

Report of Proceedings 2014

General Synod February Group of Sessions

Volume 45 No. 1

Officers of the General Synod

Presidents

The Archbishop of Canterbury

The Archbishop of York

Prolocutors of the Lower Houses of the Convocations

Canterbury

Ven. Christine Hardman

York

Ven. Cherry Vann

The House of Laity

Chair

Dr Philip Giddings

Vice-Chair

Mr Tim Hind

Secretary General

Mr William Fittall

Clerk to the Synod

Dr Jacqui Philips

Chief Legal Adviser and Registrar

Mr Stephen Slack

Administrative Secretary to the House of Bishops

Mr Ross Gillson

Standing Counsel

Mr Christopher Packer

Secretary to the House of Clergy

Mr Jonathan Neil-Smith

Deputy Legal Adviser

Revd Alexander McGregor

Secretary to the House of Laity

Mr Nicholas Hills

Officers of the Convocations

Synodical Secretary of the Convocation of Canterbury

Revd Stephen Trott

Registrar

Mr Stephen Slack

Synodical Secretary of the Convocation of York

Ven. Alan Wolstencroft

Registrar

Mr Lionel Lennox

Contents

Full Synod: First Day (Monday 10 February 2014)

Introduction of New Members	1
Progress of Measures and Statutory Instruments	1
Report by the Business Committee	2
Dates of Groups of Sessions in 2016-2018	9
Ethical Investment: Presentation under SO 97 on behalf of EIAG	10
Gender-Based Violence: Presentation under SO 97	23
Gender-Based Violence: Debate	27
Questions	40

Second Day (Tuesday 11 February 2014)

Women in the Episcopate: Draft Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests	77
Legislative Business:	
Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and Draft Amending Canon No. 33 – Draft Measure and draft Amending Canon for Revision	91
Draft Act of Synod rescinding the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993	99
Article 8 Reference to the Dioceses: Motion to Suspend SO 90(b)(iii)	104
Legislative Business:	
Draft Church of England (Naming of Dioceses) Measure	114
Draft Church of England (Pensions) (Amendment) Measure	118
Draft Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2014	121
Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2014 2014	131
The Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2014	140

Third Day (Wednesday 12 February 2014)

Presidential Address	157
Safeguarding: Proposals for Legislative Change	160
Legislative Business:	
The Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2014 (resumed)	174
Diocesan Synod Motion: Environmental Issues	182
Private Member's Motion: Girl Guides' Promise	201
Private Member's Motion: Canon B 8	214
Human Sexuality: Report from the House of Bishops' Working Group and Next Steps	216
Farewells	227

Full Synod: First Day Monday 10 February 2014

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby)* took the Chair at 2.00 p.m.

Revd Prebendary David Houlding (London) led the Synod in an act of worship.

Introduction of New Members

The Chair: In a moment I shall read out the names of the new members of the Synod. I would be very grateful if they would stand in their places when I mention their names and remain standing so that we can greet them all with applause at the end.

The new members are: Lt Gemma Winterton (Armed Forces Synod), replacing Lt Cdr Philippa Sargent; Ven. Andrew Brown (Sodor and Man), replacing Revd Marc Wolverson; Dr Graham Parr (Chichester), replacing Mrs Joy Gilliver; Rt Revd Paul Butler (Durham) – replacing someone who has gone into well-deserved obscurity! – and Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich), replacing Mr Geoffrey Wortley. (*Applause*)

I will now read out the names of the bishops who are attending this group of sessions because the diocesan see is vacant. I remind members that these bishops have the right to speak but not to vote, and do not form part of the quorum for the House of Bishops. Again, please would they stand in their places when I mention their names and remain standing so that we can greet them with applause together?

The bishops attending this group of sessions are: the Bishop of Taunton, Rt Revd Peter Maurice (Bath and Wells) – and one can understand why he might not be here! – the Bishop of Crediton, Rt Revd Nick McKinnel (Exeter); the Suffragan Bishop in Europe, Rt Revd David Hamid (Europe); the Bishop of Dorking, Rt Revd Ian Brackley (Guildford); the Bishop of Ludlow, Rt Revd Alistair Magowan (Hereford); the Bishop of Warrington, Rt Revd Richard Blackburn (Liverpool); and the Bishop of Sherwood, Rt Revd Tony Porter (Southwell and Nottingham). May we greet them all? (*Applause*)

Having been in South Sudan less than two weeks ago, I would especially like to welcome, sitting in the gallery, Rt Revd Elijah Mutaney Awate, Bishop of Cueibet, South Sudan. (*Applause*) I urge members to take every opportunity to speak to Bishop Elijah and to listen to his testimony of a heroic church.

Progress of Measures and Statutory Instruments

The Chair: I am required to report to the Synod that the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure has been submitted to the Ecclesiastical Committee, which will consider it on 26 February; all those provisions of the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Measure 2013 that were not previously in force came into force on 1 February 2014; the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules 2013 have been laid before Parliament and came into force on 1 February 2014; the Clergy Discipline Appeal (Amendment) Rules 2013 have been laid before Parliament and came into force on 1 February 2014, save that Rules 2–9 and 17–19 have no effect in relation to any complaint made before that date; and the

Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2013, the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2013 and the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013 have been laid before Parliament and came into force on 1 January 2014.

For the convenience of members, the matters that I have reported will be set out in a notice paper.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Birmingham (Rt Revd David Urquhart)* took the Chair at 2.20 p.m.

The Chair: Synod, we come now to Item 3. This is an opportunity for members to make brief points on the adequacy or otherwise of the Agenda and other matters related to the report of the Business Committee. No other items will be allowed.

Report by the Business Committee (GS 1931)

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): I beg to move:

‘That the Synod do take note of this Report.’

Friends, once again I am opening a group of sessions in which much of the focus is on the legislation for Women in the Episcopate. A number of interrelated items form a complete package and, for the sake of ease and consistency, we have scheduled all that business tomorrow. There will be four separate strands to the discussions and decisions that we will make. The first discussion relates to the House of Bishops’ draft Declaration and Disputes Resolution Regulations. These are not ours to decide but the House has brought them here as an essential part of the context in which we shall make other decisions. We need to know what the proposals are and understand how it is expected that they will work. This debate also gives us an opportunity both to endorse and to comment on them. The House will, I am sure, be listening carefully to our discussions.

In November we decided to dispense with a Revision Committee stage of the draft Measure and Amending Canon so that we could work together here, in the revision stage, to retain the delicate and essential balance of both legislative and non-legislative proposals. In the context of the understanding established through those first two pieces of work, we will move on to give preliminary consideration to the draft Act of Synod to rescind the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993.

With regard to the opportunity to suspend SO 90(b)(iii), in the light of our debates and experience last November we anticipate that the way in which we work together tomorrow will demonstrate a level of agreement that makes a faster process for the Article 8 Reference realistic and sensible, but I shall speak to the Synod in more detail about this on Tuesday.

One of our responsibilities as we work together is to consider important and sensitive issues. On Wednesday we shall consider the new safeguarding proposals approved by the Archbishops’ Council and the House of Bishops, prior to legislation being introduced to give effect to them at the July group of sessions.

In the wake of the November group of sessions, the Business Committee considered comments from members about speeches that it was felt should have been either curtailed or moderated in some way. Under SO 17 only ‘irrelevance, tedious repetition, unbecoming language or a breach of order’ allow chairs to stop a speaker. For the foreseeable future it is likely that we shall be discussing sensitive and controversial issues, about which we all hold differing and firm views. Therefore, on behalf of the Business Committee, I would like to remind us all of the importance of maintaining a balance between our respect for difference and the need for lively debate, as well as our collective responsibility for holding other Synod members to account when they express views that could be construed by others outside this chamber as offensive or misleading.

In that same context I remind members of GS Misc. 995, circulated at the beginning of the quinquennium. That document, copies of which are available at the information desk, is based on the seven principles established by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. It reminds us of our personal responsibility to disclose to Synod members, and to observers who do not know us, factors that might be relevant to the way in which our arguments may be heard and evaluated. The note helps us to understand the kinds of interest that are relevant and goes on to record in paragraph 7: ‘Members should declare any [relevant] interest which might reasonably be thought to influence what they say and do and which is relevant to the issue under debate.’ It is worth reminding ourselves of this habit from time to time! It can be really helpful to understand where people are coming from and, although none of us wishes every speech to begin with a long list, I encourage us all to think carefully, declaring any relevant issues that a spirit of co-operation and transparency might require us to share.

I turn now to Diocesan and Private Members’ Motions. The diocese of Southwark has a timely motion on environmental issues, which will be debated on Wednesday, with a motion from Guildford on Magna Carta scheduled as contingency business. As GS 1931 explains, the Committee took the view that we would be in a better position to have a lengthier and more informed debate on the Wakefield motion in July, following the Dioceses Commission review. In November we were unable to consider Private Members’ Motions and have scheduled two at this group of sessions: one outward-looking motion, reflecting concerns about the Girlguiding Promise, and another that will enable a brief reflection on our sartorial practice when conducting services!

Bearing in mind that the final item on the Agenda is a presentation on the Pilling Report, we felt that it would be premature to schedule the two Private Members’ Motions on same-sex marriage until Synod had had a chance to hear more about the process and next steps in this area. The presentation and discussion on Wednesday will offer us an opportunity to think together about how this sensitive issue might best be handled over the next two years rather than debate the detail of the report. Make no mistake, friends, that in this conversation we shall be observed carefully by our peers and society, and our demeanour and attitudes will be judged by them and by Our Lord.

At the November group of sessions I spoke briefly about the process by which the Business Committee had engaged with ideas about ‘New Ways of Doing Synod’. Since then, different members of the Committee have had an opportunity to look further at these ideas with the Panel of Chairs, the Prolocutors, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity and the Chaplain. We will extend our usual meeting in March to enable further consultation with others; and, following that, I hope that we might talk with wider groups of members as

well as the chairs of the diocesan Houses of Clergy and Laity, through whom we can extend our reach to the dioceses. Throughout this group of sessions I and my Business Committee colleagues will be available to talk to any member, and correspondence about this may be sent to the Clerk of the Synod for my attention.

Finally, an important foundation of ‘New Ways of Doing Synod’ is the placing of prayer at the centre of all our work. I trust that members have used the prayer card circulated last week and that their parishes are praying for us, as mine are. We are grateful to Gavin Kirk, our chaplain, for facilitating the continuous praying presence in the chapel and to the many volunteers, including the new ecumenical community at Lambeth, who are helping. The staff members have worked hard to organise this and many other aspects of Synod and we are, as usual, indebted to them. I hope that many members will find time to pray together in the Church House chapel or attend a lunchtime Eucharist.

The Chair: There is now an opportunity for members to make points or ask questions of the Chair of the Business Committee.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): In view of the likelihood of further strike action by London Underground workers, has the Business Committee given consideration to ending this group of sessions at 3 p.m. on Wednesday in order to facilitate the return journeys of members, especially those in more flood-prone areas of the country than mine?

The Chair: Thank you for that eminently brief question. I remind Synod that the Business Committee is not actually in charge of the transport system, but they may have an answer.

Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford): I thank the Chair of the Business Committee for suggesting that much of this Agenda is process. I realise that that may be necessary, but I had hoped that in addition there would be some doctrine or a note of the priority of mission. If I have an interest to declare, it is that I am a conservative and have a particular interest in paragraph 30 of the House of Bishops’ Declaration and paragraph 28 of House of Bishops’ Report. If it has to be process, we must still proceed with care.

I looked for three things that I do not find in this report: first, the Business Committee’s own thinking; second, the mission and evangelism priority. Coming from a diocese which, among others, this year is celebrating its centenary and has declared it a year of mission, it would have been good to see something about forward progress on Mission Action Planning, the Quinquennium Goals, or Effective Evangelism, all of which this Synod has debated previously. If it is to be process, we must see the thinking behind it, but all we see is paragraph 28 of the House of Bishops’ Report, most of which, as far as I can see, has not been reflected upon by the Business Committee but has just been dutifully acquiesced. In particular, I do not see the phrase ‘rapid progress’ in this report; it has been imported. I do see a reference to simplicity, reciprocity and mutuality, calling for respectful rather than rapid progress, sensitive rather than speedy progress; and the word ‘delicate’ has been used.

I therefore looked in this Agenda – a process agenda – for the Business Committee’s own thinking as to what it proposes, something about mission and evangelism, and in particular something to show how the Business Committee, or indeed the House of Bishops, will proceed to implement paragraph 30, which is a note of important trust required for this

whole package to go forward in relation to how a conservative evangelical bishop could be appointed.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells): – the submarine diocese! Sometimes compelling topical issues demand a call for an emergency debate. However, the residential requirements of the Bishop of Bath and Wells are not one such issue. Although much humour may be generated by the idea of a debate requiring the bishop's see house – that is s-e-e, not s-e-a – to be located in Muchelney at the centre of the flooding on the Levels, thereby concentrating all of Somerset's issues into one area, it would be totally inappropriate to have such a debate when members of Synod have insufficient opportunity to gather all the facts necessary to make such an informed decision. I am calling for serious consideration to be given to a debate at a future group of sessions on where responsibility lies for decisions of this sort.

It is clear that the process and timescale need to be debated, and there is also the matter of what the words 'suitable' and 'appropriate' mean. It appears that decisions made by the Church Commissioners affecting dioceses are taken without what nowadays would be considered proper process – financial transparency, policy agreement and discussion, and the involvement of all stakeholders. We receive reports but have no say. In theory, the Board of Governors is a body that represents the wider Church and dioceses, but in reality it is not accountable in any meaningful way.

Bishops appear in the news for all sorts of reasons. Bishop Richard Kidder, who died in 1703 when the palace chimney fell on him, would have valued greater consideration of health and safety issues regarding chimneys, and Bishop Peter Price had to defend himself from the taunts of the Bishop of Southwark regarding his luncheon arrangements in the House of Lords! It would have been good if Bishop-elect Peter had had a suitable and appropriate start to his new work in Somerset.

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford): I want to ask the Business Committee whether the agenda for the next group of sessions will include another extremely important report, which will affect Church strategy and decisions, namely *From Anecdote to Evidence* – the findings from the Church Growth Research Programme published in 2013. Members of Synod were sent a link to it but it was wedged in between details of the prayer card and the Tube strike, so it might not have received the attention that it deserves. It is essential reading because it provides the most up-to-date, comprehensive set of data relating to church growth and decline; it covers every aspect of church profiling and the various structures of the Church from cathedrals to church plants, and it really is worthy of discussion.

In my view, the report contains some fairly surprising findings. The one that challenged me particularly relates to the decline in numbers, especially concerning parish amalgamations, but it is careful to state that the finding should not be seen as a criticism of multi-parish benefices. However, the conclusion is that single church units under one leader are more likely to grow than when churches are grouped together; that the strategy of grouping multiple churches together under one leader has, in general, had a detrimental effect; that churches are more likely to grow when there is one leader for one community; and that the greater the number of churches amalgamated the greater the likelihood of decline across all categories of church size. For me, that is a very surprising and important finding, bearing in mind that apparently today more than 71 per cent of our parishes (8,400 of our 12,500

churches) are amalgamated in one shape or another, whereas in 1960 only 17 per cent of the Church of England's parishes were amalgamated.

If this practice is indeed linked to falling numbers and falling morale, the matter needs to be discussed, and I would therefore urge the Business Committee to include it in a future agenda.

Mrs Margaret Condick (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): I want to say thank you very much for the prayer card, which, as well as being a request for a prayer, was most helpful in giving an outline of the main items on the Agenda. I forwarded it by email to the various deaneries to which I report and to my own PCC and in due course began to receive it back again on the circulation list, so it has been widely circulated. I have even seen it mentioned on the news-sheet of a church that to my knowledge has never mentioned the General Synod, and that was brilliant. As well as encouraging prayer for us, it has been very good at raising awareness.

However, I want to comment on one matter that I found slightly amusing. Members will recall that it contained many apparently random, jumbled words on the left-hand side, in colour, on top of which was the Church of England logo in the middle. When on the computer I removed that logo, I discovered that it had covered some particularly important words – 'light', 'others', 'one', 'Christ' and 'God' – and I was therefore a little amused that the Church of England seemed to be hiding God. Nevertheless, that apart, I want to say thank you very much for the prayer card. It has been very helpful and much appreciated, and I urge the Business Committee to repeat it.

The Archdeacon of Bath (Ven. Andy Piggott): We are always indebted to the Business Committee for its work in shaping our agendas and I hope that this afternoon the Synod will express its customary thanks for that work. Today's psalm was very appropriate – and I say thank you to whoever chose it:

'You visit the earth and water it;
you make it very plenteous.
The river of God is full of water;'

Never were the Scriptures truer! Synod members will be well aware of the impact of the adverse weather conditions in certain parts of the country; and we in the south west have been especially severely hit. Today I do not want to press the Business Committee for an emergency debate on this topic, but surely it would be right for us to express our concern and support for all those who are suffering and, even if the weather improves, will continue to suffer for many, many weeks and months, and that is what I am asking the Synod to do.

I cannot speak for what is happening elsewhere but in the diocese of Bath and Wells many communities have been severely impacted. Some homes and businesses were flooded just after Christmas. Since then, business contracts have been lost, farmers and others who work hard on the land or care for animals have seen their livelihoods threatened, rat infestation has increased by an estimated 25 per cent, and for more than a month in some communities no arrangements were made for the sanitary disposal of waste. The normal daily routines that we all take for granted – attending school, visiting the doctor or shopping locally – have become a living nightmare. If I may be really basic, many households have had to use

buckets and black bags in which to defecate; and with no sanitary waste disposal, as someone put it to our bishop the other day, ‘What do you do with it then?’

The most telling comment that I heard was ‘Why has it taken as long to get help to us as it did to the Philippines after the recent hurricane?’ Although Prince Charles, the Prime Minister and Lord Smith have visited our county in the past few days, there is now a real feeling that it is too little too late; but, more positively, Christians have sought to offer practical love and care for those in need in their communities and others are trying to speak out on their behalf.

Although these are very dark places at the moment, it would be wrong to paint a picture of total despair, but I believe that it would be right for the Synod today to express its prayerful concern for all who are going through a really tough time. I am also sure that members would be very pleased indeed if our Archbishops were to send a pastoral message to them indicating their support; but, for today, I ask that we remember these people in our prayers and indicate our concern and support for them and all who are working hard to help them, so that they may no longer feel ignored, neglected or forgotten.

Mrs Mary Judkins (Wakefield): I declare an interest as my name was down to introduce the Wakefield Diocesan Motion, which is not on the Agenda – see paragraph 11 of the Business Committee’s Report. I am therefore disappointed and a little angry. An exchange of emails with Church House has left me dissatisfied, as have the two reasons given for the omission, namely that the Dioceses Commission needs to write its review and that our motion is so important that it needs to be allocated more time. The Dioceses Commission? We were not obeying the Dioceses Commission; our diocesan motion is obeying the Great Commission. I am pleased that the Business Committee has recognized the importance of our motion, but I wonder why it was listed only as contingency business for November. It may come up in July but we have no promises.

Why am I a little angry? Our motion goes to the heart of what I believe the Church of England should be about. We preach Christ crucified, arisen and ascended. We are asking for a theological debate on the nature and structure of the Church. Yes we have had reports – the latest version of Fresh Expressions and Growth, but never a national debate. Why do we need it now? There is ignorance among people, both inside and outside the Church, about the things of God. Did we not hear the Archbishop of York’s introduction to the debate on intentional evangelism? We need to go back to our theology and then discover afresh how our missiology forms our ecclesiology, rather than vice versa – as our motion says, to serve the people of the land – and we need that now. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

My other concern is about the lack of outward-looking debate. Where are the Christians? Yes I know that the Archbishop has returned from Sudan and Rwanda, but what about Syria and the Middle East? We have a fringe event about Sudan, but what is the Church of England doing as a whole? The Wakefield Cursillo group asked me that question this morning. Via the media, the outside world sees the Church of England as outdated, fixated on sex and women bishops. It is not all doom and gloom, but we need to devote ourselves to the teaching of the Apostles – fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers – and then we might find ourselves growing disciples. A debate on the nature and structure of the Church would be welcome sooner rather than later.

A member: On a point of order, Chair. The previous speaker said something about the Dioceses Commission ‘of which I am a member’, or words to that effect. However, that is not so and I wish to correct the record in that respect, if I may.

The Chair: Not at this point. That is for another opportunity.

Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark): In the debate on the Business Committee’s report in November I raised the question of the accountability of the Archbishops’ Council to the Synod. I gave examples of instances where in my view there had been an avoidance of the Synod’s requests. I am grateful to the Chair of the Business Committee for the letter that I received in response. Sue Booy’s helpfully referred to SO 115, saying that it gives the Business Committee a remit to ensure that synodical decisions are implemented. She went on to say, ‘The Business Committee seeks to verify that requests made by the Synod are considered seriously and actioned as appropriate’.

In the light of that advice, I would suggest that future Business Committee reports include as routine a note of its work in this regard since the previous report. A new section of the Business Committee’s report could record actions taken in the two categories: first, to ensure that the Synod’s decisions are implemented; and, second, to verify that requests made by the Synod are considered seriously and that appropriate responses are made. I believe that such an innovation could do much to encourage a culture of accountability.

Mrs Vivienne Goddard (Blackburn): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

Revd Canon Sue Booy, in reply: I begin by congratulating all those who by various means have come from the West Country and actually made it and, in doing so, I thank Andy Piggott for his speech. He will be aware that we have already prayed, and will continue to do so, for the folk across the country who are experiencing such difficult situations because of the floods. It is also very timely that we have scheduled two debates that touch on the environment and therefore have afforded ourselves an opportunity to raise such issues.

To Mr Freeman, we have considered the timing of the Agenda. I understand that we do not yet know whether further strike action will occur on Wednesday, but we will continue to monitor the situation. At this stage I cannot make any promises.

To David Banting, I would say first that the Business Committee’s particular role is about process, not doctrine, and we try to stick to that. I am not entirely certain that simplicity and reciprocity are the enemies of speed; they are not mutually exclusive. It is also important to say that in my view it would be appropriate for headship issues properly to be raised during consideration of the Code of Practice during tomorrow’s debate.

We have followed with interest issues about housing in Bath and Wells, though perhaps not necessarily with the same enthusiasm as Tim Hind. However, we know that a large number of questions have been tabled on this subject and I hope that there will be an opportunity for some of the issues to which Mr Hind referred to be raised during Questions.

Mary Durlacher referred to the excellent report *From Anecdote to Evidence* and we have taken note of her comments. Certainly some of that information and evidence will be very useful in the future scheduled debate on multi-parish benefices, but we will consider the matter in a wider sense and keep it under review.

To Margaret Condick, thank you for saying ‘thank you’ for the prayer card. We share her amusement.

I know that Mary Judkins is not pleased about the Wakefield Diocesan Motion, for which I apologize at a personal level. I believe that it is right to try to allow some more time. We will be very pushed during the three days of this group of sessions. As Mrs Judkins knows, I cannot give her a personal promise on behalf of the Business Committee, but the Committee has heard her representations. It has occurred to me that she might like this debate to be scheduled on Sunday afternoon, though I am sure she will understand that that is not in my personal gift. I know that all of us would want to have prayers, bearing in our prayers the whole of the world Church, and we are rightly reminded of our call to the Apostles’ teaching – breaking bread and growing disciples.

I thank Miss Gnanadoss for her advice to the Business Committee. She will have read in the report that in March we are to have a slightly extended meeting so that issues such as this can be given a little more of our concentration. We will look at the note that Miss Gnanadoss suggests and see whether we can find a way of reporting to her.

I have come to the end of my notes and I am still on a green light! Friends, thank you very much indeed.

The motion was put and carried.

Dates of Groups of Sessions in 2016-2018

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod meet on the following dates in 2016–2018:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2016 | Monday-Friday 15-19 February |
| | Friday-Tuesday 8-12 July |
| | Monday-Wednesday 21-23 November (contingency dates) |
| 2017 | Monday-Friday 13-17 February |
| | Friday-Tuesday 7-11 July |
| | Monday-Wednesday 20-22 November (contingency dates) |
| 2018 | Monday-Friday 5-9 February |
| | Friday-Tuesday 6-10 July |
| | Monday-Wednesday 19-21 November (contingency dates).’ |

The motion was put and carried.

THE CHAIR *Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London)* took the Chair at 2.57 p.m.

Ethical Investment

Presentation under SO 97 on behalf of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group

The Chair: We come now to Item 5, a presentation on ethical investment, which is sponsored by the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. The group will introduce its new chair, Mr James Featherby, who will give the presentation jointly with Professor Richard Burridge, the vice-chair. This is Mr Featherby's first appearance at the General Synod. The presentation will cover some of the issues on which the EIAG has been advising the Church Commissioners and the work that they are doing to produce the report due in 2015.

The procedure for this item will be that Mr Featherby and Professor Burridge will make the presentation under SO 97, which it is expected will last for about 30 minutes. I shall then call Dr Jonathan Spencer, the chair of the Pensions Board, to make some brief observations.

The Business Committee has agreed that members of Synod should be able to ask questions and Mr Featherby and Professor Burridge will answer them. I intend to take questions in groups of three. In order to ensure that we can take as many questions as possible in the limited time available, I should be grateful if questioners could keep their questions as short and clear as possible. This is not an opportunity for members to make speeches.

To bring the item to a close, I shall then give Mr Featherby and Professor Burridge up to five minutes to make some concluding comments. I now invite Mr Featherby and Professor Burridge to make their presentation.

Revd Professor Richard Burridge (London University): – but here representing the Ethical Investment Advisory Group.

We are very grateful to have this opportunity to again make a presentation to the Synod about our work. As members may recall, the debate about ethical investment came into being as a result of one of my predecessors as Dean of King's taking the Church Commissioners to court over South Africa. Matters have moved on now that the Dean of King's is a representative of the Church Commissioners putting forward ethical investment; that is how far we have moved.

Three years ago we were able to say a huge thank you to John Reynolds for his work as chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group for many years. The EIAG was set up to provide advice to the NIBs (national investing bodies), *i.e.* the Church Commissioners, the Pensions Board and the CBF Church of England Funds managed by CCLA. Together we have combined assets of about £9 billion, so it is clear that we should invest and use them as wisely as possible in our fiduciary duty, but also as ethically as we can in line with the Christian faith.

The members of the EIAG are therefore appointed directly by the national investing bodies, the Mission and Public Affairs Council and the Archbishops' Council, and elected by Synod members themselves to represent the General Synod, and we have the right to co-opt in order to acquire additional expertise. Currently three members of the EIAG are members of the General Synod – me, Jenny Humphreys, who is a Synod appointee, and Paul Boyd-Lee.

I have already expressed due thanks for all the hard work that John Reynolds did for many years as our chair, and as the deputy chair I was asked to lead the search for a new chair. John had helped us significantly to move away from ethical investment being just about nasty things that we do not want to touch to very positive engagement with our society and in particular with the City.

It was an easy and unanimous decision to ask James Featherby to serve as our new chair. James has been a partner of the very prestigious legal firm Slaughter & May in the City for 20 years, and he came to us not only with that experience but also an extremely influential address book. He is an author and commentator. (*PowerPoint presentation*) On the screen members can see the front cover of his recent book *Of Markets and Men*. He is passionately concerned to bring a Christian perspective to bear on ethics, finance and business, and already I have come to appreciate his skill, wisdom and advice in chairing the EIAG. Ladies and gentlemen, would you please welcome him? (*Applause*)

Mr James Featherby: Thank you very much. It is a real honour and privilege to come and share some thoughts with the Synod this afternoon.

Our starting point is that we take a positive view of business and of the role of business in society, both in terms of providing the goods and services that we all like, providing meaningful employment, creating wealth, and of course paying taxes. From that starting point we therefore think that it is entirely appropriate that the Church should provide capital to support business; and, of course, the Church's investments also increase the ability of the Church to fund mission and provide witness. However, subject to that starting point, we are of course not naïve about the problems, whether at a systemic or structural level or as they reside within individual companies.

It is right that the Church should avoid some investments, and indeed the Church does that. In some cases it is simply not appropriate for the Church to provide capital or derive profits from particular businesses. At the moment the restricted list – those areas where the Church does not invest – comprises about 12 per cent by market capitalization of the FTSE 350. However, our portfolio is never going to be pure. Investment, a little like life, is always ambiguous, and for us engagement is vitally important as we seek instead to achieve positive cultural momentum rather than perfection. Inevitably, from time to time we are going to graze our knees, but we think that that is better than disengagement. We need to be involved on the field of play, not sitting on the sidelines.

Our investments can of course create sustainable wealth and give every stakeholder in society an opportunity to share in that wealth. I believe that ethics should be more about the positive than the negative, more about inspiring than chiding. For me, therefore, ethical investment is about moving away from just looking to harvest returns from the financial system or applying a set of restrictions as to where we can invest; it is about bridging the gap between the world of investment and the needs of the real economy; about supporting long-term, sustainable wealth creation by applying the capital and indeed the influence of the Church, both directly and by inspiring others to do likewise. If every stakeholder in society benefits, then so will the Church as an investor. For me, therefore, there is no conflict between our Christian stewardship responsibilities and our fiduciary duties as a pension fund or charitable trustees.

To sum up, I believe that our calling as Christian investors is not to be some kind of moral policeman. Instead, it is to encourage business to be all that it can in God's kingdom, and then all of us will benefit.

Revd Professor Richard Burrige: Already members will have a flavour of the way in which James and I box and cox in the EIAG. James has explained how it looks from the City's perspective. As one of the university representatives in the Synod I have been passionately concerned to try to ensure that our policies have a thorough biblical and theological grounding. Ten years or so ago it was true that the EIAG's policies were among the best available in the City, but in many ways they were no different from anyone else's in the City and it seemed to me very important that we tried to undergird our policies with biblical theology before we made a start.

We have therefore been engaged in a process, as we mentioned three years ago, of reviewing all our major policies. They are available on the General Synod website and I urge members to look at them; they all have a common structure to them. We always begin by considering particular areas of Scripture of relevance to this area and then look at the history of Christian theology and statements of the Church in general and statements of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion in particular. That has driven our reviews of defence, alcohol and many other areas, and in fact our theology is beginning to change our investments; and I will say more about that when we come to alcohol in a moment. All our policies therefore have the Christian systematic theological viewpoint behind them, beginning with the idea that the world is the good creation of a good God, and it is on that basis that many of the references just made by James flow in terms of our engagement with the City.

However, the doctrine of the fall and of sin mean that all areas of human life, both individually and within our structures, are affected by sin and evil, so we have to use our discernment and judgement in doing that. Just because the world is fallen or sinful, God does not give up on the world. He does not wash His hands of His creation but becomes involved, first of course through the choosing and calling of a special people, the Jews, into existence to be a light to the Gentiles and then, through the incarnation, to experience what human life in the world means for Him. The risk involved in that is that God is going to get a grazed knee, but actually the crucifixion is rather more serious than a grazed knee. What human beings did when faced with the goodness of God was to reject Him and crucify Him. Therefore, as Christians – whether the Archbishop of Canterbury on Radio 4's *Today* or any of us – sometimes we must expect no less.

On the other hand, the Christian understanding of what it meant for God to be incarnate in the life, death and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth is that death, sin and evil do not own the last word. The doctrine of the resurrection helps us to understand that, whenever the sin or evil of the world does its worst, God rises above it; that love is stronger than hate, life stronger than death, good stronger than evil, and that new life can come out of the messiness.

We therefore live between the times, between the time now and the age to come; that is what the doctrine of eschatology, of the end times, tells us. Therefore, during that period between the times decisions are to be made about how we can best promote the kingdom of God and where sin and evil need to be limited, confident that there is a final goal to which all God's purposes for the universe are heading; and that, if we think of the parables of the

wheat and the weeds and of the sower and so on, one day there will be a harvest, a judgement. We try to apply that system to each of the areas we look at, but we will of course then look at the biblical and theological understanding of warfare, alcohol or whatever it happens to be. That is our basic system.

Mr James Featherby: We thought that it would be helpful to give some indication of the sorts of issue with which we tend to engage, mostly with business. We focus on what people often refer to as EESG (ethical, environmental, social and governance) issues, such as sustainable environmental practices, respect for human rights, fair treatment of employees, customers and suppliers, proper systems of corporate governance, and from time to time we engage with wider public policy initiatives.

The NIBs are also good at seeking to appoint asset managers who manage some of the Church's funds on its behalf and take these kinds of issue seriously in the way in which they select and manage their investments.

We also have a very active voting programme, and on the slide members can see some of the statistics relating to the number of resolutions that the team processes every year, together with just one indication of the way in which we seek to impact by voting at general meetings on executive pay. Last year we supported only 30 per cent of UK executive remuneration pay reports.

We also seek to work with others, whether Church investors or not, with whom we often find a similarity of interest. The NIBs are parties to the UK Stewardship Code and members of the UN Principles for Responsible Investment. We work extensively with the Carbon Disclosure Project and other Church investors, particularly through an organisation called the Church Investors Group, which is strongly influenced by both us and the Methodist Church.

What happens when we seek to engage? Frequently we find a strong alignment between the good ethics that we like to talk about and the creation of long-term financial value. It is no coincidence that often those two things work together. We find that we are arming one camp in a debate with a company that is already happening, and reinforcing elements of good practice or aspirations to good practice that are already under way. You never quite know for certain what your influence is. We are never quite sure whether we are the first or last straw on a camel's back, but we believe that sometimes we can influence major change. Over the past year we have had some very constructive discussions with Barclays and are continuing to have similar discussions with supermarkets, to which Richard will refer in a moment.

Occasionally we find it necessary to recommend divestment where we have lost confidence that there is a positive momentum for change, but only as a last resort. We did it a few years ago with Vedanta, an Indian mining company, and, as members may recall, with News Corporation a little more recently.

Revd Professor Richard Burridge: Those are the general principles behind our engagement with business as a whole. We now turn to three examples of our current work: alcohol, pooled funds and climate change.

Three years ago I announced that we would be starting a major review of our policy on alcohol. Traditionally we did not invest in any business that was engaged in the production or retail of alcohol to the extent of more than 25 per cent of its business. The more we looked at the Scriptures, where we see that alcohol is a good gift of God – ‘Blessed are you, Lord God of the universe, you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to gladden human hearts’ – and the use of fermented wine at the heart of our main sacrament, the more we studied the history and tradition of the Church. It was seen that, enjoyed in moderation, alcohol is part of God’s good creation, but the use of alcohol is often condemned. Therefore, our policy actually meant that we were not able to invest in alcohol producers or family pubs and so on, but on the other hand we were investing in the supermarkets that particularly cause a good deal of teenage drunkenness because their retailing of alcohol does not fall within the 25 per cent limit. Our investment policy was completely at odds with our biblical and theological understanding, and that is an example of what I mean by starting with the Bible and theology in an attempt to change matters.

To that end we have been driving in a new direction. We have worked with a large number and range of experts to agree minimum standards of corporate responsibility, and we are now beginning to engage as a result of that. We have engaged with all FTSE All-Share companies that now derive more than 5 per cent rather than 25 per cent of their revenue from alcohol, and of course that brought us immediately into conversation with major producers, with those who are supplying alcohol to the on-trade and especially with supermarkets. Eighteen major companies were caught by the shift from 25 to 5 per cent. Many supermarkets said that we were the first people who wanted to talk to them about the dangers of alcohol.

We have worked closely with advisers from the NHS, the police, social services and so on, and we are working our way towards making recommendations to the national investing bodies later this year but already, as a direct result of our engagement, three major UK-listed supermarkets – Tesco, Sainsbury’s and Morrisons – have published new policy statements on alcohol in which they recognize the harm that it can cause, and action has been taken by them especially with regard to high-strength white cider and similar alcoholic beverages that have caused a good deal of the front-loading drunkenness on our streets about which so often we have been concerned. Whether we will be able to continue to invest in all those supermarkets and other producers and retailers as a result of our current engagement is a matter on which we will perhaps be able to say a little more at the fringe meeting during the July group of sessions.

These are really important negotiations that I believe have resulted in a positive effect, and I urge members to pray for their continued success. James will now say something about pooled funds.

Mr James Featherby: Most of the investments that the NIBs make are direct. In other words, the investment is made straight from the NIB into a company. However, some asset classes can be sensibly accessed only by pooling your money with other investors through some kind vehicle, whether a partnership or an investment trust, et cetera. Pooled funds are particularly helpful in some sectors such as venture capital, infrastructure, emerging markets and private equity, and those sectors can offer significant benefits to both society and investors. Pooled funds are therefore an important investment segment and often especially important for smaller investors who cannot gain direct access to other sectors in the same way as the NIB.

In putting your money alongside someone else's the inherent risk is that you lose an element of the control that you would otherwise have by doing it directly yourself, so the possibility arises that from time to time your pooled funds will include some kind of investment that frankly you would rather not have made. It can happen either because many years in advance you may have committed that, when asked to do so, you will provide capital as and when the investment manager asks you to pay up, or for example because you have invested in a very innocent-looking IT company, only to wake up a few months later to discover that it has turned itself into an online gambling outfit. These things just happen. However, during the course of this year we are likely to issue a new policy on pooled funds, looking at ways in which we can mitigate the risk of restricted investments happening and at a much closer system of monitoring and reporting, together with some maximum limits.

The decision regarding whether and when to sell Wonga is not for the EIAG but for the Church Commissioners, and I understand from them that it may be a little while before they are able to dispose of that investment. To dispose of it early might damage other investments, because Wonga is held in a pooled fund alongside a number of other much more positive investments and one simply cannot sell one without the other. The theologians among us remind me of the parable of the wheat and the weeds: sometimes it is difficult to dig up one without the other.

Revd Professor Richard Burridge: The third topic is the area of climate change, which will be debated on Wednesday. Clearly fossil fuels have brought the human race enormous benefits in terms of element and great wealth, but now we understand that they risk environmental catastrophe. Since our discussions about tobacco, this has become the biggest new ethical investment issue and it is growing in urgency. Whereas many of our policies have been in place for a long time – we wrote a policy on climate change in 2008 and it is already out of date – increasingly people are viewing this as the biggest moral issue facing the human race today, so we are already engaged in a major review of our 2008 policy.

I am pleased that, as a result of our 2008 policy, the national investing bodies, advised by the EIAG, are already leading the way as investors on the issue of climate change. Unlike alcohol or defence, this is not just a single-sector issue. We look at all our engagements with companies in relation to how their policies impact on the environment. We have insisted on public policy action and engaged regarding corporate action, and we have tried to allocate capital to sustainable investment strategies such as, for instance, a recent major investment in the entire area of sustainable timber.

Our particular engagement in 2013 was with FTSE 350 laggards – those who were holding back on things like carbon emissions. That has resulted in a remarkable 72 per cent of the companies with which we have engaged improving their performance with regard to carbon emissions. As the EIAG our advice is designed to be to the national investing bodies, to our investors rather than to campaigning groups, and therefore we often find ourselves caught between the campaigning groups on the one hand and the investors on the other. It is an extremely complex area and we are again seeking to maximize our impact on a biblically grounded and theologically driven policy, and to that end we are introducing a small working party within the Church of England to consider the issues.

The debate on Wednesday could not be better timed. One of the reasons given by the High Court in its judgment in the Bishop of Oxford's original case was that you could avoid investment if it was out of synch with the main supporters of the charity, so we look forward to hearing the views of Synod on climate change during Wednesday's debate, and obviously we will have more to say on the subject then.

Let me sum up our presentation. As members have heard, the world of investment and business is both ambiguous and messy. It is driven by our theology that the creation is God's good gift, yet we also need to recognize the presence of sin and evil as a result of the fall. Therefore, we will try to promote and support all that is positive in terms of wealth creation, limit what we see as dangerous or detrimental to human flourishing and, as a last resort where necessary, in the event that our engagement produces no result, disengage and disinvest where there is a clear contradiction of God's purposes or where our attempts at engagement have resulted in no benefits or developments. We are doing this not only to maximize the benefits of the Church's investments but also as part of our witness and mission to society.

We intend to hold our usual annual fringe meeting at the July group of sessions in York, when we always very much appreciate meeting Synod members, and we will issue our annual report in advance of that, but we look forward now to members' questions and comments from the floor.

The Chair: Before we move to questions, I invite Dr Jonathan Spencer to make brief observations on behalf of the Pensions Board.

Dr Jonathan Spencer (Chair of the Pensions Board, ex officio): I would like to offer a few reactions to the EIAG presentation from the perspective of the Pensions Board as one of the national investing bodies, and I should start by saying that we value greatly the work of the EIAG and work very closely with it.

First, as investors we have to align our understanding of Scripture and theology with our investment activities. That is not straightforward and not likely to lead to a single correct answer. In that respect we rely especially heavily on the advice of the EIAG, including on investments that we should avoid.

Second, as equity investors we can use the Church's moral authority and position in the public square to seek to influence the behaviour of major industrial players. We have done this with some effect in areas in which the ethics of investment are not straightforward. For example, alcohol is both a delight and a danger. As we have heard, the Church has worked effectively with the big supermarkets to preserve the delight and reduce the danger. In relation to climate change we must recognize that the switch to decarbonize energy sources will require major investment over a long period in renewable and nuclear energy, and maybe carbon capture and storage, and we shall need large energy businesses to mobilize capital on the scale required.

Third, we can and should seek to intervene in the political and parliamentary debate that will, for example, determine the framework and incentive structures for long-term energy production, which for the Church is at least as important as for the NIBs as such.

I conclude with a note of caution. It is easy to assume that because something is ethical – for example, decarbonizing energy production – it will therefore just happen and we can plan investment strategy accordingly; not so, I fear. I therefore subscribe fully to the proposition that the Church and the NIBs should be active in the ways that the EIAG has indicated but should do so in a hard-headed way without wishful thinking, in particular in relation to the seductive notion that divestment solves all problems. Otherwise, we risk short-changing our pensioners, our dioceses and others who foot the bill, to no useful effect.

I look forward to a busy year of work with the EIAG during 2014.

The Chair: We move now to questions.

Canon Timothy Allen (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): Bearing in mind the damage done last summer to the Church of England's reputation when the *Financial Times* reported that the Church Commissioners had invested indirectly in Wonga, I have three questions.

First, how did the Church Commissioners come to make that unethical investment and were they aware that they had it before the *Financial Times* told the world? Second, why was the Archbishop of Canterbury not warned by the Church Commissioners of the investment in Wonga before he so conspicuously criticised and challenged Wonga's business methods last July? Finally, what steps have since been taken, or will be taken, to ensure that something similar does not recur?

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): First, I want to congratulate Professor Burridge and James Featherby on their very good presentation. Having been a member of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group for the past 15 years until the end of December, I have to say that they are leading it with great professionalism.

My question relates to the contrast between engagement and exclusion. I wonder if some slightly more analysed evidence is available as to the effect of engagement compared with exclusion, which I believe would be very helpful to substantiate some of the points that have been made. We have heard that at the moment we exclude about 12 per cent of the FTSE 100 Index, but I wonder whether there is a more detailed quantitative analysis over the medium to long term of the damage to an investment portfolio that is caused by excluding stocks. For many years we have operated on an ethical basis alongside the FTSE All-Share Index and I wonder whether something can be said about the contrast in relation to what sort of long-term loss that has actually caused the Church. It would be very helpful to have that information.

Mr Anirban Roy (London): Thank you for the presentation. My question is about the slides on pooled funds, which I found slightly confusing. As we know, many funds and venture capitalists have strong ethical guidelines as to how they invest. I am not clear why we are not simply investing in those funds with guidelines that either meet or exceed what we have for our direct investments. Obviously, often those firms also employ very good best practice in relation to how they influence the policies and strategies of companies in order to meet those ethical guidelines.

Mr James Featherby: Richard tells me that I have to answer all those questions!

I will talk first about Wonga. Why did Wonga happen? Actually it happened fairly simply because, as I understand it, the Church Commissioners some time in advance had committed that, when asked to pay up by writing a cheque, they would do so. They have done that and therefore there was an element of loss of control in terms of what that money was used for; but, as I have said, that is a somewhat inevitable feature of being involved in some of these structures.

Did the Church Commissioners know about it? Again, I understand that it was known about at a relatively junior level, but I am afraid that two was not added to two to reach the conclusion four, and I understand that there was a failure of communication between the Church Commissioners and Lambeth Palace.

What are we doing about it? That is the purpose of the review that is currently under way, and I am very grateful for the suggestion that has just been made. In relation to all these issues we are looking to establish whether there are side letters, restrictions, special exit provisions, which we can put in place to try to limit the possibility of it happening. Clearly a very key part of this whole process is choosing fund managers in whom we can have confidence and who are not likely to lead us into these problems in the future.

Can we guarantee that it will not happen again? No we cannot. As we tried to say in our presentation, in this kind of world it is inevitable that, as we put it, occasionally you graze your knee; but the risk that arises from not being on the field of play is that it is not possible to invest in some vital areas at the moment in the UK, such as infrastructure and new business sectors. We therefore think that it is much better to be present trying to influence what happens than simply not being there at all.

With regard to the question about effectiveness of engagement, it is very difficult to tell. Sometimes complex discussions take place over many months, with many other investors saying similar or different things. Often they are very personal discussions with a chair or chief executive, and very few chief executives want to say that they are doing something because the Church told them to do it. We organised an independent academic review of whether the improvement under the Carbon Disclosure Project last year was down to Church investors or not. The conclusion of the review was that it could be said with 90 per cent certainty that companies' ratings had improved as a result of our intervention. I cannot promise that that is necessarily representative, but hopefully it is helpful.

I am afraid that it would take a nuclear scientist to answer the question of whether investment restrictions damage investment portfolios. Certainly it is true that investment restrictions narrow the universe in which one can invest, and therefore it seems at least theoretically likely that it may reduce investment performance. However, let us not forget the bigger picture that principally what we are arguing for is that good ethics contribute to long-term, sustainable investment performance. We therefore believe that in the long term, provided that investment restrictions are kept to manageable proportions, the approach of the Church does not damage long-term investment performance – but members do not need me to tell them that the future is always uncertain.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): – and a Church Commissioner. Thank you very much for this presentation. Clearly it was not possible to include every aspect of ethical investment, but I wonder whether you could comment on a couple of related items. One is the issue of corporate tax avoidance/evasion; the other is the importance of the living wage,

to which indeed the Archbishop of York referred this morning, as well as to the increasingly damaging gap between the rich and the working poor, of which I believe we should all take notice. I would appreciate your comments on those two matters.

Dr Anna Thomas-Betts (Oxford): The presentation rightly pointed out the complexities of ethical investment, particularly in the field of climate change. It is clear to me that it is not only investment policy that matters in this field but also policy at other levels. Therefore, what scope does the EIAG see for engagement with other policymakers, especially the Government?

Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford): I wonder if the EIAG can tell us a little about the work that it is doing on carbon capture and storage and how it is encouraging investment in this, particularly by the oil companies that have such expertise in this area which they are not using.

Revd Professor Richard Burridge: Let me respond to a couple of those points. First, I am grateful to April Alexander for raising the issue of the living wage – again in the news this morning. We had a very good, robust Synod debate about this. It is important to understand that one must distinguish between those directly employed by an organisation and the fact that all public organisations put contracts out for tender to subcontractors and are required to take the lowest bid, and it is therefore much more difficult to get subcontractors to come in with the living wage. However, as a result of the discussions that we have held in the past couple of years, and not least some of the pressure from the Synod debate, I am delighted to say that not only have all the staff directly employed by the Church Commissioners been paid the London living wage but also, with effect from next year, all our subcontracted staff on the Hyde Park Estate will receive the living wage. We are now starting to write that into our contracts with subcontractors, so that is another good news story in relation to the importance of engagement.

Dr Anna Thomas-Betts is absolutely right that it is not just about investment policy but that we need to engage more widely with other policymakers such as the Government. That is why we have bishops in the House of Lords and why we work very closely with the work of the Mission and Public Affairs Council. We have quite a lot on our hands, trying to deal with our investment policy and it is important to try to join up everything across the piece. It is one reason why we will strongly support the third part of the Southwark motion on Wednesday for a much stronger group to monitor the effect of climate change across the whole of the Church.

I thank Hugh Lee for his comments about the extremely complex subject of carbon capture. We are in conversation with a number of companies about it. We have worked with oil companies, particularly with regard to the effects arising from explorations in the Arctic. If Revd Lee would like more details, I suggest that he sends an email to our wonderful secretary Edward Mason, without whom we could do nothing, and I am sure that he will be able to supply them.

I will now hand over to a City lawyer to talk about tax avoidance!

Mr James Featherby: Thank you very much for the question about tax avoidance. We have researched and reflected quite extensively on this over the past 18 months, in terms of both

trying to understand the issues – no mean feat – and how to apply good ethics and practice to it.

In summary, at the moment we have reached a position in which we are involved in some exploratory engagement with companies and are collaborating with others who are looking seriously at the issues. However, as I am sure members will understand, they are extremely complex matters, often driven as much if not more by government policy as the practice of individual companies. Nevertheless, we have some firm ideas as to what we think responsible tax policy looks like and these are the sorts of issue that we end up discussing with companies.

One issue that we are particularly alive to and concerned by is the tendency of some companies to extract profits from developing countries without paying their fair share of tax in those countries, but of course there are other issues as well.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): I am grateful to April Alexander for asking a question on the living wage and for the answer given by Professor Burridge. However, I want to push him a little harder. Why next year, not this year, for those companies that subcontract people who are actually employed by the National Church Institutions? I ask that question because York City Council was the first council to declare itself a living wage employer and last week announced that all the subcontractors it uses will, from April, pay a living wage to their employees. If occurred to me that if a city council can do it, we ought to do better – and perhaps Professor Burridge can use his theology to persuade those who are slightly reluctant to refer to the New Testament.

The Bishop of Warrington (Rt Revd Richard Blackburn): – and a member of the Pensions Board. I wonder whether we can hear something about the actual process that leads to disengagement. Are reports produced and to whom do they go?

Hearing that there is life out of messiness, I wonder whether there is life after disengagement. Is re-engagement possible, and what processes are in place to enable the EIAG to look at firms from which it has disinvested as possibilities for future reinvestment?

Mrs Penelope Allen (Lichfield): I want to raise the question of alcohol again because it has a direct link to the following debate on domestic violence, and I still feel that there is a culture of ignoring some of the effects of alcohol on society. There is still a prevalence of happy hours, cheap supermarket alcohol, under-age drinking, alcopops and the way in which alcohol is introduced to young people. It seems ironic that on the one hand we pour money into alcohol and on the other, as it exits, people mop it up with street pastors, motivated by the common scenes in the streets of our towns and cities at weekends. The prevalence of binge drinking across all ages has also contributed to this culture, which I feel is a concern that links to so many other social and difficult questions in our society. Is it not something that the Church should avoid? I would appreciate your comments on that.

Revd Professor Richard Burridge: I always enjoy being pushed by the Archbishop of York! The reason for the payment of the living wage next year rather than this year is that it is being introduced on the basis of a phased approach. I share the Archbishop's frustration relating to slow progress and I suggest that, since he serves on the Board of Governors of

the Church Commissioners, he can push it harder and quicker if wishes, but that is as far as we have been able to get from where I sit.

Thank you to the Bishop of Warrington for his very helpful and important question about disengagement. As a good example of that, I would like to tell Synod a little more about the story of Vedanta and the difference between it and Rupert Murdoch and News Corporation. In terms of accountability, we work very closely with companies through engagement. At every one of our meetings we review the companies with which we engage and the issues that we wish to raise, and if Edward and the other members of staff encounter problems in a particular area, they refer them back to our review meetings.

In the case of Vedanta, as a mining extraction company digging up a sacred mountain in India, it included sending Edward to India to investigate on the ground, but we found that all our conversations got us absolutely nowhere. There was a single shareholder with a majority share who just was not going to change the policies. On this occasion we therefore decided that if we did not recommend this investment we could not be sure when we would be able to do so, so we recommended that the NIBs dispose of their investments in that company, and subsequently a press release was issued. After a couple of weeks, a major proportion of that company's share value was wiped off through the stock exchanges, as many others who were also concerned about it had decided to follow the lead and disinvest.

The interesting point is that, traditionally, we had thought that once we disinvest we would have no influence with the company. However, we found that suddenly Vedanta was banging on our door and asking what they needed to do to persuade us to reinvest, and we have found that engagement with them has become easier since they have asked us to come back. So there is life after disinvestment – at least in the case of Vedanta.

In the case of News Corporation, despite flying Edward out to the AGM in California, Mr Murdoch was rather rude about the Church Commissioners and has not come banging on our door to ask us back. As I said at the time, I would love to think of Rupert Murdoch lying awake at night, quaking in his boots in fear of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group – but I think not!

Thank you to Penny Allen for again raising the question of alcohol. She is absolutely right that it is a major area of concern, particularly with regard to young people. In co-operation with our colleagues working in investment, with the NHS and the police and so on, we have come up with a very long list of standards that we want to discuss with all the companies that have now been caught by our 5 per cent amber light. That list includes, among others, the making of public statements recognizing the harm of alcohol, pricing, the size of cans and bottles, happy hours, and especially problematic products designed for young people, such as alcopops. We engage in dialogue with companies on all those matters and, unless a company passes the test on each of them, it will not be eligible for investment. We have noticed already that some companies with which we engage have picked up on these problems and are dealing with them. I mentioned earlier the problem about white cider and supermarkets.

This is a lengthy, complicated process, which explains why we are not yet in a position to finalise our investment advice, but we look forward to having further discussions about it at the fringe meeting in July.

The Chair: We have time for one more question.

Dr Jacqueline Butcher (Sheffield): My question is about Nestlé, which I have asked about on the floor of Synod and in fringe meetings at regular intervals since I have been a member of Synod.

The World Health Organisation still estimates that each year one and a half million babies die because of the promotion of unsafe baby food. I know that the EIAG has been in dialogue with Nestlé and that in specific instances they have changed their practice to comply with the World Health Organisation's code. However, like a piece of putty, when you squeeze it in one direction it splurges out somewhere else, and in countries where there is no independently enforced monitoring of legislation Nestlé is still perpetuating this malpractice. What effect has the EIAG's engagement had on that, and what can be done about it when playing in a team that kicks its weaker opponents? When one player is prevented from kicking an opponent, it simply kicks someone else instead.

Mr James Featherby: My understanding is that Nestlé's policy is to comply fully with the World Health Organisation's international code on the marketing and sale of breast milk substitutes in developing countries. In fact, I believe that at the moment it is the only company in the world that meets the criteria set by the FTSE Responsible Investment Index relating to the responsible sale of breast milk substitutes. We meet with Nestlé quite regularly to discuss these matters and it is extremely helpful to receive information and feedback from the Synod, and indeed the worldwide Church, on issues of particular concern. Therefore, if Dr Butcher believes that Nestlé is not doing all that it could, we will always be very interested to hear about it.

The Chair: I am sorry that it has not been possible to take all the questions in the time available, but I now invite Mr Featherby and Professor Burridge to make some concluding remarks.

Revd Professor Richard Burridge: Thank you very much indeed, Synod, for all those comments and questions. I am grateful for James's comment about Nestlé – another good example of how engagement has produced some significant changes. That is what we always want to do, rather than simply pulling out at the first sign of difficulty.

We very much appreciate the partnership that we have created with both the national investing bodies, about which I shall say more in a moment, and members of Synod, particularly through things like the fringe. If members have significant ethical concerns in relation to certain sectors or companies, they may email the details to the EIAG. All our policies are published on the Church of England website and can be accessed there. I urge members to read them and send us the questions that they would like us to explore further.

Returning to our basic theological understanding of engagement in a world that is God's good creation, yet fallen, in which James's image of grazed knees will be evident right at the start, we are trying to bind up those wounds and promote healthy, good growth, which on the one hand produces good returns for the Church and in turn helps us to fund our current ministry and pension responsibilities and, on the other, produces a more ethical form of business within our society.

I want to pay tribute to the national investing bodies. Their senior people serve with us on the Ethical Investment Advisory Group and participate fully in it, and of course the letter 'A' in our title is very important; we are only advisers. We then have to take our advice through to the various subcommittees of the Church Commissioners, the Pensions Board and the CBF assets as well, but they are always unfailingly helpful in terms of discussion and advice, and of course quite robust when they disagree with us!

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to thank Edward Mason, Chris Anchor and those who work in the EIAG secretariat for their enormous hard work, particularly the amount of engagement that they do with companies, the drafting of policies, the work on fiduciary duty that has recently been done as a response to the Government, and all the preparations for the debate on Wednesday. I ask that any thanks members wish to express be directed specifically to Edward Mason and the team, and we very much look forward to a strong, robust debate on Wednesday concerning the serious issues facing us in respect of climate change. (*Applause*)

The Chair: On behalf of the Synod I thank James Featherby and Richard Burrige not only for the informative presentation this afternoon but also for the work that they undertake to ensure that ethical investment matters remain on the agenda.

That completes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark)* took the Chair at 3.58 p.m.

Gender-Based Violence: Report by the Mission and Public Affairs Council (GS 1933)

Presentation under SO 97

The Bishop of Aston (Rt Revd Andrew Watson): This afternoon's presentation and debate on gender-based violence was first suggested by a body rather grandly known as the Panel for World Mission and the Anglican Communion, of which I find myself the Chair.

In our June meeting last year we were addressed by Mandy Marshall, who had just returned from a meeting at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women at which she was our Church of England representative. Mandy's report to that meeting, and especially her reflections on the calling of the Church to combat gender-based violence, was both informative and inspiring. One of the results of that Panel meeting was the encouragement of the bishops to get on board with White Ribbon Day on 25 November last year and the 16 Days of Activism that followed. The Panel was delighted that two-thirds of all the serving bishops in the Church of England duly joined in and used the opportunity of their campaign to raise the issue locally, nationally, internationally, and through the Church's voice in the House of Lords.

I myself spent White Ribbon Day at the headquarters of Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid, whose team includes one full-time worker in the field of female genital mutilation and another who deals with forced marriages, along with the organisation's more traditional role of responding to incidents of domestic violence and abuse. A few days earlier I had been speaking at Westminster Central Hall on the 25th anniversary of Asha, a remarkable Christian charity working in the slums of Delhi, whose programme of women's

empowerment has brought transformation to the lives of half a million of the poorest people on the planet.

I turn to Mandy Marshall and our presentation this afternoon. I first met Mandy when she started working as Tearfund's programme development adviser on gender and she became a member of the Church I was then leading in East Twickenham. During that time she was also co-directing a new charity called Restored, whose strapline is simply 'Ending violence against women'. Mandy has written and travelled widely, leading conferences and seminars across Africa, including in Liberia, Congo and Ethiopia, as well as in Central Asia, Russia and the UK. In 2011 Mandy won the Deloitte 'Women Who Rock' award for her work on gender equality and ending gender-based violence. I invite Synod to give a warm welcome to Mandy Marshall.

Ms Mandy Marshall: I would like to thank Synod for the opportunity to speak today. It is a privilege to stand here today and have a voice to speak out on this devastating issue of gender-based violence. I am aware of the hopes of survivors and of those in the Church in moving forward on this issue. I hold that responsibility heavy and I pray that I be faithful to the broken heart of God over gender-based violence as I convey our role in bringing it to an end and what our churches can do.

In a room of this size, I am also aware that this will be a trigger moment for some, a reminder of a personal experience of violence. For some it may be a defensive reaction and for others perhaps an uncomfortable reminder of their own perpetration of violence. Wherever people are with this subject, I hope they will let the barriers down and hear what is being said. We know that it is a difficult subject, and we have a national domestic violence helpline number that is easy to remember – 0808, it was formed in the year 2000 and is open 24 hours, 7 days a week – 0808-2000247.

(PowerPoint presentation) I would like to start by giving members the opportunity to hear the voice of a survivor, Charlotte, which is not her real name – I have changed it – who has given me permission to share her story. Charlotte was a young Christian woman who ended up being abused by a man named Craig. She was in a relationship with him that lasted six years, and what started off as seemingly romantic gestures, such as the need to be always close to Charlotte, gradually escalated into manipulative and controlling behaviour, like limiting the amount of communication she had with her family and friends and insisting that she had her phone with her at all times so that he could contact her.

Craig's desire to control Charlotte increased and their relationship worsened, until he was emotionally and physically abusing her. On one occasion he hit her over the back of the head, then profusely apologized and said he would never do it again – but, of course, he did. In fact the physical abuse, including rape, became so frequent and extreme that, when Charlotte finally summed up the courage and will to leave Craig, she had to undergo five months of intensive physiotherapy simply to get her limbs to work again and she had several months of post-traumatic stress disorder counselling.

The sad and shocking truth is that Charlotte's story is by no means rare. There is a common view that domestic abuse and violence against women occurs only within certain social groups and to certain kinds of women and not in our church – perhaps that church down the road, but not in ours – and most definitely not to Christians. Recalling her experience, Charlotte told us this. 'There was no hostility in the church, but I felt that it was too much to

try and talk about the abuse. I felt that nobody would understand, that people would want to know all of the details and would think that I was exaggerating the severity of the abuse.'

As we move forward and look at some of the statistics for abuse, I hope that we will hold Charlotte's experience in our hearts. For each of the statistics I am about to show, there is a person made and reflected in the image of God.

What is gender-based violence? The United Nations describes it as 'violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life'. In 2007 the United Nations released a devastating statistic, and one that breaks my heart. Women between the ages of 15 and 44 are more likely to be maimed or die due to male violence than through war, cancer, malaria or traffic accidents combined. That is devastating. That is life-destroying. It is something that is wholly and utterly preventable.

Domestic violence is the largest form of abuse of women worldwide, irrespective of region, culture, ethnicity, education, class or religion. In the UK one in four women will suffer abuse in her lifetime. Think about how many women in your church there are. If we divided that figure by four, how many women in our churches could that be? How many of them are suffering in silence due to the shame and stigma that surround that issue in our churches? At Restored we call that the toxic '3S' combination: the shame, the stigma and the silence.

Two women a week are killed in the UK by their partner or former partner. When we think of the phrase that we are asked, 'Why doesn't she just leave?' – actually leaving the relationship is one of the most dangerous times for a woman. It is the time when she could be killed. We need to be sure that we make safety plans.

In 2013, Restored carried out an indicative survey in conjunction with *Christianity* magazine. It was self-selecting and so is not an academic survey. Of the 443 people who responded, 77 per cent were women, 80 per cent were educated to above degree level and 97 per cent were churchgoers. With the proviso that it was self-selecting and not academic, I want to share these indicative results, with the aim of showing that violence is in our churches. Nineteen per cent had experienced a partner refusing to accept No for an answer to sex. That is sexual violence. That is rape. Sixteen per cent had experienced physical harm and 40 per cent had experienced intimidation. Sixteen per cent agreed that domestic violence takes place because women do not submit to their husbands. Clearly there is some work to do in our churches.

Yes, men are abused too. One in six men is abused in the UK. Again, we think about the numbers in our churches. How many men are speaking out on that issue? How many men are receiving the help and the support they need? Men are more likely to call the police and press charges. Men are less likely to drop those charges. When there are over four incidents of abuse, however, 89 per cent of the abuse is male violence towards women. We may not like these facts, yet we have to face the facts. The majority of gender-based violence is male violence towards women.

Why talk about it now? It was last debated at Synod 10 years ago, but we need to reflect the changing context in which we live. Last year I was able to represent the Church of

England at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The agreed conclusion there, on which we lobbied, was the inclusion of Churches – or, in the United Nations’ language, ‘religious institutions’ – in the response to violence against women. It is in there and we need to be able to take responsibility for outworking it at not only a structural level but also at a local level in our churches.

We had the Primates’ letter in 2011 on gender-based violence; the Anglican Consultative Council Resolution 15.07 on gender-based violence; the Foreign Secretary’s Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, with a Church of England representative on the advisory board; a new stalking law was introduced last year; and we have the Five Marks of Mission, which ‘seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation’. I note also that the Church of England is a founder member of the We Will Speak Out coalition to end sexual violence, and there is an increasing recognition of online abuse. All of these make it important for us to focus on ending abuse and illustrate that abuse still exists today.

What do we know? That all gender-based violence is wrong and must stop; that Scripture cannot be used to justify violence; that the Church has an answer and can be part of that solution; that men and women working together can end violence against women, and the time to act is now. There is plenty that we can do at the local church level. At the basic level we can put information out in our churches; we can put stuff behind the toilet doors for getting help and support, and on where it is safe to access that support. We can get training. We can link into our local service providers and support people to access the professional services that are available in our local communities. At a more engaged level we can maybe link in with the local refuge and make sure that we have those professional boundaries in place. We can discuss it at our PCCs, educate ourselves and get rid of the myths of abuse. We can have a charter for churches; we can teach in our sermons. There is a lot of stuff that we can do in our local services. We can promote healthy relationships. We can pray. We can join First Man Standing and the White Ribbon Campaign, which the Bishop of Aston has joined.

There has been some great work going on in our churches. In my own church, St Stephen’s Twickenham, we have put up the toilet door posters, we have information available at the back of the churches and we are moving forward with an action plan. Last year I was able to train 19 vicars across the diocese of Durham and leave them with an action plan to implement in their own diocese, going forward. Coventry Cathedral was one of the first to get training.

Ending gender-based violence is the responsibility of all of us and we all need to take action to bring it to an end. The culture of silence and complicity needs to be broken. It will take all of us to play our part. Perhaps we even need to redefine courage. Courage is challenging your colleague or your friend or perhaps your family member when it would be easier to stay silent rather than to speak up. We need to stand up and break the silence.

Finally, I hope that we will all make a renewed commitment to ending gender-based violence, remembering those such as Charlotte whose voices are so often not heard but silenced in our churches, through fear of the stigma and the shame associated with abuse. I pray that men perpetrating the abuse will stop and live transformed lives. Let it be so in our churches and in our families. (*Applause*)

The Chair: Members will see from Order Paper I that there are three amendments to the motion at Item 7. They will be taken later in the debate. I call upon Mr Fletcher to introduce the motion standing in his name.

Mr Philip Fletcher (Archbishops' Council, appointed): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod, believing that all people are made in the image of God and that all forms of violence based on gender represent *a defilement* of that image:

- (a) affirm work already undertaken in dioceses, deaneries, parishes and Church of England schools in raising awareness and caring for survivors of gender-based violence in all our diverse communities;
- (b) support measures to bring perpetrators to account and provide support for changed lifestyles;
- (c) encourage boys and men to stand against gender-based violence; and
- (d) commend Anglican Consultative Council Resolution 15.07 on preventing and eliminating gender-based violence to dioceses, deaneries and parishes and urge them to seek practical approaches to its implementation.’

We are very grateful to Mandy Marshall for her powerful presentation. I want rather to focus on the motion that is before Synod and what it seeks to achieve.

In the light of the stories and the facts that Mandy has given us I am naturally uneasy, as a man, to be proposing this motion on gender-based violence, which we know is predominantly inflicted by men on women. However, it is part of a trend that this motion seeks to encapsulate the public involvement in and advocacy for an end to gender-based violence by men and boys. This is an issue for the whole of humanity, women and men together, and particularly about how we are to live together and what sort of societies we are to have. It is about building the common ground and the gospel vision of fullness of life and the flourishing of all creation. It is about women and men seeking to work in partnership with God and with each other.

The theological context to the motion before us is our common identity. Mutual respect is the essential minimum in our relationships with each other. The Primates of the Anglican Communion captured this in their 2011 letter urging action on gender-based violence. They called the Churches of the Communion ‘in penitence and faith’ to ‘move forward in such a way that our churches truly become a living witness to our belief that both women and men are made in the image of God’; and they ‘acknowledged with grief that gender-based violence is a global phenomenon and that all but a very small percentage of such violence is perpetrated by men against women, with devastating effects on individuals, families and society’.

At its meeting in 2012, the Anglican Consultative Council glossed the fourth Mark of Mission to make this point. It now reads, ‘To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.’ The Bishop of Aston will be writing to his colleagues very shortly to draw attention to this change.

The motion before Synod is a call to action in our dioceses, deaneries, parishes, Church schools and families to raise awareness and provide pastoral care for any person caught in the cycle of gender-based violence. It acknowledges that in some places action is being taken but calls for more. Many small actions together can have a big effect.

First, the motion affirms what is already going on in both advocacy, pastoral care and promoting positive self-esteem. Much of that day-to-day care in our parish churches and communities goes on unseen. Other awareness-raising initiatives include a diocesan road show, the training of specialists in caring for survivors of domestic violence and the simple act of providing information on local service provision. Our Church schools are required to promote Christian character and relationships. This includes the need to show the development of personal relationships which build self-esteem and values based on mutual respect.

The work of the Anglican mission agencies and others in advocacy is significant both at home and internationally. Two examples are the work of the Mothers' Union with the 16 Days of Activism and of the Church Army in caring for survivors. The phrase in the motion 'in all our diverse communities' is proposed by agreement with our national adviser for minority ethnic Anglicans. The issue cuts across all communities, though particular issues may pertain in different contexts; thus the issue of female genital mutilation has been particularly prominent recently. It needs to be named but should never be taken as grounds for complacency in the majority communities.

Second, the motion supports measures to bring perpetrators to account and provide support for changed lifestyles. Such support involves the Church working in association with statutory authorities and with other voluntary organisations. In pastoral care, this is the reality of being a Church for all people, for survivors and perpetrators alike.

Third, the motion encourages men and boys to stand against gender-based violence. Positive male role models are vital for changes in behaviour and the transformation of relationships. Initiatives such as First Man Standing (Restored), Christian Vision for Men and the White Ribbon Campaign are examples of small actions that again can have big effects.

