

Report of Proceedings 2017

**General Synod
February group of sessions**

Volume 48, No. 1

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Full Synod: First Day

Monday 13 February 2017

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* took the Chair at 3.01 pm.

The Chair. You are very welcome this afternoon. It is wonderful to be here again. We remain standing for the Revd Michael Gisbourne to lead our opening worship. I would also like to refer you to the Community of St Anselm who are leading the continuous praying presence throughout the group of sessions. Also, just to say that the Archbishop Bishop of York is not here this afternoon because he is officiating at the funeral of a girl in York and so please remember him and, above all, their family in your prayers this afternoon.

Revd Michael Gisbourne (Chaplain to the General Synod) led the Synod in an act of worship.

WELCOME

The Chair. In a moment, I am going to read out the names of the new members of the Synod. Please, would they 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: the Revd James Hollingsworth replacing the Revd John Chitham from Chichester; the Revd Dr Mark Bratton replacing the Revd Ruth Walker from Coventry; the Revd Bill Braviner replacing the Revd Dr John Bellamy from Durham; the Revd Catherine Blair replacing the Revd Canon Karen Hutchinson from Guildford; the Revd Canon James Allison replacing the Revd Canon Jonathan Clark from Leeds; the Revd Duncan Dormer replacing the Revd Canon (now Rt Revd) Mark Tanner, Universities and TElS; Sarah Maxfield-Phillips replacing Alexandra Podd, Church of England Youth Council; Edward Cox replacing Elliot Swatridge, Church of England Youth Council. May we greet them all.

My instructions are to say to you, this is about Bishops attending during a vacancy in see and this is what I have to say to you. There are, strictly speaking, no Bishops attending during a vacancy in see. However, the Rt Revd Richard Blackburn, Bishop of Warrington, is acting Bishop of Sodor and Man. I just cannot quite work that one out, but there it is. He is, in fact, attending in his own right as an elected suffragan and, therefore, has the right to vote in that capacity. "He may not vote

twice". Richard, you are very welcome, with both hats on. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Newcastle (Rt Revd Christine Hardman)* took the Chair at 3.16 pm.

REPORT BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (GS 2043)

The Chair. Brothers and sisters, we now come to Item 2 on our Agenda. You are going to need the paper GS 2043 and I now call upon the Chair of the Business Committee to introduce this item. You may speak for up to ten minutes.

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): I beg to move:
'That the Synod do take note of this Report.'

And there are still two of me. Welcome to the Business Committee Report. It has been quite a long week in the Church of England and longer for some of you than for me. Now that we are here I trust that we are come to take counsel, whatever way we can, in order that we may continue to learn together ways we might live in mutual love and respect, focused on God's Kingdom. I am sure that many of you are thinking right now how facile that sounds—words are cheap—but in truth we all know that the actions and conversations that make these words a reality are costly and at the deepest level.

I have no doubt that this will be a costly group of sessions for everyone and I want to thank you in anticipation and assure you of my prayers and those of the Community of St Anselm who will be praying for us throughout this week. I am grateful to them and to Michael Gisbourne, especially for that masterly leading of our opening worship, for ensuring that we are enabled to worship and pray together.

Later this afternoon we will debate a motion on the anniversary of the Reformation. Our debate on the Referendum last July reminded us of the continuing importance of our relationships with partner Churches with whom we share parts of our history. As the most influential "change" movement in Christian history, the Reformation provides a background for our commitment to seek renewal and reform in the Church of England in the 21st century.

Whilst recent headlines have been almost exclusively about GS 2055, I urge you not to be deflected from spending time, energy and enthusiasm on our

consideration of GS 2056 *Setting God's People Free*—an important aspect of our work together. I am privileged in my diocese and the parishes of my team to work alongside talented and committed people whose vocation is to serve the Kingdom as members of the *laos* seven days a week. This debate on Thursday demands our serious attention as members of Synod, not only on the floor of the chamber but in taking responsibility for it across the Church.

Also, on Thursday we will have the opportunity to hear from the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Office. This will be Archbishop Josiah's first address to Synod since he took office in 2015. I often find myself saying to you that we have important legislation to consider and this group of sessions is no exception in this regard, with a significant list of legislation, some of it arising out of Simplification—so, of course, it may appear complicated. Please help us to ensure that this, our bread and butter business, gets the attention it deserves in this busy and possibly emotive Synod.

With regard to Wednesday's business on GS 2055, I want to tell you that the material for the group work will be available from your diocesan post trays from Tuesday morning. I have always been of the opinion that good group work forms the basis for good debate. There are some people who find groups easier and there are some conversations that are more easily had in groups. Many of you have made me aware of your misgivings about this particular group work, but I would encourage you, if you feel able, to take your concerns to the groups and share them as openly and honestly as you can in preparation for the take note debate later in the afternoon.