Fourth, the motion commends the resolution from the Anglican Consultative Council in 2012 on gender-based violence. It is the appendix to the paper. Gender-based violence is a global issue. It is one of the issues, the great levellers, like climate justice, that face our world today. It crosses the boundaries of culture and geography. It is in this context that the Churches of the Anglican Communion have called for action.

In a wide-ranging motion, the ACC commends recent initiatives of resisting gender-based violence, such as the We Will Speak Out campaign, the 16 Days of Activism and the White Ribbon campaign, and rejoices in what is happening around the Communion. The ACC calls for the equal valuing of boys and girls and the fostering of respectful relationships. It calls upon theological colleges and courses to build understanding of the dynamics of gender-based violence and the underlying theological issues.

I seek the support of Synod for us to make a commitment to increased awareness of this violence, together with our pastoral care for all. It is a time for many small local actions, collectively, to have that big effect. I invite Synod to take this opportunity for the Church of

England to stand with the Provinces of the Anglican Communion, recognizing our common life in Christ and our urgent desire to work towards a world free of gender-based violence.

The Chair: The floor is now open to debate this motion.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of four minutes.

Canon Dr Paula Gooder (Birmingham): It seems to me that the debate we are having this afternoon is enormously important and personally I find it very moving that we are having this debate on the floor of General Synod. I experienced gender-based violence just once, as a student. When I remember the devastating impact that experience had on my life, I quake with terror when I think about those who live in an ongoing and unremitting relationship that causes such violence. It will not surprise Synod to know that I am passionate that, in an issue of such great importance as this, we need to have the theology that resources us to speak of it, to speak into it, and to resist it with everything that we have.

I want to make a few brief points at the start of this debate. The first is that I feel we need to take very seriously the way in which our own tradition has been used to support gender-based violence in the past. We cannot for one moment ignore those terrible ‘texts of terror’ in the Bible, as Phyllis Trible called them, which represent some of the worst gender-based violence. Passages like Judges 19, which talk about the rape and ultimate murder of the Levite’s concubine, or Ezekiel 16, which describes Israel as a woman who deserves to be raped, or the use of the image of the Whore of Babylon in Revelation, implying questions about gender-based violence. We therefore need to be very careful and cautious, and to sit with horror at our own tradition and the way in which that has produced gender-based violence around the world from time to time.

At the same time, however, we need very clearly and very passionately to put down, alongside those stories, the stories from the Bible in which God intervenes in gender-based violence and makes it very clear that we as Christians cannot for one moment put up with such actions. Stories like that of Hagar, where God intervened with Hagar in the desert and gave her support and nourishment when she needed it most, or like the woman caught in adultery, where Jesus stood in between her and her accusers and refused to allow them to continue. We have much to celebrate as well as much to grieve in our tradition.

I turn now to a piece of positive theology that Synod might begin to explore in exploring such an important question. It is suggested in paragraph 8 of the report that we go to 2 Corinthians 5.19, which refers to the way in which human behaviour ‘creates a drag on the reconciliation of the world to God’s own self’. I am not quite sure that 2 Corinthians 5 does refer to reconciliation as something that is still to be completed. I would see 2 Corinthians 5 as being very clear that reconciliation has happened in Christ; but, slightly earlier in that passage, Paul talks about anyone being in Christ – ‘If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation’. Isaiah’s vision of the new creation is a creation in which the lion lies down with the lamb, in which the child plays over the hole of the asp. Surely, as people of Christ who are called to live a new creation existence we must live to the utmost of our capacity as people who resist violence at all costs, violence that is reflected in those kinds of passage.

It seems to me that we have an enormous amount to say into this subject and I therefore welcome this debate and hope that we will support the motion very strongly indeed.

Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield): This is a much-needed debate and a good report. However, violence against women and girls does not only happen in the domestic context. This is an area where the Church's ministry and voice is also vital.

I have been thrust into having to face these issues of violence against women and girls through conducting the funeral last summer of the bright and bubbly 17-year-old parishioner Georgia Williams. Georgia was murdered in a brutal and premeditated attack by a fellow teenager, not a partner but somebody she knew only socially within a group of friends, but for whom she had unknowingly become the subject of his violent sexual fantasies. One of the most disturbing features of the case was the role played by extreme pornography in arousing these fantasies. The investigating officer DCI Jamieson, commenting after the sentencing, said, 'There is no doubt in my mind that his' – that is, the offender's – 'addiction to extreme sadistic pornography played a significant part in this investigation. Even in the minutes up to Georgia's arrival at his home he was still viewing such material.'

In the light of those comments, I am convinced that we as a national Church need to challenge both the Government and the internet companies to do much more to clamp down on extreme pornography. The Government gained some good headlines a few months ago but we need to make sure that it follows through and delivers and that the internet companies do too. Tomorrow is appropriately Safer Internet Day – a good day to remember and pray for this work.

There is another aspect to all this, however. Suppressing evil is not just a battle within society; it is also a battle within the human heart. It is not just extreme pornography that is of concern, because all pornography devalues and degrades, and contributes to an attitude of mind that sees women and girls as objects – objects too often for the selfish gratification of men and boys.

Since I sat in court in November and heard some of the searing details of this particular case, I have found myself much less able to sit in front of a television and accept those scenes of graphic violence and torture that seem somehow to intrude in so many mainstream dramas these days. What we watch for entertainment and we will fill our minds with ultimately affects our outlook and our behaviour. As Jesus said, 'Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.' As Jesus also said, 'Whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' As we work with all who have suffered from gender-based violence, let us be alert ourselves as Synod members to what we allow to entertain us and to fill our minds and those of our families. As St Paul wrote, 'Whatsoever things are true, whatever are noble, whatever are right, whatever is pure, think about these things.'

The Chair: I would ask Miss Dailey to speak to both of her amendments. After she has spoken I will take the other amendment by Mrs Kathy Playle.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): I think that the whole Synod will be united in deploring and being saddened by some of the stories of domestic violence that we have heard this morning. Nevertheless, I think there is a grave misapprehension at the heart of this motion.

It was said that all but a very small percentage of such violence is perpetrated by men against women. That is a very common presumption but in fact it is not factually accurate. We heard in the presentation that one in six men is a victim of such violence. That could be some of the men in this room. According to the Home Office, 1.2 million women and 80,000 men suffer every year from domestic and sexual violence. It means that for every five victims of such violence, three are women and two are men. That is based on very similar definitions of domestic violence to the United Nations' definition that we heard this morning, except that the United Nations' definition refers only to women. If you take out that gender-specific reference, then those are the figures you have.

Erin Pizzey, the founder of the Women's Refuge Movement, has said that in her experience women can be just as violent as men. She is now a patron of the charity Mankind, which helps and supports male victims of domestic violence. In fact there is evidence that men are less likely to tell anybody about the abuse, not only out of shame but also the fear of not being believed or taken seriously – because, as we all know, domestic violence is perpetrated by men against women. There are men like Ian McNicholl, whose case is well-known in the public domain. His girlfriend sprayed bleach in his eyes, put lit cigarettes up his nose, scalded his arm with an iron, attacked him with hammers and with metal bars, and was eventually sent to prison for seven years for GBH. In one sense, that case was unusual because, if you look at cases of serious physical injury resulting from domestic violence, then those are primarily, though by no means exclusively, perpetrated by men against women; but if you look at the wider definition of domestic violence to which our attention has been drawn today, the figures are as I have said.

Despite all this, despite these 800,000 men every year in this country who are victims, there are only about a dozen refuge places for those men in the whole of the UK. That is not a dozen refuges; it is a dozen places. What is more, local authorities receive no funding from the Government to help male victims of domestic violence – only for women.

Also, children can be victims. Children, male and female, can be the victims of both their mother and their father's violence. What about same-sex couples? If domestic violence was gender-based, you would not expect it to occur with such frequency in same-sex couples, but according to the Stonewall website it does.

The reality is that domestic violence is not based on the gender of the parties involved but is a crime committed by one individual against another in a domestic setting. We must not risk making victims invisible. Men, children and those who suffer violence in same-sex relationships are already far too invisible and find it hard to get the support they need.

I would therefore urge Synod to pass this amendment. It in no way detracts from our concern for the women who are victims of violence but sends a clear signal that this Synod is concerned for the needs of all victims – women, men and children.

Mrs Kathy Playle (Chelmsford): I am grateful to Philip Fletcher and the Mission and Public Affairs Council for this, sadly, necessary report. I have no problem with the essence of the wording of the motion; it is about the language. To my shame, as a director of a counselling project in East London, I confess that on first reading it did not jump out at me to ask for this amendment.

By inference, the sentence in question refers to the victim, and therefore one who is certainly not 'defiled' by what someone else does to them. As we have heard, we could be given many examples, but I would urge Synod not to have me say to the next woman who has been raped that *she* is defiled because of it. Scripture tells us that it is what comes out of a person that defiles them. That is not for one second to say that they will not be physically or emotionally hurt to various extents, or worse, nor that as a sinner one still needs to recognise one's need for forgiveness for the sin that comes from one's own heart. Can the message be clear? The perpetrator may violate and abuse, but they defile themselves and not the victim, nor indeed the image of God.

This small amendment will, I believe, be in tune with items 9 and 12 in the report. It will show that we are not defiled; we are violated. I would urge Synod to support this amendment and to show that to be the case.

Mr Peter Hart (Chester): My remarks today come as a result of a recent meeting we had in a church in Crewe, when we were addressed by the manager responsible in our area for Cheshire Without Abuse, and from a further discussion I had with her last week about the report before us today. She was extremely pleased to know that General Synod was discussing the matter and she praised the report for its accuracy and for being so well researched.

The parish in which I am churchwarden is in an Urban Priority Area, so we are very well aware of difficulties within the community. However, until listening to this lady we had no idea of the size of the problem regarding gender-based violence. She has worked in several large cities, she told us, and yet some of the worst cases she has experienced are in fact within our parish. Parishioners were amazed at the extent of the problem. She went on to say that these are not confined to the urban area alone. A rural parish in the deanery was equally surprised to learn of such violence in their beautiful village.

The first step then is for us to become aware of the problem. That is not easy, is it? Those suffering this abuse are reluctant to tell anybody, feeling, quite wrongly, some guilt on their part and acute embarrassment in admitting what is happening. It is easy for us to notice other problems in our area. The gangs, drunkenness, vandalism, et cetera, are all too apparent but this abuse, which is happening behind closed doors, is easily disguised by those who perpetrate it and we do not notice it.

In our churches it must be necessary to engage with the organisations – in our case Cheshire Without Abuse – to ascertain what is happening. As the speaker said, we then need to publicise the work of those agencies, asking for help, for posters and leaflets, requesting them to come and speak to us, and use any way we can of informing the people in our pews. Following this step, and hopefully as a result of the report before us today, PCCs, deanery synods and diocesan synods will engage in this debate and offer practical help, undergirded always with prayer.

If victims do come forward, the speaker told us, it is usually to a friend, and that friend may be someone in a church. The friend will need to know where they can go for guidance, which is why we need to publicise the agencies with the expertise to help. Churches with the necessary information can be that bridge to begin the process of assistance.

A big problem is the shortage of refuge spaces, which results in some cases in people having to be turned away. There is another opportunity here for our churches to provide help by fundraising. Since our congregation learned of the problem, it has included Cheshire Without Abuse in our regular tithing scheme and the money, we are told, is of great benefit.

The report highlights the danger of gender stereotyping. I understand the reason for this but perhaps I could add a word of caution to our schools. This must not be superficial. I remember, in my days as a primary school teacher, an inspector coming into the infant department and telling us to remove pictures of men repairing cars and of ladies cleaning the house. Yes, but we are dealing, are we not, with something much deeper than this? Our aim must be to encourage the value of every person as being equal. RE and assemblies can emphasise this equality in the sight of God, maybe with different roles.

I welcome the report. I hope that it encourages us to know more of the problem and the ways of countering it and helps those engaged in giving of their time, all of this supported by our prayers.

The Chair called Canon Crossley for a maiden speech.

Revd Canon Ruth Crossley (Carlisle): I am delighted to be able to speak in this debate and for this motion. My only reservation is that the motion does not go far enough. I am concerned about how we make sure that some of the recommendations do not get lost in translation and that we do all what we can to promote active involvement by the people back in our dioceses.

My experience tells me that all those who work in this area need prayer, support and, importantly, money to enable this work to go on. As chair of the trustees of a church-based project called Springfield in the South Lakes area, which provides supported accommodation for women who are trying to get their lives back on track after being made homeless due to abuse, finding the right financial support to enable this work to continue is second only to our first priority of supporting the workers.

We employ 10 members of staff and provide essential 24-hour care and support for the women who come to us. The women I see have often never had what we might call a 'safe relationship' and have eventually come to a point where they have lost everything: home, children, money, security and self-belief. Springfield becomes their home and supports them through a journey of recovery, so that they might live independently and perhaps even have contact with their children once again. The abusive relationships often also cause other problems, such as mental health issues and addictions.

I am glad that Mandy gave a real example. In the example I was going to use the lady was also called Charlotte. Instead, I will tell you a little bit about Sarah, who was referred from the local homeless hostel where she was being temporarily housed. She was smart, well-spoken, in her mid-forties. She was a high-flying businesswoman who had recently been made redundant. Sarah seemed to have her life under control and so, when we initially met her, we did not think she really needed the sort of support that we provided. We soon realised that we were wrong. Sarah had been living with her current partner, also a high-flyer, for about 10 years in a very grand property. They holidayed well, skiing and cruising, but cracks had started to show in the relationship when Sarah found out that her

partner Harry had been serially unfaithful to her. When confronted with the evidence, he denied it and maintained that Sarah was paranoid, jealous and misinterpreting events. Eventually, when Sarah lost her job and had to go to Harry for money, he became violent. That is a very short story of a woman who found herself in a hostel with women from a very different class from her own.

Two years ago, income from central funds for our project, like many others in this country, was halved. Projects all over the country, which support women like these, do need our support and help but I would also encourage Synod to encourage people in your dioceses to give fairer financial support for projects like this work. Apart from supporting women, many projects like ours also speak to community groups, churches, schools and workplaces about the issue of domestic violence. I urge Synod members, having voted for this motion, to go home and challenge people in their areas to get involved, so that we can make a difference both financially and prayerfully to these people's lives, so that children, men and women are not at risk any more.

The Chair: I now call Miss Prudence Dailey to move her amendment formally.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): I beg to move as an amendment:

'Leave out "violence based on gender" and insert "sexual and domestic violence";

and

In paragraph (a), paragraph (c) and paragraph (d) *leave out "gender-based violence" and insert "sexual and domestic violence".'*

Mr Philip Fletcher: I shall invite Synod to resist this particular amendment. Why? Prudence Dailey is right that it goes both ways but the term 'gender-based violence' is an internationally accepted one for a whole range of behaviours, which includes sexual and domestic violence but goes well beyond that. It incorporates, for example, issues like female genital mutilation, honour-based violence and the appalling things that happen sometimes in relation to tribal and civil conflicts. If we were to limit the motion, it would take us away, I suggest, from the thrust of what has been said.

I would resist the assertion from Prudence that it is almost as much men who are affected by this as women. It simply is not. The evidence suggests – Mandy Marshall and I tried to set out some of it – this is overwhelmingly an issue of violence by men against women, and we ought to signal that. In addition, the term 'gender-based violence' is used throughout the Anglican Communion, so not to use it would put the Church of England out of step with other provinces as we seek to build a common response to a global problem.

The Chair: The floor is now open to debate this amendment.

The Chair imposed a three minute speech limit.

Mr Peter Collard (Derby): The reason I support this motion is that we are referring here specifically to what we do in our parishes, not to the global situation. I think it is a presentation issue. The people on whose actions we want to have an impact will bypass this; gender-based violence means nothing to them. If we want to have an impact in our

parishes and on the people we want to get through to, then I think that the amendment proposed by Prudence is a very sensible way to go.

Revd Canon Rosie Harper (Oxford): I would like to encourage Synod very strongly to resist what Prudence is proposing, on the basis of the international effect it will have. I do not think that we can isolate what is going on in this country from the gender-based violence that takes place around the world. I tried to research why the worst violence against women happens around the world. How can one human be doing this to another?

The results came out like this. There were three points. First, people would say, ‘God told us to do it.’ Second, they would say, ‘It is our culture and we resent outside interference.’ Third – grab this – ‘It is our way of maintaining a clear distinction between men and women. If you stop us, you are making men the same as women.’ We do need to understand all of these arguments, of course, but we cannot feel that, however sincere, they justify gross abuse of women’s bodies.

It would be sad if the excellent debate we have just had were to have no positive impact. The main positive impact Churches can have is in winning hearts and minds for a different way of seeing women and their God-given dignity, which transcends those three arguments, but we also have a moral obligation to speak out clearly and unequivocally when we see gender-based violence. I am glad to see that stated so clearly, and I hope that as a result of this report and debate the Church will indeed act on what it has theoretically supported and stand out far more bravely on these issues.

We undermine what is done locally when we are silent internationally and when what we say and what we do is not aligned. I would like to suggest that we make a start by openly condemning the brutal sexually and socially repressive legislation that is a hangover from the British Empire, such as we are finding in Uganda and Nigeria and, of course, Jamaica. This is not an issue where it is possible to sit on the fence. In the past, clergy used to tell abused women to stay with their abusive husbands because leaving their marriage would be even more wicked than man’s violence. We have now learnt that is wrong. I am with Bonhoeffer – ‘Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.’

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

Mrs Kathy Playle (Chelmsford): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘Leave out “a defilement” and insert “an abuse and violation”.’

Mr Philip Fletcher: I am a little torn on this amendment. The thrust of the motion is, as it was intended, nothing to do with the defilement of the person against whom the violence has been inflicted. If one reads the preamble, it is about the defilement of the image of God by his creation, by us. However, I do absolutely take Kathy Playle’s point that it might,

especially on a quick reading, be taken in the sense that she clearly felt it can bear. Therefore, I would invite Synod to accept her amendment, to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and carried.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph (c), *leave out* “boys and men” and *insert* “all people”.’

Mr Philip Fletcher: You will not be surprised to hear that I also ask Synod to reject this particular amendment. Of course it is true that all people should stand against gender-based violence, but there is a particular role for men and boys in promoting positive role models. I believe this is widely realised and there are good reasons for it. I refer to what several of us have said during this debate and Mandy Marshall’s presentation. It is a movement directed at the male sex, evidenced in initiatives like First Man Standing and the White Ribbon Campaign. Let us get on with it and not mess it up. I urge Synod to leave the motion unamended.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells): This may seem an obscure reference, but in the Industrial Revolution a lot of men and women worked very hard, particularly men. Men went to their workplace and came home in the evening very tired, and, as a result – I found this out only a couple of weeks ago – there was a build-up of entertainment facilities. Those entertainment facilities were known as ‘music hall’ and they became a potent education process for men at that time. It is very sad that we are still discussing gender-based violence well over 100 years later. I do not want anybody to sing this, because I think it would trivialise the matter, but remember the words ‘Two lovely black eyes’ because the final part of that chorus is, ‘...just for telling a man he was wrong’.

I think it is absolutely important for men to stand up to the fact that they are the major perpetrators – 89 per cent was the figure in the presentation we have just heard – and therefore it is vital that we keep the words ‘boys and men’ in this motion.

Revd Canon Kathryn Fitzsimons (Ripon and Leeds): I would encourage Synod not to support this amendment. About four years ago a young man came to see me. He was 23. As a child his mother had been a victim of violence in the home and he and his sister had witnessed many incidents. Following the divorce, he lived with his mum but he stayed in contact with his dad, visiting him regularly. At university he met a young woman whom he wanted to marry, but he had some concerns and needed to talk. The conversation went, ‘I’m quite a lot like my dad in my interests. I don’t support the way he treated my mum and I’ve told him so, but I’m really worried that I might be like my dad and end up hitting the woman I want to marry, because I do have a bit of a temper. How do I make sure I don’t?’

My heart went out to this young man. My instinct was that, have been able to articulate the fear, he would be okay, but it is vital to have positive role models and evident support for boys and men wanting to stand against gender-based violence.

Mr John Barber (Manchester): I was not planning to speak on this motion but, given the lack of support on this amendment, I believe I am called to. I have experience of domestic violence through a couple I know and whom I cared about dearly. It was not the average domestic violence that you are referring to here; it was two people who were violent against each other. Both were quite nasty in their relationship to each other, violent physically and mentally.

Domestic violence historically, as has been pointed out, is something that women suffer a great deal more than men do, but we are now starting to acknowledge that men suffer as well. We do not need to wait another 100 years to acknowledge this and to do something about it. I urge Synod to vote in favour of this amendment.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

The Chair: We resume the debate on the motion as amended.

Mrs Christina Rees (St Albans): I am very grateful to Philip Fletcher and the Mission and Public Affairs Council for bringing this to Synod. I am particularly grateful to have heard from Mandy Marshall. I know Mandy and she has been able to speak about only some of the amazing things she does for women, children and men caught up in gender-based violence in this country and around the world.

I would like to offer three practical actions that have come to the fore as I have read our papers. Two of them are contained in the papers and the third is inspired by what we have been sent. The first is to commend Restored’s Domestic Abuse Charter, which is in the back of their booklet. It can be photocopied or even cut out and stuck up. Every church, every Church school, every youth club and every Church-based initiative should have this hanging up somewhere. It would be so easy to do that. There are 10 fantastic points in it and I would like to read the second of them. ‘This Church... holds that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and irreconcilable with the Christian faith and a way of living.’ Paula referred to the theological undergirding of historic gender-based violence and this addresses it.

The second action is to have churches designate a day of action to end violence against women. Traditionally this has been 25 November. That is the day of the White Ribbon Campaign, which primarily engages with men and boys. It is an international campaign. The stories that could be told of what it has achieved around the world are incredible and we need to achieve more in this country. I would like that to happen. 25 November just

happens to be one month before Christmas, and Christmas and New Year's Eve are the two days in this country when gender-based violence spikes.

Last but not least I would like gender-based violence awareness training and sex and relationships education to be compulsory from primary age onwards, not only in Church schools but in all schools. I would like to think that our Church could be at the forefront of all Christian Churches in compelling the Government to do this. Only in that way can we break the cycle of gender-based violence.

The Archdeacon of Hackney (Ven. Rachel Treweek) (London): I, like many others, am hugely grateful that this Synod has taken the time to dare to name and look at the horrors of gender-based violence and to make a response in a number of different ways.

I wish to make a plea for us to try and do some more joined-up thinking across the many different agenda items we have from year to year. I would ask that we might spend some time together looking at what it means to be human.

The motion before us begins with the words 'That this Synod, believing that all people are made in the image of God....' Paragraph 9 on page 2 of GS 1933 says, 'The image of God requires us to recognize our origins in the Other and seek to be in mutually respectful and loving relationships with other people.' Easy words, but what do they mean in terms of the theological lens through which we look, the decisions we make, and how we see ourselves in others, both members of Christ's Body and those who do not know Christ? I suspect we could all feel that we are a bit too familiar now with those words 'trust', 'respect', 'grace' and 'flourishing' and yet these concepts are vital to life-giving human encounter in the light of our encounter with God.

This is complex stuff. Surely we need to spend time together revisiting the mysterious truths of what it means to be human? This is deeply relevant to many of our agenda items: ethical investment, safeguarding, women in the episcopate, caring for our planet. It must surely underpin our discussions about human sexuality, yet so often these subjects become a series of debates, unconnected, compartmentalized. I for one would love us as a Church, as a Synod, to do some work together on what it means to be human, created in the image of God; to live in a relationship with God and one another; to die and live with Christ. I believe that we need to grapple with this together, using our heads and our hearts, daring to be human together.

It is what we began to do recently in our facilitative group work. I believe that unless we do some theological work together, being together in our places of difference, looking each other in the eye as we wrestle with Scripture, listening to the life experience of others both near and far away, daring to share our own life stories with each other, we will go on scratching the surface of individual agenda items. We will go on hiding behind propositions and statements but so often without a primary commitment to seeing God in one another.

Yes I am encouraged that we are having these discussions today. This motion has my full support, but can we look together at what it means to be human, being made in the image of God?

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

Mr Philip Fletcher, in reply: It has been an encouraging debate, but let us not go away from it with any sense of complacency. Let us go away from it determined, as several speakers have said, to do something and not merely to carry the motion. I confess to the Synod and to my brothers and sisters that it is only very recently that I made the pledge and got my white ribbon. I urge the men here to think about that action as something that we can each do personally.

I want to thank all those who have spoken, including those who moved amendments. My thanks go very much to Paula Gooder, not just for helping us with our theological reflections but for being brave enough to share that horrible personal experience.

I thank Mark Ireland, who, fresh from the terrible business of the murder of Georgia Williams, has drawn our attention to Safer Internet Day tomorrow.

My thanks go to Prudence and to Kathy. We have already spoken about their amendments. Thanks to Mr Hart, for his emphasis on practical awareness. To Ruth Crossley, for the work that their organisation is doing locally and from which others of us can learn. To Peter Collard, for encouraging what we are doing, even though he was pro Prudence’s amendment, and to Rosie Harper in her arguments against. Thank you, Synod. We have a nice, clear motion to take us forward.

I need to talk to Tim Hind about which song we are singing. It was not male on male – or was it? ‘Two lovely black eyes’? Anyway, that is for later.

Kathryn Fitzsimons referred to the brave young man who was not going to be like his dad, but we all know how often families do take on family characteristics. It is one thing we can help others and ourselves to deal with.

Thanks to John Barber, and to Christina Rees for the practical actions that she emphasised, and finally to Rachel Treweek for pointing us forward.

I invite Synod to endorse this motion overwhelmingly.

The motion was put and carried in the following amended form:

‘That this Synod, believing that all people are made in the image of God and that all forms of violence based on gender represent an abuse and violation of that image:

- (a) affirm work already undertaken in dioceses, deaneries, parishes and Church of England schools in raising awareness and caring for survivors of gender-based violence in all our diverse communities;
- (b) support measures to bring perpetrators to account and provide support for

changed lifestyles;

(c) encourage boys and men to stand against gender-based violence; and

(d) commend Anglican Consultative Council Resolution 15.07 on preventing and eliminating gender-based violence to dioceses, deaneries and parishes and urge them to seek practical approaches to its implementation.’

The Chair: This has been an important debate on a serious and emotive topic. For that reason the Business Committee has exceptionally scheduled a period of worship to pray for all those affected by this issue.

Revd Canon Maggie McLean (Wakefield) led the Synod in prayer.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent)* took the Chair at 5.30 p.m.

The Chair: Synod will know that we have a custom and practice where there is a kind of rolling programme of who has their questions promoted to the top each time, and that rolls on between each Synod. It is a complete mystery to most people but it happens; it is not in Standing Orders. In this particular case, because there are a large number of questions relating to a particular see house in a particular western diocese, it has been felt right by the Church Commissioners and by the rest of us to bring them to the front of the Agenda, and we will therefore do that. Questions 1-8 are therefore in relation to Bath and Wells and its see house.

Questions

Questions asked in accordance with SO 105-109 were answered as follows, those for written answer being marked with an asterisk.

Questions Re Bath and Wells See House

1. *Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given that Bishop Peter Price announced on 5 November 2012 his intention to retire in June 2013 and the local outcry regarding the announcement that the new Bishop will not be housed in the Bishop’s Palace in Wells, what is the Board of Governors doing to ensure that in future any such announcements are not made merely 12 days before the good news of the appointment of a new Bishop?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner (Mr Andrew Mackie, ex officio) replied: The Commissioners always review the suitability of see houses during a vacancy in see and the recent review of the Palace at Wells was no different. The matter was considered by the Bishoprics and Cathedrals Committee and went before the Board on 28 November last year. I agree with Mr Hind about the good news of Bishop Hancock’s appointment and the Commissioners have done all they can to avoid his arrival being overshadowed by this decision. There was certainly no intention to overshadow and, if this has happened, we do of course regret it.

Mr Tim Hind: On the charitable assumption that the negative consequences of the announcement were not anticipated and in the light of the significant local opposition, what positive steps are the Commissioners now taking to review their decisions and processes in order to help repair the reputational damage caused to the Church of England in the diocese of Bath and Wells, and will they now consider a moratorium on the implementation of their plans to allow for some proper consultation to take place?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner: I cannot of course prejudge exactly what the Board will or will not do. I can say that this decision was taken after a long period of thought and discussion in each of the Bishops and Cathedrals Committee and the Board itself. It is not, as I say, for me to prejudge what the Board might or might not decide but I note that thoroughness. I note also that, as the Second Church Estates Commissioner said in Wells a couple of weeks ago, the decision was taken by a Board that is representative of the Church as a whole.

2. *Revd Mark Steadman (Southwark)* asked the Church Commissioners: In the light of public and media concern, will the Commissioners publish the minutes of the Bishops and Cathedrals Committee and the Board meetings at which discussions about the Bishop's residence in Wells took place, so that the reasons behind their decisions can be made clear?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner replied: The answer is no. The minutes and working papers of the Commissioners' Board and all its committees are internal, confidential documents.

Revd Mark Steadman: Given the general expectation that bodies such as the Commissioners will discharge their responsibilities with openness and transparency, and given that this is not the first memorable example of such a debacle – I refer of course to Octavia Hill – will the Third Church Estates Commissioner ask the Board of the Commissioners to commit itself to publishing a process of consultation and appeal to assist it in making decisions of this sort, perhaps using the Pastoral Measure processes, which in other circumstances they are highly supportive of, as a model?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner: I do not recognize the description of recent events as a 'debacle'. As I have said, it is not for me to prejudge what the Board will and will not consider. Any responsible organisation – we are one, and we are certainly part of a wider such one – will consider its processes from time to time. However, I would like to note that we are in many respects an extremely transparent organisation. We welcome the opportunity to answer questions on this topic tonight; we are pleased that the Chair has kindly agreed to bring these questions to the position they currently hold; we publish an annual report and regularly hold fringe meetings and receptions with parliamentarians and others. Lastly, the Second Church Estates Commissioner went to Wells two weeks ago.

3. *The Archdeacon of Bath (Ven. Andrew Piggott)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given that the Church Commissioners' statement concerning where the next Bishop of Bath and Wells would live refers to their decision enabling the bishop 'to carry out his ministry and mission in a more sustainable way' and enabling him to 'live in more privacy', could they please:

- explain what they meant by 'more sustainable' and how the sustainability of the palace accommodation was assessed;

- confirm that in making their decision they carefully considered its potential impact on the mission and ministry of the newly appointed Bishop of Bath and Wells; and
- state whether any other factors apart from the two mentioned in the statement played any part in their thinking?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner replied: Given the nature of the Commissioners' responsibilities, it will come as no surprise that a number of factors came into the Commissioners' thinking on these difficult matters. But I do wish to stress that the impact on the mission and ministry of the new bishop to the whole diocese is always our primary focus. The Commissioners' statement about the sustainability of his ongoing ministry reflects concern about the lack of privacy were he to live in the middle of a visitor attraction, and the distraction perhaps of finding himself under some pressure to oversee its operation, as the previous Bishop very capably did. It is important to note that lack of privacy has these two important elements.

The Archdeacon of Bath: As a point of information, the previous Bishop of Bath and Wells did not oversee the visitor attraction; it has a chief executive and staff and a board of trustees.

My supplementary question is this. You have told us that other factors did influence the Church Commissioners' thinking apart from sustainability – which sounds to me very much like privacy – and mission. Would you please tell us what they were?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner: The factors that were uppermost in the Commissioners' mind were those factors that affect the ability of the bishop to carry out his ministry in the way that he wishes to carry it out, and not being restricted in advance by any particular constraints. Therefore, the key items were that it would be unfortunate were he to find himself in the middle of a busy tourist attraction. I should add there that circumstances have changed in the last few years. The Trust has recently had, in terms of tourist numbers – although I know it is finalizing its financial numbers – a good year. There are more and more tourists and events taking place in the Palace, and we thought that possible constraint on the bishop's privacy was a real one.

The second issue – I am grateful for the correction and I apologize if I have mis-described, as I understand it, the none the less prominent role carried out by the last bishop – is the one I mentioned earlier, which is that the bishop needs not to be distracted by the expectation that he will be overly involved in the running of the Palace.

4. *Revd Prebendary Stephen Lynas (Bath and Wells)* asked the Church Commissioners: Will the Church Commissioners set out the criteria (including financial matters) they use for housing a Diocesan Bishop; and explain in what ways the present four-bedroom Bishop's apartment within the Bishop's Palace at Wells falls short of those criteria?

5. *Christina Baron (Bath and Wells)* asked the Church Commissioners: What are the criteria used by the Bishops and Cathedrals Committee for determining the suitability of accommodation for diocesan bishops and by which specific criterion/criteria was the existing four-bedroom apartment in the Bishop's Palace at Wells judged to be unsuitable?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner replied: With permission, I will answer this question and the question from Ms Christina Baron together. The main criteria used are

availability and usability of appropriate bed, hospitality, ancillary and other rooms, affordability, and privacy. The apartment in the Palace does not have a guest suite and is cut off from the garden. The apartment is also insufficiently private, being located in a busy visitor attraction, and the most crucial factor in the decision was the desire to enhance the ministry of the bishop by freeing him from these distractions.

Revd Prebendary Stephen Lynas: Again, a factual correction, if I may, Chair. Contrary to that answer, the existing apartment does have a guest suite. There are four bedrooms and an associated bathroom, which are for the use of visitors.

However, to my supplementary. With respect, the Commissioner has not answered the question. He has listed the criteria which the Commissioners may use but has not said what is wrong with the existing bedrooms, hospitality suite, ancillary and other rooms, including hospitality spaces, which are second-to-none in the whole of Somerset, and he certainly has not said anything about affordability. What is the point of leaving an empty apartment and then spending a lot of money on temporary and other houses?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner: Perhaps I can take those aspects of the question in order. I would not dream of contradicting the idea that hospitality is or is not the best in Somerset; I merely pointed out that hospitality rooms are one of the criteria that are used. It does remain the fact that the Palace is cut off from the garden. The criteria that we were particularly interested in, though, in relation to the apartment in the Palace were not financial; they were, as I have said, privacy and there were two aspects to that privacy that I have already mentioned.

As to the point that is made about the apartment and the use to which it might be put, I completely understand the point that is being made about the fact that the apartment is not generating income at the moment; but, as and when a decision has been made on that, that may change.

Mr Peter Haddock (Southwark): Given the exchange of questions between the former bishop's chaplain and the Third Church Estates Commissioner, does not this emphasize the need for greater transparency from the Church Commissioners, given the earlier question from my colleague Revd Mark Steadman in terms of papers? We are getting information that seems germane to the issue in hand, which is now being elicited by pointed questions and which seems remarkably relevant.

The Third Church Estates Commissioner: I am very pleased that my answers are being regarded as relevant. As to the point about transparency, as I pointed out, we are in a lot of respects a very transparent organisation; but I also said, and I repeat, that any responsible organisation should continually be looking at the level of its transparency. We are no exception to that.

As to the particular point that I think is being alluded to, about the privacy of the minutes and details of meetings, I think that it would be wrong retrospectively to change the basis of the meetings that have been attended by those who attended them. They attended them not on the basis that they were public meetings.

Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield): Would the Third Church Estates Commissioner not agree that the primary fiduciary responsibility of the Church Commissioners is not actually the

upkeep of historic houses but the additional provision for the cure of souls in places where it is most needed?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner: Of course our mission is to direct resources to areas of greatest need, but it is also an important part of our role to act as good stewards of the see houses – and that we endeavour to do.

6. *Revd Prebendary Stephen Lynas (Bath and Wells)* asked the Church Commissioners: At the public meeting held in Wells on 25 January, the Second Church Estates Commissioner repeatedly told an animated roomful of people that the Commissioners' decision to move the incoming Bishop's residence from the apartment in the Bishop's Palace to another house 'would not be reconsidered'. He also repeatedly said 'I will take your concerns back to the Board of Governors'. If his first statement is correct, how will the Board deal with the second one?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner replied: The Second Church Estates Commissioner actually said that it would be disingenuous of him to promise the public meeting that the Board would change its mind. That is not inconsistent with his making a report to the Board, which he will do later this month. He was pleased to attend this public meeting and welcomed the opportunity to engage with local people.

Revd Prebendary Stephen Lynas: Sir Tony's engagement with the great British public in Wells was not a huge success, as he himself might say if he were here, but the point is why was this conversation and engagement with local people, as it has been described, not done before decisions were taken, rather than his having to face a baying mob after the decision was taken?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner: I cannot comment on what the Second Church Estates Commissioner might or might not say about the meeting. I can say that I think it was important that he went down to Wells when he did.

On the process and the question you raise, the review of the Palace was carried out at a time that is entirely consistent with other reviews of this nature. It was carried out during a vacancy in see, at a time that is thought to be the least disruptive; but the time allowable for making decisions and for the Committee and the Board, as well as some consultations with senior diocesan staff, is not infinite. We think that we used it as efficiently as we could have done, although of course there are always points of detail that we might have looked at in a different way.

Mrs Jenny Humphreys (Bath and Wells): I would ask the Third Church Estates Commissioner if he could foresee, in theory if you like, any possibility that the Church Commissioners could ever say that perhaps the decision was wrong and ought to be thought about again, particularly in the light of the reputation of the Church of England as a whole?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner: I do not think that any organisation – and I certainly do not think that we are an exception to this – should ever say that there is no possibility of its having made a wrong decision. We took a decision extremely carefully. It went through a committee; it went through the Board. It happened after two meetings of consultation with the senior diocesan staff. It was a careful and diligently carried through decision. As to what the Board may or may not do in the future, it is not for me to judge.

7. *The Archdeacon of Bath (Ven. Andrew Piggott)* asked the Church Commissioners: What are the expected financial implications for the Commissioners of the decision to
- i) empty the existing Bishop's apartment in the Bishop's Palace;
 - ii) buy a temporary house outside Wells; and
 - iii) to then buy a permanent house in Wells?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner replied: Now that the purchase is completed and commercial sensitivity no longer applies, I can confirm that the temporary house was purchased for £870,000. In the light of local criticism about this purchase following the diocese's sale of the house for £750,000, it is worth noting that the sale was seven years ago, since when the property has been substantially enhanced. No decision has yet been made about the use of the bishop's apartment. One option might be to let it, but no decision has yet been made. As the permanent see house has not yet been identified, clearly I cannot give a purchase price for that.

The Archdeacon of Bath: I am very grateful to the Third Church Estates Commissioner for graciously giving us his answers and was very relieved to hear from him earlier, in answer to my question and that of Mark Ireland, that mission and ministry are really important. But these questions are about finance, so my supplementary is this. Do the Church Commissioners consider that it is good value for money, wise stewardship and prudent financial planning for the future to have a perfectly good flat – at least in the opinion of the bishop's staff, many of whom are local people – lying empty, to spend almost £900,000 on what the Church Commissioners say will be a temporary home and, given what the Third Church Estates Commissioner said in response to the last part of my question, seemingly no idea at all what a permanent house will cost?

The Third Church Estates Commissioner: There are several aspects to that question which I can perhaps answer. As to the last, I do not think that I said we had no idea what it might cost; I said that I cannot give a purchase price. I think the two things are different.

As to the use of the money, this is not revenue expenditure; it is an investment. This is not £870,000 that has been frittered away, never to return, which could be used on other things. This is an investment that has involved the swapping of one asset, cash, for another asset, a house. No investment decision is ever free of risk and, in relation to this decision, it is absolutely true that we are exposed to the possibility of a downturn in the world's residential property market. We hope that downturn will not happen, and it may even be that some of the objectors to our decision might share that hope.

8. *Miss Fay Wilson-Rudd (Bath and Wells)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What procedures are in place for the wider Church to review decisions made by the Church Commissioners when those decisions give rise to complaints from a diocese that is affected or from organisations in the wider community that object?

Ven. Christine Hardman (Southwark) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In general, there are no procedures for other Church bodies to review decisions of the Commissioners, or indeed the Pensions Board, the Archbishops' Council or diocesan boards of finance, since all are autonomous bodies responsible in law for their own decisions. However, an exception arises where the Commissioners are the 'housing provider' for a bishop holding office on common tenure. The bishop's council has

a right to object, to the Archbishops' Council, to the proposed acquisition of a particular new 'house of residence' for the bishop. The council will hear the objection and consider all relevant circumstances in deciding whether to uphold or reject it. Additionally, Church bodies sometimes have rights to be consulted by the Commissioners. For example, under the Episcopal Endowments and Stipends Measure 1943, the DAC has the right to be consulted about some proposed dealings with a see house which has been declared to be unsuitable.

Miss Fay Wilson-Rudd: The Archbishops' Council will be aware of the huge furore that this matter has generated. In the light of that, will they give consideration to proposals that would encourage the Church Commissioners to be more transparent and accountable?

Ven. Christine Hardman: I cannot answer for the Archbishops' Council on the particular question you raise but what I can say is that the Archbishops' Council has a duty to consider any objection made by the bishop's council – or, if the see is full, the bishop – to the provision of a new permanent residence for the bishop.

House of Bishops

9. *The Dean of Portsmouth (Very Revd. David Brindley)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House discussed the Theos report *Spiritual Capital* which analyzes the mission of Cathedrals in the 21st century?

The Bishop of Wakefield (Rt Revd Stephen Platten) replied on behalf of the Chair: This was a very useful and timely report, though the House of Bishops has not had an opportunity to consider it collectively. Some similar and equally useful points have been made in the Spending Task Group's report *From Anecdote to Evidence*, and I cannot resist putting in a plug for our own cathedral, which gets a very good page.

The Dean of Portsmouth: Is the bishop aware that at a fringe meeting on Wednesday lunchtime there will be a presentation of the findings of *Spiritual Capital*, examples of cathedral growth and fresh expressions, and would he recommend that event to his colleagues?

The Bishop of Wakefield: Of course he was aware of the event, and was most impressed by the ability to turn this into an advertisement!

10. *Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has an assessment been made of any implications of the appointment of Revd Dr Tory Baucum as one of Canterbury Cathedral's Six Preachers from the point of view of the relationship between the Church of England and ACNA (with which the Church of England is not currently in communion)?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby): Careful thought and assessment has certainly been given to the appointment of Dr Tory Baucum from the point of view of the relationship between the Church of England and ACNA, also the relationship with the Episcopal Church, with which of course the Church of England is in communion, and for that matter the relationship with the Anglican Church of Canada, which feels implicated in this, and also a number of other Churches around the Communion, particularly in the group known as the Global South.

An invitation to be a Six Preacher is a personal appointment of the Archbishop and has no implications in itself as to ecclesial relationships. However, this particular appointment is of a person who has a distinguished ministry in reconciliation, which he exercises carefully in his context. There was consultation with a number of people and the appointment has been enthusiastically welcomed by the local bishop of the Episcopal Church, Shannon Johnston, Bishop of Virginia.

Revd Canon Giles Goddard: I thank the Archbishop for his reply to my question. Could he say what steps have been taken to ensure that this appointment is not taken to mean that clergy ordained in this country by overseas bishops without the permission of the diocesan are nevertheless recognized in the Church of England?

The Archbishop of Canterbury: Thank you. I am straying slightly onto thin ice here! It is true that permission would be needed to be given under the 1967 Measure, which is presumably what you are thinking about, in order for Tory to preach here; but it will not be breaking new ground because, Tory having been ordained in the Episcopal Church, the permission can be given under section 1 of the Measure. That is on the basis that he has been ordained by a bishop of a Church in communion with the Church of England. It will not therefore be based upon the recognition and acceptance of the orders conferred by the ACNA.

11. *Revd Prebendary Stephen Coles (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House had any discussion of the extent to which the Primates of the Anglican Communion are complying with the communiqué which they themselves agreed at their meeting in Dromantine in February 2005, in which they stated that ‘We continue unreservedly to be committed to the pastoral support and care of homosexual people’?

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu) replied: Before I answer the question, with the Chair’s permission and on behalf of us all, I want to express sadness that Prebendary Stephen Coles is bruised after a nasty fall. We pray for you that you get better.

It is not for the Church of England’s House of Bishops to monitor the observance by other provinces of commitments made by the Primates of the Anglican Communion. What we have to recognize – including for ourselves – is the risk that the particular cultural context in which a province finds itself can lead to one part of a carefully balanced Communion statement being emphasized at the expense of another. In the light of new legislation in several countries that seeks to penalize people with same-sex attraction, the Archbishop of Canterbury and I issued a letter to Primates of the Anglican Communion on 29 January, recalling the commitment given on behalf of all the provinces at Dromantine in 2005.

Revd Prebendary Stephen Coles: Thank you for your sympathy, Archbishop. I was grateful to learn of the letter that you and the Archbishop of Canterbury sent to the Primates of the Communion on the day by which Questions had to be submitted. My supplementary, therefore, is simply to ask the Archbishop of York what response he and/or the Archbishop of Canterbury have had to their letter, as I have heard a report that some people are suggesting that the letter reveals the extent to which our Archbishops are putty in the hands of people like me.

The Chair: That is an interesting question but it is probably not one that requires an answer, because there is an imputation involved in it. The Archbishop has liberty not to answer, unless he wants to.

The Archbishop of York: Not officially answering our letter, they have gone global. I do not actually have a copy of the one from Uganda. Nigeria – a similar response; and other Primates. The Archbishop of Canterbury has an opportunity this weekend to go to the Global South Primates' Meeting in Cairo and I think that there will be face-to-face conversation. As I said, depending on the context, people can pick out of a fairly balanced, worked-out communiqué bits that suit them and they will emphasize them.

Take for example Lambeth 1.10 – people pick up the first bit of it but actually, if you read Lambeth 1.10 carefully, it is what I call an agreement in complete disunity. In the end it is unanimously disagreeing, on the one hand and on the other, and people pick up the bit that suits them. In all of this I am still committed to the fact that diminishing any people is anathema, particularly people with same-sex attraction. It is anathema to the gospel; it is anathema to Christ; it is anathema to everybody. We, as a Communion, have actually said so; but it is difficult to enforce it. Of course, in England we did not actually accept the Anglican Covenant, which had a chance – a chance – of ensuring that nobody simply disregarded either the positive bits of it or the negative bits of it.

I have just come back from Kenya and there have been similar conversations. All I can say is that out there some people mischievously report what we have not said, but I take comfort that even Jesus was often misunderstood.

12. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: With regard to the College of Bishops' request to the Archbishops to commission the design of (i) a process for facilitated conversations on the subject of sexuality, involving profound reflection on the interpretation and application of Scripture, and (ii) additional materials to support and enable them, will the Chair of the House of Bishops give assurances that the design will ensure that:

- the process will not be a 'one-way street' intended at the outset to lead to a change in the church's teaching or pastoral practice concerning sexuality or marriage;
- the primary purpose of the conversations will be to enable participants' views to be clearly articulated, heard and understood, rather than to change participants' views;
- the conversations will be professionally facilitated in a way which does not steer them to any particular conclusion;
- the conversations will not be premised on the proposition that scripture is not clear about these matters; and
- participants who believe that scripture clearly teaches that having sexual relationships, otherwise than within the marriage covenant between one man and one woman, is not consistent with Christian discipleship will be free fully to articulate and explain that view?

13. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Why, in the light of the statement on the Pilling report by the College of Bishops (issued 27 January 2014), which emphasizes upholding the Church of England's commitment to biblical orthodoxy on God's purpose for sexual expression (within marriage between one man and one woman), is a two-year process of facilitated conversation taking place, if such a process is not intended to change the orthodoxy?

14. *Revd John Cook (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the College of Bishops' request to the Archbishops to commission the design of a process for facilitated conversation on sexuality, can the Chair of the House of Bishops give an assurance that the process and additional materials will focus first on Scripture and its perspicuity, so that experience and culture are responded to in the light of a clear understanding of Scripture?

The Bishop of Sheffield (Rt Revd Steven Croft) replied on behalf of the Chair: I shall, with permission, answer this and the related questions from John Cook and Andrea Minichiello Williams together.

The *Church Times*' headline – 'Pilling Report – Bishops Accept Recommendations' – would have been less inaccurate if it had said 'accept recommendation [singular] for facilitated conversations'.

There is no predetermined outcome to these conversations nor is there any intention on the part of the bishops collectively to steer them to a particular conclusion. In our statement of 27 January the one aspiration we articulated was for 'good disagreement that testifies to our love for one another across the Church in obedience to Christ'. The statement made clear that the Church of England's 'pastoral and liturgical practice remains unchanged during this process of facilitated conversation' and that 'no change to the Church of England's teaching on marriage is proposed or envisaged'. It also stresses that our task in taking counsel together is 'to read and reflect upon the Scriptures and to continue to discern together the mind of Christ'.

What is the point of all this reflection and conversation, some ask, if Scripture is clear and the truth unchanging and unchangeable? The answer is that the substantial shift in attitudes in society to same-sex relationships inevitably raises significant questions for the Church of England. In every generation the Church is called to proclaim the faith afresh, not refashioning it but nevertheless wrestling with the interpretation and application of Scripture as the Spirit who inspired it continues to lead us into all truth.

Mr Clive Scowen: May I take it therefore that the answer to each of the five points of my question is Yes?

The Bishop of Sheffield: I would refer Mr Scowen to the answer I have already given, if I may. I think it is fair to say that there was some wrestling in the College of Bishops' meeting about whether we should use the term 'facilitated conversations' for the process we have in mind and which we agreed to take forward, partly because, it was pointed out within the conversation, the only experience we have had corporately of facilitated conversations is of a process that is designed to lead to a particular outcome and set of conclusions. However, the counter-argument was that the term is the one used by the Pilling process and the Pilling report; we could not easily think of a better substitute for it. However, we did

want to find a way to communicate clearly that no two sets of facilitated conversations are exactly the same and that this set is not designed to lead to a premeditated, already-determined conclusion.

Revd Professor Richard Burridge (University of London): I have a supplementary to Question 12 and a supplementary to Question 14. Since you gave the Bishop of Sheffield permission to answer them together, Chair, perhaps you will give me permission to ask both supplementaries together as a question.

While welcoming the College of Bishops' request to design this process involving profound reflection on the interpretation and application of Scripture (Question 12), will the Chair of the House of Bishops or the Bishop of Sheffield on his behalf give us assurances that biblical scholars might be invited to participate in that, given that the Pilling report did not invite any biblical scholars, professionally recognized or teaching in universities, to contribute to the report, instead preferring to talk to theologians and ethicists?

In terms of Question 14, with the stress on perspicuity and clear understanding, would it also suggest that those of us who have given our lives to understanding hermeneutics and the words 'perspicuity' and 'clear' might also offer our services in producing this material, so that we can work together on understanding Scripture?

The Chair: I will assume that that is one supplementary – but be careful, Professor Burridge!

The Bishop of Sheffield: The College tasked the Archbishops with commissioning this process. Canon David Porter will be involved in it. Beyond that, as far as I know, no decisions have been taken about how the process will be taken forward. Personally, I would hope that both biblical scholars and those who have given their lives to the study of hermeneutics would be closely involved, and I am sure that the Archbishops will have taken note of the question.

15. *Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has consideration been given to the implications for the Church of England of the coming into force in March 2014 of the legislation allowing same-sex marriages, including from the point of view of the status of such marriages?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied on behalf of the Chair: The College of Bishops, House of Bishops and the House of Bishops' Standing Committee have all given initial consideration to this. The House of Bishops will be meeting again very shortly, with a view to agreeing a pastoral statement before the legislation comes into force next month.

Revd Canon Giles Goddard: Thank you for your reply, Bishop. I think that the issues are a bit wider than pastoral, though. Can you say what steps are being taken to enable the House of Bishops to respond to those clergy who marry or convert their civil partnerships under the equal marriage Act? I am thinking particularly about pension entitlements and appointments.

The Bishop of Sheffield: I note the points but I do not intend to get drawn into confirming or denying or speculating on the content of the statement until the House of Bishops has issued the document.

16. *Revd Mark Steadman (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of the Association of Christian Counsellors' recent decision on ethical grounds and 'in the interests of public safety' to ask its members not to use reparative or conversion therapies, has the House of Bishops considered issuing guidance to the clergy to address the safeguarding issues that may arise from encouraging someone to engage in such therapy?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied on behalf of the Chair: There is a helpful, though brief, survey of the controversy about these therapies at paragraphs 214- 219 of the Pilling report. It notes that 'arguments about efficacy have been clouded by deeper differences over legitimacy'. This is not a subject on which the House of Bishops has plans to issue guidance.

Revd Mark Steadman: In the absence of such guidance, what reassurance can the House of Bishops offer clergy in terms of possible action under the Clergy Discipline Measure if an individual, having undergone conversion therapy following the encouragement of a member of the clergy, feels themselves to have been damaged and complains?

The Bishop of Sheffield: It is not something on which I feel qualified to answer at the present moment, but I note the question and will take it back for further reflection and response.

17. *Revd Canon Dr Hazel Whitehead (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops considered what action it will take should any Theological Education Institution (TEI), which has not been granted exemption through the proper Ministry Division channels, declare that they are not willing to work with Common Awards and the University of Durham but will continue with their own validation process through a different university?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied on behalf of the Chair: 'Not as yet' is the answer. The Ministry Division has been much encouraged by the participation of Theological Education Institutions in the creation of the Common Awards and the building of partnership with Durham University. It continues to work with them to bring about the participation of all in the Common Awards.

Revd Canon Dr Hazel Whitehead: When the House of Bishops does consider this further, will it consider whether it is being consistent in allowing Vote 1 budget money as approved by this General Synod to be used to pay for the training of ordinands at institutions that may have exempted themselves from Common Awards, despite Common Awards being supported unanimously by this same General Synod?

The Bishop of Sheffield: I am sure the House will give due consideration to that. However, it is worth noting that, in the initial report which the Synod approved and which led to the setting up of the Common Awards, it was clear that institutions that did not proceed with validation through the Common Awards would not have the university validation fees paid for them, but there was no reference made to tuition and other fees at that point.

18. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of a recent public showing in a cathedral of the Martin Scorsese film *The Last Temptation of Christ* (which contains material graphically showing Jesus succumbing to temptation and involved in an explicitly sexual act with Mary Magdalene), has the House given any advice as to the application of the requirement of Canon F 16.1 that the words, music and pictures involved in any plays, concerts or exhibitions of films and pictures in churches ‘are such as befit the House of God, are consonant with sound doctrine, and make for the edifying of the people’?

The Bishop of Chelmsford replied on behalf of the Chair: I think that I have been asked to answer this one. I think that I am the one bishop who has seen the film! Not one of Martin Scorsese’s best films, but if Synod wants to know my view on the best ones, we can talk in the bar on some other occasion.

The specific answer to the question is No. But, if we were to do so I am sure that we would want to lay emphasis on the potential that serious art, theatre, music, poetry and cinema have for provoking reflection on the big issues around the meaning of life and of God’s purposes for his world. St Paul says that ‘to the pure all things are pure’. While it is hard to say this of such a challenging film, its intentions, as with the book it is based upon, are to make us think deeply about Jesus’s own vocation and the ultimate purity of his intentions.

Revd Prebendary Stephen Lynas (Bath and Wells): I apologize for mentioning Wells, but that is the unnamed cathedral. Would the bishop agree that to get 200 people into a cathedral watching a film and to follow that with a serious discussion about the nature of the divinity and humanity of Christ is actually quite a good bit of mission?

The Bishop of Chelmsford: Yes. I wonder if you should have shown it in the Palace. It might have provided another reason for... – (*laughter*) – but that aside, I do find it hard to imagine that any Christian could watch this film without being really challenged, provoked and disturbed. For those who have not seen it, it is wise to know that the title of the film, *The Last Temptation*, refers to the temptation of Jesus coming down from the Cross and essentially leading an ordinary life. At the end of the film, as with the novel upon which it is based, Jesus returns to the Cross and climbs back on again. It is shocking for Christians to watch this film but it is a deeply serious film, which raises some of the most profound questions about Jesus’s own wrestling with his own vocation. So, yes, I would agree: shown in the right way it could be a profound piece of evangelism.

19. *Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of the fact that church growth is one of the three Quinquennial Goals, and of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s recent statement that ‘Where you have a good vicar, you will find growing churches’, has the House given any consideration to the link between the skills of clergy and church growth and how to encourage clergy whose churches are not growing?

The Bishop of Chelmsford replied on behalf of the Chair: The Quinquennial Goal speaks of numerical and spiritual growth. You are unlikely to find a church that is growing in either sense without a good vicar, though there are vicars in very tough situations who are doing a good job just by slowing the rate of decline, faithfully preaching the gospel and sowing the seed in the face of what may seem quite meagre harvests. It is important that we recognize that in some of the very tough parishes in which we minister.

We shall not secure either form of growth by a league table approach. There is no magic formula, to be bottled and passed on. If there were, we would have found it. But there are things we can learn about how best we organise for growth, which is why the recent research emerging from the Spending Plans Task Group is important. Learning more about how new and more traditional forms of Church can promote growth by drawing on a wide range of styles, skills, abilities and traditions remains a priority.

Revd Dr Patrick Richmond: Some vicars I know personally were greatly dismayed by the possible negative implication that, because their churches were not growing at the time of the broadcast of the *Today* programme, they were therefore not good vicars. I hope that they will be encouraged by this answer, as it comes with the authority of the House of Bishops.

As we heard in the debate on the business agenda, one of the things the recent research suggests ---

The Chair: I am looking for a question, please.

Revd Dr Patrick Richmond: It is coming. I have got a minute.

The Chair: No you have not!

Revd Dr Patrick Richmond: ...is that agglomeration of parishes is associated with numerical decline. Does the House of Bishops have plans to discuss this, as it seems to have immense implications for diocesan organisation and strategy for growth?

The Bishop of Chelmsford: Speaking as one who serves a diocese where we have a huge diversity of context in which we serve, I want to underline the fact that we are very well aware that there are many clergy doing a brilliant job but who may not be experiencing growth in their parish.

With regard to amalgamations, which came up earlier in the Business Committee debate, we really need to drill down beneath that research. The fact is we are where we are. The headline to that research sounded to me a bit like, 'We did some research on the Premier League. We discovered that if you have a rich Russian oligarch with pots of money, you are more likely to win the Premiership. If you haven't, you won't.' It is stating the obvious. The fact is that many of our parishes are amalgamated and some of them are in decline. What we need to do is find out why that is happening and how we can turn that into growth wherever possible.

I would finish by saying that it takes more than a good priest to grow a church, though one bad one will soon empty it.

20. *Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In view of the fact that the Church is God's vehicle for carrying the Christian faith from generation to generation, what steps are planned to ensure that this is achieved, bearing in mind the very disappointing findings among under-30s shown in recent surveys from David Voas and Linda Woodhead?

The Bishop of Chelmsford replied on behalf of the Chair: The Church Growth Research Project, led by the Church Commissioners, found that 41 per cent of all those attending

Fresh Expressions were under 16 years-old. MPA are partnering with HOPE in running 38 mission academies in England, releasing gifts and skills in young people in mission and evangelism to enable them to reach their peers. MPA work with Fresh Expressions, hosting the Young Adults' Round Table, which commissioned research into the reaching and keeping of young adults in the Church. The Round Table is now working on the implementation of the research's recommendations. In the light of David Voas's research, the Education Division in partnership with MPA, funded by the Church Commissioners, is embarking on further research into what keeps children in Church through their teenage years and into adulthood.

Mr Gavin Oldham: Thank you for that reply, but would the bishop accept that there is a role for population-centred research in addition to Church education and event-centred research in order to evaluate young people's attitudes to faith and the Church and the scale of the challenge before us?

The Bishop of Chelmsford: If I knew what event-centred research was I might ---

Mr Gavin Oldham: We are talking about the wider population, including the unchurched.

The Bishop Chelmsford: I see. Yes I am sure that would be a good idea. We need to make sure that what we do is research-based wherever possible. We certainly need to listen to the voice of those who are not part of the Church as well as those who are part of it. Clearly, for all of us going forward, communicating the gospel to children and young people, listening to them, working with them and empowering them, must be one of our first priorities.

Secretary General

21. *Dr Edmund Marshall (St Albans)* asked the Secretary General: What advice is currently offered by the National Church Institutions to Parochial Church Councils who have registered the right to enforce Chancel Repair Liability?

The Secretary General (Mr William Fittall) replied: The Legal Advisory Commission has offered generic advice on the legal duties of PCCs, both in relation to the registration of chancel repair liability and its enforcement once registered. The Legal Office also assisted the Charity Commission in an advice note for PCCs. That points out that, 'Where a chancel repair liability exists, the right to enforce that liability is an asset of the PCC which must be appropriately managed. This does not mean that it has to be enforced in every case.' In addition, the Church Commissioners' Pastoral Division is happy to respond to informal guidance to PCCs on chancel repair liability generally, including on how to establish and register the liability.

Dr Edmund Marshall: As the adverse publicity surrounding many instances of the enforcement of chancel repair liability affects the whole Church of England, is it possible for this liability to be abolished nationally, with or without new legislation?

The Secretary General: It would take legislation to abolish it and our consistent line in discussions with Government over many years has been that we would not be opposed to abolition, provided that, in the same way as happened when tithe was abolished in the 1930s, there was some suitable financial compensation package for the Church of England, given its substantial responsibility for heritage buildings. There has not been much

enthusiasm about the financial package. In fact, large numbers of PCCs have managed this very sensibly. However, we will continue to look at ways of giving advice, not least because of the change in law that came into force in October with the new regime about registration.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): Has any advice been given in cases where wealthy institutions that have previously accepted their chancel liability are now refusing to pay up, on the grounds that the PCC will not have the financial resources to defend the case against the large financial resources of the institution?

The Secretary General: I was not aware of any such cases and, if the questioner or anybody else has information about particular cases, it would be very helpful to have that. It is one of the cases for this liability that it does fall on a number of rather well-resourced institutions, which up to now have continued to pay and indeed still have the legal obligation to pay.

Board of Education

22. *Mr Robin Hall (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Board of Education: Will the materials to tackle homophobic bullying in Church of England schools be available in time for the beginning of the 2014-15 school year in September?

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd John Pritchard) replied: Yes, all being well. The timetable is for trials to be completed in early summer and the guidance materials will be made available to schools as soon as possible.

Mr Robin Hall: That is welcome news, although I note that you say ‘all being well’. Could we be reassured that sufficient contingency has been built into the process to allow for any changes based on the feedback from the pilot schools to be factored in and for the material still to be available come September of this year?

The Bishop of Oxford: Yes I thought that I emphasized ‘all being well’ a bit too much. Actually, I do not see any reason why there is any hesitation in saying that we have a timetable, we have a pilot scheme, we will learn from that and we will implement in the autumn. I cannot see any real reason why that should not be met.

Mr Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): Will these materials be available online, to enable all schools and not just Church schools to benefit from them?

The Bishop of Oxford: They will certainly be available for all schools, and I assume that means they will be online. That is the simplest way of getting them to any school that will find them useful – and I hope many will, because we will have done a good piece of work.

23. *Mr Robin Hall (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Board of Education: Given that the Board of Education does not have the resources itself to collate data on bullying from its schools, has any consideration been given to working with diocesan boards of education to collate this publicly available data?

The Bishop of Oxford replied: Ofsted inspect and regulate services which care for children and young people, including schools. The revised Ofsted framework includes a strong focus on bullying, with inspectors looking at schools’ actions to tackle all forms of bullying and of harassment, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying relating to special

educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability.

Schools deal with and may keep their own log of any incidents of bullying to ensure appropriate care and action is taken, but this is not publicly available data. Any racist incidents must be reported to the local authority but no other data for bullying is collected by local authorities and so it would not be possible to collate this at diocesan or national level.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): In the Stephen Lawrence inquiry we recommended not only the recording of racist incidents but also of homophobic incidents. Why is this not being included, given that we made the recommendation in 1999?

The Bishop of Oxford: I do not know the answer to that, but I do know that as diocesan boards of education we are not geared up at the moment to find out this information. However, it would be perfectly possible for us to talk to our diocesan directors of education and see if, at least in Church schools, we can get that information.

24. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the Board of Education: What plans does the Board of Education have to work with Christian organisations to tackle homophobic and other types of bullying, such as by identifying anti-bullying projects run by local churches for schools in their area, and then seeking to replicate the model nationally?

The Bishop of Oxford replied: The Board is producing guidance for schools on combatting homophobic bullying. This will be a further resource for teachers and governors in creating a strong anti-bullying culture within schools. In producing this guidance, our consultant is talking to a wide range of organisations and people. We would be very pleased, though, to hear from any members of local projects, details of which can be passed on to our consultant to help her in that work.

25. *Mr Nicholas Harding (Southwell and Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the Board of Education: The Church of England Youth Council celebrates its first 10 years this year. Are there any plans for General Synod or the Church of England centrally to mark and celebrate this milestone?

The Bishop of Oxford replied: We are really glad that the Church of England Youth Council has reached double figures in its current incarnation and welcome the continued engagement of young Anglicans with their dioceses and with this Synod through the Young Representatives and Young Observers.

The Council's Core Group is working closely with diocesan youth officers, enabling regional celebrations to take place across the country later this year. The Business Committee of this Synod has been asked to consider marking the milestone in some way at the July sessions in York.

26. *Revd Canon Christopher Sugden (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Board of Education: What is the outcome of the review by the Board of Education of the RE Council report on Religious Education?

The Bishop of Oxford replied: The National Society RE Strategy Group will be reviewing the RE Council's report on RE at its next meeting.

Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester): In a document sent to members of the Association of University Lecturers in Religion and Education, John Keast, Chair of the Religious Education Council, states 'The Chief Education Officer of the Church of England has endorsed the review'. Is this an accurate statement? If it is accurate, do you share the same unqualified endorsement?

The Bishop of Oxford: The word used is not 'unqualified' and that is the crucial point. It certainly is endorsed by us because we are members of the Religious Education Council (REC), but it is not endorsed without qualification and we have said that consistently. For instance, we have had particular disagreements with some of the members of the REC about the role of humanism and whether humanism can be regarded as a religion or a world view in terms of RE as we understand it. We therefore endorse it, but with qualifications.

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): In the spirit of transparency which is now pervading our institutions, will the Board of Education's reflections on this and the report be made publicly available, for example on the Church of England's website?

The Bishop of Oxford: I cannot answer that because I do not know what the protocol is for our actually doing that with this particular group, but it seems to me like a very good idea. We are indeed wanting to be transparent and accountable and to have dialogue with the rest of the Church on these issues; so I can see no personal reason, but I do not know what protocol they work with.

27. *Mr Nicholas Harding (Southwell and Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the Board of Education: Following the recent publication of the church growth report *From Anecdote to Evidence*, with its emphasis on the importance of retaining children, young people and families, how will the Church of England encourage dioceses which currently have no or little central support for this work to rethink their lack of provision?

The Bishop of Oxford replied: In 2010, General Synod welcomed the Board of Education's report *Going for Growth*, which called for dioceses to provide professional support and development for those working with children and young people in the name of the Church. The findings of *From Anecdote to Evidence* reinforce the importance of this support.

Most but not all dioceses currently have some form of central support for parish ministry among children and young people. The Board of Education would urge Synod members to encourage dioceses to continue to prioritize this vital work, not simply to retain children and young people within the Church, but to enable their faith to grow and to encourage congregations to reach out beyond their church walls.

Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield): Given the evidence that Messy Church is proving to be a very effective form of evangelism among unchurched children and families, what central support could the Board of Education give to promoting and resourcing Messy Church, given that it is impossible for all 43 dioceses to do that separately, and appoint somebody to do that?

The Bishop of Oxford: Yes, we do in BRF have a super platform for Messy Church and diocesan bishops have recently been asked whether they might be able to put funding into that support; so it is not done from the Board of Education but it is done more from BRF itself. However, that creates problems. Messy Church is wonderful and doing a terrific job, but so are a lot of other initiatives that are taking place around the Church. For bishops to put in the £2,000 or £5,000 or whatever to support just one of these projects, great as it is, creates some waves amongst those who are doing children's work in dioceses and in parishes.

I do not think it is up to the Church of England's Board of Education to take one particular model, therefore, but every children's work adviser I know, and very many churches that are taking Messy Church seriously, are finding that it is a terrific route to growth and I want to encourage it as much as I can.

28. *Canon Dr Adanna Lazz-Onyenobi (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the Board of Education: From time to time there are press reports of schoolteachers being members of the British National Party or the National Front. Has the Board collected information on the systems used by diocesan boards of education to check appointments in Church of England schools?

The Bishop of Oxford replied: The appointment of teaching staff is the responsibility of the school through its governing body. Teachers seeking a job in a Church of England school will be questioned about their commitment to upholding and working within the Christian values which underpin the school. For senior leadership appointments, a diocesan board of education officer is normally present in an advisory role but the diocesan board of education has no remit to do so for other appointments.

We are confident that Church of England schools take this responsibility very seriously, especially with regard to combatting racism and all other forms of prejudice, and the governors also have a duty to promote race equality.

Canon Dr Adanna Lazz-Onyenobi: However, there is a recent report about the increase in racist bullying in schools, leading to some children committing suicide. Has the Board of Education reviewed the effectiveness of the guidelines given to the schools?

The Bishop of Oxford: It is a good question, and we did have the review in 2010 that Maurice Smith carried out. It did not, for instance, recommend that a ban on membership should be imposed for governors because we thought that we had sufficient reassurance in our current methods and in the things I have referred to. On the other hand, things do move fast and it could well be that we might need to consider whether further action will be taken at this stage. It is nearly four years on; it might well be appropriate to do that. Thank you. I will take it to the Board.

Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark): Before declaring your confidence to General Synod, did the Board of Education check with Church schools whether *they* are confident that they do not have any members of staff who belong to the BNP or the National Front?

The Bishop of Oxford: As I think members of Synod know, we have to work through our diocesan boards of education; they work through their governors. It is a long way down from the Board of Education, working through to 4,800 schools. We have not done that

piece of work, therefore, but you can be sure that boards of education in each diocese are really aware of this issue now. You cannot be a member of our society in these days and not be aware of these particular issues. I am still trusting that we have some good methods in place, therefore, but we can have a look again and see whether we are sufficiently sure that our Smith review of four years ago is still up to date.

29. *Revd Simon Cawdell (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the Board of Education: Is the Chair satisfied that there are sufficient provisions in place in law and policy to enable schools to ask candidates for employment, governance or other voluntary posts concerning membership of organisations which the Church believes to espouse racist views?

The Bishop of Oxford replied: The Smith review that I have been talking about concluded that the existing provisions were adequate to prevent the promotion of racism within schools. These include the requirement for all schools to have an equal opportunities policy; the duty to promote race equality; the requirement to report racist incidents; and the duty to forbid the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in a school.

Candidates for any role within a school are made aware of these duties and in Church of England schools they are also questioned about their commitment to the Christian ethos which underpins the life of the school. Furthermore, the diocesan board of education requires foundation governors to commit to upholding the Christian foundation of the school. Together, I believe that these provisions and duties do provide sufficient safeguard to prevent the promotion of racist views but, as I have said, we need to keep that question under review and could revisit it.

Revd Simon Cawdell: Can candidates be asked to confirm that they are not or never have been members of the British National Party?

The Bishop of Oxford: In a voluntary-aided school I guess they could; voluntary-controlled, maybe not. I would have to take expert advice to know what can be done there. It is a good question. Can I come back and give you a written answer on that?

Ministry Council

30. *Revd Canon Dr Hazel Whitehead (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Will the Ministry Division be paying fees and maintenance for Anglican ordinands who attend any TEI which is not willing to work within the new Common Awards process through the University of Durham – a process which was approved unanimously by this Synod in all three Houses?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied: As already stated in response to Question 17, the Ministry Division is working with all the theological education institutions (TEIs) to ensure the maximum take-up of the Common Awards. It has indicated that it will not pay university validation fees for programmes of study which it has not approved. At the same time it is committed to paying the student fees and maintenance of Anglican ordinands at TEIs which have the approval of the House of Bishops.

The Dean of Portsmouth (Very Revd David Brindley): Is the Ministry Council aware of any institution which, without Ministry Division permission, intends to decline to work within the Common Awards process, and which institution might that be?

The Bishop of Sheffield: We are in continuing dialogue with a number of institutions. This is a critical year, in which institutions are going through the validation process with Durham and in some cases having internal debates about that. Dialogue to that effect is continuing at the moment with all the institutions.

Revd Canon Dr Hazel Whitehead: Could I urge the Ministry Council in its continual deliberations to bear in mind the effect on receiving dioceses if they have to integrate deacons into a peer group when they have not undertaken a recognizable Common Awards training and qualification, given that we are being encouraged to have a more coherent and seamless IME1-7 programme?

The Bishop of Sheffield: Thank you, and that is absolutely one of the considerations the Ministry Council will continue to bear in mind in the ongoing dialogue.

31. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Based on the work carried out to date in respect of ‘Turning the rhetoric of lay involvement into reality’ (GS 1815, paragraphs 18, 19 and 81-83 – ‘obstacles’), what have been identified as the main obstacles to ‘Turning the rhetoric of lay involvement into reality’ within (a) the Church’s ministry and (b) the Church’s mission to the world?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied: Ministry Division, the Mission and Public Affairs department and the Education Division have recently collaborated on a process of research and consultation with dioceses on the subject of lay ministry and discipleship. Two major themes have emerged from this work that may be described as ‘obstacles’. These are our present Church culture, including clericalism, and a lack of resources. More work is currently being undertaken to articulate these further and this will be reported to the Archbishops’ Council in May.

Mr Adrian Greenwood: Would the bishop agree with me that part of the resourcing issue can be dealt with by encouraging, inspiring and enabling all non-clerical Christians for discipleship, mission and evangelism, and that it is a key role of clergy and other authorized lay ministers to facilitate that encouragement, inspiration and enablement?

The Bishop of Sheffield: I would be very happy to agree with that.

The Chair: That barely scraped into a question; it was more an expression of opinion – but we will let you off.

32. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Based on the work carried out to date in respect of ‘Turning the rhetoric of lay involvement into reality’ (GS 1815, paragraphs 18, 19 and 81-83 – ‘obstacles’), what have been identified as objectives of, benefits to, and impacts on the mission and ministry of the Church through ‘Turning the rhetoric of lay involvement into reality’?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied: Recent church growth research, sponsored by the Archbishops’ Council and the Church Commissioners, has highlighted how lay leadership is important and the research shows that good-quality lay leadership is linked to growth. There are high associations with growth and lay leadership and rotation (where there is change and refreshing of roles rather than the same people always fulfilling the same roles). A church

where volunteers are involved in leadership and where roles are rotated regularly is likely to be growing – especially where younger members and new members are included in lay leadership and service. It is not only a matter of justice and good stewardship that we recognize all peoples' gifts in ministry; it is about building up the Body of Christ.

Mr Adrian Greenwood: In the light of this excellent report on church growth, what does Bishop Steven see as the next steps in 'Turning the rhetoric of lay involvement into reality'?

The Bishop of Sheffield: The next step in terms of national process is the report of the Archbishops' Council on the research that is already being undertaken, and there has been some consideration given as to how that report might then be brought on to this Synod. In terms of actually making a difference in every local church, I would hope that every parish in the country would debate from anecdote to evidence very carefully and give due consideration, particularly to that part of the report that you have helpfully highlighted.

33. *Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: In the light of Resolution 15.07 entitled 'Gender-based and Domestic Violence' passed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2012 (Appendix A of GS 1933), how many theological colleges and regional training courses in dioceses in the Church of England have adapted their curricula in any of the ways suggested?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied: During the period following the 2012 resolution, theological colleges and regional courses have been undergoing an intense period of curricular change as part of the move towards the Common Awards in Theology, Ministry and Mission. Within these awards, training institutions must include pastoral theology modules for ordinands, within which issues of gender-based and domestic violence can be addressed. Equally, the Ministry Division will want to reflect with the training institutions on the outcomes of the debate held on these issues at this Synod.

34. *Mr Paul Hancock (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Are figures available for the current number of Readers actually 'in training', and does this compare with the number of places available nationally?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied: The Ministry Division collects the figures of Readers or Licensed Lay Ministers in training on an annual basis. In 2012-13, the last year for which complete figures are available, 398 people were in training. As Readers train on diocesan-sponsored or created schemes, there is a degree of elasticity in the number of places available. Dioceses seek to respond to the numbers coming forward.

*35. *Revd Simon Cawdell (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Can the Ministry Division please supply numbers of those ordained deacon in each of the last five years following an application for faculty from the Archbishop of Canterbury under Canon C 4A, and indicate whether it has conducted any review of the process and, if it has, with what result?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied: The Ministry Division does not keep statistics of those ordained following an application for a faculty under Canon C 4A. The application process is a matter for the Archbishop of Canterbury's staff (and in the Province of York the Archbishop of York's staff) and the Ministry Division has no responsibility for reviewing the process.

Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee

*36. *Revd Tony Redman (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: As at the beginning of 2014, how many dioceses have taken advantage of their ability to pay some or all of the DBF fee for weddings and funerals taken by SSMs and retired clergy with PTO to agree to pay some or all of such fees to SSMs?

The Bishop of Manchester replied: It is for each DBF to decide how it wishes to use its fees income. There is also no requirement for DBFs to keep the centre informed of how it decides to spend fee income. Although guidance was first issued to dioceses about payments to retired clergy and SSMs in 1999, dioceses have never been required to let the centre know what payments they make.

In November we asked dioceses for information how the arrangements were being applied. One question was about payments to ministers who do not receive a stipend, who took services for which parochial fees are payable to the DBF and PCC. This information was requested so that the Archbishops' Council could have some information about how the new fees arrangements were going when it considered the proposals for the 2014 Order. Of the 11 dioceses which responded to this question, four replied that the DBF had decided to allow payments to SSMs (as well as retired clergy), and seven replied that they restricted payments to retired clergy only. Payments were at different amounts, but no diocese (that responded) made payments of all the DBF fee to SSMs, and only one paid all the DBF fee to retired clergy with PTO.

Mission and Public Affairs Council

37. *Mrs Mary Judkins (Wakefield)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: What is the Church of England doing to dialogue with Muslim leaders in the Middle East (with particular reference to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, based in Saudi Arabia) to prevent Salafist-jihadist inspired persecution of Christians?

Mr Philip Fletcher (Archbishops' Council, appointed) replied: The Church continues to be deeply concerned about persecution of Christians, and indeed of any other religious community. The Archbishop of Canterbury met the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 2011. The two leaders discussed the crucial need to resist violence promoted by extremists, the duty of religious communities and leaders to work for the protection of different faith communities, and especially the protection of Christians in the Muslim majority countries of the OIC. The OIC elected a new Secretary General in 2013 who takes up office this year. MPA staff have met him and expressed the Church's interest in taking forward the dialogue. The persecution of Christians by extremist Muslims is a complex issue. It occurs for different reasons in different contexts and, while dialogue with the OIC, governments and other international agencies may help to mitigate this violence, it is very unlikely to prevent it.

Mrs Mary Judkins: I understand that dialogue is vital, but you said 'interest in taking forward the dialogue'. What do you actually mean?

Mr Philip Fletcher: We think it is worth going the extra mile. We have scriptural warrant for that. The Archbishop of Canterbury is represented on the King Abdullah International Centre for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue, along with representatives of the Vatican and the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Churches. The Centre is an international organisation, founded by the Governments of Spain, Austria and Saudi Arabia, with the Holy See as a founding observer. It is based in Vienna; it is managed by a Board of Directors representing five of the great world religions, and issues of religious freedom are regularly discussed at Board meetings.

The Board was delighted when, at the Centre's Global Forum in Vienna last November, the Saudi Minister of Education, present with the Education Ministers of Pakistan and other countries, announced that his ministry was asking the dialogue Centre to undertake an evaluation of textbooks representing other religions produced by the Government of Saudi Arabia. There is therefore a concrete example of how we can help in taking this forward.

38. *Mrs Mary Judkins (Wakefield)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: What has the Church of England done to contribute to the summit recently chaired by Baroness Warsi on the persecution of Christians?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: In an article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 14 November 2013 titled 'Extremists are driving Christians out of their homelands', Baroness Warsi wrote that a stronger international response was needed after attacks on Christians and other religious communities. She wrote, 'I want to try to build an international consensus, bringing together law enforcers, politicians, charities, journalists, the judiciary and more, to develop a strategy for putting this vision for universal religious freedom into practice, and to start making an impact on people's everyday lives.'

The Church greatly values the way that Baroness Warsi has been so outspoken about the persecution of Christians and other religious communities. We understand that she intends to host a gathering on this issue, but no summit has yet been held. Staff at MPA are in regular contact with her office and continue to advocate on behalf of Christians and other religious communities facing often terrible persecution.

Mrs Mary Judkins: My question actually said, 'What is the Church of England doing to contribute to Baroness Warsi's summit', so the question became slightly changed.

Mr Philip Fletcher: Can I take a second go and expand ---

Mrs Mary Judkins: May I finish my supplementary question?

Mr Philip Fletcher: I beg your pardon, Mrs Judkins.

Mrs Mary Judkins: A PA said in an email to me today, 'As yet, our officials are working on the details of the event, which we are aiming to host in the first half of this year'. Can you assure me that MPA will be proactive and offer speakers or suggestions for the summit, as I understand that no Christians have yet been invited? Can you also encourage bishops to reply to the organiser of a study day in Truro on this topic?

Mr Philip Fletcher: I think that the bishops are capable of using their own auditory organs to pick that last one up.

To expand a bit, yes of course MPA very much wants to be part of this whole exercise, but not on its own. We think that it is very important to work with others. We are therefore working with agents like Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Open Doors, Sister Churches in the Anglican Communion, and other partner Churches. Of course it is a tremendous benefit that we have the Lords Spiritual raising issues in the House of Lords and in the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Freedom, and yes we do go to government ministers direct and we work with the other faith communities in speaking out on issues of religious persecution. We are grateful for the support of colleagues from those other communities.

I will give one last example. When the Protestant Cemetery in Jerusalem was recently broken into and graves damaged, there was immediate public condemnation from the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, representing the Chief Rabbinate of Israel as well as senior Muslim and Christian leaders, and we think that was much more effective.

The Chair: I regret that we are out of time on Questions, but we have had some good and full answers to interesting questions that have been raised. The other questions and answers will be posted in due course.

[Questions 39-71 were not reached and were answered in writing]

39. *Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: What representations have been made to the Girl Guides Association about the change to the Guide promise (under which girls can only promise to “be true to myself and to develop my beliefs” rather than “to love my God”) and, in particular, has any support been given to the 37th Newcastle Unit who wish to give their girls a choice of using either the traditional promise or the new version and was told that their membership would in consequence end on 31 December 2013?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: The Guides altered their promise after consultation. Four bishops wrote to the Church Times in January 2013 encouraging people to respond to the Guides’ (and Scouts’) consultations on their vows. At the same time the Communications Office issued a briefing note encouraging responses.

The dispute between the 37th Newcastle Unit and the national Guide Movement followed the introduction of a new promise in response to the consultation. MPA have not been in direct contact with that Unit.

It would not normally be MPA’s practice to intervene, on behalf of the church at national level, in the affairs of an independent voluntary organisation which had consulted widely before introducing changes. However, the Synod will be aware of the Private Member’s Motion being introduced in this group of sessions by Mrs Ruoff and, depending upon how Synod declares its mind, further communication with the Guide movement may indeed follow.

40. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Given the recognised link between widespread access to online pornography and children’s confusion over sexuality, is the Church working with Government to protect children from gaining such easy access, and if so, how?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: The MPA Council responded in September 2012 to the Government consultation on parental internet controls strongly supporting the initiative. Bishops continue to voice their concerns in the House of Lords when the issue arises and staff maintain close links with the likes of the Mothers' Union and their Bye Buy Childhood campaign, and Reg Bailey's ongoing work on the commercialisation and sexualisation of children.

41. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Is the Church engaging in any initiatives with Government to regulate the proliferation of betting facilities – online, on television and on the high street?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: The Church is represented on the Community Liaison Group of the Gambling Commission, and at ministerial meetings – most recently with a Minister in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in January 2014. The discussions are focussing especially on fixed-odds betting terminals, and the search for appropriate means of local authority control over the concentration of high street outlets. Bishops are engaged with the current progress through the House of Lords of the Gambling (Licensing and Regulation) Bill, which relates mainly to online gambling. We are cooperating with a number of other faith groups on these issues.

42. *Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: In addition to encouraging support of credit unions to promote good financial habits in the general population, can consideration also be given to the Church promoting means of increasing basic financial education, such as is provided by the Christians Against Poverty CAP Money course for adults, and also the basic financial education of children and young people in schools?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: The Archbishop of Canterbury's task group, which met for the first time in January under the chairmanship of Sir Hector Sants, is considering how we can link our work on credit unions with the valuable work being carried out by Christian and other debt advice organisations, in order to promote financial education and the value of thrift.

The group is in the process of forming up its work plan and conversations have already begun with the Education Division and with individual credit unions to see how we might engage with church and other schools to enhance financial awareness from an early age. There will be more to say about the task group's programme in July.

43. *Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Given many parishes use the Five Marks of Mission in drawing up their Mission Action Plans, have dioceses been advised of the extension to the fourth mark (to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation) agreed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2012?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: The Anglican Consultative Council revised the wording for the 4th 'mark' of mission at its meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, as part of an ongoing exercise to revisit the marks. There was previous discussion of adding a 6th mark for peace and reconciliation. The 2012 Report 'World-Shaped Mission' outlined these possible

changes and stressed the importance of mission as reconciliation, which is also a focus of the Mission Theology Advisory Group.

The original version of the five marks has become well known and used, having been adopted by the Synod in 1996, and they have become standard as an understanding of mission. Dioceses have not been routinely advised of the additional wording, although the World Mission and Anglican Communion Panel, chaired by the Bishop of Aston, will write to Bishops asking them to inform parishes of this important amendment to Mark 4.

44. *Miss Fay Wilson-Rudd (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: In view of the economic distress experienced in many communities what action, if any, has the Council taken to assist churches to develop programmes to help people develop healthy lifestyles, including careful housekeeping to reduce the £12 million of food waste being sent annually for recycling?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: MPA accepts that reducing food waste is an important issue. However, with limited resources MPA has to prioritise. On health-related issues alone we have recently concentrated on NHS reform, social care reform, blood and organ donation, chaplaincy provision, minority ethnic mental health concerns, abortion regulation and assisted suicide. We have also contributed to debates on tobacco sales and advertising and minimum unit pricing for alcohol. Moreover, we note the good work being done on food waste education by organisations such as W.R.A.P. and that avoidable waste has been significantly reduced since 2007, from 5.3 million tonnes to 4.2 m.t by 2012, saving UK consumers almost £13 billion over the 5 years. We recognise that there is much still to do.

45. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Are there any figures to show how many parishes are participating in the “Real Easter Egg” campaign?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: The “Real Easter Egg” campaign is widely supported across the Church of England but as it is a private initiative, run by the company “Meaningful Chocolate,” we don’t hold any figures relating to it.

46. *The Ven Jonathan Lloyd (Europe)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: What plans does MPA have over the coming four years to resource and encourage the Church nationally, regionally and locally to promote peace and reconciliation in Europe and the wider world as central themes during the Centenary Commemorations of the First World War?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: MPA works closely with staff at Lambeth Palace to resource the Archbishop of Canterbury’s ministry in international reconciliation. We are also involved in regional conversations with the Conference of European Churches and the Council of Catholic Bishops’ Conferences of Europe about opportunities to encourage reconciliation between the churches in Europe that found themselves on opposing sides in the war. MPA hopes that redemptive efforts such as these, which recognise the suffering of all involved in the war, might help a new European narrative to emerge based on stronger shared stories

and understandings. This work will be of interest to the Diocese in Europe as well as the large number of dioceses that have companion links with Europe.

Crown Nominations Commission

47. *Mr Colin Slater (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: Given the proposed timetable for the appointment of the next Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham, not expected to be made until a full year after the departure of Bishop Paul Butler, and not filled until the middle of 2015 – a situation mirrored in some other dioceses – what steps are being taken to reduce the timescale for the appointment of Diocesan Bishops in order to avoid such inordinate and unhelpful delays?

48. *Mrs Pamela Bishop (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: In light of the relatively high turnover of diocesan bishops in recent times, and the current long delay in nominating new diocesan bishops, is there, for the future, any strategic planning in place to facilitate and speed the process for the discernment and appointment of diocesan bishops?

The Archbishop of York replied: With Synod's permission I will answer the questions from Mr Slater and Mrs Bishop together. (Mr Slater will remember my answer to his supplementary question on the same subject at the November Synod.)

The Central Members of the CNC and the Archbishops considered these issues in 2013 when it became apparent there were going to be several vacancies, and took steps to reduce timescales. The Archbishop of Canterbury and I are not now automatically attending CNCs outside our Provinces. Central members are increasingly availing themselves of the provision in Standing Orders for proxies. We are also now running two appointment processes simultaneously, and will review how this works.

As regards oversight, being asked to lead the diocese during an interregnum provides Suffragan bishops with an opportunity for development, and we are alert to the possibilities of using Commissaries.

We do not anticipate such high turnover becoming a regular feature, but we have put these measures in place to deal with the current forecast retirements. If further action is required we will obviously consider it.

Dioceses Commission

49. *Mr Paul Hancock (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Dioceses Commission: In the Commission's 2013 Annual Report, there is a report on a survey in relation to Joint Diocesan Working. How was the survey carried out, was any attempt made to follow-up the non-responders and, if not, why not?

The Ven Peter Hill replied as Vice-Chair of the Dioceses Commission: The Commission's survey was designed to elicit information about joint administrative working between dioceses. Diocesan Secretaries were sent this brief survey on 18 April 2013 with a deadline set for 8 May to enable a report to be discussed by the Commission at its residential meeting

on 4 - 5 June. A reminder e-mail was sent in May and the deadline extended for several dioceses. Responses were, in practice, accepted until a week before the meeting.

A large majority of the non-responding dioceses' arrangements were covered by the replies received (as they referred to co-operation with dioceses in the same region). The scope and number of replies was therefore sufficiently representative for the report to be laid before the Commission.

Faith And Order Commission

50. *The Revd Charles Read (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: What resources and advice already exist from FAOC or its predecessors the Doctrine Commission and the Faith and Order Advisory Group regarding the Church of England's understanding of the historic episcopate, especially as regards the doctrine of apostolic succession?

The Bishop of Coventry replied: Three categories of material are relevant here. The first is reports produced by the Faith and Order Advisory Group or FAOC that have been formally adopted in some way. This would include the response to theological issues raised by the Cameron report in 1990, which was published as the House of Bishops Occasional Paper *Apostolicity and Succession* in 1994. The second category is resources sponsored or produced by these bodies to inform wider discussion within the Church, such as the collection of essays responding to ARCIC II's report, *The Gift of Authority*, and the reflections on Cardinal Kasper's address to the General Synod in 2006. The third category is documents produced in other contexts on these subjects that FAOC and its predecessors would want to take into account in their considerations, such as the Porvoo Common Statement, approved by the Synod in 1995.

51. *The Revd Charles Read (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: In its current work on the theology of Church Leadership, is the Commission considering how issues of gender relate to church leadership?

The Bishop of Coventry replied: The Commission aims to finish its on-going work in this area with a report later this year. It is attending to a wide range of topics in relation to the theology of leadership, and issues of gender are being considered as an important dimension of the historical and contemporary contexts in which Church Leadership is exercised.

Fees Advisory Commission

52. *Mr Adrian Vincent (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Fees Advisory Commission: GS 1938-9X, the Explanatory Memorandum of the *Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2014* refers to the *Legal Fees Review 2012-13*. Page 27 of that report states:

"11. The Value Added Tax treatment of retainers and faculties should be clarified with a view to establishing them as 'Outside the Scope of VAT', partly offsetting the cost increase. We recommend that a working party of registrars, with experience of establishing this, is formed, led by an FAC member and supported by specialist professional accountants, to resolve this matter during the course of 2013. Depending on professional advice and the eventual outcome, substantial VAT refunds may also be achievable for both some dioceses and the Church Commissioners."

Was a working party established and, if so, what progress did it make?

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall QC (Manchester) replied: The Commission is actively pursuing this recommendation in collaboration with the Ecclesiastical Law Association, which has nominated two registrars to serve on the working group. The group will shortly be holding its first meeting, at which we plan to clarify the issues and decide on next steps, including the provision of specialist advice to support the group's work.

Liturgical Commission

53. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: In the light of the serious concerns which have led to *Christian Initiation: Additional Texts in Accessible Language* being characterised as 'baptism lite', will the Liturgical Commission undertake a fundamental review of the texts before they are brought to the House of Bishops and General Synod for approval?

The Bishop of Wakefield replied: It would be unwise to assume that the response of the Mail on Sunday reflects widespread concerns about the new alternative texts and that article has led to unnecessary confusion. Indeed a great deal of press coverage was very positive about the changes, and the debate there has been about the Devil, sin and evil provided a good context for us to talk about faith. May I remind the Synod that these changes are intended to help clergy communicate the faith more clearly?

However, shortly after Easter, the Liturgical Commission will be looking at feedback from the parishes who have been involved in the trial of the texts. There will then be comprehensive review of the texts before they are sent for further consideration in the House of Bishops prior to submission to the General Synod.

54. *The Revd John Cook (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Granted the spontaneous growth of petitions for the dead triggered by the appalling slaughter of the First World War, and granted the high degree of publicity events of 100 years ago seem about to generate in this country, and granted that great care is needed in safeguarding the official doctrinal stance of the Church of England, while all Christians are free before God to compose their own personal prayers, can the Chair of the Liturgical Commission undertake that, without the authority of the whole General Synod, no prayers that go beyond the doctrinal base of the Book of Common Prayer will be issued by it or on its behalf, or with its encouragement or support?

The Bishop of Wakefield replied: As part of the preparatory work for the *Alternative Service Book* in 1980 and the subsequent *Common Worship* provisions, the 1971 Doctrine Commission report, *Prayer and the Departed*, examined ways in which pastoral need and doctrinal conviction could be balanced, taking as its starting point 'the mystery of the cross and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus'.

It takes a reasoned review of scripture and tradition and proposes ways of praying for those who died in the Christian faith and remembering those of other faiths or none, in confidence 'that God created, loves and sustains all mankind, and that Christ died not only for our sins only but for the sins of the whole world'.

Within this framework the provisions of the *Alternative Service Book* and *Common Worship* were approved.

The Liturgical Commission is fully aware of these principles and will continue to follow them by balancing doctrinal and pastoral considerations as it prepares resources for remembrance and commemoration.

Church Commissioners

55. *The Ven Timothy Barker (Lincoln)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given the cost of hearings at which the various parties may be present when oral representations are made to a proposed pastoral scheme or order, will the Church Commissioners consider revising their procedures to set a minimum number of objectors to a pastoral scheme or order before the full procedure of a hearing by the Commissioners' Pastoral Committee is allowed?

Mr Andrew Mackie (Third Church Estates Commissioner) replied: The Commissioners understand the concern raised and indeed the Pastoral Committee has already set up a small group, which met last week, to review its handling of representation cases including the public hearing process and associated costs. This is also relevant in the context of the work of the Simplification Group chaired by the Bishop of Willesden.

56. *Dr Jacqueline Butcher (Sheffield)* asked the Church Commissioners: Are the Commissioners aware of the concerns of some diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committees that procedures for disposing of redundant churches can drag on for a significant amount of time, and are there plans to review policy and procedure in order to facilitate more readily the appropriate disposal of redundant church buildings so that mission and ministry in the Dioceses can become more sustainable and less hampered by surplus plant?

Mr Andrew Mackie replied: The Commissioners recognise that settling the future of closed church buildings can sometimes be a lengthy and frustrating process, particularly when dealing with contested proposals. We ourselves are looking to identify ways to streamline the process and reduce timescales to facilitate local mission and ministry. There is also a further opportunity to address such issues through the work of the Group, chaired by the Bishop of Willesden, which has recently been appointed jointly by the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners to take forward the simplification agenda.

57. *Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: What steps will the Commissioners take with a view to (a) raising awareness among General Synod members of the complex investment portfolio now managed by the Church Commissioners and (b) ensuring that elected Governors contain sufficient investment knowledge/confidence to provide appropriate oversight of that portfolio?

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith (First Church Estates Commissioner) replied: The Commissioners use their annual reports to Synod, their fringe meetings, their answers to Synod Questions and their display stand at sessions in York to inform Synod members about all their work including their investment activity.

All Governors and Committee members – elected or appointed – receive thorough induction and ongoing support and training.

I should like to use this opportunity to thank Mr Oldham for his exceptional contribution to the work of the Commissioners and in particular their Assets Committee over the last fifteen years.

58. *Mr David Robilliard (Winchester, Channel Islands)* asked the Church Commissioners: Please state the costs incurred to date by the Church Commissioners and anticipated future expenditure in respect of

(a) the following commissioned by the Lord Bishop of Winchester –

- the Korris report
- the investigation by Dame Heather Steel DBE
- the visitation by Bishop John Gladwin
- the pastoral visitation by the Bishop of Dover and Bishop at Lambeth

and all ancillary costs including, but not limited to, legal fees and other disbursements incurred both by the Lord Bishop and the Dean of Jersey; and

(b) the Commission to be appointed by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury which will examine the relationship between the Channel Islands and Diocese of Winchester and the wider Church.

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith replied: The Commissioners have spent nothing on the Korris review, the pastoral visitations by the Bishop at Lambeth and the Bishop of Dover, or any commission of the Archbishop of Canterbury. We have no power to pay any costs relating to the Dean of Jersey.

We agreed with the diocese of Winchester that we would pay 50% of the costs of the Steel investigation and the Gladwin visitation. To date this share has amounted to about £92,000 including all professional fees and expenses. We do not have a detailed breakdown as between ‘Steel’ and ‘Gladwin’, and some of the costs incurred, such as costs of Jersey legal advice, relate to both.

59. *The Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: How much money has been spent by the Church Commissioners so far on the Mark Sharpe case; what future expenditure has been budgeted for it (including to meet any costs awarded to Mr Sharpe in the event of any further appeal by the Church being unsuccessful); and what advice was sought, and what factors considered, in arriving at the decision to contest this matter legally at the Commissioners’ expense, rather than allowing an Employment Tribunal simply to consider whether or not Mr Sharpe was unfairly dismissed?

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith replied: This case raises fundamental issues about the legal status of clergy and has the potential to reopen the legislation and regulations agreed by the Synod in the past decade following the McClean reviews. Therefore the Commissioners have been prepared to spend significant sums and the Archbishops’ Council has also agreed to contribute to the costs of the appeal.

Costs to date have been considerable, but it would not be right to put figures into the public domain while the proceedings continue. Leave has now been granted for the case to be considered by the Court of Appeal. The Commissioners are scrutinising the process carefully and reviewing the case regularly with a view to controlling costs as much as is consistent with putting forward our arguments effectively.

Pensions Board

60. *Mr Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What action is the Board taking in the light of Mr John Ralfe's comments on Radio 4's *Today* programme concerning the results of the recent valuation of the Church of England Funded Pension Scheme?

Dr Jonathan Spencer replied: Mr Ralfe has expressed his opinion on the way the Board handled the valuation. The Board disagrees with his views, and has issued a public statement in response. This has been placed on the noticeboard in the Bishop Partridge Hall, and can also be found on the Pensions Board website.

Although Mr Ralfe is not a member of the scheme, the Board's Chief Executive has offered, more than once, to discuss his views. Mr Ralfe has not taken up these offers.

61. *Mr William Seddon (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What is the Board's reaction to the allegation in recent press coverage that the Church of England Funded Pensions Scheme is 'the riskiest pension scheme in the country'?

Dr Jonathan Spencer replied: I see no basis for this statement. Most of the scheme's funds are invested in return-seeking assets – i.e. equities, property, infrastructure etc – which clearly fluctuate in value – but that is entirely appropriate for a scheme such as this which is both open to new members and which is only paying out pensions earned since 1998. The scheme's income from contributions will exceed pension outgoings for many years to come, so providing ample protection against fluctuations in values. The Board has diversified its portfolio in recent years, and has achieved excellent returns.

62. *Mr Colin Slater (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Will the Board undertake a review of the position under which there is the potential for hardship to some clergy pensioners as a result of as much as 30% of their total income, after tax, being paid in rent to the Board when, having already paid personal Income Tax, they also have to meet increasing bills for council tax, water, heating and lighting from what remains?

Dr Jonathan Spencer replied: We have just done so. The consultation on a new approach to housing retired clergy, which we launched at a fringe meeting of the General Synod in July 2012, closed at the end of October.

One key plank of the proposed new approach is a change in the way in which rents are calculated. We agree that they should not be based on a percentage of a tenant's income, but on the property that they are renting, taking into account its size, location and type. The proposal is to move to so-called 'target rents', which have been used in social housing for many years and are designed to be affordable for those on lower incomes.

We are very grateful to everyone who responded to the consultation; we are considering the responses very carefully, and will announce our decisions during the General Synod meeting in July this year.

Ethical Investment Advisory Group

63. *The Ven Jonathan LLOYD (Europe)* asked the Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group: Given the potential risks and downsides of drilling for oil in the high North, will the Ethical Investment Advisory Group provide an assessment of whether investment in Royal Dutch Shell plc is ethically responsible and indicate in doing so what sources of information, other than that supplied by Royal Dutch Shell, it has taken into consideration?

The Revd Professor Richard Burridge replied: The Ethical Investment Advisory Group is not in a position to assess the management of environmental risks by extractive companies on a project by project basis. However, we use a provider of environmental, social and governance ('ESG') research to monitor ESG risk associated with all the major companies in which the national investing bodies hold shares. While Shell is not flagged for unmitigated ESG risk, we have been monitoring Shell's plans to drill for hydrocarbons in the Arctic given the environmental sensitivity. This has involved media monitoring, meetings with the company and NGO contact. On 30 January 2014 Shell announced that it had decided to stop its exploration programme for Alaska in 2014.

Archbishops' Council

64. *The Revd Canon Dr Simon Cox (Blackburn)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Do those posing the questions in the annual Church statistical returns realise how much time could be saved at parish level and how much more secure the information would be if they announced to the parishes at the beginning of the year what information they wished to gather, rather than at the end of the year and, if so, do they have any plans to adopt a forward looking approach to information gathering?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: The Research and Statistics team do recognise that parishes would be helped by providing notice of the questions as early as possible. They are addressing this in three ways. First, the timetable for agreeing the questions has been brought forward. The plan this year is to ensure that the 2014 form is agreed three months earlier – i.e. to be available to parishes in July 2014. Subsequently it is planned to have the 2015 form available by December 2014. Second, they are currently trialling a web-based on-line service register. If successful, this would enable parishes to record the information on the current paper register: at the end of the year most of the information required would then be automatically transferred to the parish's return. Third, from Easter 2014 the web-based collection system will be open to collect 2014 data, such that information can be collected in a more timely fashion as appropriate.

65. *The Revd Canon Dr Simon Cox (Blackburn)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What model of membership was used in drawing up the questions in the annual Church statistical returns relating to those who 'joined' and 'left' worshipping communities in 2013, and how does it relate to 'cultivating your fringes', advocated by many church growth advisers?

Mr Philip Fletcher replied: The question on 'worshipping communities' including 'joined' and 'left' was introduced on the 2012 national Statistics for Mission return after successful use in the Diocese of Leicester. The worshipping community is defined to include all those

who attend worship at least once a month or would do so if not prevented by ill health or being away with work. Considering your ‘worshipping community’ and who has joined and who has left is an important aspect of considering all in your community especially those in ‘the fringe’ who may attend less regularly and therefore not be part of many of the aspects of your church life.

66. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council: According to information published on the ‘Past Projects’ section of the Church and Community Fund website, since the new grant criteria for 2012 to 2014 were introduced just over two years ago, about 40 grants have been awarded under either Theme 1 (neighbourhood renewal) or Theme 2 (new communities of Christian faith), but no grants have been awarded under Theme 3, for projects to ‘Replicate models of successful community engagement across the wider church’. Given this:

- i) How many applications has the Fund received for projects under Theme 3 since it was introduced at the start of 2012;
- ii) What are the main reasons for any such applications being unsuccessful; and
- iii) What steps are being taken to increase the number of successful applications made for projects for Theme 3?

Canon John Spence (ex officio) replied: The website has now been updated with the latest information. Since the new grant criteria were introduced in 2012; 45 grants were made to projects under Theme 1 (neighbourhood renewal), 25 under Theme 2 (new communities of Christian faith) and 1 under Theme 3 (replication of successful models of community engagement). In answer to the specific points raised:

- i) The CCF received 8 applications under Theme 3 between 2012 and 2013.
- ii) Reasons for unsuccessful applications include:
 - A given project might have been expanding its work in a locality rather than it being replicated in other locations;
 - A project may have already been established fairly widely.
 - The track record of success in some cases has not been strong enough.

Consultations with potential applicants to Theme 3 are already in place to ensure that bids are focused and fully meet the expectations and criteria of the funding theme.

67. *Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council: At the July 2013 group of sessions, I proposed an amendment to the motion on Welfare Reform and the Church, calling for a national campaign of prayer. In a financial memorandum from the Archbishops’ Council signed by Mr Andrew Britton, costs for this were estimated to be £10,000. Can the cost per prayer, and an explanation of how these figures were arrived at, please be provided?

Canon John Spence replied: Our estimate was based on the cost of preparing, producing and distributing materials for other exercises. It was assumed that physical copies of the

resource would be produced, but we did not make an assumption on the number of prayers it would include. So, as the amendment was lost, it is not possible to give a cost per prayer.

68. *Mr David Robilliard (Winchester, Channel Islands)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Please state the costs incurred to date by the Archbishops' Council and anticipated future expenditure in respect of

(a) the following commissioned by the Lord Bishop of Winchester –

- the Korris report
- the investigation by Dame Heather Steel DBE
- the visitation by Bishop John Gladwin
- the pastoral visitation by the Bishop of Dover and Bishop at Lambeth

and all ancillary costs including, but not limited to, legal fees and other disbursements incurred both by the Lord Bishop and the Dean of Jersey; and

(b) the Commission to be appointed by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury which will examine the relationship between the Channel Islands and Diocese of Winchester and the wider Church.

Canon John Spence replied: Since the various exercises listed in part (a) of the question were, as noted, commissioned by the Bishop of Winchester, it should not be a surprise that the Archbishops' Council has not directly incurred expenditure on them, though it has provided some administrative support for Dame Heather Steel. The arrangements in relation to the proposed wider look at relations between the Islands and the wider Church remain to be determined.

69. *Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: With reference to the answer to Question 31 at the November 2013 group of sessions, when will the planned review of missing information be carried out for the new Resource Link system?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied: The Resource Link system is expected to be operational by the middle of 2014. The review of missing information will be completed as soon as possible after the system comes into operation.

70. *Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: With reference to the answer to Question 32 at the November 2013 group of sessions, has the Ministry Division now changed the form used to collect information at ordination so that data on ethnicity can be released at diocesan level?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied: The form has been changed. A copy of the new form is on the noticeboard for members to examine. It is available on the Ministry Division website in the area for information provided for Directors of Ordinands who are responsible for the administration of the process in the dioceses.

71. *The Revd Julie Conalty (Rochester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: It was suggested in the debate on the Report of the Business Committee at the November 2013 group of sessions that, in connection with the preparation of *Turning up the Volume*, statistics had been collected by the Bishop of Rochester on appointments of Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic clergy to posts at various levels, diocese by diocese. Has consideration been given to publishing these statistics so that they can serve as a baseline against which to measure further progress?

The Bishop of Sheffield replied: As Chair of the Turning Up The Volume Task Group, the Bishop of Rochester did indeed request some simple statistics from his fellow bishops a year ago in order to inform the work of the group in its early stages. These statistics are fairly unsophisticated, and the responses were almost certainly somewhat subjective e.g. in who was included in particular categories. They are not, therefore, statistics that would be robust enough for publication and scrutiny, though they have helped fill out the TUTV group's perception of the current situation. Work is being undertaken with the Research and Statistics Team with the intention that properly collected national statistics will in future provide the information which the TUTV group needs for its continuing work. Such statistics would be robust and publishable.

The Archbishop of Canterbury dismissed the Synod with the blessing at 7 p.m.

Full Synod: Second Day Tuesday 11 February 2014

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 10.30 a.m.

Variation in the Order of Business

The Chair: I call first on the Chair of the Business Committee to seek to vary the order of business.

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): Under SO 9 I invite the Chair to vary the order of business. Before members begin to look alarmed, this is really very simple. It will be seen from page 3 of the Agenda that we have set Item 9 as ‘Women in the Episcopate, Draft Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests... (GS 1932)’ followed by ‘Legislative Business, Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure’ – that is, the draft Amending Canon – and it is the only business set for this morning.

This afternoon there are Items 500-510, followed by some legislative business which is not about women in the episcopate but for which there are a large number of amendments. It would help us greatly if we were able to regard the business for the whole day to be taken as business for the whole day. I therefore ask, with the permission of the Chair, that the rubric ‘2.30 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.’ be changed and that the business be taken as the business of the day.

Our business should continue seamlessly, so that if we complete the legislative Article 7 and 8 business before lunch we can move straightaway to Item 500.

The Chair: The intention is that we can run through Item 9, the revision stage, and then rescinding the Act of Synod and the motion to suspend the Standing Orders seamlessly. I think it is intended to help. That has my consent. Does it have the consent of Synod? (*Agreed*)

Women in the Episcopate: Draft Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests and Draft Resolution of Disputes Procedure Regulations (GS 1932)

The Chair: Synod will know that the Declaration is a very slightly amended version of the draft text set out in Appendix A of GS 1924, which was debated at the last group of sessions. The text as discussed by the Synod in November 2013 has subsequently been approved by the House of Bishops but there are various areas of clarification. The draft Resolution of Disputes Procedure Regulations have also been approved by the House of Bishops and, again, Synod will find that there are fairly small amendments to the text welcomed by the Synod in November.

When I call the Bishop of Rochester to move the motion standing in his name, I think that it will help us if, pursuant to SO 21(c), I allow him 15 minutes to explain not only the purpose of this particular amendment but the whole series of debates that we will be moving through, so that we can get a picture of what it is we are about to do. It may well be that subsequent speeches will be shorter, but we shall see.

The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd James Langstaff): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod welcome the draft House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests and the draft Resolution of Disputes Procedure Regulations as set out in GS 1932.’

In terms of the synodical process which began afresh last July we are today at a kind of midpoint. To allude to a prayer based on words of Francis Drake concerned with the desire ‘to endeavour any great matter,’ we are neither at the beginning nor yet is it thoroughly finished. Rather, we are at the interim stage of seeking to continue in the same – a stage often requiring a good deal of work, not least on matters of detail and sensitivity.

This speech comes at the beginning of a day on which Synod will consider a number of items within the overall package of proposals designed to make possible the ordination of women to the episcopate. Though at this point I stand to move the motion at Item 9, I shall – I hope with the goodwill of the Chair – in these opening remarks give something of an overview of all of today’s business, so as to set the context.

Slightly perversely, I address the items in the reverse order. Assuming a fair wind on the other items, later today I shall gladly hand over to the Chair of the Business Committee for the fifth of our series of items. This will be the proposal to suspend part of SO 9, thereby seeking Synod’s consent to set a tighter timetable than is normally allowed for the Article 8 reference to the dioceses. Before that, I will have asked Synod to address a matter relating to the replacement of the 1993 framework by the new set of arrangements. Some of this will be achieved by the repeal provisions within the Measure itself but the rescinding of the 1993 Act of Synod can only be achieved by a new Act of Synod – more on that when we come to it.

The legislative heart of all of this is of course the proposed Measure – just four clauses – together with the amending canon. These are before us today as our second and third items of business. They come today for their revision stage to be taken, unusually, in full Synod without a prior Revision Committee, as we agreed in November.

First, however, we address the draft House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests, together with the draft Resolution of Disputes Procedure Regulations. It seemed sensible for Synod to consider these before coming to the revision stage for the legislation.

As you will recall from November, the Declaration seeks to give practical and pastoral effect to the five guiding principles found in paragraph 5 of the draft Declaration. Since Synod last saw these drafts, work has been done on them by the Steering Committee and by the House of Bishops; indeed, members of the Steering Committee were with the House in December and are content with such small changes as were made to the earlier text. When the time comes, it will be for the House to make the Declaration and the Regulations but, in the motion before us, Synod is invited to welcome them. They are in our papers as annexes to GS 1932.

At this point I remind Synod about paragraph 40 of the draft Declaration, which commits the House to seeking synodical consent by two-thirds majorities for any amendments to the

Declaration once it has first been made. A parallel provision relates to the procedure for the resolution of disputes. As you will see from paragraphs 30-33 of GS 1932, this commitment is to be enshrined in a change to the Standing Orders of the House.

It may be helpful for me to touch briefly on the changes made to the draft Declaration since you last saw it. First, paragraph 4 of GS 1932 notes the addition of a footnote to paragraph 18 to deal with guild churches. I trust that I need say no more on that. The second change is to paragraph 19 and merits more by way of comment, not least because page 82 of the report of November's proceedings records me as conceding that a change would be needed to the wording of paragraph 9, rather than of paragraph 19. (The error was mine and not the stenographer's.) Paragraph 19 specifies the level of support needed within the PCC for a resolution passed under the Declaration. The point I want to stress is that what is proposed here is the same threshold which was agreed during the revision stage for the previous set of legislation, the one that did not pass.

Some may think that this is too onerous and would prefer a simple majority of those present and voting at the PCC; others will think that we have not set the bar sufficiently high, given the importance of these decisions. The House and the Steering Committee believe that the judgement reached on this point during the last legislation was right and that the requirements proposed then and now strike a sensible balance. The provision of alternative thresholds has caused some confusion – and that was not helped in the first version of the Declaration by the way in which it was expressed – but I hope that the new text is clearer, though the substance is unchanged.

To recap, it will not be sufficient just to secure a simple majority of those present in order to pass a resolution; there will need to be either a majority of those present at the meeting attended by at least two-thirds of the members or a majority of the entire membership, irrespective of how many attend the actual meeting. The second possibility is necessary, to avoid a minority of the PCC frustrating the wish of the majority simply by absenting themselves when a vote was to be taken which required at least two-thirds of the members to be present. Hence the provision that if an absolute majority of the full membership supports a resolution then it is passed.

The third change is that the House accepted the Steering Committee's advice to add some transitional provisions. Again, there is a balance to be struck here between, on the one hand, doing things so quickly that people feel they have not had time to think them through and, on the other, having so much time that they lose track of when the old regime will end and the new arrangements begin. What the House has decided is that parishes may start to pass resolutions under the Declaration from the moment that it is made, though they will not be acted upon or put into effect until the amending canon is promulgated. Additionally, resolutions passed under the 1993 Measure or petitions made under the 1993 Act of Synod will be treated as if they were new-style resolutions for two years after the amending canon is promulgated; but after the two years it is only resolutions duly made under the new Declaration that will count.

Fourthly and finally, you will see that in paragraphs 14 and 15 of GS 1932 three redundant words have been deleted from paragraph 33 of the Declaration to deal with a discrepancy with Regulation 8 and 33(f) of the Regulations.

Having dealt with the changes that the House has made, I now turn to one that was not made. Paragraphs 10-13 of GS 1932 record the House's careful consideration of an issue that had been raised within the Steering Committee. This was whether to insert a further footnote to paragraph 29 of the Declaration to pick up the distinction between 'delegation' and 'derivation' that was clarified in clause 8(2) of the earlier draft Measure. The reasons why the Committee advised and the House decided against making an addition to the text are set out in paragraph 13, and I draw particular attention to the second and fourth bullet points. The House was concerned not to introduce any confusion here and was conscious that trying to draw a neat distinction between 'spiritualities' and 'temporalities' in this context is just not possible.

Attached to GS 1932, therefore, are the texts of the Declaration and the Regulations, with the small changes made in December, shaded for ease of reference. Because the Declaration and the Regulations are not part of the legislation, they will not formally be submitted to the dioceses for approval. They will, however, be circulated for information alongside any Article 8 reference of the Measure and the Amending Canon. Thus dioceses can see the entire package when deciding on how to vote. Synod's welcome of the draft Declaration and Regulations is therefore vital prior to any reference to dioceses.

Before closing, I would remind Synod that the Declaration does not claim to resolve every detail of every issue. On the basis of the five guiding principles, it and the disputes resolution procedure set out a great deal and, perhaps just as importantly, it establishes a framework, not least of relationships, within which other issues may be resolved. For example, paragraph 22 of the Declaration refers to further guidance for bishops and parishes on the conversations to be had when a resolution has been passed. Work on that guidance has begun and a draft is circulated as GS Misc 1064. Paragraph 30 of the Declaration refers to issues surrounding supply, both of one or more bishops who hold a conservative position on headship and of those in the traditional Catholic tradition – the latter also raising questions about the liturgical arrangements for their consecration. I simply assure Synod that serious discussions around those matters are under way and will continue.

In November Synod voted by a very substantial majority for the House to bring forward draft texts of the Declaration and the Regulations for the Resolution of Disputes Procedure. These texts now have the seal of approval of the House of Bishops, advised by the Steering Committee, and I encourage Synod strongly to welcome them by voting for the motion that stands in my name.

The Chair: The matter is open for debate.

Revd Prebendary Rod Thomas (Exeter): In the period since last November, when we first looked at the draft House of Bishops' Declaration, my experience as a member of the Steering Committee has been that lots of questions have been asked of me about exactly how the various arrangements we envisage will work in practice. One of those questions, as the Bishop of Rochester has just said, concerned the issue of oath-taking. The reason that was an issue to those who are sensitive to these questions of male and female headship was that if the very taking of an oath implies an act of submission then they would find that a difficult hurdle to overcome before they are able even to consider what other arrangements might be made.

That was the reason why last November I asked if a footnote could go into the House of Bishops' Declaration, just to make it clear that a supplied bishop had authority under their orders to act and they had the legal right to do so under delegated powers.

I am very grateful indeed to the House of Bishops for their consideration of that potential footnote. It has not been accepted but I completely understand the nervousness about changing anything in the draft Declaration. I am not at all nervous about the changes I want to see, but I am very nervous about the changes that other people might want to see. Curiously enough, I recognize that the reverse could apply!

I want to thank you very much indeed for considering that footnote, but nevertheless want to stress that for some people this is the sort of thing that it is very important to introduce, in order to give people access to the provision that we are envisaging here. I would therefore ask whether or not that distinction between authority and delegated powers could perhaps appear in the guidance notes the House of Bishops is in the process of drafting.

There are other questions that have also been raised, not least the question of how the new arrangements bear on individuals. We understand how they might bear on parishes and PCCs but it is not quite clear how they might bear on an individual who had sensitivities about the whole issue of male and female headship that were not shared by their PCC.

I am conscious that in paragraph 36 of the draft Declaration it is stated that when someone takes an oath of canonical obedience this does not entail their acting contrary to their theological conviction. That, it seems to me, does provide a safeguard for individuals. There again, it would be enormously helpful if in the guidance notes being produced by the House of Bishops there could be a mention of the need for sensitivity for the position of individuals.

The upshot of all of this is that we are still engaged in honing what we have so carefully put together. That carefulness will not necessarily be reflected in the voting today. I will find myself voting on the principle, which I have tried to make clear; so that, when it comes to legislation, I will have to vote against the legislation in one or two respects and I will be abstaining on the Declaration, just because of the number of issues that remain. However, I would like Synod to note and understand that this does not reflect a negative outlook on my part; I am still keen to play a very positive role in what I believe has been a positive process.

To that end, I think that my own constituency, if I may call it that, needs to play a part in actively publishing materials that show how we could be helped to flourish within the new arrangements. I therefore see us as having an obligation under this, as well as others within the Church. With that positive outlook I hope that we may go forward, whatever the particularities of the voting today.

Mr Gerald O'Brien (Rochester): We owe a debt of gratitude to the House of Bishops, who have laboured long and hard to produce this draft Declaration. They have come up with a lot of very helpful ideas. There is one in particular that I wish to address myself to in this speech.

We are the Church of England but we are part of a wider Anglican Communion – something like 38 or 39 provinces, I think – and the fact of the matter is that we are less

than two per cent of it. Across the Communion we have some provinces that ordain women as bishops, some provinces that ordain women as presbyters, and some provinces that do not ordain women at all. We are part of this worldwide Communion and there is no consensus across it on this issue. We therefore ask ourselves how we move forward, accepting that within our own Church, within our own dioceses, within our own deaneries and our own parishes there will be some who are in favour of the ordination of women and some who will not be in favour of it. This is where the draft Declaration helps us to proceed.

I want to refer in particular to paragraphs 9-13 of the draft Declaration, which is headed 'Reciprocity'. The second sentence in paragraph 12 reads, 'In dioceses where the diocesan bishop does not ordain women he should ensure that a bishop who is fully committed to the ordained ministry of women is given a role across the whole diocese for providing support for female clergy and their ministry.'

Yes, of course, we absolutely need a statement like that if we are to have reciprocity, going forward; but true reciprocity would perhaps have another sentence added. It would say, 'In dioceses where the diocesan bishop does ordain women he should ensure that a bishop who is fully committed to the ministry of traditional Anglican clergy is given a role across the whole diocese for providing support for traditional clergy and their ministry.' That would be true reciprocity; that would enable both integrities to flourish in the future. However, when we look at the first sentence in paragraph 12 it says, '...dioceses are entitled to express a view, in the statement of needs prepared during a vacancy in see, as to whether the diocesan bishop should be someone who will or will not ordain women.'

We live in a Church where there are both integrities, and I believe that hitherto it has not been a consideration to be taken into account when we judge if someone is being called by God to the episcopate and if they should be appointed. Paragraph 12, if amplified as I have suggested, would say that in every diocese provision must be made for the women clergy there and for those who take a traditional line. In which case, if any Church of England bishop has to make provision for both integrities, why should we, at the Crown Nominations Commission point, be able to exclude someone from one or other integrity?

Let us be practical. What would actually happen? Members of Synod know perfectly well that, in something like 40 out of 42 dioceses that will be continuing, there will be a majority in favour of the ordination of women. This would effectively say that, while we open the door for a new group of clergy, women clergy, to be considered to be bishops, we will close the door on traditionalist clergy. That is not reciprocity at all. Paragraph 12 needs more thought if the reciprocity we say we want in paragraph 9 is to be given substance.

Revd Canon Simon Killwick (Manchester): I welcome the slightly revised draft Declaration and the draft Regulations and I hope that there will be an overwhelming vote in favour of the motion welcoming these documents. I very much hope too that the package will progress quickly and smoothly through its remaining stages.

Like Rod Thomas, I am sorry that the footnote did not quite make it because I believe that it would have helped to address some people's concerns; but I can also understand why the Steering Committee were nervous about including it.

I am also sorry that it did not quite make it because what the footnote says is in many ways the key to squaring the circle. It is the thing that has helped to bring mutual agreement on

this package, for the footnote embodies what Archbishop Rowan outlined in his speech to Synod about the derivation of episcopal authority. The footnote would have given something of the rationale underlying the agreement, and perhaps could be included somewhere else.

I believe that we have been greatly blessed by the degree of reconciliation that has taken place recently through this process, but I think that it is something that we need to give thanks to God for and to acknowledge thanks especially to David Porter for his facilitation and work in reconciliation.

Reconciliation is something that needs to be worked on and developed throughout the Church of England. We have our equivalent of the Good Friday Agreement but need to be careful on how it is followed up. I read something about the situation in Northern Ireland that suggested the vital work of reconciliation did not continue in following up the Good Friday Agreement, which then led to some issues. I would therefore urge that the vital work of reconciliation continues in the Church of England. What comes after final approval will be very important because, after so many years of conflict, we really need to work hard on reconciliation.

I would commend a couple of examples that may be helpful to others. In Manchester diocese there will be a Quiet Day in May, led by David Porter and attended by members of both the Manchester Women's Chapter and the Manchester Forward in Faith Chapter. I think that would be an excellent thing for us all to take part in and I would commend it to other dioceses. We also have regular meetings in the diocese between representatives of the two chapters. Again, those are very helpful.

Let us vote overwhelmingly in favour of this motion today. Let us look for a speedy and smooth progress through the remaining stages, and let us keep up that vital work of reconciliation in the future.

Christina Baron (Bath and Wells): Thank you, Chair, for enabling me to make my maiden speech on this very important issue. In doing so, I am drawing on my recent experience on the Vacancy in See Committee for Bath and Wells and on the Crown Nominations Commission for Bath and Wells.

Some members may remember President Obama's compromise when he was not sure whether or not to allow gays to serve in the military. The compromise was called 'Don't ask, don't tell'. You did not ask anyone if they were gay and they did not tell you. The only problem was that it did not work. A lot of people had a pretty good idea whether or not their colleagues were gay and a lot of gay people wanted to tell their colleagues.

We have been operating a system of 'Don't ask, don't tell' in the Church of England. As with the United States' military, it does not work. If a diocese wants – and strongly wants – a bishop who ordains women, then that diocese will look at who is available, will read their writings, will possibly ask questions of the people in the place where those now serve, and will find out whether or not someone is willing to ordain women; whether as a suffragan they already do ordain women. You are not allowed to ask them, they are not allowed – well, perhaps they are allowed – to tell you, and the diocese is not allowed to put it in its statement of needs; but they will find out. They know anyway. We all pretend we do not, but we have been operating a dishonest policy for 20 years.

The diocese of Chichester knew that their new bishop would not ordain women. Bath and Wells knows that our new bishop, when he comes, will. But no, no, no – we do not talk about it! My son has an answer to the women in the episcopate question, which is that we do not ask candidates whether they are male or female – (*laughter*) – but for the last 20 years we have been pretending something almost as absurd.

I hope that the bench of bishops will continue to include people of many different theological convictions and integrities, but I think we must admit that, when we say we do not ask, it is not true. Thank you, bishops, for making us an honest Church.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells): I want to continue with this theme of paragraph 9, because I think it is important that reciprocity is understood. One of my submissions to the process last year was that I wanted to move away from constrictive legislation towards enabling legislation. So often our legislation has been that we want something in place to prevent something from happening, and I asked why we did not write it in such a way that it is enabling. I looked at this Declaration as an enabling Declaration, as something that was positive, and I recognize in what Gerry O'Brien said that you could see it as being something that blocks off – blocking off an opportunity here or there.

If we read the Declaration with a negative mindset, it is possible to see all sorts of spectres in it; but if one reads it with a positive mindset it looks very much like an enabling set of comments and phrases. I would like everyone to re-read that Declaration with a positive mindset. If there is any possible wriggle room in terms of the wording, perhaps the House of Bishops might look at some words here or there, just to see whether or not there could be a wrong interpretation and iron it out. However, if we look at it with a positive mindset it looks to be enabling and it is a freeing way forward.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mrs Sue Slater (Lincoln): I welcome this package and, in particular, the Bishops' Declaration. It is positive and it includes a lot that is new in our ways of working, in particular the five guiding principles. They not only say how matters that have already been discussed are to be handled but also give us what Simon Killwick was saying we need, which is the basis for the ongoing and continuing process of reconciliation. They are principles that underlie how we have reached the position we are in now and can continue to guide us in the way in which we will act together in the future.

I am particularly pleased that we have reached a position where we can all say that we accept each other's orders and that there may be some aspects on which we continue to disagree theologically, but where we accept that we are a Church that has the right to make the decision and has made the decision we are about to make.

I have children who are of a generation that is much talked about. They are just over rather than just under 30 years of age but they are of the generation who say to me, 'Mum, how can you possibly be part of a Church that doesn't want you as a woman, doesn't want your sister as a woman priest and, on the side, doesn't want gays either?' My answer continues to be, 'I am in this Church. I know that God has created us equal in God's image and I know that the only way to change things is to stay here and continue to talk to the people whom God has created, whom God loves and who disagree with me on this issue or the other.'

I want the Church to be one that I can talk to my children and my granddaughters about and can show them not just what we think about priesthood but also what we think about Jesus Christ, about God the Creator, and about the Holy Spirit. I want to be able to talk about our gospel, not just about our Church order.

Sticking to Church order, however, we know that God makes things new in every generation. I believe something new happened in this chamber yesterday afternoon, at the end of the Service of Lament – a woman priest proclaimed God’s blessing.

Mrs Sarah Finch (London): I was very struck by paragraph 30 on page 12 of the draft Declaration. In it, the House accepts that three bishops – four if you count in the Bishop of Fulham – will care for the Anglo-Catholic constituency. Then, ‘The House also accepts that the presence in the College of Bishops of at least one bishop who takes the Conservative Evangelical view on headship is important for sustaining the necessary climate of trust.’

Many of us are very grateful for this statement because at present we have not a single bishop of this kind – not a single one. Yet the conservative Evangelical constituency contains many growing churches. In a small town in Kent last Sunday there were 140 adults. In a church in Cheshire last Sunday there were 500. In Chelmsford one church had a total of 410 and at the evening service one-third were under the age of 30. In a central London church there was a total of 1,136 adults with 504 at the evening service, almost entirely students; there was also a Sunday School there of well over 100 children.

If churches like this are to share in the necessary climate of trust, something will have to be done about providing bishops for them: bishops who take the conservative Evangelical headship view seriously. I thank the Bishop of Rochester for what he said earlier and his assurances that this is being dealt with.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): For me, page 3 of the Explanatory Memorandum, GS 1932, explains why that particular footnote was not agreed to by the House of Bishops. I am very grateful to Prebendary Rod Thomas, who I publicly invited to come to lunch and who travelled many hours from Exeter to Bishophorpe Palace. We had a three-hour dialogue and lunch and we talked about these particular areas. I am very grateful for his openness and willingness to talk.

If I may say so, however, the reason why that footnote would have caused confusion is explained in those particular bullet points. Also, if we are to learn from the Houses of Parliament, when a law is being passed footnotes are rarely included; but the entire debate leading to the law is always available in *Hansard*. If there were to be a misunderstanding before a court of law, therefore, the judge can look back and see the reason why the particular decision was taken. I would think that, given the fact that we are going towards having an independent reviewer, these documents will be available; so I do not think that we need a footnote, which could be misunderstood and lead to different interpretations, making the Declaration more complicated.

I want to assure Prebendary Thomas that if there were to be a misunderstanding the independent reviewer could go back and see what it was that the House decided about the matter. It is available. From time to time, if a dispute arises, the courts in this land go back to *Hansard* so that the intention of the legislation is understood. This will be available but it

need not necessarily be in the Declaration. I hope that gives some kind of assurance that no material is lost.

While I am on my feet, I would refer to page 14 of Annex A where I think there is a typo under 'Transitional provisions' in paragraph 41. At the moment it reads '...resolutions A and B or petition...' but it is not 'for external' but 'for extended'. If Synod approves this, I hope it will be agreed that it is 'extended' rather than 'external'. There is no such thing as an external episcopal ministry; it is 'extended episcopal ministry'.

With that, I hope that Synod will approve this resoundingly so that we can get on with the rest of the legislation.

Mrs Lois Haslam (Chester): Today I feel something of the excitement that Moses must have felt as he approached the Promised Land. We have wandered around the women bishops' legislation for many, many years. We are now approaching the Promised Land and it is exciting.

We have heard each other; we have listened to each other; and we have acknowledged that the other side needs consideration. We have our five principles. We now need to move forward into the Promised Land, rather than going off on another route around the desert. Let us move forward in confidence, knowing that God is in this with us. He is leading us to that Promised Land.

There were difficulties when the Israelites got to the Promised Land. We will approach differences. I doubt if any of us has exactly what we wanted, but this is where our consideration for each other must come to the fore. God is in this; he is leading us forward to the Promised Land. Let us follow the star.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Wakefield): I want to speak today on the rescinding of the Act of Synod and the disappearance of resolutions A and B. Synod may not be able to tell from my youthful looks – especially now that I have grown a beard! – but I have lived through the whole process of the ordination of women as deacons, priests, and in the not-too-distant-future I will be able to say 'bishops'.

Throughout this time I have worshipped in parishes that have adopted resolutions provided through the Act of Synod and I have lived at theological college alongside people who echo my views – I must say that we are in a significant minority – and alongside those who do not, both men and women, young and old. I have served in parishes that have had resolutions A and B in place and I have, as part of my work in the diocese, supported people who have been exploring their vocation and who are both male and female, from parishes with and without resolutions. I have supported, prayed and worked alongside ordained women and I have been able to serve God with integrity and with my head held high.

What has allowed me to do this? Simply the fact that this Synod put in place the ability for me to do so. I am still relatively new to ordained ministry, having been 'deaconed' in 2008 and priested in 2009, but the actions of this Synod meant that I had the confidence to explore and realise that which God had called me to be, even though I may be seen as being out of step with a majority in the Church of England. You could say that I am a product of the Act of Synod.

I realise that the Act of Synod now needs to be rescinded but I wish to put on record how well it has served people like me and the Church of England. Outside of this chamber I am often approached by those who hold the same views as me, who ask the question ‘Why can’t we just keep the resolutions once the new legislation goes through?’ It is not a negative question. They do not want to delay the process; they just do not understand why. I really welcome the fact that some provision has been made for people like me, both ordained and lay, and I pray that we may all flourish in the proclamation of the gospel.

Today, two persecuted Christians – a five-year-old child and his mother whose origins are in Pakistan and who worship in my parish – have appealed a decision by the Border Agency to refuse their asylum claim. As yet, I do not know the result; what I do know is that we need to model a way of respecting theological difference. We need to have hope.

Even though women will soon be admitted to the College of Bishops, men will still give themselves to the Church of England after being called by God to be ordained priest, and even though they may not be accepting of the ordination of women. This is a God-given vocation and if God recognizes that they can be called to be deacons, priests and bishops in the Church while holding differing views to the majority, and that congregations will exist who hold the same theological convictions, then we need to ensure that we will always have the ability to do so.

Canon Timothy Allen (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): Women bishops are long overdue. The lamentable, stumbling slowness of General Synod in coming to a final and positive decision on whether women may be bishops in the Church of England has done and continues to do great damage to the mission and the reputation of the Church. There is a pressing need for speed and I want to congratulate the Archbishop of Canterbury on so remarkably spurring on the previously sedate synodical procedures into a hell-for-leather gallop in this final furlong.

A little later today the whole Synod will itself take on the revision process, which in the ordinary way would otherwise have required months in committee. Once that is done, we will be asked to suspend the normal Standing Orders so as to require the dioceses to scrutinize the legislation for a second time, twice as quickly as usual, so that this Synod can give its final approval in July rather than in November.

These welcome procedural changes are as unprecedented as they are necessary, but they are also perfectly doable. Any competent diocese will have no difficulty in playing its part within three months.

Women bishops are long overdue. Briefly, here are some reasons. First, the Church of England – looking outward, as Archbishop Justin urged us in his sermon this morning – urgently needs to accept women fully, and indeed gay people too, so as to persuade most of our own congregations and of the general public that it is not the hopelessly out-of-date, old-fashioned and bigoted organisation that it is widely felt to be.

Second, the Church of England urgently needs to revive its national episcopal leadership by an injection of the excellent women who are now serving as deans, archdeacons and senior parish priests.

Third, there is a special personal urgency, in that, as delay is prolonged, increasing numbers of these excellent women now in leadership roles will feel themselves too old to accept the position of bishop.

Finally, there is a particular urgency for dioceses like my own, which are in the long queue for their turn with the Crown Nominations Commission in order to choose a new bishop. The Crown Nominations Commission has been so busy recently that there must be fears that the shallow pond of male-only candidates has been over-fished! No diocese will want to be the last to be denied the refreshing possibility of a woman as their next bishop; so there is great urgency to move with all possible speed towards the first appointments of women as bishops in the Church of England.

Mrs Mary Durance (Chelmsford): We all know the problem with speed: that you are more likely to have a crash. I am concerned at the speed with which we are going. Others have spoken of the difficulties of the oath of canonical obedience and jurisdiction. My concerns are twofold, one of which Sarah Finch has referred to – the difficulty of electing a bishop who speaks for the voice of the minority on headship. The second, which has not really been mentioned, is to do with paragraph 25, the situation in multi-parish benefices.

Last November, the Bishop of Rochester referred to the fact that the position of multi-parish benefices ‘may also merit further guidance’. I looked forward to seeing what further guidance was going to be offered and I have to say that I find it disquietingly vague. It talks about ‘exploring options’ but no fleshing out of what those options are. I think it is an abrogation of our responsibility to pass that responsibility down to the dioceses and the deaneries.

Gerry O’Brien spoke about mutuality and I want to talk about the fact that we have to establish some consistency from diocese to diocese. How shall we ensure that consistency? What are the options? Will it be left to clarity of theological exposition for those representatives who have to explain their position? Just what is involved?

At stake is the survival, not just the flourishing, of our broad and diverse Church. If it means pressing the pause button once again to try to get this right, let us have the courage to do it and not leave it to the dioceses and deaneries.

Revd Canon Pete Spiers (Liverpool): I would like to speak briefly about the House of Bishops’ Declaration and the arrangements for parishes. Forgive me for showing my ignorance, but I am not entirely clear about paragraph 19. I think what it is saying is that there needs to be a two-thirds quorum of the PCC and there needs to be a simple majority. If that is the case, why do we have (a) and (b) there?

Secondly, I think there is a slight confusion between the PCC and the parish. I wonder if, when the House of Bishops produce guidance under section 22 for bishops and parishes and the conversations, it could include what might happen in the run-up to such a PCC meeting. We know that a four-week notice is required, but will the congregation get to know that? Will the parish also get to know about the proposed PCC resolution?

Finally, I would like to make a general point. It is really heartening to hear those who are opposed to this development and whom we have already heard speak today talk about the climate of trust. That trust, certainly for those of us who are fully in favour of this, has been

there for a long time; but I am really glad that they are beginning to feel it and I want to give an assurance that they will continue to feel it as we go forward with this legislation.

The Archdeacon of Bolton (Ven. Dr John Applegate) (Manchester): On a point of order, Chair. Conscious that Moses died in sight of the Promised Land, I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Rochester, in reply: I am grateful to Synod, and in particular to those who have spoken, for the tone of this debate. It is notable, is it not, that we have not had great, barnstorming speeches? I think that reflects where we are in the process: that we have been dealing with some detail and we want to get this detail right, but there is no denying the undertow there, which is saying ‘Let’s move forward’.

I am grateful for Rod Thomas’s comments and for his very positive engagement with the process through the Steering Committee. The idea that we ought possibly to add something to the guidance notes is noted. I think that it is worth saying, though – someone else also raised this and the Archbishop of York commented on it – the fact that something is not there in the footnote does not mean that it is not in the law, as it were. The legal opinion is clear that the law is stated as it is stated. My learned friends tell me about *Pepper v. Hart*, which apparently is the precedent where, if you need to and if there is lack of clarity, if there is anything in dispute you can look back through the record at the intention behind a law. I therefore think it is secure, but Rod’s point is noted.

Gerry O’Brien touched on the Anglican Communion. Of course, the Anglican Communion itself recognises its own diversity. Resolution III.2 of Lambeth 1998, for example, does that. Yes we may only be two per cent, but the variety is recognized there.

On the issue of reciprocity, I would draw Synod back to the five principles. Those are the linchpin of this House of Bishops’ Declaration and it is where this arises. If we stick with those five principles, we will find that we behave towards each other in the ways in which it is intended that we should.