I want to thank those of you who have, in one way or another, been in touch over the past week or so, but it is important to remind you that once the Agenda is published the Business Committee no longer has the authority to change it; so, whilst I always enjoy hearing from you, the Chair of the Business Committee cannot often help.

As with each group of sessions it is my duty to remind you in particular of our security policy. I would ask you to familiarise yourself with this and make sure you refer any visitors or guests you are bringing to Synod to the policy as well. As always, please do not leave bags or possessions unattended. The Business Committee next meets in March when it will carry out its annual review of Synod policies and procedures, in particular the policy on fringe meetings which includes requirements on health and safety, dignity at work and safeguarding.

I want to finish with some words of thanks. It is enormously helpful for the Chair of the Business Committee to have the advice and support of a dedicated team: Jacqui Philips, the Clerk to the Synod; the Legal Office, Nick Hills and Andrew Brown in particular. I am really conscious of the privilege of having worked with these talented and committed staff and with my elected colleagues on the Business Committee past and present.

As this term of office comes to an end for me, I want simply to record my thanks to them and to all of you. I beg to move the Report of the Business Committee, GS 2043, standing in my name.

The Chair: Item 2 is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): What takes a lifetime to earn yet can be spent in a second? What is completely priceless and yet can never be bought? Trust. Right now, I suggest that this Synod has a trust problem. Let us be honest, the account has been pretty overdrawn for some time but now many of us, following the publication of the House of Bishops' Report on Same Sex Relationships, believe it has now gone overdrawn.

It is for this reason I would like to call for the group work to be cancelled on Wednesday afternoon in order to facilitate a longer take note debate and a potential following motion. I do not trust that the group work will serve us well. This is for three reasons. Firstly, because, like the Shared Conversations, there is no formal reporting mechanism which ensures that all the Bishops actually hear what is being said. Yes, they can go through the motions of listening but, as we now have proof, it appears to make very little difference to what they actually decide. It would be far better for us to speak on the record in this chamber in the presence, I hope, of all diocesan bishops with a formal document as proof for generations to come of what has actually been said.

Secondly, I do not trust the groups to be safe, particularly for those of us who have already made ourselves so vulnerable throughout this process. I have taken part in three subsets of conversations. I have been told it would have been better that I died in hospital or committed suicide, that I am going to hell and I am taking others with me. Safe? The Bishops have decided to chair these groups themselves meaning that we will have a postcode lottery—sorry, Bishops but, it is true—as to who we are asked to be being vulnerable with. As a matter of principle, I refuse to

partake in a process where abuse is tolerated and people like me are asked to make ourselves even more vulnerable with our abuser.

Finally, I believe the Bishops owe it to all those who have come here, keen to speak, to sit and listen to the anger, the frustration and the incredulity and, yes, the pain. Debates are not just about making arguments; they are also a mechanism for people to know they have been heard. If we have three hours of speeches that are similar, so be it. Perhaps then the Bishops will start to understand that there are many across the country who, so far, have felt unheard.

Only the Presidents, I know, can make this decision now. I hope they will reflect well and consider what is most likely to enable deposits in a bank account of trust that has gone through one of the biggest financial crises in recent history.

A Speaker: Point of order. Is it just me or is the echo so bad in this place that, for a deeply moving and important speech, I could only hear every other word and I was standing within a few feet of the speaker. Can we please have something done about this PA immediately? Thank you.

The Chair: On that point of order, I understand it is being sorted out as quickly as possible. I entirely agree with the comments.

Miss Emma Forward (Exeter): When it comes to the House of Bishops' Report on Sexuality, I think the palpable tension in the air is, in large part, due to the timing—something that the House of Bishops and the Business Committee might think more carefully about in the future. The Shared Conversations were a great opportunity to get to know each other, but there were some flaws in that people had particular expectations going into the process.

The secrecy around the arrangements of the group work in July did not help to clarify where these talks were going and what we might expect, if anything, at the following Synod. The conclusions which arose from each group and were shared with all of us in the final session were possibly misleading. There certainly was not a consensus that the best way forward was a report to be debated in the following February.

The unfortunate outcome of a report debated here in the sessions immediately after the Shared Conversations is that people have assumed that the House of Bishops' Report is a direct result of the Shared Conversations' process and feel disappointed if this Report does not lead to the outcome they were hoping for going

into the Shared Conversations. Some have, therefore, declared that the whole thing was a waste of time and money, which is a real shame as I believe that it had good intentions.