I am grateful to Simon Killwick for his positive contribution, and his commendation of the draft Declaration and the disputes resolution procedure.

I thank Christina Baron for making her maiden speech in favour of honesty, which is a rather good thing – and for her commending the House of Bishops for having been honest, which is remarkable! That is much appreciated.

Tim Hind talked of enabling legislation rather than restrictive legislation and perhaps looking at the odd words – indeed, maybe.

Sue Slater welcomed a particular passage and I thank her very much for that. She drew us back to the five principles. She, with others and with Fr Killwick, spoke of the continuing process of reconciliation. What we are seeking to put in place by this Declaration is the setting in which the relationships, which many of us have worked hard at, can continue to be nurtured across the differences of theological opinion and practice we have.

Sarah Finch and others referred to a conservative Evangelical bishop who takes the headship position. There is work being done to bring that about. It is not easy; neither is it in the gift of the House, and certainly not of the Steering Committee, to deliver on that; but, again, I would assure them that some conversations are going on as to how we might bring that about.

The Archbishop of York has addressed the paragraph 29 footnote issue. I am grateful to him for doing so and for clarifying the position. He also alluded to the typo. I am very glad that he reads everything in such fine detail. As it is in the Declaration, it will be possible for that to be amended before the House makes the Declaration.

Lois Haslam probably came closest to the barnstorming speech, with reference to Moses, stars and suchlike. The reference might have been to Joshua, because he is the one who reached the Promised Land but, indeed, let us move forward on that basis and let us keep some of that sense of excitement.

I would like to thank Fr Cartwright for sharing his own experience and for making a contribution that may well also be relevant to the later debate. Similarly, I am grateful to Timothy Allen for giving a speech in favour of Item 10, which we will come to later, though it did touch on a number of other things as well, not least the desire to keep the momentum and move forward.

Mary Durlacher's comments on multi-parish benefices and Pete Spiers' contribution referred us to the guidance note, which is very much in draft at the moment, on these conversations between the bishops and parishes where resolutions are passed, and the particular scenario in paragraph 25 relating to multi-parish benefices. I want to remind people that that note is still very much open for discussion and contribution. If people feed in suggestions, they will be taken on board.

I would like to clarify paragraph 19, because I do not think it is quite as Peter said. It is either – and I realise it is not simple to do this – a simple majority of the PCC, if two-thirds of the members are present and voting, or a simple majority of the total membership of the PCC, whether or not two-thirds of the members are there. That second provision is there to frustrate those who could continuously absent themselves from a meeting and thereby make sure that two-thirds were never present – if I can put it that way. Does that make sense? It is a double trigger. Paragraph 7 of the guidance note refers to good practice in relation to the giving of notice, consultation with the wider parish and so forth. We may want to look at that again to see if it could be strengthened in various ways.

I think I have touched on all the contributions. I am very grateful to those who made a contribution and to others who might have wished to do so but have not. I am quietly confident that Synod will wish to give the House of Bishops' Declaration and the Resolution of Disputes Procedure Regulations a welcome, as indicated in the motion.

The motion was put and carried.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Birmingham (Rt Revd David Urquhart)* took the Chair at 11.35 a.m.

The Chair: As the Bishop of Rochester has already said, the revision stage is unusual because it takes place without there having been an earlier Revision Committee stage. The consequence is that the way in which it is conducted differs in one important respect from the way a revision stage is normally conducted, in that the 40-member rule does not apply. This is a technical detail, so bear with me. When we come to the amendments, I shall call the movers to move and speak to their amendments and then a member of the Steering Committee to comment, following which the day will continue without the usual 40 members having to stand for this to be possible, until no one remains standing to speak or the closure is put and carried. We will then vote on the amendment in the normal way. I hope that makes the position absolutely clear and I will make sure that we proceed accordingly.

As far as the various items of business are concerned, where no notice has been given of any amendments to particular clauses and no members have indicated that they wish to speak against those clauses, I give my permission under SO 55(c) to the clauses being taken *en bloc*.

Legislative Business:
Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women)
Measure (GS 1925A) and Draft Amending Canon No. 33 (GS 1926A)

Article 7 and Article 8 business

Clause 1

Canon Dr Paula Gooder (Birmingham): I beg to move:

‘That Clause 1 stand part of the Measure.’

Dr Lindsay Newcombe (London): I am the lay vice-chair of Forward in Faith and I was involved in the conversations that took place in the first half of last year, at the beginning of this new process. They began really quite confrontationally, which was emotionally draining, but became more constructive as time went by. The talks that have happened in the past year and the conversations we had last July and November in the corridors have been mostly refreshing and positive. Everywhere I have been in the past year, I have encouraged people to communicate, to talk, to engage and to work constructively together with others with whom they disagree. I now believe that there is the will to stop battling each other and talking past each other. Whether we knew we were doing it or not, that is very much how it was seen.

I believe that we have come to an agreement, based on our intentional evangelism debate in November, that the mission of the Church is more important than our feelings of distance from our brothers and sisters. I believe that we can do mission so much better together.

As a result of this process, over the past year we have come to a greater understanding of each other. That has resulted in the House of Bishops’ Declaration, five guiding principles

which commit us to recognize and understand our reality in this part of the worldwide Church and to celebrate our diversity. How brilliant that we have shown that we have the will to work together for the kingdom despite differences. There is still a long way to go, but how much better it will be if we make our vision a reality.

If members support the five guiding principles, they accept the diversity of theological understanding in the Church of England and understand that I and others who do not support the consecration of women bishops will have to oppose a vote on the clause of the Measure that introduces them – which this is. I am not trying to derail the process and I am committed to working this out in the best way for the Church, but I will record my vote against the Measure in this vote today. As it is a matter of conscience, members of Synod would not expect me to do anything different.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton (Guildford): I rise to speak partly to honour what Dr Newcombe has just said but also because this is a significant moment, and it does feel to me that it would be improper to let clause 1 go to a vote without also hearing other words. This is not the moment of final approval, as the Bishop of Rochester said. We are in a midpoint but it is still a moment. As well as honouring Dr Newcombe's words, we need to honour all the praying and the thinking that has happened and which led us to this state.

From my experience on the Steering Committee, we no longer say 'both sides' because there is an increasing recognition that there are multiple sides, and indeed multiple views, conflicting views sometimes, within each one of us. As we consider this moment and momentous clause 1, we are not in a state where some of us will be happy and some not; we are all of us, I believe, mixed.

I am reminded of some of the language that was used in the 1992 debate on the ordination of women to the priesthood. It spoke both of that being consummate with Scripture and Tradition, thereby confirming the fidelity, the faithfulness, but also the sense that that new legislation was required by Scripture and Tradition, thereby honouring something that was fresh. For me, keeping those two together, the faithfulness and the freshness, is quite hard and puzzling. I draw great comfort from a line from a hymn written by George Caird, that great biblical scholar: 'You have more truth and light to break forth from thy Holy Word' – that sense of the settled, faithful Tradition, which is itself renewing. I believe that what we are doing now, here in clause 1, is both faithful and fresh. If that is a puzzling mixture, we can be confident because God and God's word is both faithful and fresh. I commend clause 1 to Synod.

The motion was put and carried.

Clause 2

Revd Canon Dr Simon Taylor (Derby): I beg to move as an amendment:

Page 1, Clause 2, *leave out* lines 13 to 15 and *insert* –

'In Schedule 23 to the Equality Act 2010 (general exceptions), after paragraph 2 *insert* –

"2A A diocesan or suffragan bishop does not discriminate against a person in

contravention of this Act only because of anything the bishop does in seeking to give effect to a resolution passed by a parochial church council to request, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration of the Ministry of Bishops and Priests."'

First of all, may I say that I am wholeheartedly in support of the ordination to the episcopate of people of all genders. However, I am troubled by the second clause of the draft Measure before us, which offers a blanket removal of bishops from the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

There is some irony in the fact that, in order to bring greater equality to the Church of England, we should need to find an exemption from the Equality Act, and that irony should give us at least pause. I am troubled by clause 2. It troubles me that this is not the best way to proceed. It troubles me also that there is a cost to this exemption.

I should acknowledge with gratitude the legal officers of Synod for help in putting together even such a crass instrument as the amendment that stands in my name. I rather regret that the manner of our proceeding this morning does not allow a more nuanced approach than an amendment can provide.

Synod, the Equality Act offers protection to a wide range of people on the basis not just of their gender but also on the basis of disability, age and other factors. Clause 2 of the draft Measure makes it clear that we do need to be able to discriminate, in order to make appropriate provision in the terms of the House of Bishops' Declaration that we have heard about this morning. However, I remain troubled that the exclusion of bishops from clauses in the Equality Act about disability and age and so on may have unintended consequences. This clause is a blunt instrument. If we need to discriminate – and it is clear that we do – then we need to be more precise about the nature of our discrimination than such a blanket exclusion allows. If I may be permitted a metaphor, what we need is keyhole surgery under a local anaesthetic. What the clause offers is a general anaesthetic, after which we will awaken to discover that we have lost a limb.

The breadth of the exclusion provided by the clause should trouble us, but equally troubling is the nature of the exclusion as a retreat from the public square and from our mission in it. Mission in the public square carries accountability, and any retreat from this, however trivial it may seem, is a retreat from our public mission. We should want our bishops to be accountable under equality legislation. This retreat from the public mission that the clause embodies should trouble us.

Finally, I am advised that the amendment standing in my name would threaten the passage of this Measure and in no way do I wish this to happen, so whilst I remain troubled by the breadth of clause 2 and by our retreat from public mission, and I regret that there is no opportunity to deal in a more nuanced way with this, I would ask the Chair for permission to withdraw my amendment. (*Applause*)

The Chair: For the amendment to be withdrawn, this being the revision stage, I need the unanimous consent of Synod. Is it the will of Synod that the amendment be withdrawn? (*Agreed*)

The amendment was withdrawn.

The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd James Langstaff): I beg to move:

‘That Clause 2 stand part of the Measure.’

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): I wholly support that this clause should stand part of the Measure. Can we please reassure ourselves that the words ‘public office’ have a very narrow and particular meaning at this point in the legislation? It is not the normal sense that we would give to the expression ‘public office’. This is necessary because of the particular terms of Schedule 6 of the Equality Act. All we are doing is ensuring that what we have always believed will continue to be the case.

Can I reassure those who would have been in support of something such as was spoken in favour of in the withdrawn amendment that we are not in any way moving back from the assertion that our bishops and other members of this Church can hold public office and are subject to all the disciplines of the Equality Act?

The Bishop of Rochester, in reply: I am grateful to Philip Giddings for that intervention. It gives me an opportunity to remind members of Synod that in paragraphs 17-19 of the Legal Office note on clause 2, which was circulated as GS Misc 1068, the point is made, as Philip Giddings has made it, that clause 2 as drafted does not imply any retreat from the public square or any change in our understanding of the public role of bishops. Indeed, in relation to the Equality Act it may be interesting to note that it puts bishops into exactly the same position as members of the House of Lords, government ministers and even the Prime Minister.

The motion was put and carried.

New clause

Mr Clive Scowen (London): I beg to move as an amendment:

Page 1, after line 15 *insert* –

‘3 Status of parochial church council resolution requesting arrangements in relation to priestly or episcopal ministry

For the avoidance of doubt, it is declared that a resolution passed by a parochial church council, requesting, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in relation to priestly or episcopal ministry, shall be taken to be an expression of “the strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of the religions followers’ for the purposes of paragraph 2(6) of Schedule 9 to the Equality Act 2010.”’

The new clause I am proposing is a simple deeming provision, intended to bring certainty where there is currently some doubt and so to build confidence in the robustness of the whole package we have before us. It concerns the position of bishops, patrons and parish representatives where a PCC has passed a resolution seeking arrangements on grounds of theological conviction with regard to the appointment of an incumbent or priest in charge.

The doubt is as to whether bishops, patrons and lay reps would be exposed to a challenge under the Equality Act if they acted in accordance with such a request.

We were told in GS 1994, which we had before us in November, that for various reasons that risk was very small but it none the less does exist and its very existence could have a chilling effect on the willingness of patrons and lay reps, whose financial resources may well be very limited, to act in accordance with the resolution for fear of having to defend the challenge.

It is said in GS 1924 that the challenge could be brought only by a woman who had not been considered or appointed to a vacancy. It is true that only such a person could bring a discrimination claim but it is impossible to exclude the possibility of a disgruntled parishioner, for example, seeking judicial review on the basis that the Equality Act had not been complied with, and it is impossible to exclude the possibility of a judge finding that such a parishioner had standing to bring a challenge.

GS 1924 also tells us that bishops would take responsibility and protect parish reps and that they would do that by themselves vetoing a patron's appointment that did not comply with the PCC resolution. This amendment, this new clause that I am moving, would protect bishops as well and it may well save them and the Church Commissioners time and money in having to defend challenges. In any event, the bishop's ability to protect parish reps in this way is not complete. Where the Crown is patron, the bishop has no veto. In the absence of any undertaking from those who make Crown appointments that they would always comply with a PCC request, parish reps could well find themselves in a very exposed position.

Where does this doubt, this uncertainty, come from? Paragraph 2(6) of Schedule 9 to the Equality Act exempts from challenge what would otherwise be a discriminatory act, if it is done in order to comply with 'the strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of the religion's followers'. We were told in GS 1924 and previously that a PCC resolution would probably fall within that concept, but in the absence of a court decision to that effect it is impossible to be certain – hence the doubt. This new clause resolves that doubt by deeming a PCC resolution seeking arrangements on grounds of theological conviction to be an expression of 'the strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of the religion's followers', in this case members of the Church of England, for the purposes of paragraph 2(6) of Schedule 9. Those acting in accordance with such a resolution would be protected from challenge.

It does not amend the Equality Act at all. It simply makes clear that something that is already believed to be within its provisions actually is. That is all it does. It does nothing to disturb the carefully crafted balance. Rather, it reinforces it. If there are concerns about precise drafting, they can be dealt with by the Steering Committee and they can finesse it at final drafting stage. It is the substance we need to decide today, as to whether we wish to give this reassurance to bishops, patrons and lay representatives that they will indeed be exempt from challenge if they do what we all agree that we want them to do, which is to act in accordance with a request from a PCC. I urge Synod to add this clause, to remove a potential obstacle to the carefully crafted package and particularly to its working in practice as the Bishops' Declaration intends it to do.

The Bishop of Rochester, in reply: I am grateful to Clive Scowen for his proposed amendment, which of course reflects a genuine and widely shared desire to minimise the risk of legal challenges being brought against PCCs and others under the Equality Act. I am, however, urging Synod to resist this amendment, both because I think it is unnecessary and, perhaps more importantly, because if carried it would no longer be safe to allow the Measure to proceed towards final approval because we do not believe that it would then be able to secure parliamentary approval.

First, we need to acknowledge that, whatever our quite understandable desires, in the end we cannot guarantee absolutely against legal challenge. However wrong-headed such a legal challenge might be, people may always try. Indeed, the possibility of legal challenge to our present arrangements has always been there, though it has not been taken up. It is for this reason that paragraphs 23 and 24 of the draft House of Bishops' Declaration make clear that a PCC resolution, properly and duly passed, should be honoured, and that those concerned should see to it that that is so.

The House of Bishops has accepted, as Clive Scowen has acknowledged, that the diocesan bishop should act as the guarantor of the process, taking the strain in such a way that he or she would be the one against whom any legal challenge would be made. This would, for example, mean bishops being willing to exercise the power of veto they already have under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, thus – as the Declaration states – protecting parish representatives from having to use their power under that Measure. That power which bishops have has not been much used in the past, but the bishops are clear about their willingness to use it in these circumstances if that should be necessary. Incidentally, I think the likelihood of the Crown seeking to act against the law when it is the patron is somewhat slim.

The Measure as we have it has been incredibly carefully drafted, taking the best advice and in consultation with – as the Legal Office note to which I have already referred reminds us – government lawyers. I am advised that, unfortunately, Mr Scowen's amendment, if passed, would leave us with a Measure that would be contrary to the terms both of the European Equality Framework Directive 2000 and the European Equal Treatment Directive 2006. As a result, the Government would not be able to allow the Measure, amended in this way, to pass through Parliament. It means that at the end of this revision stage I would need, on behalf of the Steering Committee, to move a motion under SO 58 for the Measure to be considered for further revision in committee. Given that Synod decided not to have a Revision Committee, that would not be a happy outcome. Moreover, there could be no confidence that such a committee would be able to come up with a formulation that would work and be lawful. Incidentally, I do not think something of this nature can be sorted out at final drafting stage either.

Let me try, therefore, to provide some of the reassurance that is sought as to why this Measure can be supported in its present form. Mr Scowen speaks of 'avoidance of doubt'. There is actually no doubt that, where a PCC passes a resolution on the grounds of the strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of those worshipping in the parish, that action is covered by the exemption provided in paragraph 2 of Schedule 9 to the Equality Act. There is therefore no doubt to be avoided, and I hope that members of Synod will be reassured by that.

It is perhaps also worth noting that asking Parliament to provide the additional protection sought by this amendment would be asking for something that goes beyond what we have at present. When a PCC passes a resolution under the 1993 Measure it is relying on the general exemption for organised religion provided in Schedule 9 to the Equality Act. There is no special exception now and there is no need for one in the future.

There may also be a danger that Mr Scowen's amendment, by asserting that certain decisions made by a PCC 'shall be taken to be an expression of the strongly held religious convictions...' and so forth, could provide legal protection for decisions that were in reality taken on other grounds. It is this that would fall foul of the European law, since in effect it involves deeming something to result from religious conviction, even if it did not in fact.

I agree with Mr Scowen that we all want to minimize the risk of legal challenge, particularly for PCCs and for parish representatives. It is my assertion, however, that the Measure as drafted, the general exemption that is already there under the Equality Act and the fact that bishops have committed themselves to act as guarantors for PCC resolutions, provides all the reassurances that can reasonably and lawfully be provided. I therefore urge Synod to resist this amendment.

Mr Gerald O'Brien (Rochester): I would like to thank my diocesan bishop for the very full reply he has given to Mr Scowen's request. It does occur to me that this Church has been governed by Parliament since the 16th century and it has been the British Parliament that has made the rules and regulations under which we operate. If I have understood the bishop correctly, we are now told that what Mr Scowen wants to do would fall foul of the European Directives and European law. If that is the situation, could I commend to Synod voting for UKIP at the earliest opportunity?

Revd Mark Steadman (Southwark): I too would wish to urge members of Synod to resist this amendment. I do have some sympathy with what Clive Scowen is seeking to achieve and I understand the concern that provokes this amendment. However, as we have heard, the consequences of it are very serious. The amendment suggests there is a doubt, either in the draft Measure or in the Equality Act. Like the Bishop of Rochester, I do not believe that there is such a doubt. Mr Scowen seeks protection from something that is already well covered in the Measure, the Equality Act and the Patronage Measure. Any PCC, bishop or patron who behaves lawfully and follows due process, which they are bound to do in all manner of areas and are perfectly used to doing, will not, as I understand it, contravene the Equality Law. I understand the fear and concern about this, but PCCs and others simply need to keep behaving appropriately and properly and all will be well.

Mr Scowen is seeking to address the management of risk. In fact he is seeking to remove it entirely; but managing risk in decisions made by bodies and individuals is something we are all used to dealing with on a very regular basis. This amendment effectively seeks to extend the scope of the Equality Act and, as such, unbalances that careful piece of legislation. More importantly, as has been indicated, the definition would go far beyond that which the Act intends and beyond the scope of the European directives which have been enacted into English law by Parliament in that legislation. In contravening these, there would be a very serious risk that this whole Measure would be lost. Indeed, as we have heard, a vote for this amendment could well lead to the collapse of this legislation. That seems rather a high price to pay for the avoidance of a non-existent doubt.

For the PCC that acts legitimately, the necessary protection to give effect to its theological views already exists. We do not need to be fearful about this and I would encourage Synod to reject this amendment.

The amendment was put and lost.

Clauses 3-4

The Bishop of Rochester: I beg to move:

‘That Clauses 3 and 4 stand part of the Measure.’

The motion was put and carried.

Schedule

The Bishop of Rochester: I beg to move:

‘That the Schedule stand part of the Measure.’

The motion was put and carried.

Long Title

The Bishop of Rochester: I beg to move:

‘That the Long Title stand part of the Measure.’

The motion was put and carried.

The Chair: That completes the revision stage of the Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure. The Measure now stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting.

Draft Amending Canon No. 33 (GS 1926A)

Clauses 1–6

The Chair: I have not had notice of any amendments or any intention to speak against any of the provisions of Amending Canon No. 33. I therefore give my permission under SO 55(c) for Clauses 1-6 to be moved *en bloc*, and I invite a member of the Steering Committee to move Item 515 on the Order Paper.

The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd James Langstaff): I beg to move:

‘That Clauses 1–6 stand part of the Canon.’

The Bishop of Burnley (Rt Revd John Goddard): I hope that mine will be a useful comment to help the Synod forward. So far we have taken votes for and against, but I hope that, with the Chair’s permission, we may also take votes on abstentions in relation to this item.

A previous speaker referred to the need of conscience and I would like to quote John Henry Newman, who said that he would indeed drink to the Pope but would drink to conscience first. In the draft Canon we have a balance of clauses drawing on the principle of ordination of women to the episcopacy and the Regulations and Declaration enshrined within the Canon. Therefore, while in conscience I cannot vote for the part of the draft Canon covered by Clause 1, I nevertheless want to support very strongly the way forward to which we are moving. Allowing votes on abstentions would enable those of us who wish to do so to move from having to consider voting against to voting to abstain, thus allowing the matter to go forward in a spirit of trust and goodwill.

The Chair: I am personally not minded to accede to Bishop John's request but I would like to test the mind of Synod, which is much more important, and to that end I need to see 25 members standing in order to have a division of the whole Synod, which will then record the abstentions. Are there 25 members standing? There are. I invite the mover of the motion to respond to Bishop John's suggestion.

The Bishop of Rochester, in reply: I thank Bishop John for his comment. The respecting and recording of members' conscience is important and 25 members have indicated that they agree. Clearly at the stage of final approval that will be very much a part of the picture anyway.

The motion was put and carried, 304 voting in favour and 33 against, with 45 recorded abstentions.

The Chair: That completes the revision stage of this item. The draft Amending Canon No. 33 now stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 12.22 p.m.

The Chair: We move seamlessly to Item 500. The Business Committee has determined that the draft Act of Synod be considered under the preliminary motion procedure, for which provision is made in SO 71(a). If Item 500 is lost, the rescinding Act of Synod will not proceed further. If it is carried, subject to completion of the Article 7 procedure, at a later group of sessions it will return to the Synod for final approval.

Draft Act of Synod Rescinding the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 (GS 1934)

Article 7 Business

The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd James Langstaff): I beg to move:

‘That the draft Act of Synod rescinding the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 be considered.’

We all know that the 1993 Act of Synod evokes a variety of reactions, some quite strong. However, this is not the time to rehearse again all the arguments about the merits or otherwise of what was agreed more than 20 years ago. For the purpose of this debate, it suffices to acknowledge that whatever view one takes of all that, the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod and the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 will now be superseded by

the combined effect of the new Measure, the Amending Canon, the House of Bishops' Declaration and the Regulations for the Disputes Resolution Procedure.

It is interesting to note that SO 40, which deals with Acts of Synod, comes in that part of the Standing Orders headed 'Other procedures and customs'. Acts of Synod are not forms of legislation and therefore cannot create rights or obligations. They are described in the Standing Orders as a means of giving formal publication to any instrument or resolution of the Synod 'as the embodiment of the will or opinion of the Church of England as expressed by the whole body of the Synod'. They are therefore weighty and significant statements, but perhaps sometimes they are accorded more weight than might be appropriate for the slightly unsatisfactory reason that 'Act of Synod' sounds rather like 'Act of Parliament', when in fact the synodical equivalent of an Act of Parliament is, of course, a Measure.

Since 1993 this particular Act of Synod has been spoken of almost as though it were the only one that existed, but in fact there are various other examples, such as the Acts of Synod in relation to the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation and that by which the Porvoo Declaration was ratified some years ago. Today the synodical instrument before us is another new Act of Synod, needed this time in order to rescind a previous one.

There are just three points of detail that I want to mention; they are all alluded to in paragraph 23 of the House of Bishops' report (GS 1932). The first is that the sees of Beverley, Ebbsfleet and Richborough exist by virtue of the Suffragan Bishops Act 1988, not because of the Act of Synod. They will therefore continue in existence after the Act of Synod is rescinded. If still in office at that point, the current holders of those posts will remain in office, and if they leave at some later date the relevant Archbishop would then be able to appoint a successor.

Secondly, the title 'Provincial Episcopal Visitor' and the description of the role are currently set out in the 1993 Act of Synod; and of course when the Act is rescinded, if it is, that will no longer be the case. Nevertheless, the House of Bishops sees no reason why the present titles, roles and indeed financial arrangements need to be changed simply because the Act of Synod disappears. As I stated earlier, the sees remain in any case. Finally, although we are starting the process today, as the Chair has already alluded to, there is a process and this new Act of Synod will constitute Article 7 business. That does not mean that it needs diocesan approval, but it has to be referred to the House of Bishops and it will then be open to the Convocations and the House of Laity to claim a reference before it can come to final approval. In addition, the instrument provides that it will come into force on the same day as the promulgation of the Amending Canon. That is all part of trying to ensure that this whole package hangs together in the way that has always been our intention.

The Archdeacon of Buckingham (Ven. Karen Gorham) (Oxford): I never thought that I would welcome an Act of Synod, but I welcome this draft. As we have heard, the 1993 Episcopal Act of Synod has been the topic of much debate over the years, including the subject of an entire book by the late Monica Furlong. A generation of priests has lived with the Act and, although we could say that we would not all be here in this Synod today without it, for many it has caused much distress, confusion and incredulity. Sadly, an Act that was to be a framework for the way in which we could all coexist soon became a fence to keep us apart. For many the winners appear to have been only fear and doubt.

I am not sure how history will judge the past 20 years; only time will tell. Was the Act of Synod a stroke of genius or, as Monica Furlong wrote, ‘an act of folly’? There have been losses on either side – those for whom it was a step too far and those for whom it did not go far enough. The witness of the Church has been all the poorer. The Act allowed us to go in two directions rather than out together in mission. Deanery co-operation, neighbourhood outreach and mission planning have suffered because, over the fence, we appear to have said, ‘I have no need of you’.

A generation on, I would like to think that we may have grown up and that instead of our need to be apart we have the maturity to live together out there in the world. I hope that this is so for the sake of those whom we serve and those who need the good news of the gospel of love and do not understand our theological differences.

The worst thing we can do now is continue as we have done and bury ourselves in separate structures, for we have the possibility of a new way. With the bishops’ Declaration in place and the five principles on which we agree, I hope that we can work together in a united way, respecting one another’s integrity, understanding one another’s theology and appreciating different liturgical practice, and that we can have conversations side by side about pastoral organisation, deployment and our strengths and weaknesses.

If the Episcopal Act of Synod in 1993 was for us, let this new way forward be for others. I hope that all of us may banish fear and doubt, pass this draft Act of Synod to rescind the 1993 Act and walk together in mission.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): – and speaking rather off the cuff in my capacity as chair of the House of Clergy in the diocese of Southwark.

The eagle-eyed members of Synod who have been around for a long time will have noticed on page 13 of the Agenda a motion from our diocesan synod dated March 2003 that the Act of Synod be rescinded, and it seemed inappropriate to let this moment pass without someone from that diocese marking that moment!

I was not a member of the diocesan synod at that time, but I would imagine that our diocese passed that motion because the experience of the Act of Synod was not life-giving or life-enhancing for a significant number particularly of female clergy but also many male clergy in our diocese, and the reason we sent this to General Synod was to raise that question. Time has moved on, as Karen has just said, and the context in which this debate is now taking place is very different from the one we would have envisaged 11 years ago.

In requesting the Synod to approve this motion today, I want to acknowledge the comments made earlier by Fr Cartwright about the way in which he and many others like him have found the Act to be life-enhancing. As we move forward, we do so in a different and changed environment and for both sides of the argument we can say that the package of legislation before us offers us an opportunity to move beyond that, and that the new Act of Synod will offer a way in which we can walk together in trust and fellowship. That is what I have always wanted from this process. For a long time I have been a supporter of the simplest possible legislation and I am delighted that we have reached the point at which we now have it.

In marking the death on the Agenda of our diocesan synod motion, I pray that Synod will pass this motion today.

Mr Adrian Vincent (Guildford): I too agree that the 1993 Act of Synod should go and that the five principles in the House of Bishops' Declaration are a better way forward for mutual flourishing. However, I would like to expand a little further on an area of this that was touched on today in speeches by Christina Baron, Gerry O'Brien and the Bishop of Rochester.

Currently, the Act of Synod reads, 'No person or body shall discriminate against candidates for appointment to senior office on the grounds of their view or positions about the ordination of women to the priesthood.' That will go and will be replaced by paragraph 12 of the House of Bishops' Declaration, which allows a diocese to specify in the statement of needs that it wants a bishop who does ordain women.

Christina Baron said that she hopes the bench of bishops will still include people of many integrities, and that is the aspiration in paragraph 13 of the Declaration, but she welcomes the provision in paragraph 12 because, at last, dioceses can be honest and open and do not need sneakily to find out about a candidate's position.

Gerry O'Brien's concern is that, given that the majority of people in the Church of England are strongly supportive of the ordination of women, we could have a situation in which every diocese makes a statement that its diocesan bishop must be one who ordains women. In paragraph 12 there is no reference to diocesan bishops having to consider appointing a suffragan bishop or making episcopal provision for the traditionalists within their diocese, and Gerry O'Brien was concerned about the lack of reciprocity in that respect.

In his reply, the Bishop of Rochester drew our attention to the five principles and the intention of mutual flourishing and how that will address that concern, but I believe that further consideration needs to be given to this area. If every diocese states that its diocesan bishop must be someone who ordains women and, going by past history, all or the extreme majority of diocesan bishops then appoint suffragan bishops of a like mind, leaving only the three PEVs for traditionalists and the one conservative evangelical, the aspiration of paragraph 13 and the five principles could not be given effect. Therefore, how does referring back to the five principles actually help in that situation?

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): On the statute book in the United States there still exists a traffic law clause that reads, 'When two vehicles travelling in the opposite direction shall come to a crossroads, both shall stop and neither shall move until the other has passed.' I do not know how that can be done!

With the passing of the 1993 Act of Synod we faced a similar difficulty. Lord Habgood was the architect of that Act of Synod and he tried to give theological and practical expression to the concept that both those in favour and in opposition are loyal Anglicans. How are we to do this? It may not have worked well in all parts of the Church of England, but in other parts it worked to keep the peace and kept people within the Church of England. I am sorry that in some areas women felt as though they were second-class citizens, but I can honestly say, hand on heart, that in some areas in which I have served – Stepney, Birmingham and now in York – actually it has worked in terms of getting us where we are today.

I would not have argued for the rescinding of the Act of Synod without the five principles and the Regulations, because I feel that, as the Prolocutor at that time having to support Lord Habgood's Act of Synod, I would have betrayed a lot of people to whom we said, 'There is space and room for you'. It may not have worked properly on the ground, but I want to plead that the history in 1993 was pretty difficult and Lord Habgood actually resolved the conundrum of when two cars travelling in the opposite direction come to a crossroads neither shall move until the other has passed. It kept those in opposition within the Church of England, and for that I am very grateful.

I hope that Synod will unanimously support the motion to rescind the 1993 Act of Synod as a matter of good principle, because it will be replaced by something much better; but, friends, hindsight is always a painful science.

The Bishop of Rochester, in reply: I am conscious that, from slightly different perspectives, both Karen Gorham and the Archbishop of York have in a sense reflected on where we have come from, and I am glad that ultimately both find themselves in the same position of wanting the Synod to move forward with the new arrangements, setting out a different way in which we live together and share our common life in the acknowledgement of our differences on this and other matters.

To Simon Butler, I am delighted to be part of the mechanism by which the will of the Southwark diocese might be fulfilled rather a long time after it first tabled its diocesan synod motion and that hopefully we can now take that item off the Synod Agenda.

Adrian Vincent again raised the issue, arising from paragraph 12 of the House of Bishops' draft Declaration, concerning the position of diocesan bishops and referred to the situation that may arise whereby all diocesan bishops are those who will ordain women rather than those who will not. It is a question as it were of the supply of appropriate bishops. However, because of the way in which bishops are appointed by different bodies and the fact that different people have a stake in it, it is always difficult for us to think that we can micro-manage that process to bring about a particular solution – hence the commitment on behalf of the House to ensure such supply without being able to specify the detail of how it would be assured. Again, I am conscious that it requires us to trust one another. That is really what lies at the heart of much of this and I hope that we can proceed on the basis of that trust.

This may be the last moment available to me to speak in this collection of debates. Therefore, in asking the Synod to support this motion I would observe that the debate this morning has been quite low key because we have been dealing with some of the nitty-gritty of how to get from where we were to where we seek to move, but what we have done this morning has been significant and will prepare us for the next stages of bringing about that which together we are working towards.

The motion was put and carried.

The Chair: The motion having been carried, as I indicated at the beginning of the debate, provided that the procedure under Article 7 of the Synod's constitution is completed successfully, at a later date the Synod will have an opportunity to vote on whether or not finally to approve the Act of Synod.

Members of Synod, I have a problem. It is now 12.43 and we could of course move straight on to Item 10, but I sense that we have all worked hard and I can see that many members have not yet left the chamber. Therefore, without reference to anyone else, it seems to me a good idea that we adjourn now and resume at 2.30 to deal with Item 10. [*Several members: Hear, hear!*]

(Adjournment)

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

The Chair: As members of Synod know, the Women in the Episcopate legislation must, under Article 8 of the Synod's constitution, be approved by a majority of dioceses meeting at their diocesan synods before it can come for final approval. The item on the Agenda refers to a proposal by the Business Committee that SO 90(b)(iii) be suspended so that dioceses can be required to vote on the Women in the Episcopate legislation and return their voting results to the Clerk of the Synod within a shorter period than the usual minimum period of six months. The intention is to give the dioceses just over three months, in addition to the formal notice period of three months that they were given in November. The aim is to speed up the progress of the legislation, so that all remaining stages can be completed at the July group of sessions, rather than in November 2014 or possibly later, which will enable it to go for parliamentary discussion and approval this year.

I need to remind members of Synod that under SO 38(d) 'The motion shall not be deemed to have been carried unless upon a show of hands or after a division of the whole Synod at least three-quarters of the members of the Synod present and voting have voted in its favour'. Accordingly, at the conclusion of the debate I will order a division of the whole Synod.

Women in the Episcopate: Article 8 Reference to the Dioceses Motion to Suspend SO 90(b)(iii)

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): I beg to move:

'That paragraph (b)(iii) of Standing Order 90 be suspended until the end of the group of sessions to be held in November 2014.'

Many if not all members of the Synod will remember the Article 8 process from 2010 when the last package of draft legislation on Women in the Episcopate was referred to the dioceses. Article 8 of the Constitution of the General Synod says that 'a Measure or Canon providing for permanent changes in the Services of Baptism or Holy Communion or in the Ordinal...' and in some other formal instruments 'shall not be finally approved by the General Synod' unless, at a stage determined by the Archbishops, the Measure or the Canon or the substance of the proposals embodied therein 'has been approved by a majority of dioceses at meetings of their diocesan Synods'.

SO 90 makes provision for the way in which Article 8 references are to be conducted in practice, giving responsibility to the Business Committee for overseeing them, subject to certain conditions. The effect of SO 90(a), which is unaffected by my motion, is that, following the successful completion of the revision stage, the Business Committee will be sending round documentation to diocesan synods immediately after this group of sessions to

explain how they should proceed with the vote on the Article 8 reference. That material is all ready to go, subject to some final tweaks in the light of the business we have transacted today. I am asking Synod now to vote on timing. Essentially, whether the period we allow for dioceses to vote and return their voting results to the Clerk to the Synod should be shorter than Standing Orders provide.

Paragraph (b)(iii) of SO 90 lays down one of the conditions with which the Business Committee has to comply. It states that ‘every diocesan synod shall be requested to frame its reply in the common form prescribed by the Business Committee and shall be informed of the date prescribed by the Business Committee for replies which shall be not less than six months later than the date of the Synod’s decision that the matter should be referred’.

Synod, I doubt that our predecessors have been in a situation like this. The sense of our deliberations this morning demonstrates that we have found together a measure of agreement and a real will to move forward – or even to gallop forward, as I heard one overexcited member mention. In this context, six months seems like quite a long time. The Business Committee is asking for this subparagraph of the Standing Order to be suspended so that it can ask dioceses and synods to vote on the draft Measure and Canon more quickly than that. I am advised that the suspension of Standing Orders has to be done by operating on a whole paragraph or subparagraph. However, I can give Synod an unequivocal assurance that the Business Committee will, under its general power of supervision, be requesting diocesan synods to frame their replies in a common form, as they usually do, so the suspension of the first few words of that subparagraph will have no practical effect, as I cannot image a diocese declining to co-operate in that respect.

Members of Synod will also want to know the deadline that will in fact be set if this motion is passed. With the agreement of the Business Committee, diocesan secretaries were given notice immediately after the November Synod that there might be an Article 8 reference after this group of sessions and that it was possible that there would be a shorter deadline than usual. They have been making their preparations since then. At that stage they were told that the latest time for responses, if the remaining stages were to be taken in July, would be by midnight on Thursday 22 May because the Business Committee would be meeting on the following day to set the July agenda. I can now confirm that that will be the deadline if this motion is passed. I can also confirm that, whether or not this motion is carried, the Business Committee intends to start the formal reference process this week. Although there will be only just over three months from the moment the reference starts, there will have been more than six months between putting the dioceses on notice and the deadline for responses.

Members of Synod will want to weigh carefully the reasons we have for this proposed timetable. They are set out in paragraph 28 of the report from the House of Bishops (GS 1932) as follows: ‘the dioceses (with consultation with the deaneries in many cases) have already considered legislation on women bishops and approved it by 42-2; there is a strong desire in the Synod and the wider Church to make rapid progress; the new legislation is simple and is part of a package that has had overwhelming support in the General Synod and will not in practice...’ – after today – ‘be susceptible to further significant change; given that we enter the final year of the Parliament this coming spring, there is something to be said for getting the legislation through the Synod and into the parliamentary process in July rather than November.’

Those arguments were considered separately by the House, the Archbishops' Council and the Business Committee. Each body found them persuasive. We should never lightly depart from our normal process but the Standing Orders themselves set down a process, which we are following today, for dealing with unusual circumstances in unusual ways – and this is a highly unusual set of circumstances. Indeed, I am not aware of any previous occasions since the creation of the Synod in 1970 when legislation on the same subject has had to go to the dioceses twice. Although this time the details of the legislation are different and in many ways much simpler, many of the issues are the same, namely should the Church pass legislation to enable women to become bishops in the context of an overall package designed to maintain a place for those unable to welcome that development?

It is the Synod's choice to decide whether to give the necessary 75 per cent majority this afternoon. We can do that but, if we do not, we shall need to give the dioceses at least until the second half of August to respond. November will be the earliest possible date for final approval and we shall then have to hope that we get through the subsequent parliamentary processes as quickly as possible. We can do that, but I think it would be a pity, given the huge progress made last autumn and the speed with which we have acted this morning. I believe that we will find a parallel willingness in the dioceses to move quickly. I believe that is what our dioceses are expecting and I urge Synod to join me in supporting the motion standing in my name.

Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford): Festina lente (hasten slowly) or, if I may slightly adapt it, *festina fide* (hasten by faith or in trust). I ought to say that I have a family motto, *fortiter et fideliter* (bravely and faithfully, or by trust). Unfortunately, a visit to the College of Heralds proved it to be entirely spurious, but that did not stop my father passing it on to us.

I have already hinted that I think the decision to amend Standing Orders, even on this one occasion, is unprecedented, irresponsible and unnecessary, as well as being unhelpful. It is unnecessary and unhelpful for process, and it would be irresponsible if this carefully architected package were to go forward in trust. I fear for any majority because, the longer it goes on with its way seemingly frustrated, it begins to become more emphatic, more dogmatic. If members of Synod know their history, that was seen between 1660 and 1662.

I am glad that the Chair of the Business Committee has drawn our attention to paragraph 28 because those are the only four reasons I can see for this being considered. However, each of them is not, in my opinion, convincing. First, the dioceses have debated legislation on women bishops before. The whole point is that they have not discussed this package. They have not understood it and they have certainly not owned it – this arrangement, not anything previous. We have acknowledged a sea change in the arrangements and the culture. To my knowledge, the dioceses have not engaged in any way formally with that at all. Unless there is that engagement at diocesan and deanery and parish level, which is always part of that sort of package, I suspect that trust will be dented. We will not be going forward with this new culture that we have indeed begun to create here and which we want to continue.

Do not be fooled by the figure of 42 out of 44 dioceses. Within that, there still remains 25 per cent of the Church of England for whom this element of trust, being trusted and giving trust is still quite a delicate balance. The dioceses need time. They need more than this immediate and shortened window, so that they can pass it to the deaneries and parishes

who only heard of this, frankly, six weeks ago and have no time to adapt for it. I would suggest that it is not only unnecessary or unhelpful for process but it is also irresponsible. It is in fact bad practice to change our Standing Orders in this way.

The second bullet point refers to a desire to make rapid progress. I believe that is exactly what we have done in the last 15 months. A language is now being used – indeed it has been quoted and given some applause – of a hell-for-leather gallop towards the tape. That gained the applause and the smiles, and when somebody spoke earlier today of being careful, ‘We are already moving fast, do not let us move at a gallop’, that began to get the jeers again. That was not good behaviour of Synod, in my opinion, because that is the sort of thing that dents fragile trust.

With headlines like ‘Women Fast-tracked to the House of Lords’ – when the spokesman for the bishops said that procedure needs to be changed so that women can be fast-tracked into the House of Lords before the House of Lords is changed – with the General Secretary of Synod referring in the press release for this set of sessions to there being a woman bishop before Christmas, with our own diocesan guidelines, and now this proposal to change Standing Orders, it all sounds like very rapid progress merely for process, leaving little time for these final moments to discuss as Standing Orders normally allow.

The comments made by Sarah Finch, Adrian Vincent and Gerry O’Brien on paragraphs 12 and 30 are very good examples of where this Synod and even the House of Bishops need a bit more time. I urge Synod to vote against reducing Standing Orders down to only three months.

Mrs Christina Rees (St Albans): I would like to declare that I speak in this debate as a member of WATCH, and before that I was a member of the Movement for the Ordination of Women, now long defunct. I can assure Synod that in all the time we have been debating women’s ordination and women’s consecration to the episcopate we have never rushed on this issue and we are not doing that now. We are keeping faith with the dioceses, honouring the desire of the wider Church to have women as bishops, honouring the Church’s overwhelming conviction that it is right that women and men share in our episcopal leadership and showing responsibility as the Established Church by taking into account Parliament’s timetable and the consequences of not suspending the Standing Order.

I have heard so many people say, ‘Let’s get on with passing the women bishops legislation so that we can get on with the real mission of the Church’ and I understand what they mean. They are referring to preaching the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to the captive, binding up the broken-hearted, but I believe that passing this legislation will be one of the most significant missional actions this Synod has ever taken. Taking the full six months, when it is possible to do otherwise, will not help those who remain opposed in principle to having women bishops; it will continue to allow the Church and this Synod to be held up to ridicule and our credibility will be further undermined. What is more, until we pass this legislation we will be keeping that question mark hanging over the heads of all women in ministry in this Church, especially our women clergy.

I hear what David Banting is saying, but we are far, far from moving at a gallop. We could not possibly be accused of that. Yes those words were used, but that is not what we are doing. That is not what suspending this Standing Order is to do with at all. The Chair of the Business Committee explained the consequences, the process and how it would be both

prudent, wise and in keeping with the special nature of the business before us, and the process we have already been through, for us to suspend this Standing Order on this occasion. Let us do everything we can within our powers. There is a proverb that says, 'If you can do good, then do good'. This is a good that we can do. I would urge Synod to do it and we can move forward in a timely, honourable, steady and faithful manner.

Revd Charles Read (Norwich): Somebody said this morning that the pace of doing this is wrong, and I entirely agree. It is far too slow. This is a rhetorical sleight of hand, which Synod will quickly spot, but the Church Assembly, the predecessor of the General Synod, first debated the ordination of women in 1920, and 94 years does seem rather a long time to be discussing a matter. That was a sleight of hand because, of course, we are discussing a particular legislative package here, but when I go round parishes both in my own diocese in Norwich and in the eastern region where I work in the training of potential ministers I find that parishes do not understand why we have taken this long, why it has been so slow.

In my own church in St Catherine's, Mile Cross, in the north of Norwich, we have had two female curates in succession. We have a female ordinand who will become our curate, God willing, this summer. We have a female archdeacon and we are about to have a female dean of the cathedral. People in my church wonder why the General Synod drags its feet over these matters. In July 2012, I ducked out of the July Synod to travel down to St John's, Harpenden, to preach at the first celebration of Holy Communion by one of my former students, Revd Amanda Duncan. Amanda is the curate in that church and at that point Philippa was the vicar. Afterwards, the very large congregation of over 200 people told me not only how much they had benefited from the ministry of their two female clergy but also bent my ear about why the General Synod was taking so long over this issue. That was 2012.

Meanwhile, when I work with candidates who are to be Readers and ordinands, I hear the female students saying from time to time, 'We don't know why we're bothering offering for ministry. The Church of England doesn't really value us. Look how long it's taking to get to the stage of having women bishops.' The fact is that our diocesan synods have begun to lose patience and faith in the General Synod. They do not think that we are going too fast; they think that we are going too slowly.

One of our deaneries in the Norwich diocesan synod brought a motion a couple of synods ago, raising this very question of whether the General Synod is competent and fit to do this. In their view we have made a mess of the legislation by not passing it in November 2012. If we go through a three-month reference, this will not make us look bad in the eyes of our dioceses and our parishes but quite the reverse. If we delay this by going for the normal length of reference, we will again have people saying, 'What's taking you so long? Why are you dragging your feet?'

In order to maintain the confidence of the people who have sent us here, we need to support the Business Committee and do this, not with unseemly haste but with the right kind of timescale, which is a three-month reference. I am sorry that in some parts of the country what we are doing seems too quick and I am sorry if it seems far too quick in some parts of the Lichfield diocese and Harold Wood, but I have to say that in the diocese of Norwich we are used to a rather brisker pace of life. I urge Synod to support the Business Committee and to restore people's confidence in the work we are doing here.

Revd Canon Deborah Flach (Europe): Our diocese is one of the very few dioceses which is able to comply with this suggested three-month time limit, yet we are very happy to allow this motion to go forward to suspend SO 90(b)(iii). Our diocese is a very flexible diocese. We move at a very brisk pace – even faster than Norwich – and we are very open to fresh expressions of Church, especially when it results in fresh expressions of Standing Orders, and so we are very content for this to go forward.

We have already spoken about it in our bishop's council and it was passed with a large majority at our diocesan synod. I simply commend this motion to suspend Standing Orders to Synod.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Prebendary David Houlding (London): Chair, Christina has spoken, and so Synod will recognize that I also have to speak. It is not quite true to say that we are joined at the hip, but we agree. She and I have spoken on this subject up and down the country over many, many years. She knows what I think and I know what she thinks, and we both know that we do not agree – except on one thing: that the Church has now come to the point where we have to go forward. The wonderful thing is that we have found the way forward. I spoke enthusiastically in November of the provisions that are now on the table. We have heard this morning that if in conscience members cannot go with this, then it is the honourable thing, when final approval comes, still to vote against. We are a Church that is in the process of open reception, and that continues.

Christina and others are right. There is no point in delay. There is no further credit to be gained by delaying this process. If I may simply adapt the words of Shakespeare, 'If this thing is to be done, then let's do it quickly'.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): Dioceses are funny places, are they not? I am tempted to send Gerry O'Brien the statement of needs from the diocese of London when we last appointed a diocesan bishop. We said quite clearly that the new diocesan *must* ordain women priests. Hmm...some of the things we ask for and those we get are not always quite the same – and Richard has been a great bishop. (*Laughter*) He is out of the country, so that is all right!

What we are trying to do here is to make sure that pastoral provision is made. That is different from the formal process of the consultation on Article 8 business. I think that the mistake in David Banting's speech was his belief that we can solve the problems that are perceived to be pastoral problems through the Article 8 reference. I know David is not a betting man but I was tempted to get a tenner out of my pocket and say to him, 'The reference to the dioceses will take place and it will probably be 42-2 again, but I am going to do my best to get London turned round'. It is unlikely the dioceses will change their minds on the principle, even though the legislation is different.

We need to be aware that this process has been very creative. Thank you, Synod. We have run with a process that has been so different, with a Steering Committee composed of people for and against, revision in full Synod and now sending it to the dioceses under Article 8 and saying, 'You can do it in three months because they don't want to do it again, because they are tired of the process.' However, in the spirit of what we have been doing, it may be that we ought to address some of the questions that are still lurking in the minds of

those who cannot yet accept women bishops. Therefore, I say to my colleagues wearing purple at the front of the hall that one of the jobs we probably should be doing is starting the pastoral conversation about how we will enact this stuff. We will not be relying on resolutions and the Act of Synod any longer. What will it look like in each diocese to be able to legislate for the sorts of provision people are concerned about and asking about, both women who want their ministry confirmed and those who are concerned about the implications in legislation? That conversation can go along, despite and alongside the Article 8 reference.

I urge Synod to vote for the suspension of the Standing Order. Let us do the business in three months and let us get on with the practical conversations about how this will operate at diocesan level. That will mean some work and activity from those in the dioceses who have concerns, and informal conversation or formal conversation with their bishops alongside that process, but let us get on with it.

Mrs Susannah Leafe (Truro): We all recognize the pressure for us to ‘get with the programme’ in changing these Standing Orders, and it is clear that many will see the change of these Standing Orders as part of that. However, before we gallop on, please can we consider what we as General Synod have heard this morning?

It is clear that to achieve the apparent level of agreement we have focused our attention on trust and local solutions. We have smoothed away some of the difficulties we have faced in the past by not writing down anything in any detail, but we know the issues are still there and will still be there. We know this because every poll and vote has told us that about a quarter of regular worshippers in the Church of England have theological convictions that will lead them to seek provision under the new package. That is a significant minority and there is no evidence that these people or their convictions will disappear.

In fact, this package claims that we will all flourish. That is encouraging – very encouraging. When we come to present our package to the dioceses, the very place where this provision will be worked out, surely it is vital for members of diocesan synods, the churches and the deaneries they represent, to understand the package in which they are being asked to participate? This morning a number of difficult questions were posed and we were given a number of answers, but those answers reveal the complexity of this package. We have been pointed to the Measure, the Amending Canon, the Resolution of Disputes Procedures Regulations, the guidance notes. We have been assured that every word of our debate will be relevant, so we do not need footnotes. *Hansard* will be there, clearly articulating the intention of the law – and yet we are in the process of rescinding an Act of Synod which *Hansard* promised would remain. At other points our attention has been drawn to various paragraphs of the House of Bishops’ Declaration that seem confusing or contradictory, but then we have been told it is the five principles alone that matter. Which is it? Every word or just a few of them?

It is right that Article 7 and Article 8 business will point only to the Measure and the Canon but we need serious conversations to be taking place in our deaneries. Surely by changing the Standing Orders and encouraging the dioceses to make this decision quickly we are missing an opportunity to build trust in the very place where trust will be most needed? Surely by changing the Standing Orders we are suggesting to the dioceses that this is not different legislation at all – which would be a very unhelpful inference? It would be ironic if we chose not to change our Standing Orders because of a concern about the parliamentary

timetable, seeing as it was them who told us to ‘get with the programme’. I think that they will find the time to pass the legislation. Let us not prevent the deaneries and dioceses from having the time to consider the difficult questions that we have had the opportunity to discuss.

Mrs Kay Dyer (Coventry): I want to thank my diocese, the parishes and the deaneries who at this very moment are praying for us all here. They are taking a very great interest in what is going on. The members in Synod from Coventry diocese make a special effort to go and visit at least two or three deaneries each after our meetings. I am told that our deaneries will be up for election in June, so I would not like the people who have been following this so closely to lose the opportunity to complete the process by May. We will have a new series of people in the deaneries after that. This may not be the only diocese that is affected by elections to the deanery synod. I put in a plea that we do suspend Standing Orders so that people who have been following this carefully can take it through to the end.

Miss Sally Muggeridge (Canterbury): How long, O Lord, how long must we do this? Returning to the dioceses, I agree that we need to reflect and ruminate, but this brisk pace has turned into a very slow walk – and a walk where? To freedom, I hope: the freedom to have women bishops. I came in on that ticket. I was elected on that ticket by Canterbury diocese and I want to see that delivered. I do appreciate that there are those who feel differently, but abstaining or opting out or just wasting our time is not the way forward.

I organised Desmond Tutu’s reception of the honorary freedom of the City of London on 25 November last year. He spoke passionately about women as being equal. How can we say that 50 per cent of the population of our priests cannot be bishops? He said, ‘If we have ordained women as priests, why did we not think that they would be bishops?’

I support the Business Committee.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): I did not intend to speak, but there are one or two things I would like to pick up from the things that have been said. This morning, Timothy Allen remarked upon the number of senior women clergy whose gifts as bishops we will not be able to see because we have waited so long. I have been involved in this as a layperson for 25 years. That does not feel to me like a hurry.

If members of Synod go back to a debate in 1986 when Robert Runcie was Archbishop, they will find that we have been pretty well discussing the same things for all that time. However, there are some words of comfort, I think. The dioceses took a long time to reach their conclusions last time round, even though they had been prepared for the work that was coming. I would suggest that the main body of that work was for them, wherever they stood on the spectrum, trying to understand the point of view of the other, and a lot of time was spent on preparation in that way. That has been done now. They will not have lost that. For that reason, they will be able to come to a conclusion about the new arrangements much more easily than before. Meanwhile, of course, we need to reflect a little about the damage we have been doing to ourselves and to the people whom we have served over the last 25 years, but can we let it go on much longer?

Readers of the *Church Times* will have seen Linda Woodhead’s article in which she says that religion in general has become ‘a toxic brand’. When asked whether there are positive attitudes to the Church, only 18 per cent of young people say that there are. The reason

given by older people is ‘boring and stuffy’; the young say that the Church is prejudiced, that ‘It discriminates against women and gay people.’ My friends, we cannot let this go on. We have to reach a conclusion as soon as we possibly can. We have done the damage; it is time to repair it.

Revd Simon Cawdell (Hereford): As the clergy chair of Hereford diocese I wish to support this motion strongly, for three simple reasons. First, I note that, following first consideration in November, the possibility of suspending SO 90 was envisaged and dioceses were notified at the time. Considerable effort has already been made across the country to ensure that diocesan synods have the opportunity to look at the legislation in a timely manner, and within the three-month period in this exceptional case. Indeed, such effort has been made that the Church of England on this occasion is giving the impression of joined-up thinking and organisational competence. Let us not destroy the illusion.

In reality, the minimum notice under normal procedures would give only a six-month period, which in this case would include the latter part of July and the month of August when, in reality, we all know that the Church of England goes quietly on holiday, erecting a ‘Gone fishing’ notice that has little to do with messianic demand. The additional consultation time from not passing this motion would in effect be a modest six weeks, the consequences of which would be serious. This would send final approval back to November, with consequences to follow.

That brings me to the second reason. Final approval in July would enable Parliament, with good co-operation, to complete the parliamentary processes this year, maybe even before the summer recess or the party conference season, enabling the canon to be promulgated perhaps in November. It will not have escaped members’ notice that next May there will be a general election. Working backwards, that means a likely dissolution of Parliament round the beginning of March. Taking that and the Christmas recess into account, notwithstanding that after the party conference season we may not have a fully functioning government, and the madness of electoral politics, we may find that that trumps usual business, including ours. The consequence could be that the Measure is not considered until after the election, when Parliament reconvenes in June 2015 with a new government and new priorities, even assuming the result is then clear. A short delay now may mean a year’s delay later.

Consequently, there is a real risk that next year we will have a situation where, with a high number of vacancies, the CNC will have to sit with the bizarre circumstance that Synod has passed the legislation at final approval but we still cannot yet consider women for a particular bishopric because Parliament has not concluded its business. Would your diocese appreciate being in that position? Or might you need to ask for a delay in the appointment so that you can consider both halves of the population? The situation, whatever, will be seriously anomalous, uncomfortable and unjust. Indeed, given that a normal episcopacy lasts 10 years, a delay of a few weeks now may mean a delay of a decade for some dioceses that might otherwise have been among the first to appoint a woman as their diocesan.

We have the opportunity now. The dioceses stand ready to do their bit; Parliament stands ready to do its bit and we need to do ours. I urge Synod to vote for this motion.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

Revd Canon Sue Booy, in reply: I would like to begin by making clear one thing that seems to have been a little misunderstood. We are not changing Standing Orders; we are using the provision within Standing Orders to suspend a clause of a Standing Order for a very short period of time. It is important to state that in the first instance.

Having done that, I would like to thank all those who spoke in what has been a really good and helpful debate. David Banting put the contrary argument so eloquently. I know that Synod will decide for itself the balance between speed and faith. Christina Rees spoke of a moment that was timely, honourable and faithful, and I want to thank David Houlding for standing afterwards. It gave many of us great pleasure to see the double act – perhaps for the last time and, as he pointed out, in agreement.

Debbie Flach made a very gracious speech and we are, as ever, indebted to the diocese of Europe for its wisdom and graciousness. Kay Dyer made a good and helpful point about the understanding of deanery synods. It is worth taking that into account as we move towards a vote on this.

I know that many people would echo Sally Muggeridge's plea, 'How long, O Lord, how long?' Simon Cawdell almost did my job for me, for which I thank him. Susie Leafe and others have spoken about the importance of building trust and continuing to build trust. April Alexander spoke about the damage that the Church is doing to itself.

I have grouped these comments because they lead me to what I think is the real question: how do we live together in the future? That question, I think, will not be helped by a delay.

I give Synod four Ds. The dioceses are ready and prepared to consider this business. There is a desire for progress, expressed perhaps by the phrase 'the time is right'. This legislation, from this morning, is pretty much determined; it is past the point of renegotiation. We have heard from several people about the advisability of dispatch, about getting our business into the parliamentary process.

I said earlier, and I believe it bears repetition, the measure of agreement and willingness to move on that we experienced this morning is matched in the dioceses. They are waiting for Synod to pass this motion standing in my name on behalf of the Business Committee, and to act with dispatch. There is nothing to be gained by further delay and there may be something to lose.

The Chair: As I indicated at the beginning of this debate, there will be a division of the whole Synod under SO 38(d). A majority of no fewer than three-quarters of the members of the Synod present and voting is required.

The motion was put and carried, 358 voting in favour and 39 against, with 9 recorded abstentions.

The Chair: That concludes this item of business. *(Applause)*

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Willesden* took the Chair at 3.21 p.m.

Legislative Business

Draft Church of England (Naming of Dioceses) Measure (GS 1935)

Draft Measure for First Consideration

The Archdeacon of Nottingham (Ven. Peter Hill): I beg to move:

‘That the Measure entitled “Church of England (Naming of Dioceses) Measure” be considered for revision in committee.’

‘Tell me your name and your business,’ said Humpty Dumpty. ‘My name is Alice.’ ‘What does it mean?’ said Humpty. ‘Must a name mean something?’ Alice asked doubtfully. ‘Of course it must. My name means the shape I am, and a good handsome shape it is too. With a name like yours, you could be any shape.’

What is in a name? More than in Alice in Wonderland, our Christian Scriptures make much of the meaning of names, both of people and places. Even more so, changing names is of significance: Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, and so it goes on. We neglect the meaning of names at our peril. In the context of mission, geography and local politics, names are important.

Last November, this Synod passed a motion asking for legislation to be introduced so that a diocese could be named by reference either to a city or substantial town or to a geographical area. That motion had been brought before us by the Bradford diocesan synod. The Ripon and Leeds diocesan synod also asked us to consider a motion in identical terms. The immediate background to those Diocesan Synod Motions was, of course, the Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme, which will come into force at Easter, and now we know its new bishop, Nick Baines, who needs our prayers.

One of the questions which concerned the Dioceses Commission when it was formulating its proposals was what the new diocese should be called. Following extensive local consultation, the Commission had concluded that Leeds was the natural centre of the region which would be covered by the new diocese and that the see of the diocese should therefore be Leeds. However, local opinion, with which the Commission agreed, strongly favoured giving the diocese a name which reflected the full extent of its geographical area – West Yorkshire and the Dales. We were aware that no English diocese had previously taken its name from a geographical area. Consistent with the historic practice of the Western Church, English dioceses have taken their names from a town or a city, or in some cases from two cities, where the bishop of the diocese had his see. The Commission was advised that this represented the legal position as well as historic practice. On that basis, in 1999, when the see of the Bishop of Ripon became Ripon and Leeds, the name of that diocese also changed automatically to Ripon and Leeds. The same was true in 2005 with the diocese of Southwell becoming Southwell and Nottingham, its bishop’s title also changing.

Given the strength of local opinion on the matter and the Commission’s own clear view, we were not content to let matters rest there, so we asked the Deputy Legal Adviser what could be done. His suggestion, which the Commission adopted, was that, while the new diocese would strictly be the diocese of Leeds, the reorganisation scheme could say that it may be

known as the diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales. It is not a perfect solution. In practice it leaves the new diocese in effect with two names, and the official title of the bishop of the diocese is the Bishop of Leeds, but it was the best that the Commission was able to do. The Bradford Diocesan Synod Motion, supported by Ripon and Leeds, which this Synod passed last November, sought to avoid similar difficulties in the future. The draft Measure, which is now before Synod for the first consideration, is the result of that motion.

Now we come to the techy bit – so bear with me. Clause 1(1) gives effect to this motion. If the motion is passed, receives Royal Assent and is brought into force, it will be possible to do what the Dioceses Commission was not able to do in the case of the new diocese of Leeds. Had this Measure been enforced two years ago, the Commission would have had a clear choice: the official name of the new diocese could have been the diocese of Leeds or the diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales. I have no doubt that the Commission would have opted for the latter.

The other provisions in clause 1 of the Measure flow from what is said in clause 1(1). Clause 1(2) says that, where the name of a diocese is taken from a geographical area, the style and title of the bishop of the diocese is to be taken from that name. This is an important provision, as it avoids the title of the bishop being different from the name of the diocese. More important than that, the Appointment of Bishops Act – hear this – 1553, under which diocesan bishops are appointed, contains provisions relating to the name and title by which bishops are to be known. Those provisions therefore also need to be addressed and clause 1(5) does so.

Clauses 1(3) and 1(4) make consequential amendments to the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007, so that the name of a diocese can be changed by a reorganisation scheme or by Her Majesty in Council. Dioceses and bishops will retain their current names and titles unless they are changed under these provisions. I commend this missional, sensible and non-radical change to the Synod.

The Chair: The motion is now open for debate.

Canon Timothy Allen (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): I support the proposal to allow dioceses to be named in a less restrictive way than is presently permitted. Interestingly, like the women bishops legislation that we have just discussed, this draft Measure on the naming of dioceses is rightly being moved forward with extraordinary speed. Only last November it was a mere piece of contingency business put up by diocesan synods; now it is fully-fledged draft legislation.

Such urgency is entirely appropriate in the context of the new diocese up North, which everyone would like to name the diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales but cannot because Church law dating back to 343 A.D. says it must be named after a city or a town.

The Measure will solve a serious problem for the new diocese that is being created out of the old dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds, and Wakefield. The new diocese should, I believe, be saved as soon as possible from the grave disadvantage of being called the ‘diocese of Leeds (also to be known as the diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales)’. It would be a real handicap for the new diocese to be saddled with an alias and a portmanteau title like that. Not only is it too long and unwieldy but the reference to Leeds is unsuitable because the name already belongs to a Roman Catholic diocese and Leeds is one of the very

few substantial centres of population in the new diocese where it is not proposed to site a cathedral.

Beyond that, I support the proposal that a diocese can be named for a geographical area, say a county, rather than for a city or a town, because in the longer term it could be useful for other dioceses which might take the view that their mission would be better served by a new name not related to a city or town.

I do not conceal, Chair, that I have in mind my own diocese, which celebrates its centenary this year – St Edmundsbury and Ipswich – and (I should emphasize that this is a personal feeling, which may very well be shared by no one else in the diocese) a name that I find is not only difficult to enunciate without stumbling but also difficult to identify with. St Edmundsbury and Ipswich is a predominantly rural diocese, coterminus with the county of Suffolk, with the exception of one deanery which, I am very sorry to say, preferred to remain with Norwich diocese in 1914 when the new diocese was being formed. An urban name, especially a double-barrelled urban name, is unhelpful in this context. Suffolk people naturally identify with Suffolk rather than with a pair of towns, neither of which has ever been dignified as a city.

The recently published book celebrating the diocese's centenary briefly explains how St Edmundsbury and Ipswich came to be so named. I quote from this excellent book, which I would commend to you, Chair. 'The name of the new diocese, also where the cathedral should be and where the bishop should live, provoked much discussion and a little rivalry between east and west Suffolk. It was agreed in 1907 that the cathedral should be in Bury St Edmunds, that the bishop should reside in or around Ipswich and that the new see should be called the diocese of Suffolk; but, as no English diocese had ever used a county name, alternatives were discussed and the rather long-winded title of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich was agreed.'

The Measure now before us would enable Suffolk people, if they wished, to choose whether to revisit the unwieldy name forced on their new diocese in 1914 because the Council of Sardica in 343 A.D. had resolved that only a town or city name could be adopted. In the 21st century, Suffolk people may well prefer to stick to St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, but it would be good for them to have the possibility, if they wished, to be the diocese of Suffolk.

The Chair: And I always thought it was a test of sobriety!

Revd Jonathan Frai (Chichester): My children play a game at breakfast table in which they try to see how long our address is. We start with the rectory, the house number, the road, the village, the town in East Sussex, England, the UK, Europe, the world, and beyond that we are into astronomy.

On this naming of diocese, clause 1(2) states that 'where the name of the diocese is taken from a geographical area, the style and title of the bishop of the diocese is to be taken from that name.' What a shame. I am full of envy. I think that what they have done in the north of England is brilliant. Someone is called the Bishop of Leeds and then the patch can be called by the name of its patch and the two lines of the address can be held together with no mental confusion at all.

Think of suffragan or area bishops in a diocese. In Chichester, we have a Bishop of Horsham. People do not stumble and say, ‘Where are you from?’ They know that is part of Chichester. I have not checked and received permission from our diocesan, but if we were minded to drop this rather unhelpful and restricted law in front of us and follow the marvellous precedent being set in the north of England then we could have, say on the south coast, the diocese of Sussex and the Bishop of Chichester, and everyone would be happier because it would make much more sense. Chair, this is just silly. We have stumbled across a wonderful compromise. Let us run with it.

Dr Elaine Storkey (Ely): A few years ago a bunch of law students, rather smart alics, lured their tutor to a tavern in Oxford on the pretext of having an informal seminar. When he arrived, they quoted a very ancient, unrepealed law that required their tutor to stand each of them a pint of ale. The tutor knew that he was defeated, paid up and then clapped a fine on every one of them of one sovereign for not wearing a sword. *(Laughter)*

Tradition is wonderful; the laws of our land are fantastic. We have a very ancient tradition in our Church, and every now and then it is time for a change. The time has come for a change in West Yorkshire and the Dales, to have a new diocese of their name which co-ordinates and takes in all the goodness of the old. The vision of that diocese will not change, the mission will not change, the faithfulness of the people there will not change, the urgency of the clergy there will not change. The determination to do what is right before God for the people of West Yorkshire and the Dales will not change and, in the end, the accent will not change either because ‘Tha can allus tell a Yorkshireman, but tha can’t tell ’im much.’ *(Laughter)*

The Chair: I call the Bishop of Douglas, Peel and St Johns!

The Bishop of Sodor and Man (Rt Revd Robert Paterson): I come from the see with no see, surrounded by sea—*(laughter)*—which I believe was clearly misnamed a mere 100 years after the historic practice of the Western Church that, as we are told, began in A.D. 343.

The diocese of Man – the archdeacon is over on my right and I can hear his laugh – has the best title in the Church of England. He is the Archdeacon of Man – kind, presumably. It has been part of, initially, the Province of Canterbury since 1533 and then rapidly Canterbury dumped us and gave us to York, but we acquired the Sodor part about the year 1000. The Hebrides or the Sudreys have not in fact been part of the diocese of Sodor and Man for 700 years, but the Church of England has taken a while to catch on.

Quite why members are rushing so much over the diocese of Leeds we do not really understand. Of course, the other reason it is called the diocese of Sodor is that it is the homeland of Thomas the Tank Engine and his friends – and there are some foolish people who believe this to be fictitious. We can, of course, prove that that is not the case. We have all these little steam engines running round on the Isle of Man. For goodness’ sake, Synod, get on with this!

Dr John Beal (Ripon and Leeds): I too want to address Clause 1(2), referred to in paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Memorandum, which states that the bishop of the diocese is to be taken from that name. A number of years ago I stood in this chamber when we debated whether the diocese of Ripon should be renamed the diocese of Ripon and Leeds

and I made the point that Leeds, the third biggest city in this country after London and Birmingham, had neither a diocese nor a bishop named after it.

If we approve the provision that the diocesan is to be taken from the name of the diocese and we want to name the diocese the diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales, we will be in danger of losing the Bishop of Leeds from the title. We will continue to have a Bishop of Bradford, a Bishop of Wakefield and a Bishop of Huddersfield – three much smaller towns than Leeds – but no bishop with the name Leeds in the title, and I believe that the city would expect the Church to have someone who clearly spoke on behalf of the Church and the city of Leeds with the name Leeds in the title. I therefore hope that we can revisit this particular clause.

The Archdeacon of Nottingham, in reply: I thank members for all their contributions. We have had history lessons, linguistics and, for the first time in my many years as a member of the Synod, Thomas the Tank Engine – amazing! There has been general support all round for the motion, which is appreciated.

With regard to the points made by Jonathan Fraiss and John Beal on Clause 1(2), I suggest that they simply make submissions to the Revision Committee about them. The point about taking this whole matter a little further is well made and I am sure that the Revision Committee will be glad to receive it. In the end we are being encouraged in much bigger ways to reimagine the mission and ministry of the Church of England. This is just a small contribution which, in many contexts, fits with the shape of mission and the local politics of an area as well as cities and towns. I therefore hope that members will vote positively, as the speakers have contributed positively, so that this may be taken further and creatively into revision.

The motion was put and carried.

The Chair: The draft Measure is now automatically committed to a Revision Committee. Any member who wishes to submit proposals for its amendment should send them in writing to the Clerk to the Synod, to reach her no later than 5.30 p.m. on Monday 17 March 2014.

THE CHAIR *Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London)* took the Chair at 3.59 p.m.

Draft Church of England (Pensions) (Amendment) Measure (GS 1936)

Draft Measure for First Consideration

The Chair: The decision that Synod will be making on this item of business is whether to refer the draft Measure on for revision and, if so, what form the process of revision will take. When draft legislation is considered at first consideration stage, the usual form of motion is one under which the Synod is invited to agree that the draft legislation be considered for revision in committee. If a motion in that form is carried, the draft legislation is considered by a Revision Committee before returning to the Synod, with a report from the Revision Committee for revision in full Synod.

However, SO 57 allows for an alternative procedure under which, if the Business Committee agrees, the motion at first consideration stage can propose that the draft

legislation be considered for revision in full Synod, so that at a time appointed by the Business Committee it returns to the Synod for revision without first being considered by a Revision Committee. It is proposed that that procedure be adopted in relation to this draft Measure. The Business Committee has given its consent to that and therefore has included a motion to that effect as Item 502 in the Agenda, so that the Synod can decide whether it wishes the draft legislation to go forward for revision on that basis.

Therefore, Mrs Alexander as chair of the Steering Committee will move Item 502. If that is carried, the draft Measure will be committed for revision in full Synod and Item 503 will not be moved. However, if Item 502 is lost, I shall call on Mrs Alexander to move Item 503, which, if passed, will commit the draft Measure to a Revision Committee in the usual way. I hope that makes the position clear.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): I beg to move:

‘That the Measure entitled “Church of England (Pensions) (Amendment) Measure” be considered for revision in Full Synod.’

This is a very short, technical Measure for a single purpose but it is not without complexity, and members will see the background and history to it over the past couple of decades in the Explanatory Memorandum.

At present, the Church Commissioners have a power to spend capital in order to meet their obligations to pay those pensions that have been accrued in service up to the end of 1997. That power is time-limited and without this legislation would come to an end on 31 December 2018. The new extension of this power that the Commissioners are seeking is the third one of its kind. A further extension of seven years is proposed, in line with past practice.

The power to spend capital on pensions has been crucial to the Commissioners’ investment success. It has enabled them to invest and plan much more flexibly than they would have been able to if they had had to pay pensions out of income, *i.e.* from dividends, rents et cetera, and it has been for the benefit of their non-pensioner beneficiaries. Currently the Commissioners spend over £120 million per year on pensions and that is not expected to fall significantly for at least another 15 years, so the expenditure is likely to exceed investment income for a long period after December 2018.

As the Explanatory Memorandum GS 1936X mentions, the position has been altered in one respect since the Measure authorizing the most recent seven-year extension received Royal Assent in 2009. That alteration is the total return order of which the Commissioners now have the benefit from the Charity Commission. Before this order was in place, all the Church Commissioners’ non-pensions distributions, namely those to the diocese by and large, had to be met exclusively from their investment income, leaving the capital intact. The total return order allows them to spend not only income but some of the increase in capital value that they achieve as the value of shares, agricultural land, et cetera, increases. There are of course safeguards around this, which have been agreed with the Charity Commission, the chief of which is to agree a figure for a baseline value for the total endowment and the date from which it is to be calculated. This value must be preserved and will be increased over time to protect future beneficiaries.

The power sought in this draft Measure originally was granted as part of the Pensions Measure 1997, but it is still needed beyond 2018 despite the total return order from the Charity Commission, for two reasons. First, that order was drafted on the basis that the Commissioners would continue to have and use this statutory power to spend capital on clergy pensions. If that statutory power expired and was not renewed, all payments would then have to be made out of the total returns that have been accumulated since 1947 – the agreed starting date for calculating the base capital. Without the continued ability to spend base capital on pensions, the annual recalculation of that untouchable fund would eat into those post-1947 returns. Therefore, over time more and more of the Commissioners' funds would become unavailable for beneficiaries other than pensioners. The problem would be particularly acute over the next 15–20 years or so, when pension obligations are forecast to reach their maximum.

Second, in the event of a catastrophic financial crash – Synod will remember those – in which the fund's assets were halved, an accumulated increase in capital values would have disappeared. If that happened and the statutory power to spend base capital on pension obligations had not been maintained, the Commissioners would be unable to meet their obligations either to pensioners or other beneficiaries.

In the 2012 annual report the Commissioners were pleased to report that over the past 20 years they had beaten their long-term return target by 2 per cent per annum, and actually the target was pretty high anyway. Their ability to spend capital on pensions since 1998 has been one factor that has enabled them to build and develop the portfolio diversified across a range of asset classes. Specifically, they have not needed to modify their investment policy in order to guarantee a particular income in the short to medium term. They have been able to invest with very long-term returns in mind and the result has been a steady increase in their distributions for benefits, particularly to the dioceses.

Of course, past performance cannot be a guide to the future, but a further renewal of the power will maintain the Commissioners' ability to make investment decisions with regard to the prospective overall return in the very long term. Without it, they would in time be forced to focus disproportionately on short to medium-term income at the expense of overall growth and ultimately at the expense of their capacity for distributions to the beneficiaries.

I commend the draft Measure to Synod.

The motion was put and carried.

The Chair: The draft Measure will accordingly proceed to the revision stage without a prior Revision Committee stage at such subsequent group of sessions as the Business Committee shall determine.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 4.01 p.m.

Draft Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2014 (GS 1937)

Draft Order for Approval

The Chair: We now come to Item 504A –

Sister Anne Williams (Durham): On a point of order, Chair. Are we quorate in all three Houses?

The Chair: I have not the faintest idea, but no doubt someone will tell me. Let us do this by some kind of humiliation process! Will the bishops please stand? Will the clergy please stand? Will members of the House of Laity please stand? We are quorate in all three Houses.

First, the Bishop of Manchester will move the motion at Item 504A, which will provide an opportunity for members to make general comments on the draft Order or raise specific points that do not relate to the amendments on the Order Paper. We will then move to the amendments at Items 516 and 517, and members who wish to comment on an amendment should not do so during the debate on Item 504A but should reserve their comments for the debate on the amendment in question.

The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker): I beg to move:

‘That the Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2014 be considered.’

In the autumn of 1979 I knocked on the door of the Dean of Chapel, King’s College Cambridge to say that I felt that my sense of vocation was becoming so urgent that I would have to abandon my maths PhD and leave as soon as I could to train at theological college. With the wisdom that he always showed even in later years, Michael Till said to me, ‘David, one day your maths will be useful to the Church of England.’ Depending on how much detail members want to go into this afternoon, I warn them that my moment may have come!

Two years ago, Bishop John Packer introduced a debate on the first draft Fees Order to set fees according to the arrangements that the Synod had agreed in 2011. The thinking behind the arrangements was to make sure, first, that parochial fees were justifiable in relation to their costs; second, that they were uniform across the Church of England; third, that they would be inclusive, which meant leaving the extras to those things over which people had a genuine choice; and, fourth, that they should be affordable.

The 2012 Order prescribed fees for only two years, from January 2013 to the end of this year, to see how those new arrangements would work out in practice; and, generally, they seemed to have settled in. There were many queries from those who were not quite sure what to do, but in the main they seem to have been resolved, and in any case the guidance available on the fees page of the Church of England website has been helpful. This time the

draft Order sets fees for a period of five years according to a formula as allowed for under the Measure as amended, both of which were not possible under the previous arrangements.

Why are we asking for a five-year order? Annual fees orders took up a great deal of time for the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee, the Archbishops' Council and Synod in relation to what, let us face it, are pretty routine matters most of the time. Five-year orders will save time – time that we can spend on debating other matters or that will even enable us to finish earlier! Of course, if it is felt within that quinquennium that fees have become out of step with reality, it is always possible to consider an amending order during the five-year period. We are not tying our hands; we are simply avoiding having to come back to the floor of Synod if everything is working well.

What about the formula? Since the draft Order is to cover five years, we must ensure that an annual uplift is built into it. We could have done that simply by setting arithmetical figures for each of the five years, but it is impossible to know or even predict what the economic position will be in, say, 2018. Therefore, a formula of some kind is the best way to uplift fees each year. The draft Order provides that the increase may be prescribed by specifying a formula related to a published index of price or earnings increases which is of a general application. We have chosen the RPI and specifically the September change in each year before the increase in fees comes into effect. It is the same increase as is used to increase clergy pensions in payment. In the first year this uplift will be applied to the base figures in today's draft Order and in subsequent years to the level of fees in the previous year; it compounds over the years. Should there be in any year a negative change in the RPI, there would be a nil increase.

How have those base figures been calculated? One of the principles on which the proposed fees were set is that they should refer to the cost of providing the service. Therefore, that calculation of base figures includes elements for the cost of clergy, church maintenance and running costs, churchyard maintenance and the cost of administration. Details of the calculation were shared with the Archbishops' Council at its meeting last November.

The draft Order also makes changes to fees relating to burials. Most of those changes have been made to make the description of burial fees clearer and to address anomalies that have been created by the way in which the 2012 Order was amended.

There is one larger change, namely that the fee for a funeral at the graveside in a churchyard now includes the burial of the body or the lawful disposal of cremated remains as well as the service. That change was made simply because it was felt that it would have been awkward to have two fees applying to what was felt by the people concerned to be one occasion.

To conclude, marriage and funeral services form a vital part of the Church's mission and ministry and one of the main channels for our pastoral care to reach those who otherwise may not have much contact with the Church. I believe that the Church can feel confident in the value of the services that it has to offer and should not be embarrassed about requiring a contribution towards the provision of ministry in the form of a legally payable fee.

I commend the draft Order to Synod.

The Chair: The matter is now open for debate.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): I recommend this way of increasing the fees. In my role of levying fees on the church for using holes in the ground that they own, I asked that inflation be based on the Retail Prices Index, which met with approval.

As the Bishop of Manchester has pointed out, it will save us all a lot of time. In addition, I am glad that the burial fees have been tidied up, the previous arrangements for which resulted in some of my undertaker friends getting into a bit of a tangle last year. I therefore commend the use of the RPI year on year for a period of five years and urge members to vote in favour of the motion.

The Chair called Revd Charlotte Gale for a maiden speech.

Revd Charlotte Gale (Coventry): I had not anticipated making my maiden speech on a subject as exciting as fees, but as a parish priest I have serious concerns about the proposed fees, especially those for funerals.

Over the years I and many of my fellow clergy have worked hard to build up good working relationships with our local funeral directors which have ensured that, unless a family specifically requests a minister of another faith or denomination, we are the first port of call when anyone dies in one of our parishes. This is no longer a right to be expected by churches but an immense privilege, sadly not enjoyed in many places. It means that many funeral services come our way – more than I as a parish priest can realistically take. If I were to take on all the funerals about which we are contacted, I would not be speaking here today.

However, having encouraged funeral directors always to call us, we make sure that we can always provide a minister. To do that we rely on several wonderful retired clergy who charge £60 to take a funeral service – a well earned and useful supplement to their pensions. That means that with the proposed fees for a funeral service in church the PCC will receive just £20 to cover the cost of administration and other matters. For a funeral at a crematorium it will cost the PCC £33, not including any other costs, when I am unable to take the service.

I understand that the changes to the fees in 2012 were supposed to make Occasional Offices affordable and provide clarification, but in truth it feels on the ground as though they penalize churches and clergy who take Occasional Offices seriously. My archdeacon tells me that I should have the fees paid to the DBF knocked off my parish share in the following year but, in a benefice that pays considerably more in parish share than I cost, it makes no practical difference.

I was not a member of the General Synod when the major changes to the fees were implemented, but if I had been I would have fought hard to see the fees set at more realistic rates, or maybe the levels that go to the DBF and the PCCs adjusted slightly, so that they would support clergy and churches in this hugely important ministry rather than act as a disincentive to clergy to take funerals in particular.

Revd Jonathan Frai (Chichester): I welcome these figures and find them appropriate. I also like the new ground broken by the five-year plan. I find that people are happy to pay

the fees for funerals and weddings because they represent such a small proportion of what they are required to pay for everything they do over the course of the day.

I find that a funeral service is not a great moment at which to teach but more to comfort and mourn, though I appreciate the opportunity during a funeral service to be able to say that Christianity stands apart from all other world views at this time; because our man came back, proving the afterlife, and how good it is for those who trust Him with their own lives. Similarly, a celebration of marriage is not a terrific moment for teaching. Our concern is largely with the couple involved in preparing for the day and endless administrative questions, but it is great to travel with them throughout all their preparations. I love to teach the importance of commitment for life on the part of the man and the woman and to mean it on the day. Of course, in both wedding and funeral services reverent behaviour, dress and additional music are also appropriate and important.

However, the item that I want to draw to Synod's attention is the very first one on the list on page 4 of GS 1937, under the heading 'Baptisms' – the charge of £13. When I conduct a service of baptism I tell people that this is our great moment to teach. I do not want anything from them; this is our time to give back. Therefore, in line with the discipline from the Prayer Book, we go through the Ten Commandments and the standards of God, the Apostles' Creed, the story of the gospel because we cannot keep the standards of God, and the Lord's Prayer – the first response of the humble heart. Rather than ask for any money from them, I confess that I never charge the £13 or any of its predecessor fees. We love to give them the certificate, a special book for their children (or for themselves if it is an adult baptism), towards the formation of a Christian world view in their minds, and I do not want that to be undermined by any sense that they are buying a service or – dare I even mention it? – purchasing their salvation, should baptism be misconstrued in that way. I know that it is late to mention it – I think it has been mentioned from time to time previously in Synod – but I want to question whether pastorally we should be charging anything at all for baptism.

Canon Dr John Mason (Chester): I support the idea of arranging fees on the basis of the RPI every year. My question is very simple: why, if the RPI happens to be negative, is the idea to cap it at zero per cent? I understand totally the argument that if overall costs go up, then we should increase fees, but if that genuinely is to be seen in the context of an inflationary environment, I do not really see why we should not have the generosity to reduce fees; and I speak as a PCC treasurer for whom that might be painful to do.

Revd Canon Dr Simon Cox (Blackburn): Like John Freeman, I too have used RPI for a number of years and I commend it as a good way of working. The only problem is that actually we will be using one month in September to judge the following year, and those figures are not released until about two months later; so the September figures will not be available to us until about November, which will mean that the setting of the fees for the following year would be left until the last minute.

In addition, I have discovered that the fees can be completely level over several months and then suddenly in one month, for no particular reason, either rise or fall dramatically. If we are to set the fees on the basis of one month and during that one month they rise or fall dramatically, we may be faced with a problem. Therefore, although the principle is good, it may be worth looking at using earlier months or an average of three months, which is what I do. I use April, May and June averaged to set the following year's RPI, with some calculation as to the general direction of the trend.

I have two other points. First, as far as I understand it, actually the baptism service does not have to be paid for; the certificate has to be paid for, not the baptism itself. Also, there is no charge in respect of the perfectly legitimate practice of incumbents issuing their own parish certificates; the charge applies only to the official certificate used for formal purposes.

Second, as far as charging for retired clergy is concerned, I understand that part of the DBF fee belongs to the retired clergy. It is set by each diocese on a national basis.

Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs (Chester) – and General Synod representative on the Council of British Funeral Services. I can tell members that over the past year or so I have received considerable grief from my colleagues on that body with regard to the substantial increase in fees. However, I think that is somewhat behind us, now that there has been increased recognition of the importance of the services provided by the Church pastorally and of the fact that it is appropriate to charge reasonable fees. Therefore, the provision of a clear indication of the size of increase in fees on a sensible annual basis for the next five years will be of considerable help.

One issue that has been raised both locally and nationally is the uncertainty of funeral directors about how much is being charged and why the fees are being changed, and I think that this proposal provides a clear rationale for that. I am glad that the previous speaker also clarified the issue about where the fees for retired clergy should come from, namely the DBF proportion of the fees. I am aware from my colleagues on the Council of British Funeral Services that there is a lack of clarity between dioceses, and a little more clarity between dioceses about the way these things are done pastorally would be helpful in our relationships with our colleagues across what is loosely called the funeral industry.

I therefore very much commend this motion to the Synod. I believe that pastorally it will be helpful in our relations with our colleagues with whom we work for the good of all bereaved families.

The Archdeacon of Birmingham (Ven. Hayward Osborne): I support the five-year plan and the way in which the increases have been measured. However, I want to make two points for the Synod to bear in mind.

First, certainly our experience in Birmingham, which according to government figures is one of the poorest areas in the country, if not the poorest collectively, has been that, with the increase of fees we see in this new pattern, many undertakers have found that their impoverished clients look for the cheapest option. Therefore, despite the good relations between Anglican clergy and funeral directors, the plea to find the cheapest possible service means that a good number of services are directed to other independent Churches or denominations. We know that about 650 different Churches, many of them independent, operate in the city of Birmingham and the adjoining borough of Solihull, so it remains a real battle for us to ensure that services still to come to the Anglican parishes.

My second point, which has been mentioned in previous Synod debates on this subject, is that, despite the increase in fees, the issue of the long-term, ongoing care of large churchyards and the expense associated with it has still not been resolved satisfactorily in many people's minds, and some PCCs still struggle to maintain decent, presentable churchyards.

Nevertheless, having made those points, I will support these increases.

The Bishop of Manchester, in reply: First, congratulations to Charlotte Gale on her maiden speech. One or two members have already responded to the fact that part of the DBF fee, not the PCC fee, would go to a retired clergy member taking a funeral service, so usually the PCC should not be affected by that.

Jonathan Fraiss asked about the fee for the baptism certificate. I draw his attention to the Baptismal Fees Abolition Act 1872, which abolished all fees to do with baptisms. As a parish clergyman, like many others, I give people not a copy of the legal entry but a commemorative certificate, similar to the certificate that I give to people who have completed an ALM course or some other form of activity, but there is no charge at all for that. The £13 fee is payable only if they want a certified copy of the legal document, the entry in the Register of Baptisms. I suggest to Jonathan Fraiss that the sort of commemorative certificate to which I have referred would look a little more friendly anyway than the official legal document.

John Mason asked about what would happen if RPI was negative. That happens very occasionally in the British economy, though it is quite rare in most western economies. The problem with going down when the RPI is negative is that because it tends to be a blip, one then ends up with a huge increase in the following year. I have worked a lot with the Housing Association Movement, which has in place similar policies in terms of rent increases year on year, and again there is an evident flaw that if RPI goes negative there is no resulting negative adjustment to the rent. It is quite difficult, because if the RPI becomes negative, as I have said, it tends to store up a huge increase the following year. If we reached the point at which for several years RPI had been below zero, I think we would be coming back sooner than the expiry of the five-year period to say, 'Look, we have to do something. The fees have become out of line.'

Simon Cox referred to delays in obtaining RPI figures. Actually the figures for September are available by mid-October; nowadays it does not take very long for them to come through. With regard to trying to average the RPI figures over several months – and this is where the maths geek comes in – if we were to talk about three successive RPI figures, it would only turn it from 12 to 15 months, because the RPI itself is a measure of the difference between two 12-month points on the graph, so not much benefit would be gained from adding in a few figures in that way. Usually 12 months is considered to be good enough for these sorts of estimate to be made.

I thank Revd Gibbs for his comments on behalf of the Chester diocese about the fees for funerals.

We note Archdeacon Osborne's comments on churchyards, excessive increases and families looking for the cheapest option. Of course, in cases of hardship it is entirely possible for clergy to waive the DBF fee. I felt that perhaps Birmingham was asking for slightly lower fees and Coventry was asking for slightly higher fees. Maybe it could be sorted over a game of darts or something similar in the bar afterwards!

I thank all members for their contributions. We may come to the RPI and other indices in greater detail in a moment, but for now I ask Synod to vote in favour of the motion.

The motion was put and carried.

The Chair: We now move to Item 516, the first amendment in the name of Revd Paul Cartwright, and I draw members' attention to the financial comments contained in the eighth notice paper.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Wakefield): I beg to move as an amendment:

'In Article 6, in paragraph (2), *leave out* from the first "by" to the end and *insert* "the lower of –

(a) the percentage by which the Retail Prices Index for September 2014 is greater than that for September 2013, and

(b) the percentage by which the Consumer Prices Index for September 2014 is greater than that for September 2013.';

and

In Article 6, in paragraph (3), *leave out* from the first "by" to the end and *insert* "the lower of –

(a) the percentage by which the Retail Prices Index for September in Year A is greater than that for September in the calendar year preceding Year A, and

(b) the percentage by which the Consumer Prices Index for September in Year A is greater than that for September in the calendar year preceding Year A.';

and

In Article 6, in paragraph (4), after "Index" *insert* "or where there is no increase in the Consumer Prices Index";

and

In Article 6, in paragraph (4), after "percentage" *insert* "attributable to the Index in question".'

Now then, si'thee, cock! I could not resist picking up on a reference in the previous debate when a Yorkshire man is at the microphone.

My amendment has been submitted as a result of synodical government working at its best. Following the last change in parochial fees there was a justifiable outcry in the deanery in which I serve, as well as in others in the diocese of Wakefield, at the percentage rise that took place. New fees that were seen as inappropriate were added to the Fees Table, an example being the PCC fee for a funeral that takes place in the local crematorium, to name just one. For many in the Church of England the increase in fees may have been welcomed, but for those of us who serve in some of the poorest parishes in England – out of a total of 12,775, my parish appears 550 places above the most deprived – the increase in fees was not proportionate. Fees went up, benefits in real terms were cut and wages remain stagnant.

I know that members are probably thinking that a parish priest can waive fees and that churchwardens can waive parish fees. However, in Wakefield an additional level of bureaucracy has been added, in that we now need to seek the permission of the archdeacons, who are busy enough without the likes of me knocking on their doors every two minutes. Along with others, the Barnsley Deanery submitted a motion to the Wakefield Diocesan Synod urging it to take action to address the unjust rise, and it is as a result of this process that I submit my amendment today.

Compared with the Retail Prices Index, the Consumer Prices Index is almost always lower. Members can see from the information paper provided that it was 0.7 per cent lower last year, and in fact my understanding is that it will almost always be lower in normal economic conditions, though I believe that it will be higher in the event of another market crash. That is the reason for the wording of the amendment to the effect that the index used to set the following year's fees will always be to the benefit of those who are accessing the Church and her ministers for support and pastoral care.

It is not about our making as much money as possible but rather about reasonable costs. Yes it costs money to run our buildings and to provide for the minister's time. However, as a colleague said to me recently, we would never dream of charging a school to which we go to care pastorally for the students or staff, or even when we take collective worship. We would not charge or want to make money from visiting parishioners at home or in hospital, so why would we want to profiteer from their death or their coming to church to be married? Some people spend a tremendous amount of money on wedding trimmings, but we should remember that in John 21 Jesus told Peter 'Feed my sheep' – not to fleece the flock. We should not be about making as much money as possible from those who come to church in their time of need.

The fact that the Consumer Prices Index or Retail Prices Index has increased does not mean that the amount of money available for wages and benefits will also have increased; the two do not go hand in hand. In some circumstances the RPI and the CPI may increase considerably, as a result of which I have tabled my second amendment as a safety net to allow the increase not to rise above 2 per cent, which I feel is a reasonable amount taking into account the last fees increase. Provided the matter is not brought back to the Synod in the meantime, this would also help to make it easier for undertakers to predict in five years' time the maximum cost of our services.

I therefore ask Synod to support the two amendments standing in my name, at the request of both the lay and clerical members of our diocesan and deanery synods, and my prayer is that members will do everything in their power to help those who may struggle to access the services of the Church for fear of being asked to pay an amount that they cannot afford.

The Church Urban Fund website records that we live in one of the most unequal countries in the western world and that babies born within a few miles of one another can have widely differing life expectations of up to 10 years or more. I therefore urge members to speak out for our brothers and sisters affected by these new, unjust fees and vote in favour of my amendments or alternatively, if they feel unable to do so, to leave the fees in place as they stand without any future increase, as we did a couple of years ago.

I thank members for their time and prayerful consideration.

The Chair: Revd Cartwright, for reasons that I well understand, you have spoken to both Items 516 and 517, but I believe that at the moment you are formally moving Item 516.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Wakefield): Indeed.

The Chair: In that case, I will ask you to move Item 517 later.

The Bishop of Manchester, in reply: I appreciate Fr Cartwright drawing our attention to the issues about access. It is very important that the Occasional Offices of weddings and funerals undertaken by the Church of England remain widely accessible across the population, which is one of the reasons why the incumbent has the right to waive the fee. I suppose it has to be said that in most cases the legal fees paid to the Church of England make up a relatively small part of the total costs incurred by families involved in those occasions. Nonetheless, I fully appreciate that for families living on the breadline every pound makes a difference.

However, I feel that this amendment is directed towards the entire level at which fees are set rather than to the particular issue of the uplift in fees year on year, which actually is what we are debating at the moment. I would therefore suggest that Fr Cartwright is addressing the point by a rather obscure method, in that his amendment does not refer specifically to the uplift year on year. If the fees are unaffordable, they are unaffordable now, not in four or five years' time.

The Retail Prices Index is the usual basis for uplifts in relation to costs primarily to do with work, employment and suchlike, as opposed to the cost of materials. The CPI is a much better mechanism for use in dealing with the costs of raw materials or the production of goods in relation to which effectively only a minority of the cost has to do with labour, and there are reasons for that. They relate to the difference between an arithmetic mean and a geometric mean – and I did promise the Chair that at some point during the debate I could expand on that at length if he wished me to do. I see that he is resisting it!

The Chair: I suggested that it might require me to phone my wife, as a mathematician, but I do not want to do that at the moment!

The Bishop of Manchester: Apart from the arithmetic versus geometric mean, the other difference between RPI and CPI is that CPI excludes housing costs, to which Fr Cartwright alluded.

There is a new kid on the block – RPIV, yet another index – but so far it has operated for only about one month. It may well be that in future it will become a version of a widely accepted uplift figure that we might want to use, and that will probably lie somewhere between the two, but if we are talking about the cost of labour associated with the work around a wedding or funeral, RPI is the industry standard, because it broadly reflects what is affordable and usually relates to increases in pensions as well.

Finally, I hate to say anything against archdeacons, but I suggest that Paul has stiff words with his archdeacon, because no archdeacon can require an incumbent to obtain permission to waive a fee. The right to waive a fee is clearly set in the legislation and that right rests with the incumbent, not the archdeacon.

For all those reasons, I ask Synod to oppose this amendment.

The Chair: The bishop having not supported the amendment, the 40-member rule applies and therefore I need to see whether 40 members stand who do not wish the amendment to lapse but wish a vote to be taken. There are not 40 members standing, so the amendment lapses.

I therefore invite Revd Cartwright formally to move his amendment at Item 517.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Wakefield): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In Article 6, after paragraph (4) *insert* –
“(5) Where the increase under paragraph (2) or (3) would (but for this paragraph) exceed 2 per cent, it is to be treated for the purposes of the paragraph in question as 2 per cent.”.’

The Bishop of Manchester, in reply: Once again, I think the issue here is not about the uplift year on year but whether already the fees are far too high or far too low; it is about the level at which they are pitched. I do not think that capping them at 2 per cent will be of any help to us. In particular, we really cannot predict what the rate of inflation will be in future years. Supposing inflation went up to, say, 5 or 10 per cent, once more we would be back on the floor of Synod trying to deal with the matter on a much more short-term basis. I would rather that we go with the most likely scenario, *i.e.* the proposals contained in the original motion, and I therefore urge the Synod to oppose this amendment.

The Chair: The bishop having not supported the amendment, again the 40-member rule applies. Do I see 40 members standing who wish the debate to continue and a vote to be taken? I do not. The amendment therefore lapses.

The Chair: We now move to Item 504B.

The Bishop of Manchester: I beg to move:

‘That the Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2014 be approved.’

I am very grateful for all the comments made in the earlier consideration debate. I was very pleased that at that stage the first speaker was John Freeman, who so often has helped us to save time at groups of session of the Synod and clearly has committed to our saving time by our not needing to discuss this matter year on year, and I will now save time by simply asking the Synod to approve this Order.

The motion was put and carried.

The Chair: The draft Order now stands referred to the Archbishops' Council under section 2 of the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986, and that concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Canon Ann Turner (Europe)* took the Chair at 4.40 p.m.

Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2014 (GS 1938)

Order made under the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986

The Chair: For this item members will also need the Explanatory Memorandum GS 1938-9X, and I am also asked to draw members' attention to the financial comment at paragraphs 13–15 on the fifth notice paper.

Canon Elizabeth Renshaw (Chester): I beg to move:

‘That the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2014 be approved.’

The Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order made under section 5 of the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986 prescribes the annual fee payable to each diocesan registrar for professional services specified in Schedule 2 to the Order, which is known as the retainer.

This year's Annual Fees Order introduces significant changes to the way in which diocesan registrars are paid for the work that they do. The Fees Advisory Commission believes that we need to make these changes and to do so now. Let me explain why.

The current retainer system has been in place for over 40 years, indeed since the Chester report of 1973. While the current system has points of merit – both dioceses and registrars have said consistently that payment by way of annual retainer suits them well – a long-standing dissatisfaction has been expressed in Synod debates over the years about the method of calculating the retainers.

Dioceses are unhappy because they have no involvement in the process and therefore cannot influence the amount that they have to pay. Indeed, some dioceses tell us that they have little understanding of how the retainer is calculated, and there is no incentive for them to work with their registrars to ensure that they receive best value. On the other hand, registrars are unhappy because the system takes no direct account of the actual cost of providing legal services, with the result that they do not receive a fair return for the work that they do. We need to remember that the retainer is not a salary. The costs of staff, accommodation and equipment are met in whole or in part from the payment that the registrar receives.

The system has long been crying out for reform, but previous reviews have failed to come up with a satisfactory way forward. Therefore, when the Fees Advisory Commission was reconstituted in 2012 we resolved to take a fresh and thorough look at all the issues. Following an independent review and extensive consultation, we have devised a new method of calculation, which we invite the Synod to endorse by approving this Order.

Our new approach has two key aims. First, we want dioceses and registrars to work together to achieve the best and most cost effective service. For the first time the retainer will take account of registrars' actual costs and workloads. However, to balance this, we are also asking dioceses to sit down with their registrars and talk through the figures before they are sent to the Commission for inclusion in the calculations. The aim is to encourage a real meeting of minds between dioceses and registrars on the scope and value of the work being

done. If there is disagreement, the Commission would look at all the circumstances and decide what action to take, while urging dioceses and registrars to continue their discussions. It cannot be right to continue with a system such as the one we have used hitherto that operates so remotely from the actual situation on the ground. Our proposals seek to rectify this while retaining checks and balances that come with a nationally regulated arrangement.

Secondly, we must begin to address the serious underpayment of registrars over many years. The present system has failed to reflect the rise in the real cost of delivering legal services. Even if we accept that registrars do not expect a full commercial return for the work that they do for the Church, the independent reviewers have told us that if the deficit is allowed to continue there will be a real risk that good lawyers will no longer be willing or able to specialize in ecclesiastical law, and that would have serious consequences for the Church. The responses to our consultation testify to the vital part played by registrars in supporting the bishop and the life of the diocese at all levels. If that level of support is to continue, they must receive a fair return for what they do.

Of course we recognize that these are tough times for dioceses and we have taken that into account. Originally we proposed an uplift of 50 per cent in the value of the retainer, to be phased in over five years, but in reply to the consultation a handful of dioceses told us that they simply would not be able to afford an increase on that scale. We have listened carefully to those concerns and as a result have scaled back the proposed uplift to 30 per cent, again on the basis that it will be phased in over a five-year period. If 30 per cent still sounds a lot, I would urge members to look at the actual figures. For 2015 we are looking at an average increase of under 6 per cent, or just £3,000 per diocese. It is also important to remember that 43 per cent of the overall cost of the retainer is met by the Church Commissioners, so the actual impact on diocesan budgets will be small. The figures in the 2015 Fees Table indicate that 26 dioceses will contribute less than £2,000 extra, and only two dioceses – the largest – will contribute more than £3,000.

I should add that the Church Commissioners themselves are in no doubt about the importance of ensuring that the Church continues to receive good quality legal advice and are fully supportive of our proposals.

Finally, because the Fees Advisory Commission makes recommendations to Synod on an annual basis, we have the flexibility to keep the new system under review and to propose adjustments, if needed, in the light of experience.

I commend this Order to Synod as part of a balanced package of reforms. It keeps the best feature of the current system, the annual retainer, but introduces a new method of calculation that is more transparent and responsive. It retains the necessary checks and balances and will deliver to registrars an improved return for the valuable work that they do for the Church.

The Chair: The item is now open for debate.

The First Church Estates Commissioner (Mr Andreas Whittam Smith, ex officio): As Synod has heard already, the Church Commissioners fund 43 per cent of the cost of the retainers and we therefore have a lively interest in this subject.

Some years ago I was a member of the Fees Advisory Commission for about four years and I found, as has been found since, not a lot to be particularly impressed by in the way that the system then worked – a lack of fairness between dioceses and a lack of transparency. At that time my solution was that we should go over to a system of local negotiation without any directions from the centre. I always feel that directions from the centre are a little like the old Soviet Union with Moscow trying to control everything. However, I was not successful. I had enjoyed jousting against the Church's legal establishment but had to admit that I had lost the battle. I therefore withdrew hoping that my successors would find a good way forward, and that I think they have triumphantly done. It was a very good move to reconstitute the Commission so that it properly represents users and providers and has an independent element to it. I think that probably I was wrong about local negotiations, mainly because expertise in ecclesiastical law is quite a rare, narrow specialism that needs support from the centre.

I do not intend to comment on all the proposals except to say that the Commissioners accept that there should be a staged uplift in the value of retainers. I think that is important. One of the things that we have learnt, of course, is that the cost of bad legal advice actually can be very high. Sometimes we are involved in big cases covering bishops' legal costs, which can run into six figures if the matter is of national importance and so on, and one discovers that often the case turns on the very first moves made by the diocesan registrar when the case first arises, so it is really important that good advice is given at the very outset. That is why I support the increase in fees and commend these proposals to the Synod.

Mrs Madelaine Goddard (Derby): We have just heard that the system we use for paying our diocesan registrars, namely the annual retainer, was started more than 40 years ago, and since then there has been little change despite the fact that various reviews have revealed a number of weaknesses. One of the main weaknesses is that it takes no account of the actual cost of providing legal services by our registrars, so that over a period of time it has failed to deliver a fair return to them for the work that they have done. For example in 2012 the average retainer paid for only 57 per cent of the work undertaken by the registrar; in other words, more than one-third of the work that they were doing was unpaid.

I am a member of the FAC, but I have no legal background and therefore no bias at all in this, but it cannot be allowed to continue, because unless our registrars are remunerated fairly these people and their legal firms will no longer be able to undertake specialized ecclesiastical work, which will lead to serious consequences for the Church. The volume of new law is increasing and parishes are becoming more involved in community initiatives and the growth of blame culture, so the need for sound legal advice has never been more important. We must be able to continue to receive good legal advice.

The result of the independent review conducted last year retains some of the old features, but it has earthed it squarely in the situation on the ground, in that it takes account of the actual workload and real cases and enables dioceses and registrars to work together to control costs and therefore achieve better value. One of the ways in which this will be achieved is by getting the dioceses for the very first time to sit down each year with their registrars and look at the workloads.

Most of the various proposals made by the review have been welcomed by those consulted, but members have just heard that nevertheless the Fees Advisory Commission has made some amendments to meet the concerns that were expressed. The review recommended that

a 50 per cent increase in the retainer was needed over the next five years, but the FAC has reduced that to 30 per cent, which works out at just 6 per cent or less than £3,000 for most dioceses this year, 43 per cent of which the Church Commissioners will continue to meet.

Diocesan registrars are a very special breed. They need to be expert in ecclesiastical and secular law and thoroughly conversant with how the Church of England works, which in itself is not easy. They do not grow on trees, so it is very important that we value those whom we have. For that reason I support the motion and ask the Synod to do so too.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): I declare an interest as the registrar of two dioceses, one of which pays a retainer set by the Fees Order, and I make that declaration with some trepidation knowing that the General Synod guide to pastoral relations with lawyers might sometimes be summed up in the question ‘What do you have if you have a lawyer buried up his or her neck in the sand?’ and the answer, ‘Not enough sand’!

I also speak as a former member of the Fees Advisory Commission and a member of the Executive Committee of the Ecclesiastical Law Association, which is the national body of registrars.

I would like to record the thanks of registrars that the Commission finally has sought to address the long overdue issue of registrars’ retainers. The independent review undertaken by John Farr and Keith Malcouronne and the 42-page report were impressive in their depth, clarity and analysis of the issues and rightly commanded widespread confidence and respect. It was therefore with very considerable disappointment and frustration that registrars discovered that the proposal to be brought before the Synod fall a long way short of the recommendations of that independent review in respect of the level of the retainer.

To understand the reaction of registrars, members need to know a little about the background. The Commission itself accepts that over a lengthy period the retainer has failed to deliver a fair return to registrars for the work that they do. The reality is that in 2001 the total sum of the retainers paid to registrars represented only 59 per cent of the actual value of all the work carried out by them. Reducing year on year, by 2012 this had become just 45 per cent, so on average registrars are being paid for rather less than half the work that they do. The independent review recognized that such a position was simply unsustainable and recommended that urgent action be taken to increase that figure to about 75 per cent.

The proposals before the Synod today represent a huge watering down of that recommendation. If implemented as proposed, it seems to me that by 2019 we are still likely to be in a worse position in real terms than we were in 2001. That is because not only has the uplift recommended by the independent review been reduced by 40 per cent but also has been phased over five years without any apparent account having been taken of inflation. I ask the Commission therefore whether it genuinely believes that the arrangements that it is now proposing will provide a fair and reasonable return to registrars for the work that they do.

Registrars note that the Fees Advisory Commission considers it appropriate to reduce registrars’ fees by 30 per cent as a charity discount, but the reality is that the fee levels of most registrars are also discounted to a charity rate, so this is a further discounting from already reduced rates, compounding the problem rather than helping to solve it.

I would like to reiterate that retainers are not personal salary payments to registrars. If only! Before calculating what might be left for a firm to pay a registrar, I would urge that account be taking of the following, all of which must come in whole or in part from the retainer: the need to employ a registry clerk with the related salary, national insurance, pension contributions and other liabilities; office rent; service charges; business rates; heating, lighting and other utility costs; telephone and postage costs; IT equipment and system maintenance costs; stationery, printing and photocopying costs; the cost of a practising certificate and insurance. If members think that in some circumstances at least this really does not leave very much at all, they would be quite correct.

Clearly there is vocational element to the work of many registrars. We do not seek a level of remuneration that might be prevalent in other parts of the legal profession but rather endeavour to support and encourage the life and work of the diocese by providing a range of services and a very considerable amount of advice to a wide range of people in a fascinating gamut of contexts. Registrars believe that the Church would best be served in the long term by ensuring a good supply of committed and able lawyers willing to offer their professional skills for the good of the Church as diocesan registrars.

That is why today I have said more on this issue than I would usually choose to, because the time is fast approaching when serious firms of solicitors will not consider it commercially viable for one of its solicitors to provide a registry service, and we have reached the point at which firms are unwilling to offer the hope of promotion to a solicitor working as a registrar because of the relative lack of profitability compared with other areas of the firm's practice, so drawing gifted women and men into this role becomes increasingly difficult.

Nevertheless, together with my fellow registrars, I acknowledge this first step in the right direction and invite members of Synod to support the motion.

Canon Dr John Mason (Chester): In general, I am not a great fan of lawyers. In my personal and commercial life over the years I have paid a great deal in legal fees for advice sometimes of dubious quality in respect of matters such as conveyancing, tax, probate, employment, company law and so on. However, that has not applied to the advice that I have received on ecclesiastical law. As a PCC member I have received advice from the diocesan registrar at a cost of precisely nothing.

In my time as a diocesan secretary in Chester I have worked with two separate diocesan registrars and my dealings with them were characterized by hard work, conscientiousness, and not least a good sense of humour – the latter being an essential attribute for anyone involved in ecclesiastical law. If I wanted to consult the diocesan registrar on a Saturday evening, which I admit is a rather sad thing to want to do, the first place of call would be not his home but his office, which is even sadder, but it demonstrates the hours of dedication of diocesan registrars, and consideration of Schedule 2 to the Order perhaps explains why.

Schedule 2 includes a list of duties that fall within and outwith the retainer. The list of duties that fall within the retainer is about two pages in length, and, as my former registrar colleague pointed out, this comprehensive list not only looks limitless but actually is limitless. Taking one example, it includes giving advice to churchwardens and secretaries of PCCs on any legal matter properly arising in connection with their duties or official business. In the diocese of Chester that would amount to providing unlimited advice on

complex matters to about 900 people. This huge and diverse set of responsibilities leads to the need for many hours of work and the complication of prioritizing a long list of demands.

The background paper states that the averaged retained in 2012 was sufficient to cover only about half of the work actually undertaken by registrars. I accept that in many areas of church life individuals carry out work for which their remuneration is very much lower, often infinitely so, than that which they would receive for equivalent roles and responsibilities in a secular setting; and, of course, individuals are happy to do so as part of their Christian service.

However, the position of diocesan registrars is more complex. They more normally need to be part of a firm of lawyers, and although personally they may be prepared to work for considerably less than the going rate, that is not necessarily the case for their partners. In the past this has been compensated for by an understanding that additional work such as conveyancing would be given to the firm, but do we really want to encourage this? I am not quite sure whether it qualifies as a bribe – I would have to seek legal advice on that and I wonder where I could get it – but certainly it restricts the ability to seek value for money when placing this type of work. If such a reassurance cannot be given to a firm and the current trend of reducing the amounts covered in the retainer continues, long-established firms would cease to be available at the time new registrars are appointed and the vast pool of experience will begin to dissipate. I therefore believe that the case for an increase on ethical and practical grounds is very clear.

Finally, how much? The proposed mechanism is typical of the Church of England. We can consult the Darlow formula or use any number of mechanisms used by dioceses for assigning parish share. Such formulae are imperfect, but they seek to do the best in balancing simplicity and fairness. They nearly always fail on simplicity and sometimes on fairness as well. However, I believe that in this case the balance is right. It is not particularly simple but it seems fair. It gives more to the dioceses with greater costs and workload, ensures that the spread from top to bottom is limited and builds in a very significant discount to dioceses against the going rate. It really is not over generous but it sends a signal that the work of registrars is appreciated, and it should help to ensure that this invaluable service continues to be provided by well qualified, committed individuals whose expertise we can ill afford to lose, not least because it will avoid a situation in which diocesan secretaries will be asked to give advice on matters for which they have no professional qualification.

I urge members to approve this Order.

Canon John Spence (Archbishops' Council, appointed) – and until three months ago chair of the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance, to which Aiden Hargreaves-Smith provided excellent registrar services.

In my experience we do not often have a motion that provides a win on three counts. First, as an organisation that takes prides in its ethical stance, surely it is only equitable that we give people fair pay for the job that they do. This Order hardly addresses that but it moves us in the right direction. Secondly, you get what you pay for, and the more we seek people to provide services at less than an economic rate the greater the risk that we will experience bad services. I am well used to scenarios in which large organisations beat down the cost of supply only to find that they end up with the weakest resource giving the service. Thirdly

and importantly, of course, the motion provides us with an opportunity to start having real relationships at local level to enable dioceses that do not already do so to have proper review meetings on an annual basis in order to understand how their registrars can work better to greater effect in the future.

Aiden's intervention was persuasive. We have before us now a moderate proposal that will result in no further reduction. Whether it is based on the RPI, the CPI, the RPIV or any other index to be invented, its impact over time will be such that the real increase in registrars' fees will be minimal, and all we will see is a very moderate revival in that relationship from the 57 per cent figure. Aiden has warned that if we were to allow any further diminution we would see an erosion of the number of firms willing to provide the service, and indeed that may still happen.

Had I been a member of that Commission, I might have urged that we stick to our guns, grasp the nettle and go for the bigger increase. We cannot always go at the speed or the size of the purse of the poorest part of our organisation. Sometimes we need to take difficult decisions and work out how we can help them to afford the price rather than risk the greater Church. Aiden has accepted that for hard pressed dioceses this minimum measure makes sense, and I believe that we can all understand that. It is indeed the very minimum we can do in order to ensure that we continue to receive the quality of registrar services that we have experienced, and I therefore commend the Order to the Synod.

Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Wakefield): I am a member of and the only parish priest on the Fees Advisory Commission. Our priority as parish clergy is to meet people's spiritual needs and share the good news of God's love in our communities, but in doing that inevitably we come up against legal issues. If two people, one of whom is a foreign national, approach us to be married, how can we be sure that that is genuine? If our PCC wants to rent out the parish hall to community groups, how can we make sure that we have a hiring agreement which protects them and us? We are not legally qualified and we need the help and support of our registrars.

As a member of the Fees Advisory Commission I was tremendously relieved when the reviewers came to the conclusion that the retainer system should continue. I need to be able to phone or e-mail my registrar to receive the advice that I want without worrying about how it is to be paid for, and my ability to do that hopefully saves me from getting into all sorts of trouble. However, we cannot expect that to continue if the retainer is inadequate. We have already heard that registrars have to pay their bills, maintain offices, pay staff and insurance, and if the fees they are paid do not cover such matters, they have to turn to other work or go out of business. They report their hours of work to the FAC every year and, as we have already heard, it is clear that increasingly they are underpaid.

Many registrars see their work as a vocation, but nevertheless the labourer is worthy of his or her hire, which is why I support this modest uplifting of the retainer based on the new method of calculation that takes into account the work actually done by the registrars as well as the number of churches and clergy in a diocese. It will enable us to continue to have the legal support that we all need.

As a parish priest I am also concerned with value for money as any increase has to be paid for from the diocesan side of our parish share. That is another reason why I support these proposals, because for the first time there will be an opportunity in the annual review for

diocesan management to engage with registrars and ensure that the work is done in the best possible way, with the right priorities and in an efficient manner. The diocese has to sign off the reported hours for the year before they can be used in the calculation for the following year.

We need to be able to access the advice of our registrars quickly and easily without concern for the cost. We need them to continue in the long term and therefore need to pay them fairly, but we also need to ensure that we are getting value for money, and the annual review allows us to keep a check on that. For all those reasons, I ask Synod to support this motion.

The Bishop of Dorchester (Rt Revd Colin Fletcher): – and the episcopal member of the Fees Advisory Commission. I confess that I am also the son of a barrister, so that rules me out in various quarters when it comes to speaking about the proposed increase of fees for legal officers!

Recently one of my close friends has been through a divorce. The fees for that were huge, with an amount charged for every letter written. When I compared that to the sort of service that I receive from our own registry I found that the two just do not match. For me, as the Fees Advisory Commission did its work this became fundamentally a moral question. As Joyce has just said, the labourer is worthy of his or her hire and my moment of insight came from the evidence of one registrar who said: ‘What my retainer pays for is the office staff, the heating, lighting and so on. I receive little or nothing from that retainer.’ Members of Synod, something is very wrong; the labourer is worthy of his or her hire. They could of course opt out, but, as others have said, we need our ecclesiastical lawyers, and in my day-to-day work as a bishop I know that I need only one CDM case running to realise the value of the ecclesiastical lawyers.

As we have heard from Aiden and others, this proposal tries to ensure that the labourer receives his or her hire, although it still involves a very substantial discount from the real cost of delivering these services, and I remain uncomfortable with the latter. Nevertheless, the registrar members of the Fees Advisory Commission have been present with us on the journey towards this proposal, which has come from all of us, and I feel that it would be appropriate for the Synod to meet their generosity with ours by approving this Order.

Revd Canon David Felix (Chester): I want to speak in support of the new Order because I believe that it welcomes a change of culture. Nowadays ‘openness, transparency and accountability’ is a well used phrase that applies equally well to the relationship between a professional adviser and his or her client. I therefore welcome the openness, transparency and accountability set out in this new Order and its approach. The ways in which the fee for registrars is calculated, the work to be done that is covered by it and the work that is not covered by it should all be recognized. I also welcome the annual review between the bishop, the diocese and the registrar and the five-year target period.

Nothing harms a professional relationship quite so much as a reticence on the part of both parties to discuss the nature of the retainer, but perhaps one thing is lacking, not only to do with the scope of the retainer and the work to be carried out under it but also how this information is to be communicated to the dioceses, the parishes and especially the serving clergy. There is still too much negative criticism of law and lawyers, not least by parochial clergy, who should know better because the requirements of the Clergy Discipline Measure

require them to follow the law, and no person is better placed to advise, obviously within the scope of the retainer, than a registrar. I hope that the cultural shift that is now envisaged can also be addressed.

The Bishop of Peterborough (Rt Revd Donald Allister): This Order is extremely helpful to me, for one simple reason: having been in post for almost 40 years, our excellent registrar, Ray Hemingway, is due to retire this autumn, and I would like to pay tribute to him for his outstanding work during that time. A reasonable level of fees will make it much easier to recruit a successor, and this move goes some way towards that, so I strongly support it.

Canon Elizabeth Renshaw, in reply: I thank all members of Synod who have contributed to the debate. It is very clear from what has been said that the work of our registrars is highly valued and we need to retain their excellent work. We recognize that this is just a step on the way to addressing a lengthy period of negligence on our part, and we hope to do that over the coming years.

Thank you to Andreas Whittam Smith, Madelaine Goddard, Aiden Hargreaves-Smith, John Spence, Joyce Jones, Colin Fletcher, David Felix and Bishop Donald.

We regret that we have been unable to balance the needs of the dioceses for low increases and the registrars' needs for something better. However, the fees that to be addressed on an annual basis will be relevant to the actual costs of the registrar, so we will be able to make necessary adjustments and bring them back to the Synod for approval.

The Commission is focused on ensuring that these changes are carefully monitored and that its findings are brought back to the Synod, the body that will continue to be responsible for the final approval of any proposed change. In preparing these proposals the Commission has sought expert advice and wishes to thank all who have contributed to two wide-ranging consultations. We are all better informed as a result and have confidence that these proposals provide for transparency, objectivity and accountability.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Fees Advisory Commission, in particular our chair John Alpass, our legal advisers Stephen Slack and Judith Egar, and the Research and Statistics Department of the Archbishops' Council, which crunched all the numbers for us, for its invaluable support.

I invite the Synod to approve the Fees Order so that we can move forward with confidence to ensure that the Church has transparent and effective legal advice and that its registrars are remunerated fairly for a job well done.

The motion was put and carried.

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark)* took the Chair at 5.30 p.m.

The Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2014 (GS 1940)

Resolution made under section 7 of the Synodical Government Measure 1969

Revd Canon Robert Cotton (Guildford): I beg to move:

‘That the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2014 be considered.’

I am very grateful to Debbie Flach for giving me the phrase ‘fresh expressions of Standing Orders’ in an earlier debate this afternoon. I know that the phrase ‘fresh expressions’ can be overused but this item of business is partly about fresh expressions of the Church Representation Rules, because to some extent the title sums up the idea that some of our business in the Church needs to be structured and delivered in a fresh and more imaginative way.

The context for what is in front of us now is very important. In 2011 we as a Synod were involved in the adoption of the three Quinquennial Goals: growth, reimagining ministry and the common good. There was a fourth, which was slightly under the surface. As part of the *Going for Growth* agenda, the fourth goal was to look for ways in which we could lighten our Church structures and processes and remove burdens, releasing parishes, laypeople and clergy to concentrate more on mission and ministry. Some of it has been described in paragraph 4 of GS 1940X. Just to name one, we have looked at the faculty jurisdiction processes. Some of that has already happened; more is coming our way.

In addition, the view of the Simplification Group, as it was called, was that we should look at the Church Representation Rules, some of which originated in times past. The nature of parochial ministry has changed since the early 20th century. Also, the way in which charities are expected to run, and indeed to devise suitable governance arrangements for themselves within a broad structure, has changed quite considerably recently.

That is the beginning of the context but the second part is as important. The first thing the Simplification Group did was to consult widely amongst diocesan officers and parishes as to what people in the parishes thought needed to be changed. Many of the ideas now in front of Synod, therefore, originated from those who find the Church Representation Rules particularly irksome and burdensome. The ideas originated there; collectively. They were checked nationally; they were then laid before Synod as GS Misc 1048. They have been taken through a sifting mechanism, which included the Archbishops’ Council; and they are now here before us. This is not top-down, therefore. We have listened to what archdeacons, parish priests, PCC secretaries and others have been saying, and many of these ideas started with them.

I hope that one of the things the Synod will bear in mind is that we need to be careful about imposing ideas that are suitable for – if I may phrase it this way – ‘me and my situation’ on other parishes where the needs are very different. Having listened to those who find these rules burdensome, we need to listen to that and to react appropriately. I hope another aspect of this afternoon’s debate is to see that the best way of dealing with bad practice is not by

imposing burdensome rules because *your* bad practice may be sorted out by rules that burden *you* where you are. Therefore, there is an intentional emphasis on increasing flexibility, increasing space, because such space and flexibility should increase the responsibility for us all to devise ways of improving our governance.

I do not intend to go through everything in the paper because we are assuming that you have read it and I am well aware of the number of amendments we have to deal with later. However, paragraph 3 is about the requirement for PCCs to hold a minimum of four meetings a year. We think that this should properly come down, because multi-parish benefices are part of the group of parishes that are particularly burdened by the Church Representation Rules and we need to listen carefully to what they are urging us to do: to lessen the requirement for PCC meetings through the year. Often, people involved in such benefices have not only to have many PCC meetings but also joint team or group council meetings.

We then go on to the convening of PCC meetings and how we make sure that those who need to know do know that the meetings are happening. There is the relationship between the standing committee and PCCs; there is something about whether ministers have to be an *ex officio* member of all committees. Towards the end, there is something about removal from church electoral rolls – something much more honoured in the breach than in the observance, it is said.

As I am involved in this, I am very aware of the emotional drivers behind what we are trying to do. I have already mentioned being careful to deal with bad behaviour by simply imposing more rules – rules that may be burdensome to those whose behaviour is not bad. The other key emotional driver that I hope we can all keep in mind is about wanting to establish the culture of empowerment; an encouragement to all of us to be creative and resourceful as we devise patterns of managing our business that are suitable to our own context, because the contexts across the Church of England are remarkably different.

Good practice is not necessarily created by us, sitting in this room in London. Trying to establish more of that empowering culture is what is in front of us in this debate. I therefore hope that Synod will agree this package of amendments which, though modest, will have a positive impact on the life and work of many of the parishes, removing outdated and unnecessary constraints and releasing time and energy for activities better calculated to further our mission. I therefore invite the Synod to give this its warm support.

The Chair: The item is now open for debate.

Revd Sister Rosemary Howorth CHN (Religious Communities): When I first read these proposals I was horrified at the suggestion that the minimum number of PCC meetings should be reduced to one in the year. I spoke to the priest in charge of the two-parish benefice where I serve, who was equally horrified and encouraged me to speak on this. Therefore, as no kind of expert whatsoever, that is what I am doing.

We do of course recognize the enormous burden on priests who have many parishes and therefore an enormous number of PCC meetings. We can quite understand that this is a very demanding burden. We can see the problem but we do not feel that this is the solution.

Somebody I know had eight parishes and the way she dealt with it was that she did not go to every PCC meeting; she allowed the vice-chair to take some of the meetings. That is one other way of dealing with it.

Another suggestion, which I know would require a lot of legal work and all kinds of complications, would be to ask if every parish has to have a separate PCC. Clearly in law at the moment it does, but would there be some way of making the benefice the unit rather than the parish? Instead of PCCs, we would have a Benefice Church Council – a BCC – or, if we wanted an adjective corresponding to ‘Parochial’, perhaps a ‘Beneficial’ Church Council.

Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester): On the whole, I agree with the bulk of what is in this paper but I have great concerns about two particular points. Reading the excellent ‘health check’ that is going on in the *Church Times* at the moment, I came across an article where General Synod members were referred to as ‘complacent, static and resistant to change’. I hope that I am none of those things, although what I am about to say may make Synod think otherwise. I would also make the point to the writer of that article that I have not come with a prepared speech, which they will be pleased to know!

Like Sister Rosemary, the paragraph that really concerns me is with respect to the number of PCC meetings. I discussed this with members of my own congregation on Sunday. In a perfect world we would think, ‘Great! Just one PCC meeting a year’ but, in truth, I do not think that this will work. I fully understand the point made by Revd Cotton about multi-parish benefices, but the priest in charge or vicar does not have to attend every meeting. If there happens to be just one PCC meeting a year, it would be storing up a huge number of problems; things would not get done and, in addition, more and more subcommittees would be created. I simply do not think that this will work.

If someone had come forward and said that it should be reduced to three meetings a year – fine. That would have been acceptable. However, I think that just one is really dangerous. It is not simply an issue in my own parish and my own deanery; it is true all around the country.

There are a couple of other points here. Paragraph 4 talks about not having to post a notice of the meeting on the church door or to advertise it. I am not entirely sure what that is doing here. It is almost making us look like a branch of the ‘Secret Seven’ rather than the national Church. Surely we should be advertising our meetings? I will not vote against the motion based simply on that but I am puzzled as to why it is there.

I am also rather puzzled with regard to paragraph 6 and enshrining that change in the business of the PCC. I think that most PCCs probably do this anyway. I have been on a PCC for about 17 years and in most meetings, when circumstances dictate, we tend to change the order of business. It is pure common sense and I am not sure that it should be enshrined here.

There are some very good things. Referring to paragraph 8, it is a good idea that the incumbent is no longer an *ex officio* member of different committees. Again, that speeds up processes and enables people to be carrying out much more constructive acts of mission.

I return to paragraph 3, however. As it stands, I cannot support this legislation because of that paragraph. If we carry this, I think that we will be back here in three, four or five years' time, revisiting it. If this paragraph were taken out, I would support the motion. I cannot support this and I would urge Synod to follow my example.

Revd Tony Redman (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): Was it only last November that we had the stunning debate about intentional evangelism? We all agreed wholeheartedly then that one whole meeting of our PCC each year should be given over to mission.

My wife, who is our PCC treasurer, tells me that we have to have two meetings a year: one to receive our annual report and then, when it returns from the official person who makes sure that we have added it all up, we have to approve it. I am therefore rather anxious about reducing the number of PCC meetings to one a year because I cannot see how we can cram it all in. Therefore, when my colleague Jonathan Alderton-Ford puts his amendment forward, I hope that Synod members will stand to support it. Although I do not like going to so many PCC meetings, I think that having one meeting is just a step too far.

The Simplification Group has done a tremendous piece of work and I am happy to support just about everything else in this motion, apart from limiting the number of PCC meetings.

Last year, as the inspecting surveyor, I was asked to inspect a very poor church in a sad part of Suffolk. It was pouring with rain and when I got to the door there was nobody there, but in the vestry there was a logbook and in the logbook there was a note from the PCC secretary. It said, 'That's it. I'm giving up. We can't appoint a treasurer. We can appoint only one churchwarden. We can't afford to pay our parish share unless we dip into our reserves. Numbers are falling – and I'm going home!' I was rather bedraggled and quite upset by this, but when I looked at the bottom of the note it was dated 'June 1952'! In the intervening years this poor parish is not thriving but it does pay its share. In all sorts of extraordinary ways they have devised a way of maintaining a presence in their community. They have not done it by reducing the number of PCC meetings; they have done it in other intuitive and exciting ways. (See me afterwards if you are interested.)

When I moved into the parish where I now live, I discovered that my incumbent was scared stiff of dogs, so much so that he did no visiting in the parish whatsoever. However, he was quite keen to appoint other people to do the visiting on his behalf; so he trained up lots of laypeople. He also hated PCC meetings; so he amalgamated his three parishes into one PCC. We have one APC in a year; we have two churchwardens and one treasurer for the benefice – for which, as an FSM, I now have responsibility. Things have therefore gone in a strange way.

I do not think that reducing the number of PCC meetings has the intended simplification we want. I believe in the law of unintended consequences and I suspect that we may be putting a greater burden on the clergy, who, as we have read in the *Church Times*, are not the right personality type to go forward for mission but are very keen to do the administrative things that the PCC might otherwise do on their behalf. I would therefore encourage people to look more radically at what we can do to simplify the bureaucracy and let us release the laity to involve themselves in the mission of our PCCs.

Mr Philip French (Rochester): Simplification is obviously good and I, for one, would like to reduce the time spent in Church meetings. However, as others have said, I am concerned

about paragraph 3. I am also concerned about paragraph 7 and the number of members on a standing committee. I think that those aspects of this proposal go beyond simplification to recklessness.

PCCs are not designed for the convenience of the clergy, nor should they be. They are for the good governance of the Church of England – the Church of England by law established and a Church enjoying all the privileges of charitable status. Dare I say it, they may even be meant to further Our Lord's kingdom.

To allow a PCC to meet only once a year without further qualification would be downright dangerous. How are PCC members to exert their responsibilities as charity trustees in those circumstances? What opportunity would there be to review the mission of the Church, its finances or its relationships with other bodies? Would it be sufficient to ensure that safeguarding was given proper attention?

It is not only dangerous: it is impractical. We have just been reminded that as recently as November we declared that at least one meeting of the PCC should be largely devoted to sharing experiences and initiatives for making new disciples. Given that the PCC is also expected to approve the annual accounts, amongst other regulatory requirements, including adopting the safeguarding policies, it will be a *very* long meeting.

More seriously, these two proposals taken together risk allowing a parish to be captured – captured by a narrow, and perhaps narrow-minded, group and one more or less handpicked by the minister. That would not be the Church of England at its best; it would be parochialism of the worst sort; not, incidentally, congregationalism, which would pay much more attention to whole-church meetings.

It has been said that these proposals are meant to further the needs of multi-parish benefices. I understand the issue there. If so, let us be transparent about it. There are provisions in the Church Representation Rules relating to joint church councils. Why not strengthen and clarify those, rather than make provisions to dilute lay involvement? Alternatively, safeguards could be introduced. We will hear about some of those possibilities in the amendments to come. Another possibility would be to require the permission of the bishop's council to adopt either a reduced number of PCC meetings or a smaller standing committee.

Lacking such safeguards, I am sorry to say that I will be voting against this proposal, despite the many good things in it, and I would encourage others to do the same.

The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Michael Perham): I also want to speak against the proposal to allow only one meeting of the Parochial Church Council in a year and I do it for two reasons.

The first reason is that sometimes I as bishop, or sometimes my diocesan synod, wish to consult parishes about important issues. We want to be collaborative and consultative; we want to know what people think and believe at the grass roots and so we ask a PCC to talk about something. It is quite infuriating when you have to wait three or four months because you are told that a parish does not have a PCC meeting until April; but if we had to wait a whole year we would not be able to do that kind of consultation at all, and I think that would be a pity.

The second reason is that if a parish intends to have only one PCC meeting a year I suspect it means that parish is dysfunctional. If it is dysfunctional – and most dioceses have a few like that – the answer is not just to make it easier for them but to make them face some issues. In my diocese the issue would probably be ‘Isn’t it time that you became a united parish with the one next door, in order that you had a PCC that could function properly and in which there could be a sense of mission and vision?’ I therefore hope that we will reject this particular proposal.

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): I would like to speak about this terrible, terrible thing, the single PCC meeting in the year. Robert Cotton helpfully said in his opening – and I paraphrase – what was sauce for the goose was not sauce for the gander.

I want to introduce Synod to Newington, a parish of some 84 souls and probably the kind of PCC for which this part of the simplification is intended. They are really good at small bits of mission that work in their small parish. They are really good at going to other things that happen elsewhere in the benefice, but they do not (‘thank you very much’) want to be part of a joint PCC, and the burden of a large number of PCC meetings would be a burden on the laity rather than the clergy. I say that advisedly because their PCC meetings usually come with a bottle of a red wine and some good conversation afterwards!

In Newington they can have as many PCC meetings as they like, but in that particular community they would be able to do what they need to do in one PCC meeting a year and do other kinds of mission in partnership with the other parishes in the Dorchester team and in their benefice.

For those who do not know about small parishes, I would therefore make a plea for parishes like Newington, which are really doing very well in a small way. The responsibility of not having to put on extra PCC meetings would help them enormously.

Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford): I approach the lectern in a state of some embarrassment because Canon Sue Booy has already made a large number of my points. I was also thinking of a parish with approximately 85 souls. Not Newington, where I remember spending some happy Sundays on placement many years ago, but one in our own diocese.

The parish I was thinking of will be one of scores in the Hereford diocese and one of hundreds across England, where the population is very small, the number of services is few – probably one a month – but where a small congregation faithfully and successfully carries on the work of the Church. The parish I was thinking of, Milson in Shropshire, certainly fulfils the calling of the Church of England to be open to all, because the key to the door was lost some years ago and therefore it is never locked. It is available for prayer, for the occasional offices, and sometimes even for travelling tramps who need somewhere out of the rain.

I want to say a little more about the fact that we have to live with the reality of this across the Church of England. We agreed at our last meeting to urge all PCCs to spend at least one meeting a year discussing ways of making new disciples. We did not resolve any means of telling PCCs that they ought to do this. I am sure that there are many PCCs that are quite ignorant of the great duty we have urged upon them and will do no such thing. Let us be honest, there are plenty of PCCs that do not meet four times a year. I am afraid I have to say

to the bishops and to the strategists that it would be worth surveying, to see how far their attempts to consult go down into parishes. We all know that it is not as far as we would like. That is part of the reality.

I return to the point made by the original proposer: do not presume that what you think of as best practice in the places you know will work everywhere.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): If we look at the Explanatory Memorandum, it says that paragraph 3 reduces the minimum number of meetings that each PCC must hold in a year from four to one. In other words, the minimum is changing from four to one. That is just the minimum; it does not prevent any PCC from having as many meetings as it wants. However, the obligation to have four meetings as a minimum is being reduced.

I do not accept the idea that there will not be an annual parochial meeting and you will not be able to approve the accounts. You can still do all of that, but the requirement that there must be four is what is being changed – not that you cannot have more than one meeting. You can have six, seven or eight. If the PCC feels that it wants more meetings in terms of prayer and talking about mission, it can still do so.

When I was a vicar, because of that obligation I sometimes had to cancel meetings anyway, because there was no agenda and no business. They turned into prayer meetings. It is a matter of simply reducing the obligation of a mandatory minimum of four meetings to a minimum of one, to which you can add as many as you like.

We should read carefully what is being said. I no longer have PCCs but I know from my own bishop's council that sometimes there is not enough business and I have had to cancel it. It is permissive, reducing the obligation to have a minimum of four to a minimum of one. I would have thought that most of us would say that is not a bad idea. The PCC could have 12 meetings a year, if it chose to do so.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton, in reply: I said that the process began with consulting and listening, and it is very easy to hear what is being said. I very much appreciate what has been said about the minimum number, but there is still some anxiety about that. I will therefore ask Synod to vote in favour of this motion, not least because there are amendments to come that bring forward two different numbers and whether the number stays at four or two. I may, with His Grace the Archbishop, want the minimum to be one, but we need to listen to what Synod is saying. However, if we vote against this now and the motion is lost, we will not have the chance to consider the amendments. I recognize the anxiety and we need to explore that further, but perhaps we could do that by considering the amendments that are coming up in a moment.

Clearly the minimum number of PCC meetings is an important issue. This proposal was not designed simply for the sake of clergy alone; whether lay, vice-chair or chair, other PCC

members need to attend. This is not solely being driven either by the concerns of clergy or indeed by multi-parish benefices. One of the things that lies at the heart of this is groups of loyal Christians in their locality taking responsibility for ordering the life of their local Christian community. In a formal sense, as charity trustees, PCC members have the responsibility not only to make decisions that affect the life of their community and their Christian community but they also have to make them wisely. It means that they have to make decisions about how many meetings are needed in order to make wise decisions. We cannot determine that here. If they are to fulfil their charitable functions as well as their Christian leadership, they are the ones who will know how many meetings are needed – whether it is for prayer, for discussing mission, safeguarding, receiving accounts or whatever. That is why there is a proposed change to the minimum. Let us see what the number comes out as, as we consider the amendments.

It is also very clear that a number of parishes sit light to the Church Representation Rules – coded language for ‘currently break them’ – which came up in the second speech. That is one of the reasons why some of these amendments are being proposed. What Robin’s parish is doing is breaking the Church Representation Rules but trying to fulfil what the Church community needs. We are making some simple proposals, so that the rules do not have to be broken but the required business can be carried out through the parish.

We had a number of other calls. I love Sister Rosemary’s idea of having a ‘Beneficial Church Council’ but I had whispered in my ear that to turn it from a Parochial Church Council into a Beneficial Church Council would require primary legislation. Part of what we are doing here is an attempt to do a few simple things that do not require us to go to Parliament.

What the Bishop of Gloucester was saying was very similar to something that an archdeacon said to me in the tearoom this afternoon, about wishing that PCC meetings could be called not only by the incumbent nor only by PCC members but by others, who have a right and proper relationship with good, flourishing and functioning PCCs. It may therefore be that at some stage we would want to bring forward ideas that the bishops or archdeacons could ensure that PCC meetings happen – could in effect call them. Those are new ideas and would require more complex legislation, which is not what we are doing now. I endorse the bishop’s sentiments but that is not what is in front of us this evening.

What is in front of us is a mix, a simple package, for some simplification. I would ask for Synod’s support now, not least because we need to get into the details of working out the right number to attach as a minimum number of PCC meetings. I would therefore urge Synod to vote in favour of this motion.

The motion was put and carried.

Dr Graham Campbell (Chester): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph 3, *leave out* sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) and *insert* –

“(a) after ‘four meetings in each year’ *insert* ‘, unless the annual meeting resolves that in the coming year the council may hold fewer than four meetings; but the resolution must require the council to hold at least one meeting in that year’,

and

(b) for ‘at quarterly intervals’ substitute ‘spread evenly through the year’.”

When I looked at these profound changes to the Church Representation Rules, alarm bells began to ring. Although it is 40 years since I trained as a chartered accountant, I just about remember my course’s training experience in auditing. My experience then taught me to look at systems and identify possible weaknesses. The combination of paragraph 3, allowing a reduction in PCC meetings to one a year, coupled with paragraph 7, reducing the minimum number of people on the standing committee to three – the incumbent and the wardens – therefore gave me grounds for concern.

It is the incumbent who calls the PCC meetings, so these changes can result in a cabal of the incumbent and two wardens, if they so wish, running a parish for a whole year without having to account for their decisions and actions to anybody else. Philip French raised the same point a few minutes ago.

Before a member of the Business Committee reminds me of the rule that a meeting of the PCC can be requested by a third of the PCC putting their request in writing, I would point out that very few PCC members are conversant with the Church Representation Rules and in any event such a demand, demanding that a PCC be told to check on the actions of the vicar and wardens, may not do much for pastoral harmony in the parish.

In many parishes, one of the wardens doubles up as the PCC treasurer, and indeed this is the default position under the Rules if a volunteer cannot be found to act as treasurer. Since the other warden will almost certainly be an authorized signature on the PCC bank account, this means that the two wardens will have complete control over the PCC finances for a whole year without having to give an account of their stewardship.

Mercifully, instances of embezzlement by PCC treasurers are very rare indeed: so rare as to hit the tabloid headlines when they do occur. However, we are told to pray ‘Lead us not into temptation’ and so should not legislate for that temptation to be a possibility. Of course, the other danger is simply basic complacency on financial affairs and busy people perhaps not having the time to do things as they should.

My parish is relatively large. The PCC has several businessmen and women, senior managers and professionals among the membership. Our finances come under close scrutiny. Each December we prepare a budget for the following year, and I have to provide quarterly management accounts for the PCC with an explanation of any item of income or expenditure that is significantly different to budget; then the PCC discuss possible steps to rectify the financial situation. We would not get away with one meeting a year.

It is not only the finances that need to be monitored. As people have already indicated, there are safeguarding policies, health and safety issues, mission and evangelism, growth action planning, to name a few. These really cannot be left to the wardens and the incumbent to deal with and report back once a year.

As we have heard, the other side of the argument is the priest who is the incumbent of eight or ten parishes and who is therefore obliged by law to attend 30 or 40 PCC meetings a year

– though, from what has been said, they tend to delegate it on occasions. I think we can all agree that this is not the best use of his or her time and a reduction in the number of PCC meetings would be very sensible. There are also parishes and districts where the work is done by the DCC, leaving little for the PCC to do.

My amendment seeks to introduce some checks and balances. The congregation know what their situation is, how much work is to be done in the parish over the next year, the character and the abilities of the incumbent, wardens and standing committee members and how many PCCs their incumbent has to chair, so this amendment leaves it to the congregation at the Annual Church Parish Meeting to determine the number of PCCs to be held, if it will be less than the default of four. Hopefully this will prevent a couple or three running the parish for a year without accounting for their stewardship, while the same Rules allow the number of meetings he or she has to attend purely for the sake of having a meeting. Canon Cotton mentioned flexibility. Hopefully this will introduce flexibility, with checks and balances.

There has been reference to joint PCC meetings. Perhaps that ought to be strengthened. I cannot find anything about electronic use, and I just hope that 40 members will help to support my amendment.

The Chair: I call on Canon Cotton to reply.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton: I am very grateful for Dr Campbell raising this. What I have already said about the importance of this being the minimum number of meetings still stands. However, I did mention at the beginning the concern that what might be said here could be driven by our worries about what happens in parishes that are not our own. Therefore, what Dr Campbell says needs to be balanced by Sue Booy's positive view about a parish with just 84 souls and what sounded like the picture there and, whether it is the 84 souls or the PCC representing them, themselves recognizing what they needed to flourish. That again is what we are trying to do: to increase this flexibility so that responsibility is taken where it belongs.

The other aspect where I have difficulty with Dr Campbell's amendment is that the PCC needs to do this, not the annual meeting. The trustee responsibility lies with the PCC; they are responsible and know what decisions need to be made. They therefore know the sort of processes that need to be undergone in order to make wise decisions. That is their legal responsibility. The annual meeting specifying the number of meetings that the PCC could hold during the year locates the responsibility in the wrong place.

Dr Campbell noted, and it is worth remembering, that a third of the PCC coming together can summon a meeting anyway. I too have concerns about any parish being tyrannized, whether by the incumbent or by a small cabal of members. However, there is a collective trustee and Christian leadership responsibility. It is already there in the Church Representation Rules with that power to call a meeting. If the PCC members do not know it, then to some extent they are not fulfilling their responsibility in knowing that they can call the meetings as and when required.

I am minded to look more favourably on the amendment at Item 519, which reduces the minimum to two; but, partly because of the lack of change in Dr Campbell's amendment

and because I think it is locating the responsibility in the wrong place, I urge Synod to resist his amendment.

The Chair: The 40-member rule applies here, so I ask if there are 40 members standing who do not wish this amendment to lapse but wish a vote to be taken on it. There are not 40 members standing, so that item has lapsed.

Revd Jonathan Alderton-Ford ((St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): – which some of us would like to change to the diocese of Suffolk without Lowestoft!

I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph 3 *leave out* sub-paragraph (a) and *insert* –

“(a) for ‘four meetings’ substitute ‘two meetings’”

and

after paragraph 3(a) *insert* as a new sub-paragraph –

“(–) after ‘each year’ *insert* ‘, the first of which shall not take place before the end of the period of four weeks beginning with the date of the annual meeting.’.”

I shall not repeat many of the points that have already been made, but in Suffolk we have many multi-parish benefices, some smaller than 83, some larger, some a mix of rural and urban (or what passes for ‘urban’ in Suffolk); and we have thousands of PCC meetings every year. We are not opposed, therefore, to limiting the numbers of unnecessary PCC meetings – but many of our smaller churches are run by a few families who hold all the key positions on the PCC between them. Some see this as sacrificial leadership; others see it as nepotistic domination.

If there is only one PCC meeting other than the APCM, it may be very difficult for newcomers or those deemed to be outsiders to ask questions and to raise concerns about issues, or just to join in – issues like financial accountability, safeguarding policy and all those things that do need to be asked about these days.

When one considers the opinion that two PCCs are needed to receive accounts – and that is an opinion, not necessarily a fact – and the guidelines on evangelism that require at least one full PCC on that topic every year, a minimum of three PCCs is needed to cover all the work while those requirements are in force, and of course they themselves may change.

The real issue is that things should be scrutinized and debated properly. Doing things properly is the key. In particular, if it is not done properly the opportunity for financial malpractice looms large. There are many stories of money going missing and there are other horrors that we need to consider and to safeguard ourselves against.

That is the first part of my amendment. As to the second part, I would say this. If you are feeling lonely and considering going on to some form of dating agency, think again. You only have to put down an amendment on the Church Representation Rules and suddenly you get dozens of emails, conversations, advice and direction. The second part is designed

to be helpful because it draws attention to the status of that well-known practice of holding a PCC immediately after the APCM, which some people consider to be a full and proper PCC. If this view were to prevail in conjunction with a new rule, there could be no PCC for the whole year except for the APCM and the one that follows.

The Legal Department have scrutinized my amendment and are keen for it to be debated (that is why effectively it appears twice) so that members will understand that it refers to Representation Rules, Annex 2, paragraph 4(b) – yes, I am becoming an anorak! This points out that there can be a meeting to appoint officers straight after the APCM, which is not considered to have the same status as a full PCC but none the less achieves its purpose. This being understood – and I hope Synod understands it – there can be a PCC to appoint officers after an APCM and then the minimum of two PCCs that are necessary to do the work of the Church properly.

I hope that Synod members will see the wisdom of what we are trying to achieve and will stand to support this amendment.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton: I need to begin with what is numbered Item 521 on the order paper, because I give an indication now that I will be wanting to accept Jonathan's amendment there. It is the part about the meeting that might take place immediately after an annual meeting not being counted for the purposes of the minimum number of PCC meetings in the rest of the year. We would want to accept that.

That said, I need to revert to the amendment at Item 519. I still take issue with the idea that setting a low number is limiting the number of PCC meetings. It is not doing that at all. The responsibility of setting the numbers, and much more importantly the responsibility of discharging the business, stays with the PCC.

I recognize some of the evocative description we have had about some parishes either being captured by family, wider families or local concerns, but I also hear stories about the dynamics being pulled in the other direction. Even those who have been churchwardens for a very long time, and who seem to pass it on from father to son and mother to daughter, increasingly recognize it as a burden and do want others to join in. The way to do that is by such a small group of people needing to take the responsibility and asking 'How can we make that happen?' For us in London to tell them how to do it is not the right way.

We also heard the worry about embezzlement and the misuse of finance. That will not be solved by the number of PCC meetings, however; it will be solved by the adequacy of the PCC controls that are set in place.

There was the feeling that we are having a proper issue recognized, but I am still not completely convinced that the amendment is the way to deal with it. For my part, I would be very happy to see part (a) of the amendment passed but I have to admit a concern that the second part would require me – if I may speak personally – to change the pattern of what we have established at Holy Trinity and St Mary's Guildford for the last 10-15 years. For a long time we have held our annual meeting within the context of Sunday worship and used it as a chance – because we have the congregation there and discussions afterwards before we go formally to the annual meeting – to engage as great a number of people as possible in setting the priorities for the year ahead. Then, very soon afterwards – not within 45 minutes in the way described but within a couple of weeks – the PCC, having heard and reflected,

signs off on the priorities for the year. The second part of this amendment would forbid that to happen, because I would not be able to hold a PCC meeting within four weeks of the date of the annual meeting. That is precisely the sort of example where what sounds like a good idea for one place can actually inhibit what might be designed as good practice elsewhere.

I am caught, therefore, between wanting to acknowledge that Synod seems to be slightly unhappy with reducing the minimum to one, and therefore I would be content with the first part of the amendment, but the second part seems to create a new and additional restriction that goes against the flexibility we are trying to increase. Therefore, I will formally resist this amendment.

Revd Jonathan Alderton-Ford: On a point of order, Chair. Would it be helpful at this point if I split my amendment into two parts?

The Chair: Canon Cotton has indicated that he does not accept this amendment and so the 40-member rule will have to apply. We will consider the point subsequently but the 40-member rule has to apply at this point. Do I see 40 members standing? I do.

Having taken legal advice, I am prepared to divide the amendment. So that we know what we are debating, it is this. 'In paragraph 3 leave out sub-paragraph (a) and insert – "(a) for 'four meetings' substitute 'two meetings'.'" It is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): How often do you have to attend a meeting to become an effective member of a body? When we have had discussions in this Synod about how often we should meet, there has been a significant voice of those who are not otherwise involved in the work of the Synod except when they are here.

A very important aspect, particularly of representative bodies, is the development of some kind of sense of togetherness. If you meet only once a year, that is extremely difficult. It would be difficult even with two. It is very important for laypeople and especially for young people, of whom we are desperately short in our synodical system, and PCCs are the beginning of the process of involvement in our synodical system.

We need to give people the opportunities, not just to do the business but to develop that sense of corporate identity which enables them to contribute to the development of the mission of the parish. I hope that we will keep that factor in mind when we come to vote on this amendment.

Mr Christopher Fielden (Salisbury): I would like to take the previous speaker's words a little further. At the last sessions of Synod we discussed how we could improve the representation on the Synod. The whole synodical system in the Church starts at the bottom with the PCC. If we do not encourage a powerful PCC that meets regularly, we do not get people going through to deanery synod, to diocesan synod, and then to this august body.

I urge Synod members to be very careful when considering what they are doing to the image of the PCC in the parish.

Mr Graham Smith (Gloucester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and carried.

The Chair: We now move on to the second part of the amendment, which I will read. ‘After paragraph 3(a) insert as a new sub-paragraph – “(-) after ‘each year’ insert ‘, the first of which shall not take place before the end of the period of four weeks beginning with the date of the annual meeting’.” That is now open for debate.

Dr John Beal (Ripon and Leeds): I would like to clarify what Canon Cotton has said, because he indicated that if this were passed it would preclude his having a PCC meeting within a month of the annual meeting.

As I understand it, that is not the case. It would preclude his doing that if he were to restrict it to only two meetings, because that meeting could not count as one of the two meetings. In effect, it would mean that he could have that meeting he wants and two other meetings, which seems to me to be a very sensible proposal.

Mr Peter Collard (Derby): The problem I have with this is the order in which we are doing things. If the amendment at Item 521 had already been carried, then passing this section would not be too much of a problem. If the amendment at Item 521 is not carried, however, we will not be able to appoint our treasurer, our PCC secretary and a couple of deputy wardens for a month. Could someone tell me how we will do our accounts and how we will organise PCC meetings? If the amendment at Item 521 is not in place, I do not see how we can wait to hold that meeting for a month.

Revd Jonathan Alderton-Ford: On a point of order, Chair. Can I clarify that last point, because it is not correct?

The Chair: I will seek advice. I think that we can have that clarification.

Revd Jonathan Alderton-Ford: What I am saying is that you can have your APCM and your brief PCC afterwards to appoint your officers. That immediate PCC does not count as one of the two. The purpose of this amendment is to make sure that the other two PCCs happen later in the year. Therefore, there is the APCM, a short PCC to appoint officers, and then two more. That is the idea and that is what the amendment hopes to achieve.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and, following a division of the whole Synod, was carried, 133 voting in favour and 123 against, with 10 recorded abstentions.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): – hoping not to be told that this contravenes European law, I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph 4, *leave out* from “Appendix II” to the end and *insert* –

“, in sub-paragraph (a), for other words from ‘and signed by’ to the end substitute ‘shall be given in such form (whether printed or electronic) as, in the opinion of the chairman of the council or the persons convening the meeting, is likely to enable persons whose names are entered on the roll of the parish to discover that the meeting is to be held’.”

There is no doubt that the current requirement in paragraph 4 of Appendix II, for a notice to be fixed to the church door 10 days before a meeting, is somewhat old-fashioned and out of date and probably no longer achieves its purpose, which was to alert electoral roll members to the fact that a forthcoming PCC meeting is to be held. However, I suggest that that purpose is important and should not be abandoned simply because the method is out of date.

PCCs are public bodies meeting in public and they are there to represent the members of the electoral roll. I suggest that there is a continuing need to make electoral roll members aware that a meeting is to be held, in good time for them to decide if they want to attend and observe, and for them to speak to PCC members, the rector, the vicar, or whoever seems appropriate, to find out what is on the agenda and perhaps to make representations to them about the matters to be discussed.

PCCs ought not to be allowed to behave like a private club, without telling anyone else when and where they are meeting. This amendment therefore proposes a more flexible and modern approach to notifying electoral roll members. It leaves it to the discretion of the convenor of the meeting to decide precisely how notice is to be given, because what is appropriate in one place, as we have heard so often tonight, may not be appropriate in another. What matters is that the information is communicated. It might be on the church notice sheet; it might be on the parish website; in some parishes they might have an email address for every electoral roll member and they could send it round; perhaps even a Facebook page (I am not so sure about that); even a notice on the church door, if that is what suits local circumstances, or a combination of all of them. But let us require that the maximum amount of publicity should be given to the fact that the PCC is meeting and considering important business, rather than the minimum or none at all. I invite the Synod to approve this amendment, to ensure that happens.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton: Some themes are emerging. As Clive has said, what works in one parish will not work elsewhere. There is also the theme of being careful about what words intend and what they will actually achieve.

The intention here about PCCs taking responsibility for their business and then ensuring that there is buy-in or that stakeholders know, or whatever sort of jargon is used, is absolutely laudable and right and will help contribute to good decisions being made. I am just not sure that the amendment as phrased here achieves that intention. There is some uncertainty. When it refers to ‘is likely to enable persons’, I am not sure quite how that phrase can be cashed out in legal terms. What sort of electronic notice will meet that requirement? In particular, sending emails out to everyone on the electoral roll of a parish may be inappropriate and not achieve what the amendment is trying to achieve. Some

would put it up on a website; some parishes do not have websites. Again, the idea that PCCs take responsibility, not only for other business but involving others in knowing about the business, is certainly laudable.

Quoting from our parish, we felt that it was right to make clear in our weekly newsletter for two weeks in advance the content of the PCC meeting, the key decisions to be made, and not merely when and where the PCC meeting would take place. I think that is what the amendment points us to, namely the location and the time of the meeting, but surely it is the content? For example, it is if a parish is to discuss women in the episcopate or repairs to the roof at a cost of half a million pounds, or some of those really big decisions – rather than primarily when a PCC will take place.

The other thing we have done is to make very clear the results of PCC meetings; so that if we have made decisions, then for two weeks afterwards, in the same sort of format, we will make sure that people know what has happened.

I think that this is going in the right way but it is not necessarily attacking the major concerns. I am happy to have a debate on this if required but, for simplicity's sake, I will resist this amendment.

The Chair: This amendment is subject to the 40-member rule and so I will ask if there are 40 members standing who do not wish this amendment to lapse but wish a vote to be taken on it. There are 40 members standing.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): Canon Cotton has expressed reservations about this amendment on the grounds that it may not require the kind of publicity of the meeting which the proposer intends. However, the fact is that if we do not carry this amendment there is *no* requirement for the meeting to be publicized in advance.

I think that Mr Scowen has been very flexible in the terms of his amendment, which would not in any way preclude the kind of publicity that Mr Cotton has described he gives notice of in his parish. If we do not pass it, however, we simply remove all requirement for that notice to be given and therefore find ourselves in a worse situation than the one which Canon Cotton described.

Revd Paul Ayers (Bradford): I am in favour of this amendment and, if I may say so, I am also in favour of the subsequent amendments. Otherwise, I think that the proposals we have been given are surprisingly anti-democratic.

The Church Representation Rules are there to protect the interests of the local laity. It may be that the current rules are not entirely suitable in every place but neither are the new proposals, which simply sweep away so many of those protections. We cannot make universal rules for the whole of England based on Newington and its 84 people.

Unwittingly, without these amendments we have a recipe for clerical dictatorship. It diminishes the right of the laity to be consulted. We would end up with two meetings a year, a standing committee of three, no public notice required, business introduced onto the agenda with no notice and nobody knowing that it is coming, variations in the order of business with no notice, so that if you are not there at the right time you may well miss it.

All of this is a recipe for decline and a reduction in the consultation and co-operation with the laity that is required by the current Rules.

I want Synod to support this amendment and the subsequent amendments. If not, I want Synod to vote against the final approval contained in the proposal at Item 505B.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): I support Clive Scowen's amendment. As the last two speakers have pointed out, things can go on: lights under bushels – people do not know what is happening. He has tried to make sure that as many people know as possible. We have to be imaginative.

We have heard tonight about big PCCs, small PCCs and, dare I say, people playing fast and loose with the existing Representation Rules. It is a warning that, when we produce something like this, all these variations to satisfy the whole myriad of PCCs need a little more thought and flexibility, to make sure that we are doing what we are legally required to do and people know that we are getting on with it.

There is all sorts being sent down to PCCs and if they never meet they will never discuss it, so I urge Synod to support Mr Scowen's amendment.

The amendment was put and carried.

The Chair: As Synod can see, we are still short of the number of amendments that we need to cover this evening, as well as the vote on the substantive motion. I therefore deem that there is insufficient time to complete the business this evening, even with an extension of the time that would be allowable. I therefore adjourn the sitting and we will resume business tomorrow.

The Chair adjourned the debate at 6.55 p.m.

Canon Janet Perrett (Ely) led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Archbishop of York dismissed the Synod with the blessing at 7.10 p.m.

Full Synod: Third Day Wednesday 12 February 2014

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark)* took the Chair at 9.15 a.m.

Canon Celia Thomson (Gloucester) led the Synod in prayer.

The Chair: I call on the Archbishop of Canterbury to give us a Presidential Address.

Presidential Address

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby): I have a couple of preliminary notices. Contrary to the rumours on Twitter yesterday, when I sneeze I am not allergic to Synod. (*Laughter*) Someone who was clearly not paying attention to the debate counted 27 sneezes. Personally, I was not counting. If it happens today, just talk amongst yourselves for a while!

A trip to the South Sudan, Burundi – I am glad we prayed for Burundi this morning – Rwanda and Goma in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) brings home some pretty tough realities. Two of those areas are current conflict and two are post-conflict. In them, the issues which mesmerize me day by day vanish and the extraordinary courage of the Church is brought afresh in front of my eyes. I referred to this yesterday. By the Church I do not only mean the Bishops and the Archbishops, extraordinary as they are, but the whole Church, in the small villages where they have been raided, where sexual violence is the norm, where unspeakable atrocities have been carried out and yet they still trust in God. These are Churches of courage – Anglican, Catholic, Pentecostal, Protestant of other sorts, and many others. Of course they are all flawed, we all are, but it is their courage and faith that lives with me.

However, like all Churches, including ourselves, they are part of the society in which they live. In their society at the moment, conflict is generated by fear. It is on that subject of fear that I want to reflect for a few minutes this morning, not with reference so much to the international situation but to ourselves and the way we deal with ourselves and between ourselves.

We all know, of course, that perfect love casts out fear. We know it, though we do not often apply it. We all know the old cliché that perfect fear casts out love. In any institution or organisation the moment that suspicion reigns and the assumption that everything is zero-sum becomes dominant – that is to say that one person's gain must be my loss; we cannot both flourish – that institution will be increasingly dominated by fear. It is an old problem in game theory. The moment at which something is zero-sum, players stop looking so much at their objectives and increasingly watch each other. The more they look at each other, the more they are dominated by fear and the less they are capable of achieving their objectives.

The Church of England is not a closed system, nor is the Anglican Communion, and most certainly nor is the Church universal and catholic. It is not a closed system because God is involved and where he is involved there is no limit to what can happen and no limit to human flourishing. We are in the exact opposite of a zero-sum game. His abundant love

overwhelms us when we make space, to flood into our own lives but also into our institutions and our systems.

At the other end of the spectrum, closed systems, full of fear, eventually implode under the weight of their own contradictions and conflicts. In a closed system, or a system which people feel to be closed and forget is open, assumptions grow about what is happening. They grow with fear, and I notice many of them. For example, as those who were in the chamber for Questions know, I recently commented that where there is a growing church there is usually a good incumbent. A number of people took that to mean as well that where a church is not growing it must be because there is a bad incumbent. However, I did not say that and neither did I mean it. I have to confess, just for the sake of transparency, that the moment I said it I knew that I had expressed myself badly, and I do apologize sincerely to those hurt by the comment. The underlying point, however, remains the same. Fear led to the assumption of denigration: one that was not there.

Take another example. Yesterday, this Synod, by an overwhelming majority, supported at its latest stage the legislation that could lead to the ordination of women to the episcopate. We all know in this place that it is only one of the stages; that we have some way to go. In the middle of the paper we have in Annex A of GS 1932 the five principles agreed by the House of Bishops. They are short and to the point and they depend on love and trust. The love has to be demonstrated and the trust has to be earned, but the love cannot be demonstrated if it is refused and the trust cannot be earned without the iterative process of being received and reinforced in the reception. That is how love and trust work. For example, if we are to live out a commitment to the flourishing of every tradition of the Church, there will have to be a massive cultural change that accepts that people with whom I differ deeply are also deeply loved by Christ and therefore must be deeply loved by me, and love means seeking their practical flourishing. We cannot make any sense of Philippians 2 and the hymn to the Servant unless we adopt that approach. The gift that Christ gives us, of loving us to the end, to the ultimate degree, is meaningless unless that love is both given and received, and then passed on.

Culture change, which is what we are undergoing, is always threatening. When we talk about implementing the five principles, including the one that seeks the flourishing of every part of the Church, and thus of appointments of people who disagree with us most profoundly, all sorts of objections can be raised. Someone asks, 'How would a Church flourish if it appointed men who do not ordain women to senior posts, simply because in other respects those appointing sense the call and purpose of God? How would it flourish if it appointed people like that? What would the world think?' The Church's answer has to be, 'The world may think what it likes. We are seeking mutual flourishing.' Even as I say it, again as a gesture to transparency, my heart beats faster with concern about the consequences and with fear of the difficulty of climbing such a steep slope. Someone else might ask, 'How can those who are deeply and theologically committed to the idea that women should not be ordained as bishops flourish?' I can see the answer only in the grace and love of God, but I see the answer there and in a Church that risks living out that call that we have reflected in the five principles. It is a hard course to steer, yet I know it is right that we set such a course and hold to it through thick and thin, with integrity, transparency and honesty.

Yet what lies on the journey as we steer that course? Let us be clear, it is an untidy Church. It has incoherence. It has inconsistency between dioceses and between different places. It is

not a Church that has a simple set of rules that says, 'We do this and do not do that'; it is a Church that says, 'We do this and we do that'. Actually, quite a lot of us do not like that, but we are still going to do it because of love and grace. It is a Church that speaks to the world and says that consistency and coherence are not the ultimate virtues. Holy grace is what we hold to.

A Church that loves those with whom the majority deeply disagree and seeks their flourishing is a Church that will be unpleasantly challenging to a world where disagreement is either banned within a given group or removed and expelled. The absolute of holy grace challenges the absolutism of a world that says there are no absolutes – except the statement, of course, that there are no absolutes.

The Church of England is not tidy, nor, thank God, is it efficiently hierarchical. There are no popes, but there is a House of Bishops, there is a College of Bishops, there are synods and collections and lobbies and groups and pressures and struggles, and they are all out in the open. Praise God for that. When it works well, it works because love overcomes fear. When it works badly, it is because fear overcomes love. That choice lies within the way we work. The resource for more fear lies within us and the resource for more love lies within God and it is readily available to all those who in repentance and humility stretch out and seek it. With Jesus, every imperative rests on an indicative, every command springs from a promise. Do not fear.

Already I can hear the arguments being pushed back at me about compromise, about the wishy-washiness of reconciliation (to quote a sentence I saw recently in a blog), but this sort of love of which I am speaking and the reconciliation between differing groups that it demands and implies is not comfortable and soft and wishy-washy. 'Facilitated conversations' may be – and I feel is – a clumsy phrase, but it has at its heart a search for good disagreement. It is exceptionally hard-edged, extraordinarily demanding and likely to lead in parts of the world to profound unpopularity and dismissal.

This sort of gracious reconciliation means that we have to create safe space within ourselves to disagree, as we began to do last summer at the Synod in York, as we did yesterday, and as we need to do over the issues arising out of our discussions on sexuality; not because the outcome is predetermined to be a wishy-washy one but because the very process is a proclamation of the gospel of unconditionally loving God, who gives Himself for our sin and failure. It is incarnational in the best sense and leads to the need to bear our cross in the way we are commanded.

Let us bring it down to some basics. We have agreed that we will ordain women as bishops. At the same time we have agreed that while doing that we want all parts of the Church to flourish. We know that if we are to challenge fear we have to find cultural change in the life of the Church, in the way our groups and parties work, sufficient to build love and trust. That will mean different ways of working at every level of the Church in practice, in the way our meetings are structured, presented and lived out and in every form of appointment. It will, dare I say, mean a lot of careful training and development in our working methods, because the challenge for all institutions today, and above all us, is not merely the making of policy, which is easy, but making it happen, which is hard.

We have received a report with disagreement in it on sexuality, through the group led by Sir Joseph Pilling – to whom, incidentally, for all the controversy, we owe a huge debt of

thanks, both to him and to those who worked with him, advised him, helped him and struggled. I hope that later the Synod will indicate, when he is here, how much we appreciate him and those with him.

There is great fear among some here and round the world that the Pilling report will lead to the betrayal of our traditions, to the denial of the authority of Scripture, to apostasy – not to put too strong a word on it – and there is also a great fear that our decisions will lead us to the rejection of LGBT people, to irrelevance in a changing society, to behaviour that many see akin to racism. Both those fears are alive and well in this room today.

When we work to overcome fear and to bring society closer together we do make a real difference. I want to mention the Near Neighbours programme, which over the last few years, in extraordinary and creative ways, has helped to create a stronger fabric of relationships and joint working across different faith communities in stressed parts of our country. It has been funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government through the Church Urban Fund. It has been operated through the Church of England with its network of parishes. It has four Presence and Engagement Centres, which have partnered with people and organisations from a range of Churches and different faiths to produce real local change that has been acknowledged in two independent reports. It is just one example of the Church, when it does its stuff and overcomes fear, changing the world in which we live. Let us rejoice and be glad in that. Let us celebrate it. I am delighted that it looks as though this partnership will be extended over the next two years and we look forward to a formal announcement soon.

I therefore come back to where I started. We live in a world of courageous Churches, not only the ones I saw last week but also Churches like the Church of Nigeria, the Church of Kenya, the Church of Uganda and many, many others – South Africa – I could go on and on – who live out the reality of costly discipleship and somehow manage to find love in the midst of it. They are not sinless but they are heroic.

We are called to be a heroic Church. Before us are the great demons of poverty, ignorance, need, human suffering, a loss of spiritual life and consciousness of the greater love of God filling us with that grace and love from Christ who leads us in mission. The Churches I saw in the last 10 days are certainly heroic. That heroism should challenge us not simply to follow what they say but to be those whose heroic faith is truly holy and gracious.

(Applause)

THE CHAIR *Canon Ann Turner (Europe)* took the Chair at 9.52 a.m.

Safeguarding: Proposals for Legislative Change in Response to the Report of the Archbishop's Chichester Visitation (GS 1941)

The Chair: This is a debate of a very sensitive nature. I would remind members of Synod that we do have chaplains available should the debate put members in the situation where they would like to consult them.

The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod request that draft legislation be brought forward to give effect to the proposals for legislative change set out in GS 1941.’

The most important change required in our safeguarding remains the transformation of our very DNA in relation to our theology, our thinking and our practice when it comes to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. This needs to be at every level of our life. The lead-up to this debate, in which our own continued corporate failings adequately to listen to and engage with survivors of Church-based abuse, has only freshly emphasized this. The resource we put in nationally and at diocesan levels speaks volumes for the genuine seriousness with which we engage on this issue. We simply cannot do this on the cheap or without adequate expertise. In this we are not alone.

It is clear that historically our society has tolerated abuse in ways that are shocking and totally unacceptable. There is a particular concern in relation to institutional abuse. Schools, hospitals, the media, the police and Churches all share this sad and shameful history. Somehow we need to learn from Ireland, Australia and other countries how we face up to this history as a nation. It is, of course, not history for those who continue to live with the impact of such abuse. As a Church we must take a full part in this national soul searching. On Monday we made clear commitments relating to gender-based violence. Today we are about considering legal changes that are needed to make us a safer Church in our future processes. After last summer's consultation, both the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops have identified these as important reforms. Formal legislation will follow in July, taking into consideration all that arises in this debate, input into the Steering Committee, especially from survivors.

What is before us? The proposals set out in GS 1941 have been developed out of the report and recommendations of the Chichester commissaries, to whom I pay tribute for their important work. The proposals essentially fall into two parts. There are those that are intended to reduce the risk of possible abuse and exploitation of children and other vulnerable people within our Church and parishes; second, in cases where allegations are made against clergy of abuse and exploitation, the proposals before Synod are designed to make the Clergy Discipline Measure more effective when dealing with such cases. The proposed legislation is not just about clergy; it will also impact on lay officers of the Church.

The opening proposal relates to Canon C 8.2. Under that canon it is possible for a minister with the cure of souls to permit another minister to officiate in his or her parish for up to seven days in every three months. That means it is actually possible for a priest or deacon to officiate on alternate Sundays in a parish throughout the year without receiving any authorisation to do so from the bishop. All that is required under the existing law is for the incumbent to be satisfied that the person he or she is permitting to officiate is of good life and standing. There are obvious difficulties with that. Unlike the bishop, the parish priest does not have access to the minister's blue file or to the Archbishops' list recording any disciplinary penalties and so may be innocently unaware that the person's authority to minister has been terminated on safeguarding or other grounds.

We therefore seek to amend Canon C 8.2 so that only ministers who are beneficed or holding a bishop's licence or permission to officiate can be given temporary permission by a priest with a cure of souls. A simple telephone call or email to the relevant bishop's office would quickly and simply establish whether the minister in question had current authority to officiate. Linked to this is the proposal that it should be misconduct for a priest with a cure of souls to allow another minister to officiate or robe within his church if the priest knows that the minister does not have such a bishop's authority to officiate.

Within the Church a practice has been developing whereby professional risk assessments are commissioned for clergy where the bishop has concerns that there may be a safeguarding risk. The role of the risk assessor is to reach a professional view on whether there is a future risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults. The commissaries referred to this practice but drew attention to the problem that arises if the minister in question refuses to undergo a risk assessment. At the moment, clergy cannot be compelled.

The proposals would overcome that problem by enabling a bishop to direct a priest or deacon to submit to a professionally conducted risk assessment in accordance with regulations approved by the House of Bishops. Those regulations would lay down national standards of good practice. When directing that there should be a risk assessment, the bishop would have to give reason to justify his direction and the cleric in question would be able to challenge the bishop's direction by asking the President of Tribunals for a review of the bishop's decision. Failure to comply with the bishop's direction without good cause would be misconduct for the purposes of the CDM and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

A crucial issue concerns what action should be taken if an assessment identifies that there is a future safeguarding risk. The answer depends on how we achieve the right balance between protecting the vulnerable and ensuring that the human rights of our clergy are respected, both with regard to their private lives and in respect of the basic principle that a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. In many responses to the consultation last year there was some forceful opposition to the suggestion that an adverse risk assessment should lead to removal from office just on the basis of an expert's prediction, with loss of vocation, stipend and family home – risk assessments being about assessing future risk. The proposed package before Synod takes account of those objections. Risk assessments will therefore continue to be used and manage any identified possible risk. This might include notifying the Disclosure and Barring Service of the concerns raised in the assessment, so that consideration can be given by that body to putting the person on one or both of the barred lists. Of course, if a person were entered on a barred list by the DBS that could lead on to removal from office and prohibition under the current provisions of the CDM.

Under the Churchwardens Measure 2001 there are already a number of disqualification provisions in respect of churchwardens, for example on conviction of certain offences in relation to children, but those disqualification provisions do not go far enough against the backdrop that, under the House of Bishops' policy for safeguarding, the PCC and incumbent are together responsible for ensuring that diocesan safeguarding policies are implemented. The proposals before Synod would mean that a person would be disqualified from holding office as churchwarden or serving on a PCC if entered on a barred list under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act. A person convicted of specified criminal offences against children would be barred from being a member of a PCC, subject to the bishop being able to waive such disqualification in appropriate circumstances. Disqualification provisions are also proposed in respect of licensed lay Readers and lay workers.

In order generally to strengthen the effectiveness of the Church's safeguarding regime and the policies of the House of Bishops, it is proposed to impose on all clergy in ministry, all bishops, licensed lay Readers and workers, and all churchwardens and PCCs, a duty to have regard to safeguarding guidance from the House. Additionally, there will be a duty on diocesan bishops to appoint a suitably qualified diocesan safeguarding adviser, with all such

appointments to be made in accordance with national regulations approved by the House. The House would then be able to regulate the minimum requirements for such posts so that there is consistency across the dioceses. This might in some cases require dioceses to incur added expenditure, but the safeguarding investment it represents is incalculable. Furthermore, the package before Synod would ensure that all clergy and ministry would be obliged to participate in arrangements approved by the diocesan bishop for their instruction or training in safeguarding, and also the diocesan bishop would be under a duty to ensure that all licensed lay Readers and lay workers received appropriate training.

A significant amendment to the Clergy Discipline Measure is proposed. For complaints of sexual misconduct against children and vulnerable adults, the present 12-month period for making a complaint will be removed. This recognises that it may take years for the victims of sexual abuse to come forward with a complaint. However, the precise scope and meaning of the term ‘vulnerable adult’ for these purposes has attracted different views, and may well in due course be the subject of close scrutiny and debate as the legislation progresses through Synod.

The opportunity will be taken to amend the Clergy Discipline Measure in another respect, that is, in relation to suspension. The proposal is that, subject to certain conditions, the bishop would have the power to suspend when an application is made to the President of Tribunals for permission to make a complaint out of time. At the moment, the bishop cannot suspend until after a complaint has actually been made and the registrar has completed the preliminary scrutiny report. If the limitation period is removed in sexual abuse cases, then for obvious reasons this particular new provision would apply only to other types of complaint, but it will be useful where the bishop considers there is good reason for the respondent to be temporarily removed from ministry while the application is pending. New powers to suspend are also proposed in respect of licensed lay Readers and lay workers. This package is intended to provide further protection for children and vulnerable adults within the Church. Lord Bichard noted in his report of 2004, ‘The harsh reality is that if a sufficiently devious person is determined to seek out opportunities to work their evil, no one can guarantee that they will be stopped....’ That said, our task is to make it as difficult as possible for such a person to succeed.

I look forward to comments on the proposals.

Mr David Kemp (Canterbury): I speak as a former diocesan secretary and now chair of the Canterbury Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group – a snappy title if ever there was one.

In the light of the problems in Chichester diocese, last summer in Canterbury we conducted an internal review of our safeguarding policies and procedures. We then commissioned a formal external review by an experienced diocesan safeguarding adviser from another diocese. This has proved to be a hugely helpful process, generally affirming our procedures without any complacency but also providing us with over 30 recommendations for improvement and clarification, upon which we are now working. However, one of the interesting discoveries during the review was the difference in the way in which diocesan safeguarding advisers operated between our diocese and the diocese of the reviewer.

In Canterbury we have two safeguarding advisers, both qualified, experienced social workers. Because there are two of them, they provide mutual support and cover. They

concentrate on advising and supporting parishes and clergy and carrying out risk assessments. The administrative and managerial roles are carried out by others, unlike the other diocese where the safeguarding adviser is much more administrative.

Both systems work. I therefore want to suggest that the Regulations are not too prescriptive about the precise job descriptions of safeguarding advisers. Much better to list the essential tasks to be carried out by a diocese – advice and support, training, risk assessment, monitoring, DBS checks, et cetera – and then give the bishop the responsibility for making sure these tasks are carried out effectively and efficiently by suitably qualified individuals. We have just heard that consistency is not the be all and end all, and consistency across dioceses in this matter may not be the be all and end all. The important thing is to make sure that the essential tasks are covered properly.

In addition, and in the light of our own experience, I want to suggest that the Regulations insist on dioceses having an external review of their policies and procedures, say every five years. This would not only facilitate the sharing of good practice but also give dioceses confidence that their processes are fit for purpose.

Finally, I repeat my call that I made in York last year for more resources for safeguarding here at the centre. We need to do more and we need to move more quickly.

In Canterbury we do not put a cap on our funding of our safeguarding advisers, who are paid according to the work they actually have to do. For us, that is a sign that we take safeguarding seriously. I long for the time when the resources and funding allocated to work here at the centre sends the same message on safeguarding about the Church of England.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells): I start with a declaration of interest, in the interests of transparency. As the brother of the former Bishop of Chichester and the brother-in-law of the former National Safeguarding Officer for the Church of England, I wish to make no further comments on what happened in Chichester but I do want to welcome this report wholeheartedly.

There are two things that I have picked up over the last few days that I would like the bishop to comment on if he can. There is a lot of talk about PCC membership and I wonder whether or not there is one bit that might be missing, which is that there are some people who serve on the PCC but not as members. For example, there are sometimes secretaries and so on, and I wonder whether or not there needs to be some sort of inclusion of them within this framework. The other is that we do not always have joined-up thinking here in Synod – and I know that will come as a shock.

We are discussing safeguarding this morning and this afternoon we are discussing whether or not we can dispense with robing, and I wonder whether the bishop could comment on the issue regarding robing.

The Bishop of Chichester (Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner): Can I first of all say that in the diocese of Chichester we are grateful that the lapses and failures of our past, which mark and sear us still, in the service of the wider Church nationally none the less seem now to be an opportunity for us to take stock and to learn and benefit from the failures. We are delighted to be part of the learning process.

There are several things I want to raise in relation to this report, which I welcome greatly. The first is on communication and training. It is something about the culture and the creation of culture within the life of our Church, the culture of safety and confidence, which casts out or contributes to casting out fear. It is very helpful to have heard what the Archbishop said about fear in his Presidential Address. In particular, we need to recognise exactly what the scope of the fear of survivors and victims might be. We also need to notice what our own fears might be in terms of having to think the unthinkable when taking into account that those whom we have known, trusted and loved might turn out also to be perpetrators. It is clearly not enough for us to go on assumptions from the past about people, and I welcome in paragraph 6 the tightening of control of those who function within churches.

Second, the role of ministerial and priestly vocation is about service. The reference to being tighter on licensing and holding a commission to officiate is a very timely reminder to us all that the call of ministry is also a call to service of the mission of the Church. It is not a call to self-fulfilment. It is a reminder that all of us who function publicly in ministry are called to account for how we function and how we serve the wider mission of the Church. Therefore the recommendation in paragraph 15 is one that I welcome warmly.

The role of laypeople in safeguarding is also usefully identified here, and I welcome the recommendations in paragraphs 46 and 47, but I think that there will be more work to be done here. One of the key things for us is recognising just how damaging it can be for survivors to see those who are perpetrators still functioning in some public way. One of the areas that we will perhaps need to explore – and certainly we have begun doing this in the diocese of Chichester – is where this involves other performance within churches, of musical, dramatic and artistic engagements. Here, once again, we find ourselves in an area of difficulty where we have little control over those who take part in, perform, lead and function in artistic events, and yet who in so doing may also reinforce – if there is a history in those people's lives of abuse – the damage that they have done. We have experienced some of that in the diocese of Chichester. The experience of that on survivors is something that we cannot underestimate. Seeing somebody still free to function when the life of survivors has been so destroyed is a terrible and devastating consequence, which can continue to reinforce the original abuse throughout their lives.

I turn to risk assessment, which I think is the weakest part of this report. In her earlier report on the Chichester diocese, Elizabeth Butler-Sloss recommended that we should have the right to enforce risk assessments. I would ask that some further work is done on understanding what the impact of a risk assessment is for and how it might function in reference to people's past behaviour and their future behaviour. This is looking at the tendency to manipulate and to confuse in order to obscure behaviour. It is also about the way in which abusive behaviour can often be on a sliding scale: breaking one rule, then breaking two, then becoming habitual and then becoming something that is a dependency. Reassessing how we understand risk assessments and their place in creating a culture where our sacred spaces are safe places is of enormous importance.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): Chair, it is good to find the new Bishop of Durham in action today. I wish to speak as a member of both the Clergy Discipline Commission and of the general practice medical community. I think there are some parallels that might help us, particularly thanking Bishop Martin for reflecting on Canon C 8.2 and the changes at paragraph 6 of the report.

Some years ago, the NHS in England decided to make it a requirement for all GPs to go on what was then called, and still is, the Medical Performers List, *i.e.* those who are performing as GPs. They are already on the GP Register of the General Medical Council and in good standing, but initially they needed to prove various other things. They made statements about health and probity, that they were doing annual appraisals, not least in maintaining their professional development and particularly in relation to safeguarding and also resuscitation training. Of course, there is no guarantee that by doing training you will necessarily do as well as you might, but you will probably do better than you could. Because of the Medical Performers List requirement, it started to tighten up the practices as they began to employ locums and others – would they have a doctor who was properly qualified but also in good standing in the system?

I was very actively involved in monitoring and supporting that list for a number of years in the northern region, and I sincerely believe that patient safety was improved. People were protected, but also employers in practice, their reputation and their being, were helped and protected. They could be certain that the doctor was properly qualified and relatively up to date but also had no particular problem with language, with safeguarding, with complaints, with behaviours that might bring themselves and the practice into disrepute and their patients into harm.

I note from paragraph 10 that concerns were raised by a minority. Would this be, as it were, a sledgehammer to crack a nut? Would it block temporary deployment? Would it be unhelpful for the ministry of the Church locally, particularly in very hard-pressed areas of the country and of the dioceses? Sadly, the reality is that, even if the incidence potentially is very low, the risk of getting it wrong would lead to potential catastrophe. It is a bit like when someone comes in to see me with a pain of some sort in the chest. It is most likely that they have lifted the piano incorrectly, but equally I have to exclude the possibility of a heart attack coming on. In other words, the incident is probably not very important but the potential problem is very great. That is why I would wish to support this desire to amend Canon C 8.2.

However, I do have one caveat, which is in paragraph 11. When the Medical Performers List was introduced, there were significant problems in finding ways of discovering whether or not the doctor was on the list. I note the point that ‘it ought to be relatively easy to check’ is not the same as ‘it will be easy to check’. The list we have within general practice is national. I believe that I or anyone else can go online and discover whether a GP is on that list. That may be one thing further than we want to go but it seems vital that, for whoever needs to check on this – and I know particularly the requirement on the incumbent – they should be made as timely, as easy and as up to date as possible. Otherwise, I am very supportive of this. I do believe that it is necessary, however sadly necessary, and I am very grateful to the bishop bringing it to us in this form.

Mrs Christine Corteen (Salisbury): I welcome this report but I would also say that we should not take our eye off the ball. This should be a constant monitoring process and, if necessary, we should take further measures as appropriate. We should not be complacent, having come to this point.

I would now like to go into a bit more detail. On page 14, where it lists the recommendations concisely, the bishop has already indicated that in certain circumstances

there will be a power for the diocesan bishop to waive the disqualification. Recommendation (iv) is looking at the Church Representation Rules in respect of churchwardens or members of PCCs and recommendation (v) is looking at licensed lay Readers and workers. Where they have been convicted of an offence they are to be disqualified, subject to a power for the diocesan bishop to waive the disqualification. Would the bishop kindly give us an indication of what those appropriate circumstances might be where the diocesan bishop would waive the disqualification?

The Archdeacon of Bolton (Ven. Dr John Applegate)(Manchester): Faced with such a serious issue, I first want to say that I support unreservedly the recommendations that are made here, but I hope that members of Synod will bear with me in one point of foolishness a little later on.

Within the Church of England I am not normal – at least I am not standard. As principal of a training institution, I hold a general preacher’s licence. There are not many in the Manchester diocese or among my colleagues in TEIs, the theological training institutions, who do. While I wholeheartedly welcome these recommendations, there are one or two loopholes yet to be closed.

Among the provisions, the recommendations set out a clear rationale for preventing clergy without a licence or PTO from robing or officiating in a parish church – or, presumably, a cathedral. The bishop who licensed me as principal deliberately used the traditional phrase ‘sharing his cure of souls with me’ in my new role. As a good former archdeacon, I pointed out that legally I had no cure of souls, and he wisely pointed out that if I had no spiritual care for my students and colleagues then there was no point to the role. I agree. As the recommendations stand, as a priest without a legal cure of souls, I could, though I would not, invite a priest or a Reader who has no licence or PTO to officiate at a course event and so contribute to the formation of ordinands. There is a small hole there that needs to be addressed.

I am also struck by the situation of a number of my ordained colleagues who work in theological education. Some bishops seem reluctant to license clergy working in these institutions either because of the relationship it creates under common tenure – or so they say – or because of the additional support the diocese may need to provide or the confusion of accountabilities this might create for those who are employed to train. Under these recommendations, the bizarre outcome of this reluctance could be that colleagues who are meant to be modelling ministry for those in training may find themselves unable to robe or officiate in worship outside their training institution. In fact, I wonder if a bishop or a dean would be committing an offence by inviting such clergy to robe at the Maundy Thursday renewal of ministerial vows or at a service where the ordinands they had trained were actually ordained. I am sure that this is not the intention of any of these recommendations and the answer may well be that bishops should recognise that licensing those whose ministry lies in training is the right thing to do. It is the way in which many of us follow a priestly vocation today.

I also want to offer one other thought, which I find is missing in the recommendations. The loophole that needs to be closed further is the responsibility for arranging ministry during a vacancy. Practically, it is the churchwardens who take responsibility rather than a priest with a cure of souls, such as an area dean, even if he or she is co-sequestrator. I say that on the basis of some experience, as an archdeacon for over six years. The organising of

ministry and vacancies opens up a huge hole to those who might be ministering in our churches without the recognition of the bishop.

I urge Synod to support these important recommendations but, from my point of view, recognise that they are not yet the last word on the subject. I think that it would be really helpful if they could be extended to include chaplaincies, Theological Education Institutions, and other places where clergy are at work on behalf of the Church and its ministry and mission.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): I want to thank the Committee for their hard work in bringing together a whole series of reports and findings, as well as the wealth of experience, both good and bad, that we and other denominations have gained in recent years as we have all grappled with the issues of providing a safe environment for all the children, young people and vulnerable adults committed to our care. I believe that we are well on the way to producing a body of information from which we can frame good safeguarding legislation that will both compel and assist dioceses to provide robust structures and effective procedures to combat what is a national challenge before us all.

Sadly, as other speakers have indicated, there is still some work to be done. I rise to ask the platform whether we should do some more consultations before they frame the laws and rules on the basis outlined here, because some dioceses, such as ours, feel that we are already ahead of much of what is proposed here, and if we do it as it is written out here it will take us backwards by perhaps some years.

I draw particular attention to recommendations (i) and (ii) in relation to permission to officiate and robing. We have already indicated that we agree in theory to what is proposed here, but how will we do it in practice? We have suggested the use of an ID card, which could act in a similar way to a warrant card for a police officer – a common form of ID and authority that would be taken away if permission to officiate were suspended.

We would support the model of risk assessment. We would do so in consultation with the bishop's Safeguarding Panel, seeking the necessary professional advice of our statutory partners so that we could provide sufficient support and guidance to the bishop in taking that decision.

The other area is this. I am concerned about what is not in these proposals. Where is the commitment to develop good, working relationships with other agencies working in the same field? Most of the worst cases that have come to light recently are directly due to care agencies, the police and the Church, not consulting and sharing information as they should. It is our experience in Suffolk that, once we had developed both good practices and policies, we were able to work with our partners effectively to everyone's mutual benefit. However, we must get our act together and earn respect and confidence with those other agencies.

We do need to have a national policy that is both owned and implemented by every diocese but we also need to keep raising standards before we have another costly disaster. This is not about safeguarding the Church and its paid members and volunteers; it is about creating

a truly safe environment for all who entrust themselves to our care, and we do need to play our full part in our nation's struggle in dealing with what remains a national scandal.

Revd Prebendary Patricia Hawkins (Lichfield): I am speaking as a parish priest and therefore as somebody who, in the terms of this debate, is a non-expert. That is significant in what I am going to say. I speak as somebody who is totally committed to robust and workable safeguarding policies and practices.

I have three main points. The first is a very specific one and it relates to paragraph 79(iv) on page 14 about disqualification from serving on PCCs. How will we know that people are on a barred list? Those here who have had experience of applying for DBS clearance will know that it is a very complicated procedure and there are very specific grounds on which clearance can be applied for. I am also thinking in terms of the timescale between asking for nominations for PCC membership and applying for clearance. There are many questions in relation to that for me. It may be that I am missing something and that there is an obvious answer.

That takes me to my second point, which is that there is a need for robust, Church-appropriate training for all of us involved in this. I would say, as I read this report, can we take it further? I am very mindful of the comment that was made in July that the training many of us access through our involvement in schools is not entirely fit for purpose for churches, only because they are different institutions. I think that we do need robust training.

From the point of view of a parish clergyperson who has been an incumbent for 10 years, in those 10 years the number of policies and practices that we have been required to operate has increased vastly. Quite honestly, as a non-expert trying to work through them it is a bit of a minefield. I would ask to have very solid, easily accessible, relevant and up-to-date training provided for us.

My third point refers to paragraph 79(v). Does that include people like Sunday School teachers, *ad hoc* youth workers who are not licensed by the diocese but who are approved at parish level?

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): I want to pick up from the last speaker's question. We of course need to thank the Bishop of Durham and his group who carried out this wonderful consultation. The proposals come to us approved by the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops. I have just noticed in this particular package that, since we will be preparing the legislation, something more needs to be done.

We discovered in the Stephen Lawrence inquiry that it was not just what particular officers did or did not do but there was a systemic and collective failure by the Met. The whole body had to be dealt with, hence our definition of the concept of institutional racism. In relation to safeguarding what would go wrong would be not simply what a particular bishop, a PCC, a churchwarden and others had done but the systemic and collective failure of the whole Church to safeguard and protect children and young people. We somehow need to find a way of taking on that issue.

That therefore raises a question for me about appointments by the PCC. The last speaker referred to Sunday School teachers, but what about organists? What about other people who

are not Readers or licensed lay workers? How do we catch them? That is where all of us would be very vulnerable. I want to suggest that we find a way not only of dealing with those who are licensed, like clergy, Readers, lay workers, churchwardens and PCC members, but those appointed by the PCCs who are not in that particular category? How shall we do that? If we do not find a way of dealing with it, this is where we will remain most vulnerable. May I therefore suggest to the Bishop of Durham and his group before the legislation comes up that some thought be given to everybody who is employed in some sense and who comes into contact with children and vulnerable adults.

The other thing we need to work out in this legislation, if it is to stick, is the way our dioceses are arranged. Some national monitoring of the whole system needs to happen, because that again is where we will be very vulnerable. We know that dioceses and diocesan bishops have authority and jurisdiction in their place, but on this issue I want the system to be sufficiently robust so that we do not end up in the position that the Met found itself, with systemic and collective failure.

Could some thought be given to how we could have clear cross-checking everywhere? We know that, where abuse has been very difficult to detect, it is because people who were known to have abused in a particular place have moved quietly to another place and have then abused someone else, and we do not catch up with them. There must be some way in this legislation of being very transparent to one another, because what would damage all of us is this systemic and collective failure.

Revd Prebendary Stephen Lynas (Bath and Wells): I want to welcome this report and the process whereby we are in a position to comment now about more detailed legislation that will come to us later in the year. As a bishop's chaplain, I get involved in clergy discipline matters. I have to help administer the bishop's permissions to officiate and I represent the bishop on day-to-day safeguarding discussions when required.

I want to address three detailed points that are raised in GS 1941. First, in relation to the discussion about Canon C 8.2, which is on page 2 of the document, it seems to me that there is a lack of clarity and potentially a conflict between what is said in paragraph 9 of the report and what is said in paragraph 11. Paragraph 9 refers to the submission from the Church of England clergy advocates, who are happy to support limited amendment of Canon C 8.2 but make the point that a local bishop will not know all relevant information about a particular cleric from the other end of the country who has been invited to pop up to do a wedding or something of that sort. Indeed, that is true. The local bishop may not, but he will tell his chaplain to ring up the chaplain of the Bishop of Barchester and see if this person is in good standing or not. In paragraph 11 the implication is that the matter should be dealt with by the host incumbent who is inviting this person to come and take the wedding. I think we need to sort out whether the onus is on the parish priest who is inviting to do the work himself or on the parish priest to get the bishop to check with another bishop whether Revd Charley Farley is in good standing (or not) when he comes to take a wedding.

Second, at paragraphs 29-41 there is a great chunk of stuff under section C, and there is a recommendation on page 7 about risk assessment and what happens if a risk assessment identifies that somebody is a risk. I think it is fantastically good news that we can go to a place where the bishop can insist on a risk assessment if there is an identified problem, but what happens if that risk assessment says that there is a risk? Effectively, the report says that there are huge difficulties in simply giving the bishop power to remove that person

from the office. I agree with that. On the other hand, these proposals seem to me to be saying that it is actually a bit too difficult and there is not a lot we can do. It seems to me that is unsatisfactory and we need to be able to go a little further with what happens if there is a risk assessment.

Finally, the whole business in paragraphs 59 and 60 on page 10 is about compulsory training for clergy who have a PTO. We are now rolling that out to our PTO clergy on a kind of a two and a half line whip. We use phraseology, as other dioceses do, to say that if they do not undergo this training it may be a disciplinary offence – by which we actually mean that it may be a disciplinary offence when all this stuff has been legislated for. I think that we need to work a little harder on the training and encouragement of PTO clergy, especially the frail, to turn up and do that.

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): At page 8 of the report, paragraphs 46 and 47 and (iii) therein will give a bishop power to suspend a churchwarden, a member of a PCC, lay Reader or similar, pending criminal proceedings for someone who has been arrested on suspicion.

There is no question that we must do all that we can to deal with this plague in order to protect children but we also need to recognise that there can be other casualties, and in the current climate the police are very quick – rightly – to act and to arrest on suspicion. We know of cases involving clergy as well as laypeople where the process which then follows for that suspicion to be investigated takes a very long time indeed, and the person who has been arrested on suspicion is innocent and their reputation is tarnished.

We are probably right to enable bishops to have this power but I hope that, as we take the process through, we will give very considerable thought to how we will support those who have been arrested on suspicion – clergy, of course, but also laity, who will not be as able easily to access the support mechanisms which clergy should.

Sadly, amongst the evils in our world is the possibility that people falsely accuse. It does happen. We need to take the steps to safeguard children above all other things, but I hope that this point will be looked into carefully in order to provide assistance to those who are falsely accused or have to wait months, possibly years, for their case to be resolved.

Revd Dr Meg Gilley (Durham): I really welcome the legislation because when things go wrong it gets in the way of mission; it gets in the way of mission for a long time and it stops anything happening for a very long time.

I want to make a comment about risk assessments. I am quite interested in what would be looked at in terms of risk assessments. There are some things that might indicate risk that would not appear, for instance, on a DBS report. I can think of a particular case, and I will talk to my new bishop about that at some stage. We need to think about what it is we are looking for when we are looking at risk assessments.

There is one more plea that I would make, and it is not so much to do with the legislation that we are looking at but another bit of the jigsaw we need to put into place. It is to do with how we minister to parishes after abuse has taken place; maybe where abuse has taken place many years, decades before, where there is still an impact. We need to find ways of ministering into that and addressing that.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby): I want to make a very brief comment as we come towards the end of debating one of the most significant things we ever debate – not only in thanks to the Bishop of Durham for all that he and his group are working on, to those who work with him and to those who have contributed to this debate, but also to say that, in the process of getting into ‘what we are going to do’ in the future, in looking at the legal changes and process changes, which are absolutely essential, we need to remember the Bishop of Durham’s opening comments about our past and to say that all our discussion needs to be in a context of, I would say, profound shame and sorrow for what we have done in the past or what we have tolerated in the past. Because survivors are listening to us, because they see and hear what we do, that sense of acknowledgement that we do not come from a good place is absolutely essential in everything we say and do now.

I particularly want to comment on the issue of support and delay as cases come through. We all know that every institution is fallible. In my previous brief role in Durham we had a particular safeguarding case and we found it very difficult to get the statutory agencies to respond quickly to it. I can see nodding heads. We know that happens. I am not saying that they are bad; it is simply that people are sometimes overwhelmed. Cases take a long time to investigate. Risk assessments take a long time to undertake. When we talk about support, yes it is essential that we talk about support for those who are accused – but also for survivors. We may be disqualified to provide that support and so we have to be those who either support or ensure that support exists from someone who is acceptable to the survivors. It is not just children; it is children and vulnerable adults.

Many of the cases I see concern vulnerable adults who may have been survivors of abuse before and who have turned to the Church, only to find that ultimate crime: that those to whom they turn for help merely increase the abuse. We therefore need to be a Church that is conscious of coming from a deep, dark place; a Church that is generous with support and the providing of support, which puts the needs of the survivors at the centre of our ministry of grace and love, unconditionally, so that it may not be done by us but by others.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Durham, in reply: David Kemp, thank you very much. We will aim not to be too prescriptive. We are looking at a model rather than prescription, and then it will be left to the dioceses to work out how to put it.

We are grateful for the reference to no cap on money. We take note.

Tim Hind, the issue around the PCC secretary – and indeed this applies to organists and others – is covered by the PCC’s duty to pay regard to the House of Bishops’ guidelines. The PCC secretary can be removed that way, and so on.

I would like to thank the Bishop of Chichester for his helpful comments. Several people referred to risk assessment. We will take all those comments on board and look afresh at

that. There is work already under way on what appropriate risk assessments would look like across the Church. Certainly the whole issue of past behaviour, the step-by-step and manipulation must be part and parcel of that.

Jamie Harrison, thank you very much for your comments, particularly on the available list of authorised medics. We will look at the possibility of a publicly accessible list of authorised clergy.

Chris Corteen, this is an example of where the diocesan bishop might waive. If an 18 year old attacked a 17 year-old, they would be guilty, technically, of abuse against a child, and if at a later date they applied to be on the PCC, there may have been good reasons – there was a particular drunken brawl that night – why that happened. It is that kind of case, but it would be extreme and the bishop would have to have very good grounds for waiving.

John Applegate, thank you for pointing out the loopholes around general licences and chaplaincies. We will look into that and make sure we close it.

Jonathan Alderton-Ford, much of what you noted does not need legislation. The policy already requires multi-agency working. If people are not doing it, then they are not following the policy as it stands. We take all your comments and we will look at the regulations as well, but it does not need any further legislation.

Pat Hawkins, thank you for your comments on training. Of course there is a duty to provide training and a duty to undertake it. There is work being done on a core basic package of training, which would be required across the nation but would be delivered locally.

I thank the Archbishop of York for his reminder of our systemic failure – indeed, both Archbishops spoke of that. We need to address that very seriously. That does include that we look at national monitoring, but it is costly and time-consuming and will need resource to be done.

Stephen Lynas, thank you for your comment about the conflict between paragraphs 9 and 11. We will seek to ensure that is clarified. You made comments about risk assessment and also training of PTO clergy.

Philip Giddings, yes there is all this need for support. The issue of false accusations does have to be taken seriously, but in most cases of abuse this is not true. False accusation is not a common thing. We have to take it seriously and we have to deal with it when it comes, but it tends to be rare.

Meg Gilley, thank you for your comments on risk assessment and certainly we will offer advice on what ministry is provided longer term.

I thank Archbishop Justin for his final comments. Absolutely, we have to recognize that we come from a place of deep shame and sorrow. Survivors will keep reminding us all, or will keep reminding me, that if we do not face up to the past and deal with the past all this will not work. We have to do both. We have to get the legislation right but we have to face up to the past and deal with it. That will be painful for us as a Church and indeed as a nation.

The motion was put and carried.

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark)* took the Chair at 10.56 a.m.

Legislative Business

The Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2014 (GS 1940)

Resolution made under section 7 of the Synodical Government Measure 1969 (Resumed debate)

The Chair: Members of Synod, we now resume the uncompleted legislative business from yesterday afternoon at the point at which it was adjourned. The remaining items are set out on Order Paper IV. In the normal course the next item to be considered would be Canon Alderton-Ford's amendment at Item 521. However, before we consider that we need to address an issue arising from one of the decisions that Synod took yesterday. To allow that issue to be considered, following consultation I have given my permission for Canon Cotton to move a further amendment, which appears on Order Paper IV as Item 525. Accordingly, I call on Canon Cotton to move that amendment and explain why he is doing so.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton (Guildford): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph 3, at the end *insert* as a new sub-paragraph –

“(–) at the end add ‘But the requirement that the first of the meetings in a year shall not take place before the end of the period of four weeks referred to applies only in a case where it is proposed to hold only two meetings in the year.’”.’

I am grateful for this chance to review the amendment that was passed yesterday. I remind members that we were dealing with the minimum number of meetings for the year. Clearly it was the mood of Synod that it should not be one meeting and Synod therefore passed, in part, Jonathan Alderton-Ford's first amendment that a PCC shall hold no fewer than two meetings each year, but then also passed the next part of the amendment – ‘the first of which shall not take place before the end of a period of four weeks beginning with the date of the annual meeting.’

It was very evident that the mood of Synod was with what Jonathan was proposing, namely that this should apply only if a PCC was to hold only the minimum two meetings per year, but that it should not apply *carte blanche* across the board. The intention was that it should not be possible to get rid of one of the meetings five minutes after the APCM had taken place.

I opposed it because I understood that that would not be the effect of Jonathan's amendment, and indeed further legal advice taken overnight has confirmed that the effect of the amendment would be to prohibit the holding of a meeting within four weeks of an annual parochial church meeting. That would apply to every PCC no matter how many meetings it held or intended to hold during the course of a year, and surely there seems to be no reason why we should prevent a PCC meeting happening within four weeks of an annual meeting. Indeed, there may be very good reasons why a PCC needs to meet to consider urgent or important business. Therefore, my amendment is a drafting amendment to ensure that the rules mean what Jonathan Alderton-Ford and the Synod clearly wanted.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): – and for those members who attended a particular drinks party last evening, not the James Bond of the Church of England. That is an insider joke that members will no doubt get at some point!

I want simply to say that I accept this amendment. The purpose of all my amendments was to help this legislative work. Every single one of them has been crafted by the legal department, which is putting right the ammunition that it gave to me. I am therefore quite happy for this to go ahead.

Revd Ruth Walker (Coventry) – and chair of the House of Clergy in that diocese. I welcome this amendment with a view to this item of business being clarified. Following the debate yesterday I felt rather disappointed that after we had all worked so well together we seemed to fall apart over simplification. That set me thinking that actually the number of amendments tabled and the mess we seemed to have got ourselves into in a way shows up where we are at as the Church of England, some of which begins to bear on the research that is being done about growth.

It seemed to me that yesterday we were creating burdens for some and causing concern for others in terms of where their lives are at within the Church. I therefore feel that maybe we should look again at some of this as we come to simplification in all sorts of areas. This is a bigger issue, about which we need simplification, and people on the ground need to understand the law and what is expected of them, but actually as a Church we are all in very different places and one size does not fit all.

Revd Simon Cawdell (Hereford): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and carried.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph 4 at the end *insert* as a new sub-paragraph –

“(–) at the end of sub-paragraph (b) *insert* ‘; and a council meeting called solely for that purpose is to be ignored for the purposes of paragraph 2.’”.

I do not intend to keep Synod very long. This amendment forms part of what has gone before. It is the cement to hold the brick in place.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton: I agree and urge Synod to accept the amendment.

The amendment was put and carried.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): I beg to move as an amendment:

'Leave out paragraph 5.'

My simple amendment seeks to preserve the status quo in respect of paragraph 6 of Appendix II to the Church Representation Rules by deleting the proposal in the resolution before us to remove the rule that business which is not on a PCC agenda may be taken only if 75 per cent of the members present agree. I suggest that that is, and continues to be, a very important safeguard, which is commonplace in many organisations.

Having an agenda published a full week in advance enables members to know what is to be discussed, so that they can think and pray about it and consult with other church members and with each other, in order to be properly prepared before going to the meeting. It also enables members who have conflicting commitments to decide which meeting they should attend and whether they need to be at the PCC meeting in the light of the business to be discussed because their contribution elsewhere might be of greater value.

Good practice, good order and prayerful deliberation require that usually business not on the agenda should not be taken. There are of course occasions when it is appropriate to take some truly urgent or truly uncontroversial items even though they are not on the agenda; and when that is truly vital the 75 per cent of those present at the meeting will be readily forthcoming for it to be taken, as indeed we saw yesterday afternoon when 75 per cent of the membership of this Synod was willing to give permission to waive a Standing Order in exceptional circumstances.

I suggest that the current rule creates no problems, but it is an important safeguard against controversial business being sprung on a meeting and railroaded through. I know that we find it difficult to imagine that that would ever happen, but I assure members that it does, and it positively promotes good decision-making. I urge Synod to vote for my amendment and leave the rule as it stands.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton: We are back in the same sort of territory as we were yesterday afternoon – a lot of wisdom and good intention, but that can be thwarted by the imposition of rules – so I am absolutely with Clive Scowen in wanting to say how bad it is that material is railroaded through any kind of meeting. However, by keeping this rule, or I would say imposing it as a rule, we are turning protection against bad behaviour and flexibility into a zero-sum game, to use the Archbishop's language earlier this morning. There are other ways of protecting PCCs from bad behaviour, but we are trying to increase the flexibility so that urgent or important matters that were not thought of when the agenda was compiled can still be discussed.

Seventy-five per cent is a very high margin, and in our consideration of these rules we have been helped by looking at what happens elsewhere in the charitable sector. This sort of major margin is usually reserved not for matters of process – whether an item that is not on an agenda can be debated or not – but for such matters as changing the purposes of a charity, for which certainly a higher requirement would usually be expected; but here we are trying to simplify matters and allow some PCCs to react in ways that would be helpful.

I am not going to go to the stake over this but I would urge Synod to resist the amendment.

The Chair: As Canon Cotton has resisted the amendment, I need to ask if 40 members are standing who do not wish the amendment to lapse but wish a vote to be taken. There are 40 members standing.

Revd Paul Ayres (Bradford): Clive Scowen is absolutely right about this and I am afraid that Canon Cotton is wrong. Seventy-five per cent may be a high margin but zero per cent is a very low margin. I have attended many meetings that I have not chaired – obviously members would never imagine my doing this when I am chairing a meeting – when people have tried to bounce items onto the agenda, papers have been tabled at the meeting so that no one has had any time to read them, very vague agenda items have concealed what the subject was really about, and financial matters that have important implications have been brought up with no chance for anyone to work through them beforehand.

We are referring to this as simplification but very often simplification is the rhetoric used by those who want to get things done their way, in a way that they are convinced is absolutely right and about which they need not consult others. As I said yesterday, the rules are there to preserve the right of the laity to be consulted, in order to prevent the chair, and possibly the churchwardens working with the chair, railroading matters through. It may be that we ought to reduce the percentage required, but not to zero.

I therefore urge the Synod to support this and the following amendments.

The Archdeacon of Cleveland (Ven. Paul Ferguson) (York): I had hoped that in this debate we could think of PCCs as really good bodies. The first sentence of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure refers to a PCC as an instrument of mission – evangelistic, pastoral, social and ecumenical. In this debate there is not very much about the good things to do with PCCs.

I hope that this particular item is not just a piece of archidiaconal paranoia – though I can assure members that it exists – but the combination of a number of provisions: the reduction in the number of PCCs; the reduction in the necessary size of a standing committee; and the possibility of major items of AOB being taken with little notice. The proper engagement of a PCC and the proper oversight of the things done by vicars and churchwardens are important matters, and there is a risk that they could be diminished.

I therefore urge members to support Mr Scowen's amendment.

Mr Peter Smith (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): Yesterday, major changes were agreed by way of Items 519, 520 and 521, which indeed was amended a few moments ago by Item 525. There was some disquiet over the exact wording of both what I might call part (b) of Item 519, Canon Alderton-Ford's amendment, and Item 520, Clive Scowen's amendment.

Obviously, I do not know what will happen with the other amendments that we are working through this morning. However, it is very much on the cards that as we go through this matter item by item, making so many amendments, the animal that we will have designed by 10.45 today will be dramatically different from the version that was presented to us yesterday. I therefore suggest that at this stage, before we reach Item 505B rather than bouncing it later in the debate, consideration be given by those on the platform that the draft Rules be not approved at this group of sessions, thus allowing our hard-working legal officers to check the wording of all the amendments and make any consequential adjustments, so that the matter may be brought back in July for final approval with the wording in a form that is both legally correct and understandable by PCCs. I would also

encourage archdeacons to consider whether draft guidance notes could be prepared to enable PCC secretaries and others to understand what is required of them.

I fully support Mr Scowen's amendment at Item 522, because I feel that, with a reduction in the size of standing committees and number of PCC meetings a possibility, it is right that matters affecting the mission of a parish in which ordinary PCC members really have little understanding of what is taking place are not dealt with in an *ad hoc* way.

Finally, having been a churchwarden for 19 years in a seven-parish benefice, as a layperson I regularly chaired five or so PCC meetings per year.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and carried.

Dr Graham Campbell (Chester): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘Leave out paragraph 7.’

When I spoke to my previous amendment I set out my concerns over the governance of a parish in which the number of PCC meetings is reduced to below four per year and the parish effectively run by a standing committee for much of the time. My view is that a standing committee of three consisting of the incumbent and two wardens is too small to allow a broad range of views. The existing minimum number of five is more sensible. It is not as though a huge commitment in terms of time is required of a member of the parish standing committee.

In my parish we usually meet only once a year – occasionally twice – to prepare the budget. For items of business required on a short timescale a briefing paper is circulated by email, which is often followed by further emails passing between members who want to ask questions or make comments, but eventually consensus is reached, the agreed action is put into practice and the matter is duly reported to the next PCC meeting, to be incorporated into its minutes.

The Church Representation Rules make no mention of electronic communication and the ability in the 21st century to have online conversations, make decisions remotely and communicate electronically without physically having to meet, so perhaps the rules need some attention in that regard.

Those members of Synod with very long memories may recall a situation that arose some years ago in a particular parish when a pressure group with some grievance against the local church signed up to the electoral roll in order to use its block vote to elect a number of its group to the PCC, with a view to changing the policy of the church so as to bring it in line with its particular views. Obviously this caused a division and some ill feeling in the church to the detriment of the gospel. Following that attempt to hijack the PCC, the Church

Representation Rules were changed to provide that an individual had to be on the church's electoral register for six months before becoming eligible to stand for election to the PCC.

The election of churchwardens is now open to all residents of a parish, not just the members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll. Therefore, in a similar situation to the one that I have just described, a pressure group could turn up at the parish meeting and elect a couple of its members to be churchwardens – and hence members of the standing committee – so that the poor old incumbent could be faced with working for a year with two non-Christian, non-churchgoing wardens who, if the standing committee had consisted of only the three of them, would be able to outvote the incumbent between PCC meetings, the number of which may be as low as two. Having two additional people on the standing committee at least would mean that three Christians could outvote the rest. Could it happen? Murphy's Law is that if something can happen it almost certainly will, and that does not give us much confidence that such an event might not occur.

I see no advantage to reducing the size of the committee and I invite 40 members to stand to allow the debate to continue.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton: I am sure that by now Synod can do my speech for me. This is about flexibility, about removing a requirement to make it possible, because in some places a standing committee of three may be advisable and what helps good practice to happen. Part of my concern, which I also registered yesterday, is about the danger of turning what is suitable in one context into a requirement for other parishes in other contexts, but that is the bit about simplification and flexibility, and I have said all that.

As a matter of substance, it is worth remembering that a standing committee receives power only from the PCC. The standing committee is under the direction of the PCC, and even if it transacts business between PCC meetings it is required to give account to the PCC. In other words, already there is provision elsewhere in the rules to the effect that the PCC has control over the standing committee. I believe that this is a useful piece of flexibility which some parishes will find very helpful and I therefore ask Synod to resist the amendment.

The Chair: Once again, the 40-member rule applies. Are there 40 members standing? There are.

Revd Canon Martin Wood (Chelmsford): I want to resist this amendment because in my experience many parishes have very small congregations and consequently a correspondingly small PCC, and to insist on having five members of a standing committee would make for a disproportionate number of members of the PCC on the standing committee. I think that a good minimum number is three. However, I would ask Canon Cotton to consider that in such parishes it is often difficult to elect two churchwardens, in which case it may be useful to include a reference to the fact that the incumbent and churchwardens are *ex officio* and that if there are not two churchwardens one other person must be on the standing committee.

Revd Simon Cawdell (Hereford): I too ask the Synod to resist this amendment, simply because I have a number of very small parishes in which the population of the total parish, let alone membership of the church, is of the order of 60. In the case of a PCC which when fully constituted has only eight members, a minimum number of three is perfectly reasonable for a standing committee. As Robert Cotton has said, its business is regulated by

the PCC and it cannot undertake duties that are not given to it. Therefore, the possibility outlined in the amendment of the incumbent being outvoted by churchwardens really should not arise in terms of destructive business, if the PCC itself is being properly regulated.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

The Chair: As a result of that amendment being lost, the following consequential amendment at Item 524 cannot be moved.

We now move to Item 505B and I call on Canon Cotton ---

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge (Ven. Clive Mansell) (Rochester): On a point of order, Chair. This may not be an appropriate point at which to raise it, but Mr Peter Smith has suggested the possibility that the Synod may want to consider adjourning the making of a decision on this matter until July. If that is to be considered as a procedural motion, I seek your guidance on whether it should be considered at this stage, before Canon Cotton speaks to Item 505B, or at a later stage in the course of the next part of the Agenda, so that the Synod may reflect on it.

The Chair: I shall take a moment to consult. Archdeacon, I am advised that, if you wish to, under SO 33 you may move the procedural motion that the debate be now adjourned, and you have two minutes in which to give your reasons.

Adjournment of Debate

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge: I beg to move:

‘That the debate be now adjourned and resumed at the July 2014 group of sessions.’

Members of Synod will have heard Peter Smith’s earlier comments, and I too reflected on the matter overnight. We have now had a debate over two days on some quite technical issues, so not all members will have been present to hear both parts of the debate. To some extent we have filleted the original arrangements, which were intended to try to simplify for parishes the rules that have been in place for many years. Therefore, given the previous lengthy history, I suspect that, if it were the wish of Synod to delay a final vote until July, the additional few months involved in that process would be of no consequence.

Certainly I would like to see a summary of what we have now put together, in the light of both the Simplification Group’s proposals and the decisions of the Synod, in order to check whether there are any knock-on implications that we have not foreseen. We almost touched on one of those during the previous mini-debate about the standing committee and churchwardens, when we heard that some parishes cannot recruit two churchwardens, let alone one. If the requirement specifies that in such a case the standing committee shall comprise the incumbent and two churchwardens, rather than two people one of whom may

be a churchwarden, and it is not possible to find churchwardens to serve, it could result in a standing committee the only member of which is the incumbent, and we have not thought that through.

I therefore believe that it would be helpful for us to consider whether we may need to make any further amendments in the light of the decisions we have already made, so that when as a Synod we come to final approval we can be confident that we have made a good, robust decision, but I suggest that we may first need a little time to check on those matters.

The Chair: That procedural motion having been moved, Canon Cotton now has two minutes in to which to respond.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton: I have two minutes in which to respond to the wonderful Clive Mansell – how lovely! I shall come to my response in the final 10 seconds. First, however, I want to thank Synod for its careful attention to all this detail. The enthusiasm with which members have engaged with this subject matter has been admirable! *[Laughter]* There was just a tiny dissonance between the energy in the room at the fringe meeting yesterday – from anecdote to evidence about church growth, empowering, releasing and, dare I say it, flexibility – and the caution that has been present in our debate on the Church Representation Rules.

I say that because, again using the Archbishop's words this morning, I want us to keep clear in our minds the necessity to focus on objectives. In all synodical business our objectives must be about strengthening the capability of groups of local Christians as they take wise, innovative and responsible decisions, not only for the sake of the Church but also their neighbourhoods and parishes. Part of our method for fulfilling those objectives has been to say that we do not control bad behaviour by rules; we control bad behaviour much more by encouraging and empowering people, giving them responsibility and helping them to use it wisely.

That said, it is not difficult to read the mood of Synod, and I therefore fully endorse the adjournment of this debate to allow members to reflect on it a little more. I am mindful that this was only ever meant to be a small package and that during the debate new ideas have come up, in the form of Martin Wood's contribution just now and the Bishop of Gloucester last night saying how he wishes he could call PCC meetings. This may be only a first step, but for now I recommend that we accept Clive Mansell's idea to adjourn this debate and resume the entertainment and enjoyment of the Church Representation Rules at York in July!

The Chair: In my discretion under SO 33 I do not propose to allow any more speeches on this matter. The effect of passing this procedural motion will be that the debate that is interrupted may be resumed only by direction of the Business Committee.

Mr John Wilson (Lichfield): On a point of clarification, Chair. On this procedural motion we are voting for an adjournment until July and it is not simply being left open-ended.

The Chair: That is as I have been advised. The debate will be resumed in July. Thank you for that clarification.

The procedural motion was put and carried.

THE CHAIR *Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London)* took the Chair at 11.38 a.m.

**Diocesan Synod Motion
Environmental Issues (GS 1942A and GS 1942B)**

Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod:

- (a) recognizing the damage being done to the planet through the burning of fossil fuels;
- (b) aware of the huge reserves held by gas, oil and coal extraction industries;
- (c) committing itself to taking seriously our Christian responsibility to care for the planet (“the earth is the Lord’s”);
- (d) acknowledging the financial responsibility of the Church’s national investing bodies; and
- (e) noting that a review of recommended ethical investment policy with regard to climate change has been begun by the Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group (“EIAG”),
 - (i) call upon the national investing bodies to ensure that their investment policy (including the option of divestment) is aligned with the theological, moral and social priorities of the Church which find expression in the reports *Sharing God’s Planet* and *Church and Earth 2009-2016* and in the Shrinking the Footprint campaign;
 - (ii) call upon the EIAG to publish the report of its review by the end of 2014; and
 - (iii) agree to the establishment of a General Synod working group on the environment, to monitor this and other environmental issues.’

From Church Representation Rules to climate change in one short jump – what does that say about the Church of England? I am very pleased that we have an additional six minutes for this motion as a result of the Synod having adjourned its previous business.

In Mozambique there is a village that used to be known as ‘Sack Place’ because of the huge sacks of vegetables and maize that the villagers were able to sell from their fertile soil. Every year on 15 October they planted seeds knowing that the rains would come within the next day or two. The nearby river was full of fish. Today, life is dramatically different and radically harder. In ‘Sack Place’ the river has dried up – no more fish. Crop yields have collapsed as a result of flooding, successive droughts and extreme temperatures. People are afraid; they can see the signs that the climate is becoming less predictable and hotter. There are fewer children in schools due to malnutrition and the need to work to support the family. Many people are migrating from the land to cities, and there is nothing there for them either.

The issue of climate change is real and is happening. The average temperature of the surface of the planet has increased by 0.89 degrees in the last century. There are increasing numbers of exceptional weather events – at the moment we are hearing much about the floods in the

West Country – and there is evidence from around the world that farmers' lives and livelihoods are being detrimentally affected.

The recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change details the physical evidence; it explains that on the ground, in the air and in the oceans global warming is unequivocal, adding with 95 per cent confidence that it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause for global warming since the 1950s.

However, since the failure of the Copenhagen talks in 2009 the issue has dropped down the agenda. It almost feels as though there has been a collective shrug – 'We can't do anything about it, can we?' – and climate change sceptics continue to question whether human activity is affecting the climate. I agree that we cannot be certain about the effects of climate change, but there is a remarkable scientific consensus about the predicted effects. On Saturday, Professor Julia Slingo, the Met Office's Chief Scientist, said, 'We have experienced the most exceptional rainfall in 248 years.' All the evidence suggests that there is a link with climate change.

That is the context for this motion, which in some ways is very unambitious. It does not call for radical action by the Church at this stage; it does not highlight particular issues. It touches on investment and disinvestment, because that was the genesis of the motion, but does not go into detail on that. It hopes very simply to raise the profile of climate change within the Church and to help us have all our boats facing in the same direction. It seeks to align the mission of the Church with its investment arm and with the life of our parishes.

It matters to the Church and to all our congregations that this motion is passed with strong support. I hope that it will unite us and transcend the differences that we have on other matters. Why is it important? For three reasons: mission, justice and the future.

First, mission. The fifth Mark of Mission is to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. 'Care for the earth', as gift of the Creator, is in many ways foundational for the gospel. We have the responsibility, expressed for example in the Genesis story and in the covenant with Noah, to care for the whole of God's creation.

There are other, more practical mission factors. As we keep hearing, the Church is perceived by most young people as supremely irrelevant, but when I was involved in a tour organised by Operation Noah alongside People & Planet, which works on climate change in the universities, there was real enthusiasm for the Church's involvement. I know that Christiana Figueras, the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, believes that the faith groups across the world should be doing much more in their response to the reality of climate change. This motion tries to enable that to happen.

Second, in terms of justice, climate change is a moral issue, because the rich world has contributed disproportionately to it and the poor world is suffering disproportionately. Poor communities are least equipped to deal with the impacts. There is an argument that in order to lift people out of poverty it is necessary to keep burning fossil fuels, and certainly we need to think about how we transition to better ways of providing energy. Over the medium and longer term we must move into a new world of energy production, producing abundant, cheap, renewable energy for all. Here is an interesting fact. The amount of solar energy reaching the surface of the planet every 40 minutes is enough to power all the people of the earth for a whole year. However, at the moment we are harvesting only 1 per cent of that

power; we should be doing better and the Church can help to create the conditions to enable that to happen.

Third, we have a responsibility to the future. Professor James Hansen, formerly climate scientist at NASA, has said: ‘The basic matter is not one of economics. It is a matter of morality – a matter of intergenerational justice. The blame, if we fail to stand up and demand a change of course, will fall on us, the current generation of adults. Our parents honestly did not know that their actions could harm future generations. We, the current generation, can only pretend that we did not know.’

This motion contains three simple requests. The first calls on the investment bodies to align their policies with Sharing God’s Planet, Church and Earth and Shrinking the Footprint. In preparing for this debate we have engaged closely with the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. I welcome its work. As members heard on Monday, a comprehensive review in this area is under way. Underlying our conversation has been the question of the wisdom or otherwise of disinvesting from fossil fuels. There are good reasons why many advocate disinvestment. Carbon emissions are an ethical issue; we need urgently to rebalance our economy; and there is much concern about the fact that there are five times as many reserves on companies’ balance sheets than we can burn if we are even to stay within a two-degree increase. However, that is for a future discussion. I am quite sure that any investment decisions need to be taken alongside strong national and international pressure for policy change. If this motion is passed, it will give us all a strong base for better work together in the future.

Secondly, the motion asks the EIAG to publish its report, and I am glad to learn that the report is likely to be published once it is completed next year.

Thirdly, it asks for a General Synod working group on the environment. However, since the Southwark diocese passed the motion, its thinking on this has developed. I want to pay tribute to the work of the Shrinking the Footprint group and the diocesan environmental officers as well as individual dioceses, but there is general acknowledgement that we need to raise this issue higher up the Church’s agenda. I intend to welcome Canon Swinson’s amendment, which, with the support of Shrinking the Footprint, proposes to reconstitute its working group and make it responsible to the Archbishops’ Council.

However, I regret both the number and content of Mr Sutcliffe’s amendments and intend to resist all of them. They seem to me to deflect us from the main issue, and I hope very much that the Synod will reject them quickly so that we may hear its voice on the immediate challenge of climate change.

I have prepared a paragraph on what we might do but I shall omit it because we are short of time, except to say that I would like to see an international, online prayer network in preparation for the major climate change conference in Paris in 2015. The Church in its various guises must be responsible for over 100,000 buildings – think what we could do with better, more concerted action!

These environmental issues are really urgent. Recently, Prince Charles stuck his head above the parapet on this subject and so should we. For the next big conference in Paris to be successful there needs to be a renewed international and national conversation. I believe that the Church is in a position to facilitate that urgent conversation, and I therefore urge

members to support this motion for the sake of the gospel, for our children and their children, and for the good of the whole earth.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Bishop of Sheffield (Rt Revd Steven Croft): I rise to support this motion as put and in particular the proposal to appoint a General Synod working group on the environment to lead and monitor the entire range of the Church of England's response to climate change.

William Beveridge and William Temple referred to the giants that would have to be fought by the generation which led the reconstruction of Europe following the Second World War – squalor, ignorance, want, idleness and disease. Earlier today, the Archbishop of Canterbury referred to the great demons of poverty, need, ignorance and human suffering. The threat of climate change is a giant evil, a great demon of our day. The damage that this goliath will do to this beautiful earth, if unchecked, is beyond our imagining. It is a giant of deconstruction and immensely dangerous to future life on this earth, to our children, our grandchildren and the poorest of the poor. This giant evil of climate change is stealthy and invisible. Its power rests on the accumulation of gas in the atmosphere, which cannot be seen but can be measured. Its power is fed by greed, blindness and complacency in the present generation, and we know that it wreaks havoc through the immense power of our unpredictable weather systems. Its power to change our future grows year by year.

We therefore need a fresh sense of reality and urgency in dealing with this. We need to fight the giant of climate change through good science and good stewardship, personally and together, and through wise investment policies, which can be levers of change elsewhere. We need to fight it through determined political campaigning to get this issue back on the agenda of every major party by 2015, seeking clear manifesto commitments to reach the target of 80 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Church of England has a critical role to play in raising this agenda.

The DEOs in Yorkshire and the north east of England have combined to develop a simple campaign under the title 'Hope for the Future'. I will post the details on Twitter in a few moments' time; they can also be reached from the diocese of Sheffield's website. The campaign has the support of Christian Aid and Tearfund. We are called to pray, engage in politics, campaign and mobilize letters to Members of Parliament, urging them to make manifesto commitments to raise environmental concerns at their party conferences this year. The next six months will be critical to raise the profile of this agenda in public life.

I urge the Synod to support this motion wholeheartedly and to take action.

Revd Professor Richard Burrige (University of London): As deputy chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group I would like to draw Synod's attention to the background note GS 1942B standing in my name. We are very grateful to the diocese of Southwark for this motion, especially because it recognizes the important role of the Church's investments. At the moment climate change is in sharp focus, with the UK experiencing such extreme flooding that even the chief scientist at the Met Office links it to climate change, not to mention forest fires in Australia and blizzards in the USA. Scientists warn us about the damage that we are creating, but we continue to do little to mitigate it or adapt to it.

The EIAG recognizes that climate change is a huge ethical investment issue, particularly because of its impact being felt most by the poor. We developed our first climate change policy (annexed to GS 1942B) in 2008. Together with colleagues from other Churches we are leading the way on lobbying for effective public policy, low carbon investments and engaging with businesses as detailed in the leaflet available in the Bishop Partridge Hall. Members of Synod, today is your chance to tell us how important climate change is to you as we revise and update our policy advice.

The EIAG strongly supports this motion. We note that it draws particular attention to fossil fuels, and I understand why some are calling for disinvestment. However, it is not as simple as that. Pointing the finger at the extractive industries gets us off the hook and avoids the fundamental problem of our selfishness, our way of life, fuelled by plentiful, cheap energy and more and more people around the world wanting it. Making the transition away from fossil fuels in a fair and just way will be long and hard and will require sacrifice. Therefore, our policies are already aligned with the theological and moral priorities as mentioned in paragraphs 11–14 of the background paper.

As I said on Monday, we are conducting our review in the light of creation, the fall, incarnation, atonement, redemption, resurrection and eschatology. We will consider all options for taking forward the policies, but, as we made clear on Monday, in a spirit of engagement with the business world, staying on the pitch, not retreating to the sidelines even at the risk of the occasional grazed knee. We are talking to policymakers and companies in an attempt to improve sustainability.

In 2013, 72 per cent of the companies that we targeted improved their emissions management. Staying on the field of play we can make a difference, but make no mistake that we reserve the final option of disinvestment from companies that resist change, as I detailed on Monday in the case of the mining company Vedanta.

The motion asks us to finish the review by the end of 2014, which we are trying very hard to do, but it will need to be adopted by the investing bodies early in 2015.

We also strongly support the call for robust organisational arrangements to co-ordinate, develop and monitor the Church's response to climate change, and I therefore urge Synod to support Canon Swinson's amendment. However, I hope that we shall not be distracted by the other amendments so that together we can achieve a stronger, more co-ordinated Church response.

Synod's vote today will give us a strong mandate to improve environmental issues relating to climate change for the future not only of our children but all God's children. I therefore urge Synod to support the motion.

Mrs Madeleine Holmes (Europe): I have long waited for this moment when environmental matters found their way on to the Agenda, and I thoroughly support Canon Margaret Swinson's comment on how we should go forward.

I represent the diocese in Europe as its environmental officer. I am sure that members can imagine how immense that diocese is. I am also a provincial representative of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network and, through personal experience, know of the great

desire throughout the world to tackle the environment, our greed and the problems that we face.

For goodness' sake, who is our neighbour? We are meant to love and care for our neighbour. Therefore, the General Synod and the Archbishops' Council need to combine with the leaders of other faiths throughout the world to care for what we call the Fifth Amendment, about caring for God's world. We really need to act now; we are already late in getting to grips with talking about the environment.

I prefer not to use the term 'climate change', because it gives people an excuse to argue, whereas we cannot argue about this amazing world that God has given us or about what we are doing to the environment. I call on our leaders now to spearhead and push for the creation of a paid post for someone to co-ordinate the work of this Synod with all the aid charities that are working towards improving the environment. I know from my in-mail that South Africa, New Zealand and other countries throughout the world are listening and wondering what will happen today, looking to us to lead the way – and if we do not, I shall be sorely, desperately disappointed – in what we are given to do for God's world.

The Chair: Mr Sutcliffe, as you have kindly agreed to speak to all your amendments in one speech, your speech limit will be five minutes.

Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark): Thank you very much. Because of work commitments I could not attend the Southwark diocesan synod meeting last July, so I played no part in forming the motion. I believe that the Church should get behind ecologically responsible actions and awareness – an immense task in which the Church must share.

The motion as it stands leaves out so much that is relevant to any proper ecological understanding while at the same time being deluded, it seems to me, about the power of either the Church or Church members as investors or consumers to do very much about the dangerous, if not disastrous, situation facing our world. Taken as a whole, my amendments aim to improve the motion.

I believe that the Church should see that, when Genesis was being set down a few thousand years ago, it was reasonable to be fruitful and multiply, but clearly that has now gone more than too far if we observe how the loss of habitat by so many creatures and plants in the world as a direct result of our human need for living space and food is a major cause of the ecological crisis facing us.

In 1983, I asked Bishop Graham Leonard what might be the right population size for the world; he was after all a scientist. His reply was, 'You must remember that we are peopling heaven.' Is there a tension between that belief and the stewardship of the world? Possibly the human population will begin to reduce after the polar ice caps have melted and sea levels have risen, but there should be reference in the Southwark motion to the very rapid human population increase over the past few hundred years – hence my first two amendments.

Yet the Church cannot by its own actions significantly reduce fossil fuel consumption in the world. We must be realistic. Doing much about ecology by any means is way beyond the Church's remit. Whether the Church invests ethically or unethically will make very little

difference at all to the outcome. Any alleviation of the ecological crisis will be immensely complex; admitting that is simply honesty.

What the Church can do best, in my view, is to launch and sustain a discourse that would relate to what individuals can do and what they might energetically agitate to have done. The Church needs to encourage everyone to think ahead and understand better. What will be the burden if one day the population declines? What will it mean if the mantra of economic expansion that we constantly hear, fuelled of course partly by population increase, is abandoned?

The Church can do much to change attitudes and to encourage new forms of social responsibility. That is why my final amendment proposes informed discourse instead of the setting up of any new or reinforcing of any existing bodies by the Church. Any such process of examining what little we can do or are doing will be insignificant and irrelevant to the purpose for which the Church exists.

Despite all the buildings that we own, the Church's footprint is very small. What is the point of wasting people's time by establishing a process of self-examination that will, at best, lead to self-congratulation about what little is being achieved by us and, at worst, be controversial and questionable? We should instead, and in my view much more valuably, look far more closely at all these issues. I recommend that we start by reading a superb book on ecology entitled *A Sting in the Tale* by Professor Dave Goulson, about bumblebees and what they do, which I recommended to friends at Christmas. It explains the law of unintended consequences, which ecologically we have all been breaking.

As individuals we need to see how we can be more responsible ecologically. Developing such a discourse is what the Church is in business to do and often is good at, and that is what the Church should seriously undertake to do.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Canon Margaret Swinson (Liverpool): In the interests of brevity I will focus on the amendment rather than the broader issues of the motion.

In proposing the amendment I had in mind two matters. First, in the debate at the 2005 General Synod, at which I and other members were present, we were urged not to vote in favour unless we were serious about taking action. Were we? I question that now.

Second, I bore in mind my experience as a representative of the Church of England at the Anglican Consultative Council in New Zealand in 2012, when we were hosted to a fabulous dinner by members of the Polynesian community, who gave, as I reported to Synod on my return, a moving presentation in dance, music and drama about the impact of climate change on their lives and their islands. As my husband and I left that presentation, one of the old men grasped my husband's hand and pleaded in desperation for our help. For him, for them, for that community, this is not a case of 'Well, it might happen one day'; it is a matter of urgency. Islands occupied by people are disappearing and people have to make decisions whether to stay or go. That plea struck both of us very deeply and featured in my report back to Synod in 2012; and it caused me to think about how seriously as a Church we had taken the vote that we made in 2005. I have therefore tabled my amendment as part of my commitment to that vote in 2005 and to those whom I met in New Zealand.

I do not know whether any members have watched the Winter Olympics, but on Saturday morning in the men's slopestyle there was a knitter; a pair of hands could be seen knitting, and it occurred to me that in the past we have been a little like that knitter. We have sent the riders on their way; we have not accompanied them on the journey and we have not been there at the finish. My amendment seeks to encourage us to send this motion on its way, to accompany it, to take it seriously and to take seriously the outcome of the journey. That will involve our taking seriously our church buildings, our governance structures, our homes, as well as encouraging people in our churches to take this issue seriously, for the sake of their homes, the organisations of which we are members through work or recreation, and our local communities. I hope that my amendment proposes a stronger motion to enable all those things to happen.

Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph (a) before “burning” insert “excessive”.’

Revd Canon Robert Goddard: In many ways Tom and I have two hearts that beat as one, but I suggest that his amendment gives more weight to the motion than it actually carries. We are saying that we want the Church to do things better. At the moment we are not doing very much and we want to improve the way we do things. We do not imagine that we can change the whole world on our own, for we are not stupid, and I would like to say to Tom that we are not deluded either. We are quite realistic about this, but we need to improve our systems.

I do not believe that it would be helpful to add the word ‘excessive’ before ‘burning’, because it would simply open up room for further argument. We are not in a position in which any further burning of fossil fuels would be excessive. Our target of 80 per cent by 2050 is not enough. The problem lies with cumulative emissions. The present figure is 400 parts of carbon per million parts of the air, and it is rising; before the Industrial Revolution it was 280 parts per million. If we are to have any hope of avoiding runaway climate change, we need to peak by 2016 and then reduce to virtually nothing by 2050, so *any* burning of fossil fuels is now excessive.

I hope that Synod will resist this amendment quickly so that we can return to debate on the main motion.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Revd Rosalind Rutherford (Winchester): I do not think I need to persuade Synod that this motion is both timely and very important but, like Canon Giles Goddard, I want to encourage members to resist this amendment, because it risks distracting us from the main point and force of the motion and from being able to take clear, focused action as a result of this debate.

I ask Synod to oppose this amendment to paragraph (a) of the motion because, as we have just been told, all burning of fossil fuels is the problem and we need to be able to recognize this in any actions that follow from today's debate. I know that we cannot equate cooking over a small wood fire or on a small stove in a rural village with the huge, open pit coalmines in the developing world, funded in significant part by our banks, which

contribute not only to the emission of carbon dioxide but also cause forced displacements of communities, though I am sure that, if solar-powered stoves were provided for women in developing countries, they would be used.

To quibble over what is excessive is a distraction. In this context ‘excessive’ is usually interpreted as ‘more than I use’. Is it excessive to heat our cold churches for half a dozen people? We know that the greenhouse gases that we have allowed to fill our atmosphere, especially carbon dioxide, almost certainly are the most significant cause of the extreme weather events that we are now living with and will continue to live with, but of course 32.4 million in the world were displaced in 2012 alone. We know that the only way of modifying this disaster is significantly and quickly to reduce the use of fossil fuels. We do not need to allow ourselves to be distracted by arguing over whether or not our use is excessive. We need to do what we can as individuals to reduce our fuel use and give authority to those acting on behalf of our Church to take action to reduce investment in companies that contribute to the problem.

I ask Synod to vote in favour of the main motion without the potential distraction of this amendment.

The amendment was put and lost.

Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘Leave out paragraph (b) and insert –

“(b) aware that rapid and massive human population increase may be threatening many creatures and plants that share this planet with us and together sustain the life in which all are created to partake;”.’

Revd Canon Giles Goddard: Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, gave the Dimbleby Lecture on BBC1 last week. It is well worth watching and I recommend it to Synod. In it, she addresses all the major issues that are facing us and she calls for much closer co-operation between governments and other agencies. Let us listen to what she is saying. She acknowledges that population growth is an issue but she separates it from climate change, and so should we.

In fact, I think that the effect of this amendment is quite insidious, because it moves the responsibility away from the rich world to the poor world. People have large families as insurance against poverty. Poverty is increasingly the result of climate change, so we need to attack climate change to reduce poverty and therefore population growth.

There is also an issue of relative equity. A climate calendar has been produced by the World Development Movement, which shows that the average UK citizen emits in eight days as much CO₂ as the average person in one of the 50 developing countries emits in a whole year. In Britain we emit 9.62 tonnes per person per year of CO₂; in the USA it is 20.18 tonnes per person; in the developing world it is a minimal amount.

Finally, there is the fact that if we are to keep temperature increases to within two degrees, we can only burn one-fifth of the currently identified reserves. I think that we should leave

those reserves to poorer countries if we possibly can. I therefore hope that we will resist this amendment and return to discussion of the main motion.

The Chair: The amendment is now open for debate.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): I oppose this amendment, in particular because I think there is a bit of a problem about what we mean by population increase, and the implication of Mr Sutcliffe's speech suggested that it involved family size. In fact, on family size it appears that we are hugely mistaken in the so-called developed West and, when questioned, we vastly overestimate family size. Interestingly, when the sample is taken exclusively from people with higher education the mistake is even greater. In fact, over the vast majority of the world now family size is 2.5 per woman. It is reducing hugely in those countries in Africa, where they have not yet reached that level. However, we are facing a population increase – a vast population increase – because people like us will live a lot longer than they have in the past. I am not quite sure what can be suggested about that!

As Giles Goddard has said, we are in danger of diverting our discussion from climate change by concentrating, partly a mistake I think, on population increase. It helps us to avoid an extremely uncomfortable conversation and the uncomfortable implications, particularly here in the power-hungry developed world.

Mr Sutcliffe says that he wants to avoid this self-examination. I think that we should certainly indulge in it, as suggested by Mrs Swinson's amendment, which I would support.

Mrs Jennifer Humphreys (Bath and Wells): I need to declare several interests. I am the General Synod rep on the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, so I am aware of the huge amount of work that is ongoing, and on behalf of us all I am very grateful for what is happening.

I live in Somerset, fortunately for me not on the Levels but, with a home address of Brook Cottage, Riverside, I have no cause for complacency. I am the World Mission adviser for the diocese, so can say that what is being experienced on the Levels and elsewhere has already been felt by many poor communities in other parts of the world where help is minimal.

This amendment about population growth, whatever its intention, seems to give the impression that the poor are to blame for their own misfortunes. I will not dwell on those things that April Alexander has already said about changing population growth, with which I totally agree; what I would like to concentrate on is the fact that this amendment is designed to replace the reference to gas, coal and oil industries, which is why I make my next point.

Last Saturday, a national newspaper said that we should divert some of the overseas aid budget to the Environment Agency. The Director of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals campaign has pointed out that, in the face of the financial crisis, leaders of the rich countries found \$18 trillion to bail out the financial institutions. Did the farmers on the Levels cause the financial crash? Did the people in Zambia, recently made homeless by floods, cause it? Or was it the financial institutions, with vested interests in the fossil fuel business? Many businesses such as this have larger turnovers than most countries in the

world's economy and therefore have a very undemocratic representation into what the world does.

Chevron, Exxon and Shell have spent half a trillion between them over the last five years, without managing to increase production. It is costing them over \$100 billion to stand still. The share price is stalling as they commit the cardinal sin of not growing.

I therefore urge Synod to support the original motion from Southwark diocese but to resist this amendment to paragraph (b).

Mr Keith Malcouronne (Guildford): I am aware that the body of the Synod is keen to support the main motion and I just want to address the concerns people have about this amendment.

The motion as it stands hangs largely on fossil fuels in the first two paragraphs. Even if through technological change we were able to adapt and minimize the impact of the use of fossil fuels, it would not, on its own, alleviate all the impact that humankind is having on the climate and the planet. To shut our eyes to population growth is to look at only one of the causes.

I well understand the concern that this amendment perhaps appears to focus on areas of the world where population growth has been most rapid, but let us look at the UK. Our own population has shot up from 50 million to over 70 million in the last generation, and we are the people who are burning fossil fuels at a rate many times that of people in the other parts of the world and creating other climate change impacts.

I would urge Synod not to throw this amendment out, because it very sensibly widens the range of concerns, issues and causes.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘Leave out paragraph (d) and insert –

“(d) acknowledging the complex economic and sociological challenges involved in achieving any alleviation of ecological dangers; and”.’

Revd Canon Giles Goddard: It seems to me that the effect of this amendment is to abrogate responsibility, to move the responsibility for what is happening away from ourselves. We know that the issues are complicated. That is why we are having this debate. We do not need to say that in the motion.

However, we have £9 billion worth of assets and with that we can make a difference; maybe not a huge difference but a difference, if we use it well. If we do it properly, it may not even cost us very much. The financial statement Synod has received puts a possible cost of a full ethical policy at 0.25 per cent of the value of our portfolio, which is really not very much – to do something that could make a real difference. Clearly that is a prediction and our investments can go up as well as down.

We need to take our responsibilities seriously, however. We have made mistakes in the past. People in my parish are suffering as a result of the decision to sell the Octavia Hill Estates to the highest bidder. (I had to get that in, I am sorry!) This is an opportunity for us to take a lead.

I therefore hope that Synod will resist this amendment so that we can return to discussion of the main motion.

The Chair: The item is now open for debate.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton (Guildford): I want to underline what Giles has just said: that there are obvious difficulties but that inserting Mr Sutcliffe's amendment will not help matters. We are having the debate because there are difficulties with all sorts of environmental issues. By putting in this amendment as written it will give the people who want to avoid facing up to the difficulties an easy way out, not only to avoid addressing the difficulties but also to deny them.

We have responsibilities. That is what the original motion makes clear. We do not have sole responsibility, but by having responsibilities we also acknowledge that we have power. My concern is that if we accept this amendment we are moving close to going into victim mode, where we shut our eyes not only to the responsibilities we have but also the power to do things. I know that is not what Tom Sutcliffe wants; it is not what Synod wants. I therefore urge Synod to resist going down the victim route and to resist this amendment.

Mr Peter Smith ((St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): It is a pity here that Mr Sutcliffe's amendment will take out (d), acknowledging the financial responsibilities of the Church's national investing bodies, because I think it is very important that (d) should stay. Regrettably, therefore, in this case I will not be able to support Tom's amendment. However, there is a tremendous amount that I fully support in what I think has been quite carefully crafted, acknowledging the complex economic and sociological challenges.

I am fairly well travelled on the African continent and I have also been to India. A point I would like to touch on is that there is a lot of economic damage taking place in the form of deforestation by people who want wood, which they turn into charcoal for cooking purposes. Various governments are deliberately encouraging rural communities to swap to bottled gas or, if the money is available, to such things as solar panels to produce electricity.

I think it is important that we should not lose sight of what is behind the amendment, notwithstanding that I feel I will have to vote against it.

Mr Brian Wilson (Southwark): I speak in support of Tom Sutcliffe's amendment. It adds an extra dimension to the main motion, which is to be welcomed. Retaining (d) does not achieve very much because the Ethical Investment Advisory Group policy is already

adopted by the investing agencies, including the Pensions Board of which I am a member; so I think that what is currently in (d) is covered by (ii).

The amendment was put and lost.

Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘*Leave out* paragraph (e)(iii) and *insert* –
“(iii) call upon all parishes and cathedrals to promote best ecological practice wherever possible and also to encourage informed discourse on environmental responsibility as fundamental to Christian stewardship of the given world.”.’

Revd Canon Giles Goddard: By having this debate we are raising expectations. There are many people listening online and a lot of the NGOs are very interested in what will come out of today. I am anxious about raising expectations that we then cannot meet. To remove this clause in relation to a working group would make it less likely that we are about to meet those expectations.

It is not a zero-sum game, as we heard this morning. It is definitely not a zero-sum game. I am not saying that cathedrals, churches and congregations should not engage with these questions; of course they should. We have been encouraged to engage with these issues, as Mrs Swinson has said, since our debate in 2006 and long before; but we are not really doing it – we are not doing very well.

I hope that if we can have better structures at the centre to enable and facilitate, not to tell people what to do, that will also enable us to be better at local level. I therefore urge Synod to resist this amendment.

The Chair: The item is now open for debate.

Revd Canon Steven Saxby (Chelmsford): I am for action and I am for this Synod taking action. In speaking against Tom Sutcliffe’s amendment, I am opposing his suggestion that we should not have a working group but instead have a general call for encouragement to promote best practice and informed discourse.

We need action and we need help from the central structures of the Church of England, not only to take action in parishes but we also need help from the Church of England centrally to take action on the UK and global stage.

Many in my congregation in Walthamstow are Anglicans from the Philippines, some of whom have lost loved ones in Typhoon Yolanda. Many have families that have been devastated by the tragedy of that typhoon. Last month I was with Church partners in Manila and they are looking to us to support them in addressing the global consequences of climate change.

I am encouraged by the Southwark motion precisely because it calls us to act. The Ash Wednesday Declaration quoted Romans 15:13 in calling us ‘to act with hope’. I hope that we will indeed establish this group and see it help us all to take action.

Revd Mark Steadman (Southwark): In urging Synod to resist Mr Sutcliffe's amendment I would suggest that what this amendment is seeking to do is to take out one of the vital components of the Southwark Diocesan Motion.

Tom spoke about the law of unintended consequences. It seems to me that applies directly to what he is proposing. Rather than directing our energy into productive, fertile, vital work, it seems to me that Tom proposes the production of more hot air. I rather thought that was what we were trying to avoid. I urge Synod to resist this amendment.

The amendment was put and lost.

Canon Margaret Swinson (Liverpool): I beg to move as an amendment:

'Leave out paragraph (e)(iii) and insert –

“(iii) request the Archbishops' Council to reconstitute the Shrinking the Footprint working group, so that it reports direct to the Council, to monitor, facilitate co-ordination and promote the responses of all parts of the Church of England to environmental challenges.”'

Revd Canon Giles Goddard: I support this amendment.

Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield): I ought to apologize for taking up the time of the Synod, but it is very important. Actions speak louder than words, and therefore I want to endorse Margaret Swinson's amendment. I do so as the vice-chair of the Anglican Consultative Council and it is my privilege to serve in that way.

For the Church of England to be urging action in this area is so important. The presentation at ACC-15 by the Environmental Network would have melted our hearts. There were people there suffering *that day*, losing families *that week*. We must do something.

I would thank our lay representative from Europe for being one of the members of the ACC's Environmental Network. There are people across the Communion who are working diligently to bring this to the fore in their synods. Actions are important and we need clearly defined actions. I urge Synod to vote for this amendment.

Revd Janet Appleby (Newcastle): I am grateful to Southwark diocese and Giles Goddard for the motion. However, I am particularly grateful to Margaret Swinson because of the words 'all parts of the Church of England'. That includes all of us as individuals.

At the Eucharist yesterday we all sang lustily 'Lord, end our madness, carelessness and greed. Make us content with the things that we need', but I wonder if we really meant those words. It can be uncomfortable and require sacrifice of us. Are we prepared to take that personal responsibility and to live more simply than others may simply live?

I ask that because this has been going on for a long time. Long before climate change was known about, prophetic Christian voices spoke of our Christian duty to God's creation. I was only a teenager when John V. Taylor wrote his cry of outrage *Enough is Enough* but it was a profound conversion experience for me. It turned me into a conservationist. A few years later I was a student at Bristol University when Horace Dammers based his Christian

Lifestyle Movement in Bristol: a call for us all to embrace a simpler lifestyle. There were other things at the time, such as the Brandt Report, which some may remember.

Sadly, since then, far from simplifying our lives – and I include myself – we have fallen into more complex ways of living and use more resources. We buy more clothes and other goods; we travel more and farther; we eat more exotic foods; we use more food miles; we have endless electronic gadgets. It is all very pleasant for us but our planet suffers.

I would draw Synod's attention today to a way in which we can help, with some of the practical things that have been talked about. There are the 'three Rs' – reduce, reuse and repair – which come before recycling. We need to reduce our use, reuse goods and then repair them before recycling. We should also think more about how we use these electronic gadgets that some members of Synod are using at this moment. I was shocked to learn that every single Google search uses as much energy as boiling a kettle. Our internet habit is therefore using vast and increasing amounts of energy, but it is invisible and we do not see it.

I urge members of Synod to support this amendment and, when at home, to think seriously about their personal contribution towards acting more responsibly for the planet.

The amendment was put and carried.

The Chair: We now resume debate on the motion, as amended.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): I declare an interest. For the last 15 years and until the end of December I was a member of the EIAG and it was me who initiated the current comprehensive review into climate change.

This generation has developed an ability to impact the lives of others that follow it to an extent greater than any other generation in human history, by consuming resources which rightfully belong to those future generations and by wrecking their environment. How can we be loving our neighbour of tomorrow as well as those of today if we act in a way that impoverishes their lives?

This issue of climate change has a dilemma, however. How many of us drive petrol or diesel cars and leave unnecessary lights and heating on in our houses? The answer is most of us. The curious thing is that the younger generations – the under-30s and teenagers – often seem to be the worst at switching off lights, even after they have been educated for the last 15 or 20 years about the damage that climate change will wreak on their generation. It is a field ripe for hypocrisy but at the same time we must do all we can to reduce carbon in the atmosphere, notwithstanding our human inability to value the future on equal terms as the present, as Professor Stern acknowledged in his 2006 review.

However, if there is foot-dragging in the Church, it is much more rampant in society as a whole all over the world. When the test comes in the form of recession, renewables are seen as a luxury. The key thing is to get secure, low-cost energy. Hence the dash for gas and hence fracking.

Church investors therefore have to be cunning as serpents, innocent as doves – to quote the phrase from Richard Higginson’s book *Transforming Leadership*. While on the one hand we have to push for alignment with the prophetic, theological, moral and social priorities in sharing God’s planet, we also have to provide an ethical framework for our investment managers to benefit from adaptation to climate change. For example, had the Thames Barrier not been built, much of London, including large parts of Southwark diocese, would have been swamped in the recent floods and storm surges.

Climate change will therefore be something to resist and something which gives rise to investment opportunity. The development of such a dual-track perspective will take courage. We need to live in the real world where sea levels are rising, and I suspect it is already too late to remove that situation. Meanwhile, investments in hydrocarbons give us the opportunity to engage. We simply cannot increase our exclusions further.

In conclusion, I am very pleased that this motion speaks a language of engagement with business and people, to gain a new sense of urgency in shrinking the human footprint and mitigating, if not being able to remove, climate change. I welcome the new monitoring group and would be pleased to play a part in it. I also encourage the EIAG and national investment bodies to develop an ethical basis for making investments on the back of adaptation to cope with the effects of climate change.

Dr Jacqueline Butcher (Sheffield): Many of the environmental engineers I meet and talk to think that we have already missed the chance to limit the temperature rise to two degrees. The implications of a three and a half degree rise are quite frankly terrifying. Vast tracts of land become un-farmable, leading to mass migration. A lot of land becomes unlivable in because it is flooded, sea levels rise, leading to mass migration.

The Government has a legally binding target of 80 per cent reduction of CO₂ emissions by 2050. That is the target we have as a Church. If we want to know how to get there, then Professor David MacKay from Cambridge University’s Department of Physics has produced an online carbon calculator tool. It has quite a complicated internet address, but a search using ‘David MacKay, carbon calculator’ will find it. One can play about with it, changing how we generate electricity and how we consume energy, to see how we can hit an 80 per cent reduction in CO₂ by 2050. It is really interesting.

The only way to generate enough energy for our needs and hit an 80 per cent reduction in CO₂ by 2050 is to generate energy in a low-carbon manner – and we have to have a grown-up, adult and rational conversation about nuclear energy as part of that – then to generate and use that electricity. We will no longer have gas central heating in our houses; we will no longer be cooking with gas. Domestic and commercial heating will be electric, using our low-carbon electricity; cooking will be electric. There will no longer be any diesel or petrol cars on the road by 2050.

That is how we get there. That is what the maths say. That is how it works. Why then is investment in fossil fuel companies still such a good commercial investment? It seems to me that the Government is not actually living by what it says, by its own legally binding target.

In terms of large civil engineering projects, 2050 is not very far away. They take a long time to build. Imagine replacing the central heating in every house in the country. That is a large

project. We need to start now. It is eight general elections away. That requires not just a five-year plan by one Government at a time but agreement with cross-party support to plan, between now and 2050, how we will get to the targets in between.

We will still be here in 2050 and the Church needs to play its part in that. I am really excited about the new group and having these conversations. When will we face up to what we have said we are going to do? When will we face up to what that will mean in terms of energy consumption and energy use, and how are we to make that a reality? I am really looking forward to the Church being part of that conversation.

The Bishop of Southwark (Rt Revd Christopher Chessun): I simply want to say two things. First, I hope that this motion will help to raise awareness within the Church of England of the urgency of the moral, social and spiritual dimensions of climate change and, in particular, our God-given responsibility of care for God's earth in general. I believe that we urgently need a new public conversation about this. We are talking about our grandchildren's future and the future habitability of the planet. The Church of England is very well placed to encourage that public conversation. One word from the Archbishop of Canterbury about Wonga and the public debate changed overnight. More needs to be done.

Secondly, we urgently need to get a more rounded, strategically thinking, communicative and purposeful undergirding of this revived Shrinking the Footprint working group. Margaret talked in her amendment about 'all parts of the Church of England'. Our major problem in the Church of England at the moment is that no one quite knows who holds the brief for work on climate change – Shrinking the Footprint, Mission and Public Affairs, the bishops' Environment Group or the Diocesan Environment Officers' network. All of this needs to be brought together, with the addition, I would think, of some specialists outside our Church structures.

Canon Giles Goddard has encouraged us to focus on mission, justice and the future. I urge Synod to do so and to support this motion.

Dr Anna Thomas-Betts (Oxford): I spent my best 15 years of research life studying the geothermal potential of the UK. That was because petrol prices went sky-high in the 1970s and Governments were throwing money at research into alternative energy sources. When OPEC reduced oil prices, however, government research funding also died and, ironically, we were funded by oil companies whose interest was in identifying the more difficult and obscure oil reserves. Therefore, the point I would make is about the importance of government policy.

I wholeheartedly support this motion and everything that Giles Goddard said but I want us to be aware of the complexities of ethical decisions about fossil fuels. Let us be honest. The outcome we want is a serious reduction in hydrocarbon extraction and use, but the world will not need less energy. On the contrary: as other countries develop their economies, the global energy demands are increasing incessantly. Indeed, this will happen whether or not our NIBs disinvest from fossil fuels.

That is not a counsel of despair, nor an excuse for us not to follow our ethical and moral values in our investment policy. However, I would argue that any disinvestment has to be accompanied by more effort to develop alternative sustainable sources and more incentives and investment for cleaner energy. We should therefore be investing in carbon capture and

storage and solar energy. Yes photovoltaic cells are expensive but there are technologies ripe for development to produce cheaper solar cells. Unless there is investment in it, it will not be developed. For example, if petrol prices had stayed up in the 1970s there would now be lots of space heating of buildings in the UK, and maybe even a limited amount of electricity generation. None of this happened because nobody was prepared to put up the development costs once the oil prices went down.

My main plea therefore is that the EIAG should consider not only withdrawing from investment in fuels that pollute but also positively encouraging the development of alternative sources.

This is the third occasion in my time on Synod that I am speaking about this issue. I thank Synod for the forbearance of those who have heard me speak about this three times.

Mr Philip Fletcher (Archbishops' Council, appointed): I want to encourage the Synod to take courage and I very much welcome the motion as amended. As a young civil servant in the early 1970s, for the first time we recognized a couple of major global threats. One was that of halons, chlorofluoride carbons emitted from things like refrigerators, damaging the ozone layer. The other was the effect of lead in petrol. We took urgent national and international action on both of those issues, perhaps just about in time, and we feel the benefits now.

Climate change is of course more complex but it is real, it is urgent; we need to act. I suggest that it is even more urgent than we have been saying in this debate. We have a general election next year; we have an absolutely crucial international meeting in Paris at the end of 2015. The Church should be making its voice heard effectively in the lead-up to both events. Canon Swinson's amendment will help us to get there.

I want to pay tribute to the work of Shrinking the Footprint so far, because it is far from wasted. We are proposing to replace it with a more streamlined organisation with a clear reporting line, and that I welcome, but STF has helped to give the Church credibility by showing what we can do for ourselves, and that is very important.

I also welcome the flexibility that the motion gives to respond appropriately to the various issues directly confronting us; therefore, disinvestment is one option but only one, and we need to think hard about what is involved. We need to think about issues like fracking, which should not necessarily be rejected out of hand. We might need gas as a transitional fuel. All of this will be difficult and we will do everything, I hope in conjunction with others, both nationally and internationally. Bodies like Christian Aid are vital here.

I urge Synod to support the motion as amended.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

Revd Canon Giles Goddard, in reply: I thank members for their contributions and for Synod's support for this motion. Clearly there is a hunger for us to do more as a Church.

I will not go through the individual comments but I want to highlight a few of them. I thank Anna Thomas-Betts and Jackie Butcher for their encouragement to us to look at ways in which we can rebalance our economy. It is urgent. We need to be part of that discussion; we need to take a lead.

Thank you to Janet Appleby for reminding us of our own personal responsibility and for telling us that a Google search takes the same energy as boiling a kettle, which is rather shocking.

I thank Madeleine Holmes for calling for a paid member of staff. At the moment we have David Shreeve doing two days a week and Anna Kefala/Ruth Knight – Anna is replacing Ruth on maternity leave and gives 70 per cent of her time. We may need to increase staffing and that will have a cost implication, but I think it is important to bear that in mind.

This motion is not the end; it is the beginning. It is a motion about making things happen. Support for the motion means that Synod will be doing two things: committing itself to work on this, alongside all parts the Church; and sending a strong message to the Church and to the world that this is a priority for us. However, can I urge Synod not to wait for the setting up of the working group in order to take action? We cannot sit back and say, 'We've set up a working group, so that's fine'. There is a meeting on this immediately after this debate in the Robert Runcie Room, hosted by Operation Noah and Christian Aid; so if members are interested in doing things, I would urge them to come to that meeting.

I would also urge members to take action back in their constituencies. For pastoral reasons I was interested to see the engagement of the West Country bishops with those who are suffering from the floods, but we need to do more in terms of getting this into the public debate. It is important that we have a strong majority, for three reasons. First, to help the Ethical Investment Advisory Group in its work. According to the Oxford judgment, the views of the beneficiaries can be taken into account, and it will help the EIAG if we send a clear message on this.

The second reason is because many people are looking to us to take a lead. The IPCC and the UN desperately need the faith groups to step up on this, and we can help make that happen.

The third reason is because of the gospel. We are called to care for the widows and the orphans and to care for God's world. I would therefore urge Synod to support the motion.

Revd Professor Richard Burrige (University of London): On a point of order, Chair. Because of the importance for us and our work on the EIAG, it would be extremely helpful for us, under SO 36(b), to have a division of the whole Synod so that we have some numbers.

The Chair: If there are 25 members standing, we will have a division of the whole Synod. That is very clearly more than 25. I therefore order a division of the whole Synod.

The motion was put and carried in the following amended form, 274 voting in favour and 1 against, with 3 recorded abstentions:

‘That this Synod:

- (a) recognizing the damage being done to the planet through the burning of fossil fuels;
- (b) aware of the huge reserves held by gas, oil and coal extraction industries;
- (c) committing itself to taking seriously our Christian responsibility to care for the planet (“the earth is the Lord’s”);
- (d) acknowledging the financial responsibilities of the Church’s national investing bodies; and
- (e) noting that a review of recommended ethical investment policy with regard to climate change has been begun by the Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG),
 - (i) call upon the national investing bodies to ensure that their investment policy (including the option of divestment) is aligned with the theological, moral and social priorities of the Church which find expression in the reports “Sharing God’s Planet” and “Church and Earth 2009-2016” and in the “Shrinking the Footprint” campaign;
 - (ii) call upon the EIAG to publish the report of its review by the end of 2014; and
 - (iii) request the Archbishops’ Council to reconstitute the Shrinking the Footprint working group, so that it reports direct to the Council, to monitor, facilitate co-ordination and promote the responses of all parts of the Church of England to environmental challenges.’

The Chair: That completes this item of business. *Bon appetit!*

(Adjournment)

THE CHAIR *Canon Ann Turner (Europe)* took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

Private Member’s Motion Girl Guides’ Promise (GS 1943A and GS 1943B)

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. I have been asked to draw members’ attention to Order Paper IV. At the top of page 6 there is a rubric in bold, which should read, ‘If item 27 is not carried’.

Mrs Alison Ruoff (London): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod believe that girls of all ages in the Girlguiding movement should not suffer discrimination but be able to continue to promise to love God when enrolled rather than making a wholly secular Promise.’

Members of Synod, may I begin by thanking those of you who kindly signed this motion, thus bringing it to the attention of members of the Business Committee, and to the Business Committee for allowing it to be on the Agenda of these sessions while the subject remains topical and relevant.

Having spent many of my formative years in Guiding, as a Brownie, a Guide, a Queen's Guide and a Sea Ranger, I owe a great deal to the Guide movement. My mother in her younger days was a Commissioner in Northern Ireland. When I worked in northern Newfoundland with the Grenfell Medical Mission, I started a Ranger unit for senior girls. I shall never forget a breakfast hike in winter, with sunshine and blue skies but with the temperature at -15C. It took hours to be able feel I had legs again!

To be a Guide helped me, I believe – and countless other girls over the century since its beginning – to feel that as a young person I had worth and that I could, and indeed was expected, to make a contribution in society, to my country and not just to my community. The fact that one made a promise at enrolment to God and the Queen and to be of service to others seemed to have huge importance and gravitas. We learned so much and had a huge amount of fun. It has always been so.

What I am seeking today is Synod's support in asking the movement, Girlguiding UK, simply to reinstate the former Promise that was in use up until 1 September last year, when it was changed to a wholly secular Promise. I commend to members the change in wording on GS 1943A. I therefore ask that both Promises may be in use as an alternative, dependent on the wishes of the girls and their leaders.

The question may be asked what has this to do with the Synod of the Church of England? Why on earth should we be debating such an issue? Let me try to explain. Many Guides of all ages meet week by week in Church premises – and I include all Churches here, not just the Church of England, as Church use and sponsorship varies from county to county. Some units have their own buildings, others use schools and community halls, but for those meeting in Church premises to now be banned from saying 'I love my God' cannot be right. Leaders and girls who are Christians – and I am talking about the Christian faith in particular, although this applies to those of other faiths too – are faced with choosing between their faith and guiding. Many leaders and particularly the senior girls, Rangers, are deeply upset and distressed by this, and parents are too.

The Promise has apparently been changed 10 times over the 105 years, and this is the eleventh, but in the past it has only been 'tweaked', for want of a better word. The change introduced from last September is mandatory, wholly secular and removes God completely. The argument from Girlguiding UK is that 'We all need to be one and saying the same Promise'. Why? The Scouts have retained their Promise with God and introduced a simple secular one, so that both leaders and their young people have choice. Why should the girls in this wonderful and remarkable youth movement not do likewise?

There are over half a million girls of all ages in guiding today. That is thrilling, and I would like to pay tribute here to all the leaders who so willingly give of their time every week to run their units. It takes a huge commitment, one which is probably much taken for granted. I would also like to thank those members of the Guide movement who have come here today.

Some units have taken a brave stand against the decision from the executive and trustees. That has been anything but easy for them. A Brownie unit in Harrogate was the first to declare publicly that it would continue with the 'old' Promise but capitulated. The units in Jesmond Church in the Newcastle diocese have said that they wish to use only the 'old' Promise, but I have to say that the pressure on their leaders to change to the secular Promise has been enormous. Further, I understand that there are many units that have no intention of using the secular Promise at all but which have said nothing openly. This surely must lead to division in the Guide movement.

Girlguiding has always been a faith organisation, namely the Christian faith, as was the state of the nation at that time. Otherwise, why would God have been included? The Baden-Powells were certainly nominally Christian but I suspect had a strong Christian faith. The Chief Executive Officer of Girlguiding UK has said, 'The organisation has always moved with the times while retaining its core values'. If the removal of God is not a core value, I do not know what is. She has also said with regard to spirituality that it is 'A source of strength and guidance, external to oneself'. Yet the new secular Promise asks the girls to state that they should 'be true to myself and my beliefs'. Is this external to oneself? Of course not; it is putting 'I' first and foremost. Synod members will know that brilliant tune but with the worst possible words – 'I did it my way'. Surely we would want to say God's way has to be best for every one of us?

I would remind Synod that I am asking only that the girls and their leaders be accorded choice when making or renewing their Promise. To refuse this would seem to me to be absolute discrimination against the girls and their leaders when the Scouting Association offers choice – and both organisations were founded by Robert Baden-Powell and his sister. Later, his wife Olave Baden-Powell became the Chief Guide. She was a remarkable lady and leader whom I had the very real privilege of meeting on at least two occasions. I believe that she would be heartbroken by the change that is being imposed on the Guide movement.

It will be seen from paragraph 5 of the background paper that the Guide units in Jesmond were threatened with expulsion if they refused to accept the new Promise on 31 December last. The Chief Guide then offered a further 19 days for reflection prior to expulsion, which time has again been extended without a further limit. Following a meeting 10 days ago with Guide leaders, Commissioners and parents in the North East, it appears that there may possibly be some softening on the part of the executive and headquarters. Already, some 1500 objections have been received at headquarters. We must pray that this movement will continue. I hope that this debate and, dare I say it, the help of the media today will encourage further consideration to that end.

Under paragraph 6(d) of GS 1943 I have mentioned the further marginalization of Christianity in this country. Synod may remember from the press that the Magistrates' Association, at their AGM last September, had a motion for debate to remove the Bible when an oath was taken in court, and this when there was already the opportunity to affirm. I went to the meeting. I believe that this was an attempt at the marginalization of the Christian faith in England and Wales. The motion was defeated, but here today we have yet another example of pushing God not only into the sidelines but out altogether. As Christian people we must stand against this and, for the sake of the girls and their leaders, seek to support those who wish to put their faith as a number one priority.

Further, for those joining guiding and learning what the Promise means, there is the opportunity in a Christian church-based unit to learn not only about God but also to understand how much each is loved by Him and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Jeremy Fletcher (York): I have been trying to work out for some time how much of our business this actually is. It seems to me a bit rude to send Girlguiding's homework back saying that they could do it better, and I do not know if it is our place to do that. Neither do I really see it as a sign of the collapse of Christian values in our nation, even if I do not particularly interpret being true to myself in the way that the Girlguiding background paper does.

However, there is of course a way in which this our business. For me it is, at the local level, to affirm the fabulous work of Girlguiding, to value our Guides' involvement in our parish life, to see this partnership as part of the investment in children and young people, which the Church growth report *From Anecdote to Evidence* commends as a correlate to growth, and, rather than ticking Girlguiding off, getting in there and asking how we can help them develop their beliefs. Last Friday, for example, when talking with our Guides about this, we agreed on the best way that we could be involved in the Discovering Faith badge.

I think I would much rather that we just said No to this motion and leave it at that, committing ourselves to support and do all that we can in the stuff where we are. However, if we have to vote for something, let it be a positive engagement with all the opportunities that the new Promise offers. Let us thank Girlguiding UK for their superb and sacrificial work – for example, one of my Guide leaders travels a two-hour round trip across the Humber and back to work with her group – and commit ourselves to doing all that we can to help. The way to get God in this is to build on all the involvement we already have and not to worry about these particular words.

Mrs Alison Wynne (Blackburn): I wonder whether the potential consequences of this new Promise have been considered. We know, of course, that human beings are all sinful and that a promise to be true to self, to do what is right in my own eyes, can only lead to chaos. What might happen, I wonder, when 'being true to myself' leads Guides or Brownies to disregard their leader's instructions on camp and wander off into the woods alone at night? Or refuse to wear the uniform 'because the colour doesn't suit me'? Or choose to bring alcohol along to a group meeting? If anyone thinks teenage or pre-teenage girls would not do any of this, then they have never been a young girl – or, indeed, known any.

All human beings are sinful. A promise to be true to my sinful self is a promise to refuse to come under God's rule in my life; a promise to push God off the throne and put self there instead; a promise to live life for my own ends, selfishly. It is a promise that no Christian can make.

The refusal to allow an alternative Promise is discrimination not only against Christians but also against those of other faiths who have submitted their lives to something or someone beyond themselves. No Christian girl can now join the Girl Guides; no Christian parent can with integrity allow their daughter to belong to an organisation which insists on a promise to reject God's rule from all of its members. I find myself wondering how any Christian church can continue to allow such an organisation to meet on its premises.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): I have a confession to make. Over 45 years ago I met a young woman at university. I was then, I have to say, reluctantly a Methodist. Some of you may wish that were still the case—(laughter)—but I could not possibly say. She was also a Girlguider. Even then she was a warranted leader. We got married. We are still married – I think! – and for over 40 years she has led a pack of Brownies. Indeed, our daughter is her District Commissioner. It makes it a bit confusing sometimes. She operates a Church-based unit which meets in the church hall. She goes to church parade; she encourages the children to go. We live in a fairly mixed, multicultural area. On no occasion in the last 40 years has a parent ever objected to the Promise being made to love their God. It has never been an issue. It has never also been an issue that they go to church parade.

I am not quite sure what this is all about, because things worked really very well. What is the motivation for change? I really do not know. There is obviously quite a big difference between loving your God and being true to yourself, so I would urge Synod to support the motion.

Miss Emma Forward (Exeter): As a former Girl Guide, Brownie and Rainbow, and now a member of General Synod, I would like to record my disappointment at this change to what lies at the heart of the Girlguiding movement. Here I echo Alison Wynne's comments – a strong thread of where the discussion has been going so far.

Now a Girl Guide is to promise to be true to herself, but I wonder what that even means. We quite often hear in common parlance the sentiment 'Be true to yourself'. People say, 'It doesn't matter; I'm true to myself and that is the most important thing'. To take this to its natural conclusion, even the most extreme, most abhorrent, set of beliefs can be justified by the idea that at least the person has been true to themselves.

According to the background paper from Girlguiding, the change from 'love my God' to 'be true to myself and develop my beliefs' was to ensure that all beliefs could find a place in the Promise. I would argue differently. Prioritizing the self is not inclusive of Christians because it is not in line with the basic principles of the Christian faith. Scripture as a whole shows that the human experience is, in essence, a struggle between self and God. While God seeks to shape us to be more like Him, our self tends towards sin. More often than not, self will be in opposition to God. Each of us will experience that struggle on a daily basis.

I would argue that understanding life in those terms is a primary foundation stone for the formation of a young Christian. One of the first things that a Christian girl will come to understand in her childhood is that God should come before self. As a teacher who spends a lot of time with girls in a boarding environment, if it were possible to be true to such an indefinable, transient, subjective entity as 'self' then it would be the last thing that I would recommend a young girl to be true to, and even less something she could swear by. While 'being true to myself' is a respectable-sounding sentiment, for Christians it is at best an empty one; at worst, I fear, a dangerous one.

The Chair: I call Mr Dotchin, followed by Anneleise Barrell, to speak to but not to move their amendments.

Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): John said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with

us,' but Jesus said to him, 'Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you is for you'. 'Whoever is not against you is for you' is a timely reminder that the Church of England does not have a monopoly on good works.

Girlguiding encompasses a wide group of girls and young women from a large variety of circumstances and of many different faiths, so it would be foolish to be prescriptive as to in whose name they cast out the demons of our day, but I am certain about this: they are very good at casting out demons. Girlguiding is a splendid gift to our nation. For over a century it has helped girls and young women find their rightful place in society, girls who are in the lead on a wide variety of contemporary issues. It has promoted self-esteem and a positive self-image for its members. It has been at the forefront of making girls aware of the dangers of internet use. It is a leader in teaching about reproductive health, human rights and protesting with us against the evils of female genital mutilation; and, of course, it has a very long experience of leadership by women, right to the very top of Girlguiding – something with which the Church of England may finally be catching up. It has come a long way since the early days of camp craft and the famous plea to the founder of 'Something for the girls, please'.

As a nation and as a National Church we should be proud of this long history of empowering girls and women. I would like to applaud their work and say, 'Girls and ladies, you have indeed done and continue to do your best'. With this great heritage of good work in the community, it is easy to see how Girlguiding can sometimes be confused with the Church. In many places, up and down the land, we work together. Girlguiding has always been able to make up its own mind but, because of our closeness in aims and work, it is easy to forget that we are not the same. Girlguiding is not a branch of the Church Girls' Brigade and we must be careful not to make the same mistake as the disciple John did in condemning good work done by others.

Personally, I think it would be wonderful if every organisation that used our parish halls and facilities would make a promise to do their duty to God, but I am not sure how this would go down with the members of our parish knitting circle, nor indeed what Slimming World, Weight Watchers and the kickboxing class would make about such a promise.

Girlguiding is a grown-up organisation. It is perfectly capable of ordering its own affairs in its own ways and however its own members may choose so to do. Several of my guiding friends, who incidentally would have preferred to retain the version of the previous Promise before the Promise that is now on the table, have told me how offended they are that the Church of England has the audacity to suggest how they should go about ordering their affairs. It feels a little like inviting someone in for a cup of tea and then locking the door once they are inside.

Girlguiding does good work in our communities, which we should applaud and encourage rather than questioning its motives or challenging its own democratic process. It is all too easy for the Church to sound like 'Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells' rather than 'Welcoming of Church House, Westminster'.

As an ambassador for Girlguiding, each year I try to attend the Thinking Day in our district. It would be wonderful if at such events the many Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and members of the Trefoil Guild would take note of the last part of my amendment and make their service to their community and their decision to be selfless people in the presence of

God, but that must be at their own free choice and not at our prescription. Whatever they do choose to do, I will be there to support them in their work, encourage them in their activities and applaud them as they continue their 100-year-old tradition of transforming the lives of girls and young women all over the world.

Mrs Anneliese Barrell (Exeter): I am speaking as someone who has been a member of Girlguiding since the age of nine – and I am not telling how many years ago that was! I have experiences at every level, from Brownie to Guide leader, Commissioner, trainer and tutor, and I am still involved as the public relations adviser for the South West England Trefoil Guild.

I personally am not in favour of the changes in the wording of the Promise, mainly because I did not believe that change was necessary. However, having read the new wording and spoken to girls and young women who are still active within the Girlguiding movement, I have come to understand the reasons for the change.

Girlguiding spent much thought and research into producing a very comprehensive consultation questionnaire. I know, because I took part in it. It itemized every clause of the existing Promise and elicited views from a very large range of people inside and outside the movement, including faith-based organisations via the Inter Faith Network. It was well publicized in the media. There were no preconceived ideas or covert intentions. This was purely a fact-finding mission to find out what members really wanted of their Promise. Of the 44,000 respondents, the overwhelming view was that the words ‘to love my God’ were a barrier to many girls and young women who did not have a defined faith but who wanted to be part of this worldwide, growing and exciting movement.

As a registered charity, its charitable purpose is to promote the education of girls and young women and to help them develop emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually so that they can make a positive contribution to their community and the wider world. As a founder member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Girlguiding has a requirement to have a Promise and a Law which are in line with the principle of the original Promise and Law: the essence of spirituality, citizenship and commitment to others. The Promise and the Law cannot be separated.

From what I have been hearing since the change of wording, there is a sense of relief amongst the majority of leader and girls. They can now discuss their beliefs and how to make them a reality without feeling that they have to sign up to a God in whom they have little or no knowledge. Is that not a challenge and an opportunity for outreach; a mission opportunity for the Church to share what it is to be unconditionally loved by a God who recognizes no barriers; a sign that we should be proactive in our support and not reactive? It is good that we have a chance to voice our opinions, but trying to suggest a change is like closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. The time to make suggestions about the format and the wording was during the consultation period.

As committed Christians, we can offer so much to Girlguiding. We have knowledge and experience; they have a spiritual education programme which needs and welcomes help and advice and assistance to carry it out. Let us be available and sensitive to the units in our towns and villages if asked by our local Girlguiding leaders, who have the difficult task of discussing faith with the girls in their unit. I know from years of trying to help girls, young women, and even established leaders, how difficult it is to understand what it means to love

God and how hard it can be, especially if the leader or the girl comes from a family where there is no defined faith.

If I had not been a Guide, I should not be standing here before you. As a child I was unsure of myself and of my abilities, but the whole guiding ethos, the friendships, the skills that I acquired, the awareness of the wider world and the opportunity to explore travel helped me to further my career, gave me increased confidence and a sense of independence.

I beg members of Synod to support this amendment, even if they strongly disagree with what has been decided. Let us, as I said before, be proactive and not reactive. If we carry our faith with real joy, we ought to become infectious. When a girl meets a Christian she should see that joy being emanated. Girlguiding has given the girl an opportunity to explore faith. We have the means to help and develop this. If this motion goes through unamended, I fear that it will send messages to those outside the Synod that we as a Church are being critical. Our message must be one of prayerful support.

The Chair: I call Joanna Monckton to speak to but not to move her amendment.

Mrs Joanna Monckton (Lichfield): I too was a Girl Guide – a very long time ago. I am still in contact with Brownies and Guides, as two of my grandchildren are involved as a Brownie and as a Guide. I think most of the points have been covered in this very short debate. I think my amendment says it all, in that I feel that Guides should be giving choice to their members in the same way that the Scouts do by retaining the choice and taking either the old Promise, which includes God, or taking the new one. I think that this choice is what this is all about.

I was rather upset to see this unfortunate headline in the summer: [‘God help us when Girl Guides ditch religion for the shallow cult of the individual’]. Is this really just one more example of Christianity being marginalized? I have my suspicions that perhaps it is.

The Chair: We now move to the amendments.

Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘*Leave out* everything after “That this Synod” and *insert* –

“(a) congratulate Girlguiding on its recent Centenary and applaud its work in helping girls and young women to take their places as full and responsible members of their communities;

(b) believe that girls and women of all ages in the Girlguiding movement should be able to continue to promise to love God when enrolled; and

(c) commend the suggestion that, when a member chooses so to do, the Promise may be prefaced with the phrase ‘In the presence of God I make my Guide Promise’.”

A member: On a point of order, Chair. Is it possible to take Mr Dotchin’s amendment clause by clause?

The Chair: No, that is not possible.

Mrs Alison Rouff, in reply: I would ask Synod members to resist this with all that they can. The Church of England of course does not have the monopoly on good works. Why would it? We are all here to do the same thing – to praise God and to put that praise into action in our lives – every single one of us.

Mr Dotchin was right in his praise of the work of the Girl Guides. I hope I made clear in my speech that I have tremendous support and respect for what Guides do and I think that praise was really very helpful. I have no wish whatsoever to tell Girlguiding UK what to do. I am simply here on behalf of those hundreds and hundreds of girls and leaders who would just like choice. I want to keep it simple and that is all about. I urge Synod to resist the amendment.

Mr Graham Smith (Gloucester): ‘On my honour, I promise to do my best, to do my duty to God and to the Queen, to help other people at all times and to obey the Scout Law.’ I was very happy to make that Promise as a Boy Scout and to progress later to be a Queen’s Scout and a Scout leader, but that was 60 years ago, in the context of a firmly Anglo-Saxon, middle-class area. There was a fairly good turnout even then when we had a monthly church parade, although for some I am sure the ‘duty to God’ aspect was more observed in the breach than in practice.

Girlguiding has recognized that it is now in a very different environment. The amendment from Andrew Dotchin allows us to be supportive of the excellent spiritual ethos of Girlguiding.

Before seeing this and the following amendment, I would have felt impelled to propose at the appropriate time that Synod pass to Next Business, so I thank the Business Committee for publishing the robust and highly informative response from Girlguiding to this item on our Agenda. It illustrates to me that the original motion before us was generated in response to the headline in, if I might term it this way, the popular press and not informed by engaging with Girlguiding beforehand.

If we do proceed to vote on an unamended motion, whichever way the vote goes we open the Church to some very unhelpful headlines. An accusation of the C of E meddling with the internal affairs of Guiding could lead to a headline, ‘Church Meddles with Girl Guides’. A further damaging accusation of interfering without first seeking out the truth of the matter could lead to a headline ‘C of E does not seek truth’. As we know from our experiences in this chamber, failing to engage in dialogue first can often be disastrous.

If we look at the depth of the information now before us, we can clearly see that, in particular in the second page of the Appendix to the Girlguiding response, God is not being abandoned by Girl Guides. Spelled out there are serious anticipated spiritual outcomes, relative to each of the sections of guiding today. If we vote against the unamended motion, even more disastrously we invite the headline in the popular press ‘C of E abandons God’!

Because a vote either for or against an unamended motion will be damaging in the light of the information from Girlguiding, I urge Synod to support Andrew Dotchin’s amendment, allowing Synod to vote unanimously for this helpful and supportive motion as amended.

Revd Amanda Fairclough (Liverpool): It should come as no surprise that I consider myself a feminist. The Girl Guide movement is at least partly to blame. As a Guide I gained self-confidence and self-awareness. I was assured that as a female I am different but equal, and I was shown so many things and given countless opportunities that I might otherwise have missed. Woven throughout all these wonderful experiences, in the rhythms and rituals of our Monday night meetings, was God. We prayed, we sang and we learned about the God of Christianity as well as exploring comparative religion. Centralizing God in my guiding experience was the Promise.

I was an outspoken, know-it-all 12 year-old – again, no surprises – and pompously labelled myself ‘agnostic’, but I rationalized my Promise to do my duty to God as a commitment to learn; so I learned the word ‘practice’ from my Guide Handbook and, having looked it up in the dictionary, I experienced practice by going to church parade. I doubt that I would have stepped foot inside a church during my teenage years if it had not been for the Girl Guides. As it happened, I discovered a curious propensity for walking in procession down a church aisle wearing an esoteric uniform. (*Laughter*) It is possible that I would have become a Christian even if I had never been a Guide, but without my guiding experiences I doubt that I would ever have been comfortable enough with organised religion to become a regular churchgoer, let alone a priest.

When I was ordained, kneeling alongside me was the inspirational woman who had been my Guide leader three decades earlier. Girlguiding taught both of us the value of our uniqueness, encouraged us to love our God and helped us to open our eyes to the possibilities to serve. Because I am a Guide, I am a feminist, a Christian and a priest.

Previous speakers have noted that the new Promise removes all reference to God or indeed any higher power, leaving the concept of self as the highest power. Girlguiding UK and its trustees are not accountable to the Church of England but they are accountable to countless generations of girls and women past, present and future for whom ‘once a guide always a Guide’ always means something. On behalf of all those girls and women, I implore Girlguiding UK not to limit the spiritual opportunities for future generations to keep the quest to find God as an integral part of the way they guide girls to maturity. I urge this Synod to support the amendment before us.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and carried, 164 voting for and 154 against, with 15 recorded abstentions.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): On a point of order, Chair. Is it in order to request a division by Houses?

The Chair: I am afraid, Miss Dailey, after the vote has been taken that is not possible. We will proceed with the debate on the amended motion.

Canon Elizabeth Holdsworth (Peterborough): I would like to declare an interest. I was a terrible Brownie. I only ever got one badge. I never learned to tie the old yellow necktie that doubled as a sling – because, of course, we were always breaking our arms in those days, mainly because we had to hop round the toadstool, balancing sixpences on our feet. Happy days! I must apologize to all Guide leaders here. I was probably your worst-ever recruit. However, 45 years after I left the Brownies I still remember the Brownie Promise. It made explicit what was implicit as the backdrop of our lives: that we had a duty to God and to the Queen – we were accountable. Making the Brownie Promise is a significant moment in the life of a child, probably the first if not the only time they make a public promise of that sort.

I believe that the old Promise is still fit for purpose – as much today, in our multicultural society, as its predecessor was in the 1960s' culturally more monochrome Hull. The new Promise is not sufficient on its own. Indeed, it is an existential statement, not a Promise. If someone is simply true to themselves and develops their own beliefs, within its own paradigm there is no accountability and, therefore, as a promise it is an intellectually redundant exercise. On those grounds alone, I think it is not a good example to our children. It is not philosophically neutral. Everything comes from somewhere. Therefore, there is discrimination, and I do not believe that this amendment is an appropriate one. To make this Promise, with its philosophical statement, in the presence of God, I believe is offensive. Therefore, sadly – I would have preferred to support the original motion.

Revd Richard Hibbert (St Albans): I am cautious about speaking on this matter. I never was a Girl Guide and it remains a bit of a mystery. However, I decided that this was important enough to ask a friend, who has been a Girl Guide leader for some 20 years and runs her own group. She had a number of comments to bring to it. She did say that the new Promise was both good and bad, which made me think, 'I wonder why?' She was glad that the new Promise never asked them not to love God. That would have been a problem for her – she is a committed Church member. However, she never really liked the phrase 'love my God' either, principally because it closed down conversations.

I asked my friend what her positive take was on this new Promise and I hope that Synod might be encouraged that all is not bad news, all is not lost. It did have a consultation; there was something on the website; there was the *Guiding* magazine; there was a widespread request for people to be involved; and, as she said, it seemed democratic and it was good that the girls were involved. In other words, the views of the Girl Guides themselves mattered. She felt that was really important and was glad that the movement had done it. She also found with the new wording that it helped her to discuss faith and belief, and, indeed, the Girl Guides' self-identity.

When it comes to that phrase 'to be true to myself' we have heard much, but she herself found that the most difficult one was the Girl Guide who said, 'to be true to myself, so if I want to be' – I hesitate to say the word – 'I can be a...' This led to a rather interesting and early version of a facilitated conversation—(laughter)—but helped the Girl Guide leader to talk through what it meant to be true to yourself and how things can be both positive and negative. It was an unhelpful phrase that turned into a helpful conversation.

With regard to faith and belief, 'to develop my beliefs' may sound thin but she has told me clearly that it is much easier to have conversations. When God was involved, they knew their God, but if there was talk about 'beliefs' they were unsure. They want some help.

There is both good and bad in this. It is easier to discuss beliefs, faith and who they are, and she rejoices over that opportunity. It is also easier to help the girls to make a difference to their community, because that is in there.

I support Andrew Dotchin's amendment. I voted for it a moment ago. I want to encourage Synod to vote for this as a way of encouraging the Girlguiding movement at this moment. Can I just read the words my friend wrote? 'It makes me so cross when politics and tradition come before the most important thing in guiding, which is the girls. I have always thought I can show so much more of God's love by the way I treat the girls and relate to them and love them rather than by preaching at them. They know my beliefs but not because I have forced them on to them.' I support the amended motion. Let us not force Girlguiding but woo them to a richer world.

Next Business

Revd Rosalind Rutherford (Winchester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

'That the Synod do pass to the Next Business.'

The Chair: Synod, if the procedural motion is carried then the motion standing in Mrs Ruoff's name lapses, and the matter cannot be brought up again for debate in the lifetime of this Synod except with the permission of the Business Committee and with the general consent of the Synod. I now ask the member to speak to this motion for movement to Next Business.

Revd Rosalind Rutherford: This debate has made it absolutely clear that everyone here really values what guiding does, values our relationship with Guides, values our faith and wants to share it with the Guides. There is clearly a bit of discrepancy about whether we should tell Guiding what to do when we practically can. We cannot. We can share our concerns, and we have done. We have also said that we want to share our faith with them. I do not think we need to be torn as to precisely which motion we pass. Some people will be sad that the motion they originally proposed is now not there to vote on; others will think they preferred another amendment. I think we can all agree with the sense of taking it by clause.

If we pass to Next Business, we have done what we need to do, which is to say that we value our faith in God, we value guiding, we want to work with them. No more needs to be said.

Mr John Wilson (Lichfield): On a point of order, Chair. Now that this is the motion, can we not take it clause by clause? I know that you could not take the amendment clause by clause, but can we not now take the amendment clause by clause?

The Chair: That is in my discretion but I do not think that it helps the amendment as it was moved. Therefore, we will take it as it stands. I now ask Mrs Ruoff to respond to the procedural motion.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Mrs Alison Ruoff, in reply: I would urge Synod not to move to Next Business. All I am asking for is choice. Paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of the amendment say what we want to say, what I would love to say. I would ask that we are able to send a gentle, kind message to Girlguiding to have a rethink. I would like to continue the debate and would resist this.

The Chair: I do not propose to allow any more speeches on this.

A member: On a point of order, Chair. As there is an extreme interest beyond this House in the outcome of this, I wonder whether it would be in order to have a count of the whole Synod on this procedural motion.

The Chair: Synod, I will call for a vote on this procedural motion to move to Next Business by a show of hands. If a member of Synod wishes to challenge that and 25 members stand, then we will look at that again.

The procedural motion was put and lost.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Chair. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

Mrs Alison Ruoff, in reply: I thank members of Synod very much for the debate. Beginning with Jeremy Fletcher, obviously I disagree in many respects that it is Church business; it is a gospel matter and it belongs to every one of us to own it. To support the Guides, yes, but to allow this choice. Revd Fletcher spoke about the intention of ticking people off. I have no intention of ticking people off, though I am very good at it! I certainly do not want to tick off the Guides, for whom I have huge respect. I love guiding and it has meant the world to me throughout my life – and I am very good at doing knots!

Alison Wynne gave us some very wise words about God rather than self being on the throne, and that is so true. That little word ‘sin’ has the letter ‘i’ right in the middle of it, and we do not want that.

Geoffrey Tattersall, bless his heart, 45 years and it seems that he is not sure whether he has a wife! She is a Brownie leader, and 45 years of looking after girls and little ones is a tremendous piece of service. Little ones are not my scene; I like the older ones. But no one has objected, he said, to love their God in that time. When I say that I like the older ones – (*Laughter*) You are rotten, really! This is all about having conversations with the older ones, and I can be cross with them too!

Emma Forward referred to being true to oneself and asked what it meant. I could not agree more, and thank you for that, Emma. She said that putting self first is not right for a Christian; we put God first.

We then came to the amendment. I salute Graham Smith as a Scout. He talked about our meddling in guiding in the Church of England – absolutely not! We are making a simple request that God be brought back and not chucked out.

Amanda Fairclough's was a super speech. As a feminist she centralized God in guiding wonderfully, as well as the commitment to learn about God from a young age, which eventually led to her full-time Christian ministry. I think that is absolutely brilliant and I salute those people in her guide unit who helped in that process.

Elizabeth Holdsworth said that she was a terrible Brownie, and I think I rather might have been too! She said that the new Promise was not sufficient on its own, not intellectually neutral, and I agree with that.

I have forgotten what some of the other speakers said. Nevertheless I want to thank them all for what has been a very helpful debate.

Finally, I would like to draw to Synod's attention a letter from the Roman Catholic Bishops Conference about the by-laws of the Royal Charter. It referred to the fundamental principles. In Article 2 of those by-laws it reads, 'The Fundamental Principles of the World Association [of Guiding] are those of the Girl Guide/Girl Scout Movement as expressed in the Original Promise and Law laid down by the Founder' – Robert Baden-Powell and his sister. The original Promise was, 'On my honour, I promise that I will do my best to do my duty to God and the King; or God and my country.'

I therefore ask members to give their full support to the motion.

The motion was put and carried in the following amended form:

‘That this Synod:

- (a) congratulate Girlguiding on its recent centenary and applaud its work in helping girls and young women to take their places as full and responsible members of their communities;
- (b) believe that girls and women of all ages in the Girlguiding movement should be able to continue to promise to love God when enrolled; and
- (c) commend the suggestion that, when a member chooses so to do, the Promise may be prefaced with the phrase “In the presence of God I make my Guide Promise”.’

The Chair: Thank you, Synod, for a challenging debate – if only to the Chair!

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Birmingham (Rt Revd David Urquhart)* took the Chair at 3.35 p.m.

Private Member's Motion Canon B 8 (GS 1944A and GS 1944B)

The Chair: I need to explain to Synod that this item of business is timed to finish at 4.15. In my judgement, that will not allow us to have a proper debate on both the main motion and the three amendments that have been tabled, to which a number of members have indicated their wish to speak. In that case, if members are so minded, I propose that we begin with a general debate on the subject, on the understanding that there will be insufficient time to

properly weigh all the arguments on both the main motion and the amendments by 4.15, and that the debate then be resumed as a full item at the July group of sessions.

Revd Eva McIntyre (Worcester): On a point of order, Chair. Would you consider a motion to adjourn the debate?

The Chair: Under SO 33 Revd McIntyre has no more than two minutes to give us the reasons behind her proposal, following which I will ask Revd Christopher Hobbs to reply for no more than two minutes. I will then decide in my discretion under SO 33 whether to allow any further speakers on the procedural motion.

Adjournment of Debate

Revd Eva McIntyre (Worcester): I beg to move:

‘That the debate be now adjourned.’

It seems to me unsatisfactory to begin this debate on the motion and resume it at a later date in order to debate the amendments. I believe, as I am sure other members do, that it would be preferable to deal with it as one piece of business, led by the Business Committee as to when it should be scheduled.

Revd Christopher Hobbs (London): In fact I have in the past submitted a Private Member's Motion to the Synod in York that had to go over two days, so I am not unduly worried about starting this item of business and continuing it on a future occasion. To begin the debate now would take advantage of our being here today, using some of our time to deal with a matter for which we have all prepared and which we have told our PCCs we shall be discussing.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): On a point of order, Chair. I have a little knowledge of Standing Orders, but can we adjourn a motion that has yet to be moved?

The Chair: The procedural motion is to adjourn the debate, not the motion. In my discretion under SO 33 I am prepared to hear one or two more speakers.

Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford): As the amendments reveal, this is a more complicated subject than may at first have been thought. As the proposer of the first amendment, I fully support the motion that the debate be adjourned so that we can discuss it with proper time.

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge (Ven. Clive Mansell) (Rochester): I want to support this procedural motion. In the debate on safeguarding this morning we heard that issues arose that somehow have found their way on to the Agenda on the same day as this Private Member's Motion. Whatever the outcome of that safeguarding legislative process, it will in some measure tie in with the item of business that is now before Synod.

I suppose the judgement call is whether to start this debate now and at some later stage in the legislative process, if it were to go through, feed it into what the safeguarding people might say. In those circumstances it might be preferable to postpone this item to a later date – either July or November at the discretion of the Business Committee – until we know and

have had an opportunity to consider the findings of the safeguarding group in relation to its particular issues.

Mr Paul Hancock (Liverpool): On a point of order, Chair. Would it be in order to ask for the advice of the chair of the Business Committee?

The Chair: Not at this point. I have had some discussion with the Business Committee.

The procedural motion was put and carried.

Under SO 14(g) the Chair adjourned the sitting at 3.46 p.m. The sitting was resumed at 3.57 p.m.

THE CHAIR *Canon Ann Turner (Europe)* took the Chair at 3.57 p.m.

The Chair: Synod, we come rather sooner than I had anticipated to Item 16.

Sir Joseph Pilling will begin the presentation, followed by the Bishop of Sheffield, who will explain in the light of the meeting of the House of Bishops what process is to follow from the publication of the report. At the end of the presentation there will be an opportunity for members to ask questions on the process as highlighted in paragraph 41 of the Business Committee's report.

Human Sexuality: Report from the House of Bishops' Working Group (GS 1929) and Next Steps

Presentation under SO 97

Sir Joseph Pilling: Let me begin by reporting that William Fittall has not lost his capacity to foresee the unexpected. He said to me on the phone, 'I would come a bit before 4.15 if I were you'!

On the first occasion that I had the privilege of addressing General Synod almost seven years ago, naturally I had no notion that my encore might be to do with human sexuality. Occasionally I have speculated as to why I was asked to chair this working group. Certainly it was not because I have any special expertise in the science, theology or sociology of human sexuality but, as this is my very last duty as chair of the working group, it is rather too late for me to worry about how ill-equipped I was for the task.

When a report has been produced – especially one that poses as many challenges as ours – it is worth recalling how those responsible for it came to be set up in the first place. On 1 July 2011 the House of Bishops announced that it intended to draw together and reflect on explorations on human sexuality and material from the listening process and to offer proposals on how the continuing discussion within the Church might best be shaped. The bishops said that they would set up a group to help them with this work.

Quite a few people wish that the group had never been set up. Selfishly, some of us who were members of the group might have wished that! However, we came to see that it is now more than 22 years since *Issues in Human Sexuality* was published. Back then, the group that produced it was clear that it did not see its report as the last word on the subject, and it

said as much. The work that led to *Some Issues in Human Sexuality* as a resource document about 10 years ago did not include any examination of the Church's policies on the subject.

It would be difficult to find any other area of our national life where since 1991 there has been as much change as this. 1991 was only four years after section 28 had taken effect at the instigation of a Conservative Government. Since then, section 28 has been repealed and civil partnerships have been introduced. A Conservative-dominated Government has just driven through same-sex marriage. That almost bewildering rate of change may be judged irrelevant to what the teaching and practice of the Church should be, but it makes it close to inevitable that they should be examined.

The membership of the group was announced in January 2012 and at our first meeting we decided to invite three people to be our advisers. They came to all the subsequent meetings, wrote some of the papers, saw all the other papers and played a full part in all the discussions. We felt that the best way to reflect the part that they had played was to ask them to sign the report, and they graciously agreed to do so.

We issued the customary invitation for written evidence and set up a number of days to take oral evidence. The very considerable response is recorded in Appendix 2 and, of course, influenced the report. We also decided to undertake a listening exercise of our own. That is described in some detail early in the report. For some of us, perhaps all of us, and not least for me, this was a memorable learning experience whose impact on each of us will still be there when no one is any longer talking about the report. With the help of some anonymous and skilful facilitators we met and listened in a safe setting to a variety of people with contrasting perspectives on the Church's approach to gay and lesbian people. There is more about this in the report, but let me say now that life for many of the people we met had not been easy, and we were moved by the courage that they showed in speaking openly about deeply personal matters to listeners whom they had never met before.

When we sought evidence, same-sex marriage may have been a gleam in Mr Cameron's eye but most of the country had not noticed, and the evidence that we received made little or no reference to the subject. The experience reinforced our sense of how rapidly the society around us continues to change on same-sex issues. We adjusted what we had to say to avoid the impression that we had not even noticed the legislation, but essentially we stuck to the task that we were given originally. We knew that the House of Bishops would need to settle what guidance should be given on same-sex marriage, on a different timescale to that which we were contemplating, as of course they had done on civil partnerships.

The report contains a mix of findings and recommendations – 18 in all. We expected that most of them would not be tackled immediately but would await further discussions across the Church, and it is turning out as we expected. The broad thrust of the three recommendations on facilitated conversations has been accepted; and that, given the terms of reference that I have already mentioned, is not surprising. Those three recommendations have met with some criticism from those who wish there to be no change and do not want to spend more time and energy on the subject.

Let me quickly make the case for what we recommended. We said and meant that there should be no predetermined outcome, and I am sure there will not be. Our work showed that, with some honourable exceptions in certain dioceses, the Church in England generally has not grasped the nettle of talking, listening and pondering. However much many of us

would prefer to avoid the subject, there are wider implications for mission if we simply appear to be sticking our heads in the sand. After two years of work, the members of the group would say that there is no one who has nothing to learn by talking and listening and that most of us have rather a lot to learn. On this subject the time for ostriches is past.

We made another group of recommendations on welcoming gay and lesbian people into the Church and on standing against homophobia, and I am delighted that the College of Bishops did not set those aside for another day but issued a statement which, respectfully, I applaud as setting just the right tone for the planned conversations.

Much of the attention since publication has been on recommendations 16 and 17. I do not today want to argue the merits of what we say there but simply to remind us all of the background. Paragraph 5.6 of *Issues in Human Sexuality*, published in 1991, refers to Christian couples of the same sex who are conscientiously convinced that it is right for them to be in a sexually active partnership intended to be lifelong. It went on to outline that it was important that such couples should find in their congregations others who would sensitively and naturally provide friendship and understanding for them.

In its 2005 pastoral statement linked to the introduction of civil partnerships, the House of Bishops said, 'Where clergy are approached by people asking for prayer in relation to entering into a civil partnership they should respond pastorally and sensitively in the light of the circumstances of each case.' That was not intended to cover public acts of worship, but we know that in some churches that is happening.

Our starting point on this was that we were not recommending any change in the Church's teaching that the right context for sexual activity is marriage between a man and a woman. Most of us went on to judge that the time had come to take further the pastoral responses adopted in 1991 and 2005. Our intention was to seek a careful balance. If the priest and the PCC are content for the formation of permanent same-sex relationships to be marked by a public act of worship in that church and the priest considers it appropriate in the case of a specific couple, we suggest that the priest should be authorized to conduct that act of worship.

We are clear that this should not be pressed on an unwilling priest and/or PCC. We are also clear that there should not be an authorized liturgy for the purpose chiefly on the ground that liturgy is a key way by which our Church articulates its teaching. Some have not wanted us to go as far as that and others have wanted us to go much further. Careful balance and compromise is usually like that. The recommendations await attention when the outcome of the facilitated conversations is known some way down the road.

I have highlighted recommendations 16 and 17 because of their significance, partly because the background has not always been understood and partly because they were probably the subjects on which we in the group had our toughest discussions.

Over several centuries the Church of England has shown an unrivalled capacity to hold together Christians in quite fundamental disagreement with each other. A minor feature of that history has been a long tradition of Church reports laced with generous helpings of fudge. I cannot tell Synod how keen I was to join that tradition! I believe it to be entirely honourable. I failed, as Bishop Keith's dissenting statement and the two appendices on Scripture show.

How much do I now regret that? Not as much as I expected and not as much as members might think. In the light of the evidence that we received and where the Church in this country and internationally is on the subject, a document signed by everyone might have been positively misleading. The division was painful for all of us in the group, but the report holds up a much more accurate mirror to the Church than a single agreed document could have done.

When we were doing the work I cannot recall ever having heard the phrase ‘good disagreement’, but I recognized it as soon as I heard it as what we had experienced. We knew that many people were praying for us because they encouraged us by telling us so, and I am sure that those prayers were answered chiefly as the Holy Spirit enabled us to disagree while continuing to love and respect each other.

As I come to the end of my work on this fraught but important subject I shall remain in the ranks of those who continue to pray that God will show his Church the right way forward and bless it with good disagreement. (*Applause*)

The Bishop of Sheffield (Rt Revd Steven Croft): On Monday I answered some questions on behalf of the House of Bishops about the Pilling report, and I do not want to detain the Synod for very long now by saying much more. However, as this group of sessions draws to a close, inevitably there is an interest not only in what the report said and why but also in what will happen next. I therefore want to say a little about the meeting of the College of Bishops on 27 January and the statement that we issued at the end of it.

The first thing – and this is not intended to provoke a further round of applause but simply to read something important into the Synod record – is to note that the College of Bishops began its statement a fortnight ago by expressing its appreciation to Sir Joseph Pilling and all members of the working party for the work they have done on behalf of the Church.

Whatever view any of us take of the various recommendations made by the group, it is plain that the bishops, advisers, members of staff, and above all Sir Joseph himself, worked immensely hard and sacrificially to provide us with a wide-ranging and challenging report. This commission was undertaken at the request of the House of Bishops not because any of those involved longed to spend their time in this way. Therefore, the entire College of Bishops was immensely grateful for the care and thoughtfulness that all concerned manifested in this most difficult task.

Secondly, at that stage the College of Bishops did not want to start picking and choosing between individual recommendations in the report. Nevertheless, we thought it right to set the tone for the next phase of reflection on the report by making it clear that we shared the group’s view on two general issues.

The first was to make clear that the welcome we offer to people within the Church of England is the same, whatever their sexual orientation may be. The second was to acknowledge the need for repentance for the homophobic attitudes that sometimes we have failed to rebuke. The College realises that the concept of homophobia is contested, and the Pilling report was right to suggest that no one should be accused of it simply for articulating traditional Christian teaching. However, as a Church we do ourselves and others no good if

we are heard as being homophobic; and, as the College of Bishops' statement said, we need to stand firmly against homophobia wherever and whenever it is found.

The main decision that we took on 27 January was to agree with the group's recommendation for a process of facilitated conversations 'ecumenically, across the Anglican Communion and at national and diocesan level'.

On the 27th we did not feel able to launch the process of conversations straightaway. There were two essential reasons for that. First, we did not think that it would be particularly sensible to embark on this process in dioceses until the Article 8 reference on the women bishops legislation had been dealt with; second, we wanted to give the small group commissioned by the Archbishops time to design a process that would work, and we also wanted the opportunity to prepare some further material to help focus those conversations. Obviously the report of the Pilling group is an important resource for the process, but as bishops we want the opportunity to establish some ground rules for the conversations and to map out the questions that we think they should address.

In line with the Pilling report – and I commend to Synod the chapter on facilitated conversations – the conversations will be held nationally, with the possibility of being taken forward differently in each diocese. Primarily they will be about the way in which the Church should respond to the range of issues about human sexuality. They will include both profound reflection on Scripture and attention to the experience of LGBT people within Church and society.

We hope that the House will have more to say about the process and focus of the facilitated conversations after its meeting in May, but my expectation is that it will engage with a number of different sorts of question, including doctrine, particularly in relation to the Christian doctrine of marriage and the role, authority and interpretation of Scripture; ethics and patterns of Christian behaviour both for individuals and communities; mission and the ways in which we seek to communicate the love of God and the good news of Jesus Christ in a society that is changing so rapidly in its views on human sexuality; and ecclesiology and the way in which we seek to hold together divergent views on these issues in one Church.

It is already apparent from reactions since the report was published that the prospect of these talks arouses a wide variety of hopes, fears and expectations. For some there is a reluctance to talk because they believe that Scripture is clear – so what is there to talk about? For others the need for a change in practice or teaching is equally clear, so there is a wish for decisions rather than further talking; and I suspect that for a good number of people there is something of a sinking feeling at the thought of having to talk further about a subject that they see as having received disproportionate attention in recent years, not least in the context of the statistics quoted in paragraphs 152 and 153 of the Pilling report.

In agreeing to the proposal for facilitated conversations, the College of Bishops does not suggest that this subject, of all others, should be our main focus of attention over the coming period – far from it. However, it touches on deep questions about the interpretation and application of Scripture and about God's purposes for all his creation. Therefore, in a society in which the context and assumptions have changed so rapidly, we need to continue to take counsel together, seeking agreement where we can and, as our statement said, good disagreement where we cannot.

We look forward to commending the process for the facilitated conversations to the Synod and to the whole Church in due course.

The Chair: Now is the time for questions, rather than speeches, on the process. Members will be aware that this is a very sensitive issue and I know that they will take that into account in the phrasing of their questions.

Revd Sister Rosemary Howorth CHN (Religious Communities): I look for reassurance on this. Can we be sure that those who arrange the facilitated conversations, which certainly seem a very good idea and very necessary in some places, will ensure that every group includes Christians living in committed same-sex relationships who feel able to speak openly – and that is an important qualification – so that the groups can be informed by the voice of experience and those people most directly affected by these deliberations can be confident that they have been heard?

Revd Stephen Coles (London): Given the report's encouragement that we should use the words 'homophobia' and 'homophobic' less loosely and that it defines homophobia as hostility to homosexual people, can we be sure that in the process we are given much clearer guidelines about what constitutes homophobia? That will be very important for the groups.

Secondly, given the way that the insights of the natural and social sciences have been treated by the report – that is, as far as I can see, that they are not to be taken as seriously as I would want, because they are not unanimous – could they be considered more deeply while the material is being prepared?

Mr John Ward (London): If we think that the next two years should be a really safe space and believe that everyone needs to be open to changing their views – and that of course includes gay people, like me, who might have to accept that the Church would become more conservative – how can we really hear from gay clergy in particular and those gay people employed by the Church who frankly may be afraid for their jobs if the outcome of the next two years is a Church that is as conservative as it now is, or potentially more so?

The Bishop of Sheffield: Sir Joseph has indicated that I should go first – thank you very much!

Sister Rosemary asked whether the facilitated conversations will ensure that in each instance we hear from people in committed same-sex relationships. I believe that in designing this process every effort will be made to ensure that such listening can take place. When a process is designed nationally and interpreted and put into practice locally, it is of course not possible to guarantee everything, but I am sure that that would be the ideal. The work that the College agreed to ask the Archbishops to commission has not begun, so all the questions and comments made this afternoon will be able to feed into that design process.

Thank you to Stephen Coles for his question about clearer guidelines on what constitutes homophobia. That is one of the areas that the Pilling report has explored in some depth and detail, and Sir Joseph may want to comment on it, but clearly one of the elements needed for any facilitated conversations will be some kind of guidance on how people should

conduct themselves in the groups, both in terms of any written framing and the facilitation that is envisaged.

Can the insights of natural and human sciences be given greater weight? Again, Sir Joseph may want to comment on that, but clearly the conversations will need to bring to bear the best possible insights of natural and human sciences. I cannot think of any reason not to do that.

John Ward asked how we can really hear from gay clergy and people employed by the Church. I think that we have to accept that is challenging at two different levels. First, at the level of official policy in terms of encouragement; and, second, at the level of building trust and safe space within those conversations. We should not ignore the difficulty of that but in that process aspire to the very best listening that we can.

Sir Joseph Pilling: I can tell the Synod that I did not get where I am today by going first!

Generally, I think those questions were asked in a spirit of looking forward rather than backwards and I want to add two footnotes. So far as natural and social science is concerned, I would say slightly defensively that we wanted to emphasize that they had nothing to say to the Church that could as it were be regarded as the end of the matter, but we urged that the Church should continue to pay attention to further work done in those areas, and I would certainly stand by that.

I wish I had wise words to utter about how precisely to talk about this subject without making some of one's listeners think that one is homophobic. Recommendation 6 of the report is that no one should be accused of homophobia solely for articulating traditional Christian teaching on same-sex relationships. I am very enthusiastic about that recommendation and the idea that those who articulate traditional Christian teaching should do so sensitively in relation to people who are attracted to members of their own gender.

By way of illustration of the fact, I can only say that as a group we did not feel utterly confident about our own capacity in this area. We therefore arranged for someone to proofread the report in draft – not for the usual reason of checking for typing mistakes and so on but to see whether unwittingly we had included some words that might have upset some of our potential readers. It is immensely difficult to get it right, but all I would say is that people are usually forgiving if they think that you are trying.

Revd Clare Herbert (London): I would like to ask a question about the nature of welcome and firm support for LGBT people. In considering process, would the House of Bishops please pay special attention to the request made in this report that consideration be given to public services of prayer and dedication following the celebration of civil partnerships, given the urgent missiological need to give both gay Christians in our churches and the wider LGBT community of our country a positive sign of their welcome, belonging and honour among us at a time when they may feel that the Church is against them?

There may be, and obviously are, serious reasons yet to be discussed why these should not be services of marriage, and equally serious reasons for waiting now for an emphasis on the listening process, but surely there can be no good reason to wait for prayer, no good reason for a lack of prayer and dedication to God at a point in people's faith journeys of such enormous and life-changing importance to them – (*The Chair rang the bell.*)

The Chair: I do not think we have heard a question.

Revd Clare Herbert (London): Could serious consideration be given in the process to that subject?

Revd Canon Dr Hazel Whitehead (Guildford): In Appendix 2 a list is given of all the people who were invited to give oral evidence to the group and, apart from the groups, 13 individual men are listed and one woman. I suspect that is because, as it goes on in the next paragraph to say, ‘several other people were involved but did not want to be named’.

My question or comment is this. Am I right in thinking that not just 13 men and one woman were invited? Secondly, am I right in thinking that there were lots of women who did not want to be named? Will the group take into account some interpretation of that fact as they go forward in the facilitated listening groups?

Revd Professor Richard Burridge (University of London): – Dean of King’s College London, where I am also Professor of Biblical Interpretation. My question about the ongoing process, Synod will not be surprised to know, arises out of the additional sentence in Recommendation 2 in its repeat on page 149, as opposed to its not being there in the first mention of Recommendation 2 earlier in the report, namely that the ongoing process ‘should continue to involve profound reflection on the interpretation and application of Scripture’.

While congratulating Sir Joseph on the listening exercise that has gone on, I am hoping that in the process going forward we will listen to a group that was not listened to in the report, namely biblical scholars. There is no biblical scholar listed in Appendix 2. Those who were invited to make submissions were leading theologians and ethicists and it was written by theologians and ethicists, whom I admire enormously. The failure to grapple with any biblical scholarship has meant that this report is mixed. Therefore, the coverage in the main report is at best mixed and, while I am grateful to the Bishop of Birkenhead for apologizing and withdrawing his comments about my work in Appendix 3, there are still lots of factual inaccuracies through that; and Appendix 4 was written by somebody who has nothing to do with the group and who would be the first person to say that he is not a biblical scholar – although that is the best bit in it.

My question is, in going forward can we please take up the offer of biblical scholars to be involved, particularly somebody like Loveday Alexander, Canon Theologian to the Bishops of Chester and Birkenhead, who gave a stunning lecture on this last week, and make sure that we have proper biblical resources, please?

Sir Joseph Pilling: I think that most of the questions are in fact about the future process. Richard Burridge’s comments are somewhat difficult to disagree with because the lists are there. The most specific question I have to try to address is the imbalance of men and women in the individuals named in Appendix 2.

It is the case that some people did not wish to be named. Certainly in the listening process that we undertook both men and women were involved, and we have not named any of those at all. In the groups that came to see us which are mentioned, where we have not named the individual members of the groups, some were women and some were men. There

were particular reasons why each of the individuals was asked by us or volunteered, and I am afraid that perhaps we were not paying the attention that we might have done to the gender balance in that particular group; but each of them was asked for individual reasons rather than to be a representative group collectively.

On Clare Herbert's point, it is not for us to decide what happens to Recommendation 16 during the facilitated conversations but I think it is fairly clear that the view of the bishops is that we hold for the status quo, which does allow for prayer but not for authorized public acts of worship, which is what we were recommending. I think that will therefore be the position until further decisions are taken.

The Bishop of Sheffield: Thank you to Clare Herbert for expressing that question so memorably and helpfully. It is my understanding that the facilitated conversations will explore that set of recommendations as flowing from what the Pilling report has recommended.

I think that Hazel's question was a retrospective one.

To Richard and listening to biblical scholars – yes I would very much hope that, as I said on Monday, the process going forward would pay attention very carefully to Scripture, to biblical scholarship and to hermeneutics. One comment worth making, and it is something of a thread that runs through the Pilling report as I have read it, is that each area of study opened up by the report – whether it is science, biblical studies or social sciences and changing attitudes – is now itself a vast area of study. The sentence recurs in the report that we cannot do justice to this particular aspect of study within the scope of this report.

Part of my appeal to the community of biblical scholarship and hermeneutics serving the Church in this way is that we clearly need our serious works of scholarship for this purpose, but we also need biblical studies at a very accessible level for Church communities to engage with as this moves forward. It may be that we need help in finding such accessible scholarship. The example Richard referred to from Loveday Alexander, which I had the chance to read yesterday, is a very good example of how that could be helpful in the process.

Ms Susan Cooper (London): I wonder if the people designing the facilitated discussions were familiar with the short report from Ekklesia, headed 'Church views on sexuality: recovering the middle ground'. Research was carried out on church congregations and it was found that there were seven main views describing people's opinions on sexuality. It struck me as something that might be good, at least as an icebreaker, with people discussing where they are in the range of seven views rather than dividing people into sheep and goats, which can be rather polarizing.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells): Given the fact that there are a large number of stakeholders involved in the facilitated conversations that are likely to take place over the next up to two years and given the fact that that is quite a long time, can we make sure all of those players are signed up to that process, both on one side and the other, or all 14 sides or whatever it is?

Can we make sure that somehow the Church of England in particular ensures that the communications that take place during that period are done in a sensitive way, given the sensitive nature of the way in which those conversations are likely to go?

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): My question requires a little context and a large amount of honesty. I am gay. I do not have a vocation to celibacy. At the same time, I have always taken my baptism and ordination vows with serious intent and with a sincere desire to model my life on the example of Christ. *Simul justus et peccator*. Those who have selected me, ordained me and licensed me know all this, and my parish know it too.

My question is this. At the end of this process of facilitated conversations will the College of Bishops tell me whether there is a place for me, for people like me, as priests, deacons and bishops in the Church, rather than persisting in the existing policy that will encourage massive dishonesty, so corrosive to the gospel? For my spiritual health, for my flourishing and the flourishing of others as ministers of the gospel, and for the health of the wider Church I think that we all need to have an answer to that question.

The Bishop of Sheffield: I think that those are all prospective questions. To Susan Cooper and the short report from Ekklesia, Malcolm Brown and David Porter have signalled that they were both aware of that report and the range of seven views, although I was not and I am grateful to be alerted to it.

To Tim Hind, part of the process of drawing people together in conversation is exactly drawing together the different stakeholders to give a diverse range of views in which we may engage together, and the success of the conversations will depend to a large degree on the extent to which we can do that – again, both nationally and locally.

Different dioceses have already been reflecting on how those conversations might be structured. David Porter at the College of Bishops encouraged all bishops to put him in touch with work that was currently being done and good models, so that we might begin to develop and he might begin to lead the development with others of that process. I am sure from the evidence I have seen to date that great care will be taken about the communication of everything in relation to these issues.

Thank you, Simon, for that very moving question and for articulating that aspiration. I would share the aspiration that through this process we will become more honest with one another and that it may be a richer conversation, which will lead to the answers you are seeking.

If I may, I would also say on behalf of my colleagues that there is a shared view that the present situation is extraordinarily difficult and we feel the weight of those questions very sharply. We are not able to answer them well but we aspire to do better.

Mrs Penelope Allen (Lichfield): On reading the report, I found a word that was missing and I hope that it can be included in our considerations and in the further materials that are made available. That word was ‘sensuality’. In teaching young people about sex for the last 20 years, it is a word that I have used a lot. God gave us our senses; we are supposed to engage with them. I therefore hope that there will be some work about ‘sensuality’ in our further materials. It is the essence of what it means to be human.

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): I adhere to what is shorthanded as the traditional view of what Scripture says on these matters. I have been in that position for some time and previously engaged in many kinds of conversation, facilitated and otherwise, around this material.

My question is about what it is envisaged will happen in two aspects. It is clearly desirable that these conversations should be wholly inclusive. Will they therefore include together those who have experienced same-sex attraction and feel that they have been liberated from it and those who see their identity in terms of same-sex attraction and experience? My experience in previous facilitated conversations has been the practical impossibility of bringing those two groups together.

Secondly and more importantly, how many of these instances of facilitated conversations will there be around the country? If they are to be the safe place where people can speak honestly and therefore confidential, how is the Church as a whole to be informed about the product of those conversations as a whole, in a way in which it can test the validity of any conclusions drawn from them?

Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark): – reverting to type. Thank you, Synod!

The Archbishop spoke this morning about the need to move towards a new way of being Church and it seems to me that these conversations should be part of a new way of being Church, although I am not really picking that up at this stage. That is a point I want to make. The question I want to ask is a difficult one and I am pushing slightly on what Simon said.

We are all going to have to be honest in these conversations, and that includes the members of the College of Bishops. I want to know how the College of Bishops will create a safe space for its own members to be able to engage publicly in these sorts of conversations.

My second question is about the support given to those who are engaging in these conversations. I have been involved in facilitated conversations on these subjects for 20 years and they are often very painful, for lots of obvious reasons. I think I can speak for most people who are involved in this question – gay people and lesbians within the Church – that we stand ready to contribute in any way we think is helpful, to help this process go forward. We have signed up to it. However, I think that we would like some acknowledgement or sense that there would be support following any difficulties or painful experience as a result of them.

Sir Joseph Pilling: I think that all those questions were looking forward, but I would make just two points drawing on our experience. We cannot recall that the word ‘sensuality’ is used. I think the idea is covered fairly clearly in the prologue to the report, where the word ‘desire’ appears in the title.

As to the bringing together of people who have experienced same-sex attraction but who are now taking very different views of it – Philip Giddings’ point, looking forward – so far as we were concerned, we went out in pairs and I was not in a pair which brought together people from those contrasting backgrounds, but others were. It is possibly easier to do in that sort of structure than in Diocesan Church House, with somebody making a record of what is being said and so on. That is all I can say. We certainly did experience it, though I personally did not.

The Bishop of Sheffield: Again, thank you. Those different aspirations are well articulated, and I think not unreasonable to expect of the process. However, in setting up these aspirations it is important to get these conversations as good as they can be, but realistically they will be a step forward from where they are now; they will not be the whole journey. Hopefully they will be a step forward in the right direction.

There is some material in the report, in the very good introduction from Jessica Martin, which begins to explore desire theologically. It may perhaps be too much to expect for a group of churchpeople to engage with some of those concepts, depending on for how long and how many times they are to meet.

Will the conversations be wholly inclusive? – Philip Giddings. I would hope so, in the way that you have described. How many are there to be? That remains to be seen. In the work that a group has been doing in Sheffield diocese – this is only indicative and we have yet not finally decided to go with it, depending on what happens nationally – we are looking for conversations in each deanery, with each parish sending representatives, with conversation around a meal, for different perspectives to be included, and for parishes to prepare for that in their church councils on the way in. There would be a mechanism from those conversations to feed back into the diocese and, hopefully, nationally.

To Giles's comments and can the College of Bishops continue to work at creating safe space, yes I would hope that we would be very committed to doing that. Would there be support readily available to those who would contribute? Yes I would hope that we would also take due care in that as the process moved forward – and may I say how useful are all of these comments to those who will have the responsibility of designing this process?

The Chair: With those replies, that draws this item of business to a close. I would like to thank Sir Joseph Pilling and the Bishop of Sheffield for their answers but I would also like to thank the nine people who put their questions.

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark)* took the Chair at 4.50 p.m.

Farewells

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): What is a platten? The verb 'to platten' comes from glassmaking. It is about making plate glass under extreme heat. It is a high-energy, high-intensity operation, but its result is a highly desirable clarity and transparency.

Glasses of course become essential to most of us at a certain stage of our life, but they have an unerring habit of not being where we want them to be. Bishop Stephen is famous in the House of Lords for not being able to find his spectacles. He has been seen, anxiously looking for them, only to discover that they are already on his head! In the diocese of Wakefield, a number of parish vestries treasure amongst their relics a set of Bishop Stephen's spectacles.

There is another meaning of the word 'platten'. It is apparently an old Norfolk word for 'whirlwind'. The Bishop of Norwich mentioned this when welcoming Stephen as Dean of

Norwich, but one priest got it wrong and told Dean Stephen that he had heard he had been called a ‘whirlpool’!

Born in London, Bishop Stephen was educated at the Stationers’ Company’s School in Hornsey, the University of London, then at Cuddesdon and Trinity College Oxford. He worked for Shell before ordination and served as a priest in Oxford, Lincoln and Portsmouth, becoming the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs in 1990. In 1995 he became Dean of Norwich and in July 2003 he was enthroned as the Bishop of Wakefield.

In Wakefield, Bishop Stephen has established a number of traditions. Amongst them are the Harold Wilson Lectures, a series run jointly by the University of Huddersfield and the diocese, looking at social and ethical issues. There are also the monthly Bishop’s Breakfasts in Wakefield, Barnsley, Huddersfield and Halifax, engaging a wide audience with vital questions on welfare and the economy. Regular diocesan celebrations in York, Nostell Priory and Cannon Hall have all been a real encouragement to everyone, including open-air evangelistic events, one of which I preached at and where there must have been well over 5,000 people.

A prolific reader, writer and editor, he has urged the clergy to take their learning seriously, setting up regular Bishop’s Study Days. Across the diocese he has promoted Lenten study courses, such as last year’s course ‘Growing in Christ: bearing fruit by our life together’.

In the House of Lords, Bishop Stephen has been lead bishop for defence and the military and takes a keen interest in international affairs and development. He has focused much of his attention on the Great Lakes region of Africa, speaking about the concerns the Church there has with the prevalence of sexual violence and continued tribal struggles.

He often speaks about Georgia, a country where he has made many friends. At a dinner with religious leaders in Tbilisi, where there was some beautiful singing of Georgian folk songs, Bishop Stephen was invited to sing. His rendition of all three verses of Flanders and Swann’s ‘Hippopotamus’ – ‘Mud, mud, glorious mud’ – has become part of Georgian folklore. News must have reached Lambeth Palace because Archbishop Justin has asked Bishop Stephen to continue as lead bishop for Georgia.

Nearer home, Bishop Stephen is one of very few bishops ever to have joined a picket line. He was protesting about the low price of milk paid to dairy farmers, seeking a fair deal for farmers against cost-cutting corporate greed. Bishop Stephen dedicated himself to issues, representing his local community in Parliament with dynamism and energy. In Parliament, one of his final debates will be on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

In the bishop’s office, heroic diary management has enabled him to balance diocese, Parliament, chairing the Liturgical Commission, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, with so many other events. One recent event was a particular delight: the blessing of the new Wakefield station.

Bishop Stephen has been a governor of the Anglican Centre in Rome for almost 25 years, as chair since 2001 – a remarkable contribution. He does however have extremely bad luck in his travel arrangements when going to Rome – but you will have to ask him about that!

Bishop Stephen's wife Rosslie is a teacher. I have stayed in their house four times and she has always offered a wonderful welcome and hospitality. She is massively appreciated within the diocese, as before in the deanery at Norwich. There she even managed to serve tables when Dean Stephen occasionally forgot to tell her about the guests he had invited. At Portsmouth Cathedral he invited the choir back to supper one Sunday evening but only remembered to tell Rosslie just before Evensong. One hour later, a meal for 20 had been prepared. Was a lad with five loaves and two fishes seen in the cathedral precinct that evening? I do not know.

Both their sons, Aidan and Gregory, are now ordained priests. Bishop Stephen was driving home from a service with one of his sons, both of them wearing cassocks. They spotted a notice saying, 'Coal for Sale'. They stopped – supplies at Bishop's Lodge were running low – they knocked at the door and a young man answered. 'We would like to buy some coal, please' said the bishop. 'Fred is not here. He'll be in later in the afternoon. Can you come back later? I'll tell him that you called.' Later, father and son returned. Fred answered the door. 'We have come back to buy a sack of coal, please.' Fred looked surprised. 'Are you the two gentlemen who called earlier wearing skirts?' 'They were cassocks' replied Bishop Stephen. 'Black and purple?' enquired Fred. 'Yes' replied Bishop Stephen. Picking up the sack of coal, Fred shook his head and muttered, 'Long frocks. They were long frocks, they were. Never mind. I can't be doing with that.' What I do not know is whether Fred gave them a discount! I found the place but the seller could not divulge that!

Bishop Stephen is rightly proud of his sons, as I have no doubt his own father George, a former captain in the Royal Marines, would be of Bishop Stephen today. May God bless you, Stephen and Rosslie, as you move to your new ministry in the City of London. I am sure that the Lord has plenty in store for you. We thank you and we pray for you in all that the future holds. 'For all that has been – thanks; for all that shall be – Yes!' Thank you and may God richly bless you both. (*Applause*)

The Archbishop of Canterbury prorogued the group of sessions at 5.05 p.m.

INDEX

- 16 Days of Activism 23, 28
- ACNA *see* Anglican Church in North America
- Act of Synod Rescinding the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 2, 78, 99–104
- Agenda, Business Committee report on 2–9
- alcohol, and investment 13–14, 16, 20, 21
- Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) 46–7
- Anglican Communion:
Dromantine statement on homosexuality 47–8
and women in the episcopate 81–2, 89
- Anglican Communion Environmental Network 186
- Anglican Consultative Council:
and climate change 195
and Marks of Mission 65–6
New Zealand 2012 188
Resolution on gender-based violence 26, 27–8, 40, 61
- Anglo-Catholicism, and women bishops 85, 86–7, 102
- Annual Parochial Church Meeting 149, 150–53, 174
- apostolic succession 68
- Appointment of Bishops Act 1553 115
- Archbishops' Council:
accountability to Synod 8
and Church Commissioners 45–6
questions to 73–6
Research and Statistics team 73–4
- Arctic, and oil drilling 73
- Article 7 business 99–104
- Article 8 reference 2, 78, 80, 87, 104–113, 220
- Association of Christian Counsellors 51
- baptism, certificate fee 124–5, 126
- Baptismal Fees Abolition Act 1872 126
- Bath and Wells, *see* house 5, 8, 40–46
- benefices, multi-parish:
and church growth 5–6, 9, 53
and number of meetings 141–2, 144, 147, 148–50
and women bishops legislation 88, 90
- betting, regulation 65
- Bishoprics and Cathedrals Committee 40, 41, 42
- bishops:
conservative evangelical 5
delays in appointments 67
in House of Lords 19, 64, 65
housing 5, 8, 40–46
and public office 93
- Board of Education, questions to 55–9
- British National Party, and school staff 58–9
- bullying:
homophobic 55–6
racist 56, 58–9
- burials, fees 122, 123
- Business Committee:
and Girl Guides' Promise 202
report on the Agenda 2–9
and women bishops legislation 104–113
- canon law:
Canon B 8 3, 214–16
Canon C 4 A 61
Canon C 8.2 161, 165–6, 170
Canon F 16.1 52
- Canterbury Cathedral, Six Preachers 46–7
- carbon capture 16, 19, 198
- Carbon Disclosure Project 13, 18
- carbon emissions 15, 185, 186, 189–90, 197
- cathedrals, and mission 46
- CBF Church of England Funds 10, 23
- Chancel Repair Liability 54–5
- Channel Islands, and Winchester diocese 71, 75
- Charity Commission, and Pensions Board 119–20

- Chichester diocese, and safeguarding 161–2, 163–5
- children, ministry among 58–9
- Christian Initiation: Additional Texts in Accessible Language* 69
- Christian Vision for Men 28
- Christians Against Poverty (CAP), Money course 65
- church buildings, redundant 70
- Church Commissioners:
- accountability 5, 46
 - and clergy pensions 119–20
 - and diocesan registrars 132–4
 - and ethical investment 10, 15, 17–18, 23, 70
 - and living wage 19, 20–21
 - Pastoral Committee 70
 - Pastoral Division 54
 - questions to 70–71
 - and see houses 40–46
 - transparency 5, 41, 43, 46
- Church and Community Fund 74
- Church and Earth 2009-2016* 182, 184, 201
- Church of England, nature and structure 3, 7
- Church of England Funded Pension Scheme, valuation 72
- Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1
- Church of England (Naming of Dioceses) Measure (Draft) 114–18
- Church of England (Pensions) (Amendment) Measure (Draft) 118–20
- Church of England Youth Council 56
- church growth:
- and clergy 52–3, 158
 - and lay involvement 60–61
 - and multi-parish benefices 5–6, 9, 53
- Church Growth Research Project 5, 53–4
- Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2014 140–56, 174–81
- adjournment of debate 180–81
- church schools:
- and finance education 65
 - and gender-based violence 27, 28, 33, 34, 38, 39
 - and homophobic bullying 55–6
 - and political allegiance of staff 58–9
- Church Urban Fund 160
- churchwardens, election 179
- Churchwardens Measure 2001 162
- churchyards, costs 125
- civil partnerships 50, 217, 218, 222
- clergy:
- and church growth 52–3, 158
 - in civil partnerships 50
 - gay 221–2, 225
 - minority ethnic 75–6
 - non-stipendiary, and diocesan fees 62, 123, 125–6
 - pensions 72, 118–20
 - retirement housing 72
 - robing 3, 164, 214–16
- Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Measure 2013 1
- Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules 2013 1
- Clergy Discipline Appeal (Amendment) Rules 2013 1
- Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 51, 138–9
- and safeguarding 161–2, 163
- climate change 182–201
- and fossil fuels 15, 183–4, 186, 187–92, 197, 198, 201
 - and investment 15–16, 19
 - and population levels 187–8, 190–92
- Common Awards 51, 59–60
- conservative evangelicalism, and women bishops 85, 88, 90, 102
- Consumer Prices Index, and Fees Order 127–9, 137
- Council of British Funeral Services 125
- credit unions 65
- Crown Nominations Commission:
- questions to 67
 - and women bishops legislation 112
- DBS *see* Disclosure and Barring Service
- delegation, and women bishops legislation 80–81, 83
- dialogue, interfaith 62–4
- diocesan boards of finance, and fees income 62

- diocesan environmental officers 184, 186–7, 198
- diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committees 70
- diocesan registrars, fees 131–9
- diocesan safeguarding advisers 162–4
- Diocesan Synod Motions:
 - environmental issues (Southwark) 3, 19, 182–201
 - Magna Carta (Guildford) 3
 - naming of dioceses (Bradford) 114–15
 - nature and structure of CofE (Wakefield) 3, 7, 9
 - rescinding Act of Synod (Southwark; 2003) 101, 103
- diocesan synods, and women bishops legislation 2, 78, 80, 87, 104–113
- dioceses:
 - joint working 67–8
 - naming 114–18
 - statement of needs 82, 83–4, 102, 109
- Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme 114
- Dioceses Commission 7–8
 - and naming of dioceses 114–15
 - question to 67–8
- Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 115
- Disclosure and Barring Service 162, 164, 169, 171
- Domestic Abuse Charter 37
- domestic violence *see* violence, gender-based
- Draft Church of England (Naming of Dioceses) Measure 114–18
- Draft Church of England (Pensions) (Amendment) Measure 118–20
- Draft Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2014 121–30

- Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament 1
- Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986 130, 131
- Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2013 2

- Ecclesiastical Law Association 68
- environment *see* climate change
- Episcopal Endowments and Stipends Measure 1943 46
- Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 97
 - rescinding 2, 78, 86–7, 99–104
- episcopate, and apostolic succession 68
- Equal Marriage Act *see* Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act
- Equality Act 2010 92–3, 94, 95–7
- ethical investment 10–23
 - and disinvestment 13, 16, 17, 19, 20–21, 182–4, 186, 198–9, 201
 - and Pensions Board 16–17, 23
 - presentation 10–16
- Ethical Investment Advisory Group:
 - and alcohol 13–14, 16, 20, 21
 - and climate change 15–16, 182–90, 193–7, 201
 - issues 13
 - membership 10–11
 - policies 11–12
 - and pooled funds 14–15, 17, 18
 - question to 73
 - review 182, 186, 201
- ethnicity, statistics on 75–6
- European Equal Treatment Directive 2006 96–7
- European Equality Framework Directive 2000 96–7

- Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013 2
- Faith and Order Commission, question to 68
- Farewells 227–9
- fees:
 - waiver 126, 128, 129
 - see also* Draft Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2014
- Fees Advisory Commission:
 - and payment of registrars 131–4, 137–9
 - question to 68–9
- finance education 65
- First Man Standing 26, 28, 36
- First World War, Centenary Commemorations 66
- Five Marks of Mission 26, 27, 60–61,

- 65–6
- flooding 6–7, 8, 183, 185, 191, 197, 200
- food waste, reduction 66
- fossil fuels, and climate change 15, 183–4, 186, 187–92, 197, 198, 201
- fracking 196, 199
- Fresh Expressions 54
- From Anecdote to Evidence* 5–6, 9, 46, 57, 61
- funerals, fees 122, 123–6, 127, 129

- gambling, regulation 65
- Gambling (Licensing and Regulation) Bill 65
- gender, and church leadership 68
- gender-based violence 20, 23–40, 61
- General Synod:
 - accountability of Archbishops' Council to 8
 - dates of groups of sessions 9
 - guests 1
 - new members 1
 - New Ways of Doing Synod 3–4
 - prayer for 4, 6, 111
 - proposed working group on environment 182, 184, 185, 194–5, 197–201
 - speeches 3
- genital mutilation 23, 28, 34, 206
- Girl Guides Association, and changed Promise 3, 64, 201–214
- global warming 183
- Going for Growth* 58, 140
- greenhouse gas emissions 15, 185, 186, 189–90, 197

- headship, male 8, 80–81, 85, 88, 90
- homophobia 218, 219–20, 221, 222
 - and bullying 55–6
- homosexuality 47–8
 - and conversion therapies 51
 - see also* sexuality
- House of Bishops:
 - Declaration on Women in the Episcopate 2, 4, 77–90
 - and human sexuality 216–27
 - questions to 46–54
 - Report 4
 - safeguarding policy 161, 162–3, 172
- Standing Orders 79
- House of Lords, bishops in 19, 64, 65, 107, 228
- Hyde Park Estate 19

- interest, declaring 3, 164, 191
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 183
- internet, and protection of children 64–5
- investment *see* ethical investment
- Islam, dialogue with 62–4
- Issues in Human Sexuality* 216, 218

- jurisdiction, delegation and derivation 80–81, 83, 88
- justice:
 - and climate change 183–4
 - intergenerational 184, 196

- Lambeth Palace, ecumenical community 4
- Lambeth Resolutions:
 - I.16 48
 - III.2 89
- Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2013 2
- Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2014 68–9, 131–9
- Liturgical Commission, questions to 69
- living wage 18–19, 20–21

- marriage:
 - fees 122, 124, 128–9
 - same-sex 3, 50, 217
- Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 3, 50, 217
- members, new 1
- Messy Church 58–9
- ministry, lay 60–61
- Ministry Council, questions to 59–61
- mission:
 - and environment 183
 - Five Marks 26, 27, 65–6, 183
 - and lay involvement 60–61
 - and PCC meetings 143, 144, 145
 - and Synod Agenda 4–5
- Mission and Public Affairs Council, questions to 63–6
- Mission Theology Advisory Group 66

- National Church Institutions, and
 - living wage 20
- National Front, and school staff 58–9
- National Society, RE Strategy Group 57
- Near Neighbours programme 160
- Nestlé, investment in 22
- News Corporation, investment in 13, 21
- NIBS (national investing bodies) *see*
 - CBF Church of England Funds;
 - Church Commissioners; Pensions Board
- oath of canonical obedience 80–81, 88
- Occasional Offices, fees 221–30
- Octavia Hill estates, sale 41, 193
- Operation Noah 183, 200
- Organisation of Islamic Cooperation 62
- Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967 47
- Parliament:
 - Ecclesiastical Committee 1
 - and women bishops legislation 104, 105–6, 107, 110–119
- Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 177
- Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2014 (Draft) 121–30
- Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 96
- PCCs:
 - agendas 176–7
 - and Annual Parochial Church Meeting 149, 150–53, 174
 - and Chancel Repair Liability 54–5
 - election of churchwardens 179
 - and mission 143, 144, 145
 - notice of meetings 142, 154–5
 - number of meetings 141–53, 174–5, 178
 - Resolutions A and B 79, 86, 88–9, 90, 94–8
 - and safeguarding 162, 164, 167, 169–70, 172
 - standing committees 144, 148, 155, 178–81
- Pensions Board:
 - and ethical investment 16–17, 23, 194
 - questions to 72
- Pensions Measure 1997 120
- persecution of Christians 62–4
- Pilling Report 3, 49, 51, 159–60, 216–27
- population levels 187–8, 190–92
- pornography, effects 30, 64–5
- prayer:
 - for climate change conference 184
 - for the dead 69
 - for General Synod 4, 6, 111
 - and welfare reforms 74
- Presence and Engagement Centres 160
- Presidential Address 157–60
- Private Members' Motions:
 - Canon B 8 3
 - Girlguiding Promise 3, 64, 201–214
 - same-sex marriage 3
- Progress of Measures and Statutory Instruments 1–2
- Provincial Episcopal Visitors 100, 102
- Quinquennial Goals 4, 52, 140
- racism, in schools 56, 58–9
- Readers:
 - and safeguarding guidelines 162–3, 167
 - in training 61
- 'Real Easter Egg' campaign 66
- reconciliation, ongoing 82–3, 84, 89, 159
- registrars, fees 131–9
- Religious Education Council, report on Religious Education 56–7
- Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:
 - and parochial fees 122
 - question to 62
- Resource Link system 75
- Restored (charity) 23, 25, 28, 37
- retail price index (RPI), and Fees Order 122, 123, 124, 126, 127–9, 137
- robing, and Canon B 8 3, 164, 214–16
- Royal Dutch Shell, investment in 73
- RPI *see* retail price index

- safeguarding:
 - and conversion therapies 51
 - and false accusations 171, 173
 - and ministry during vacancy 167–8
 - proposals 2, 160–73
 - provision of training 163, 164, 165, 169, 171, 173
 - and risk assessments 162, 164, 165, 168, 170–71, 172–3
 - as waiver of disqualification 162, 167, 173
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 162
- Safer Internet Day 30, 39
- schools *see* church schools
- Scorsese, Martin, *The Last Temptation of Christ* 52
- Scripture:
 - and gender-based violence 26, 29
 - and sexuality 48–50, 160, 220, 223–4, 226
- Secretary General, question to 54–5
- see* houses 5, 8, 40–46
- sexuality 47–8
 - and facilitated conversations 217, 218, 220–27
 - and Pilling Report 49–50, 159–60, 216–27
 - and pornography 30, 64–5
 - see also* violence, gender-based
- Sharing God's Planet* 182, 184, 201
- Sharpe (Mark) case 72
- Shrinking the Footprint campaign 182, 184, 195, 198, 199, 201
- Simplification Group 70, 140, 143, 180
- solar energy 183, 190, 193, 199
- Some Issues in Human Sexuality* 217
- South Sudan 1
- Spending Plans Task Group 53
- Spiritual Capital* 46
- Standing Orders:
 - SO 9 77, 78
 - SO 14(g) 216
 - SO 17 3
 - SO 21(c) 77
 - SO 33 180–81, 215
 - SO 36(b) 200
 - SO 38(d) 104, 113
 - SO 40 100
 - SO 55(c) 98
 - SO 57 118–19
 - SO 58 96
 - SO 71(a) 99
 - SO 90(b)(iii) 2, 104–113
 - SO 97 10, 23, 216
 - SO 105–109 40
 - SO 115 8
- statistical returns 73–4
- Suffragan Bishops Act 1988 100
- Synodical Government Measure 1969 140, 174
- tax avoidance 18, 19–20
- teachers, and political affiliations 58–9
- TEIs *see* Theological Education Institutions
- The Last Temptation of Christ* (Scorsese) 52
- Theological Education Institutions (TEIs):
 - and Common Awards 51, 59–60
 - and gender-based violence 61
 - and safeguarding 167
- theology, and investment 12
- Turning up the Volume* 76
- Vedanta, investment in 13, 21, 186
- violence, gender-based:
 - against men 25, 31, 34, 37
 - and alcohol 20
 - debate 27–40
 - definition 25, 31
 - and ministry training 61
 - presentation 23–6
- Vote 1 51
- voting:
 - by Houses 210
 - by whole Synod 99, 104, 113, 153, 200, 213
- We Will Speak Out coalition 26, 28
- West Yorkshire and the Dales, diocese of 114–18
- White Ribbon campaign 23, 26, 28, 36, 37, 39
- Winchester diocese, and Channel Islands 71, 75
- women in the episcopate:
 - Article 8 reference 2, 78, 80, 87,

104–113, 220
Code of Practice 8
Disputes Resolution Regulations 2,
77–90
Draft Amending Canon 79, 98–9
five principles 86, 89, 101–3, 110,
158
House of Bishops’ draft Declaration
2, 4, 77–90, 102, 103, 110
Measure 78
and parliamentary timetable 104,
105–6, 107, 110–119
and reciprocity 81–2, 84, 89, 102
and reconciliation 82–3, 84, 89, 159
revision stage 2, 78, 91–8
Steering Committee 78–80, 82, 89,
90, 92, 95, 109
and trust 88–9, 101, 103, 106–7, 110,
113, 159
Wonga, investment in 15, 17–18, 198
World Mission and Anglican
Communion Panel 23, 66

Young Adults’ Round Table 54
Young Observers 56
young people, and the Church 54, 58,
111–12