If I may make two suggestions for how this process may have been improved. First, if no conclusions were intended to be drawn from the Shared Conversations process, then they should not have asked us to gather our thoughts at the end on the final day; secondly, rather than include a report from the House of Bishops straight after the end of the Shared Conversations, have left more time for reflection and for building on the positive but delicate new relationships achieved in that process.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): I would like to thank the Chair of the Business Committee for her Report and for her good offices in the past week in addressing the issue of the group work surrounding GS 2055. Both the Prolocutor of York and I recognise that, despite our shared wish for the group work to be cancelled, the decision to do so rests not with the Business Committee but with the Presidents. I am aware that conversations are on-going about possible alternative pathways and, hopefully, we might find some compromise.

What I think would help the Presidents and the Business Committee to appreciate is there are a number of times when pastoral necessity outweighs planned procedural pathway. Remember the revision stage of the first women Bishops legislation. We all vowed we did not want to do that to one another again. The reaction to the content of 2055 is, first and foremost, a cry of pain from many LGBT Anglicans and others.

I understand that this does appear to have come as a surprise to many in the House of Bishops; so, recognising that reality, the question is how to approach our procedures in this Synod? First, I ask about safeguarding. What safeguarding advice has the Business Committee taken in deciding the format of the group work? Do the Presidents believe the risk of emotional harm has been mitigated by the structure, ability of leaders and format?

Second, what guarantee do clergy who hold bishop's licences have that, despite the St Michael's Protocols being in place, any disclosures made in these groups will not affect their ability to seek appointments in the dioceses of bishops who happen to be in their allocated group? What is to prevent a bishop or another member of a group from making a complaint under the CDM for anything disclosed in the groups?

If you do not think that is serious, at 2.58 pm afternoon I had a text from a member of this Synod asking questions about my personal life. Its emotional intelligence was crass. It is borderline harassment. Third, given the clear condemnation of homophobia in 2055, can the Presidents be confident that members of the House as Chairs of groups are able to recognise homophobia and abuse from other group members even when dressed in theological clothes?

Ironically, the conduct of our discussion in open debate, rather than through the artificiality of theoretical case studies, seems to me to offer a safer, more honest context for sharing our reactions with one another: The ground rules are clearer, the words of members are recorded and the Bishops would be able to play a full part in debate rather than the near impossible task of trying to facilitate a group while being at the same time the focus of a great deal of contentious emotion.

I would like to ask for a meeting with the Presidents, the Chair of the House of Laity and the Prolocutors and with a member of the National Safeguarding Team to talk through these things before a final decision is made about Wednesday afternoon's format.

Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield): I also wish to ask the Business Committee to use the greatest possible freedom available to reconsider the decision to include group work of case studies during this session. Given the shock and anger over the content and tone of GS 2055, a longer debate would be a safer space for LGBTI members to engage and be heard when the Report does not adequately demonstrate that they have been.

I imagine many of us have received many emails recently; shocked, wounded, heart-breaking personal stories from gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender members of our Church—incidentally, none of whom identified as same-sex attracted.

One such member particularly noted how he feels being considered a case study degrading, as a choice made instead of including actual people. He wished to be treated humanely as a faithful follower of Christ who, incidentally, spent years praying for God to heal him of his sexuality until he realised that God was giving him a gift and calling him to serve this Church as a priest. He has a very fruitful ministry. He likens the exclusion of any openly gay people from the Bishops' Reflection Group to a group of white people considering the inclusion of ethnic minorities or, indeed, a working group on disability filled only with able-bodied people.

This would never be tolerated and can only delegitimise the work that follows and worsen the suspicion and alienation. It is unreasonable to expect those feeling unsafe to participate in this group work and it is likely that LGBTI members and their supporters may be absent which would only deepen division rather than work towards good disagreement. It will be counterproductive. Please reconsider.

The Bishop of Southwark (Rt Revd Christopher Chessun): I am grateful to the Chair of the Business Committee for proposing the Agenda, of which I am supportive. One omission: I wonder if the Chair would recommend to the Presidents that they give consideration to sending a message to the Government expressing our profound regret over the volte-face over the Dubs Amendment.

The Chair: Canon Jane Charman, and then I am minded to take one more speech from Simon Baynes and then, after that, I would welcome a motion for closure if anyone is minded so to propose one.

Revd Canon Jane Charman (Salisbury): A week used to be a long time in politics; these days, 24 hours is a long time in politics, and so it is no criticism of the Business Committee that our Agenda for this group of sessions makes no mention of some of the most unprecedented events in recent history which have recently arisen. The Executive Order suspending refugee resettlements and blocking individuals from seven majority Muslim countries from entering the US has caused international concern and condemnation. The response of the UK Government is widely seen as inadequate and weak.

The repealing last week of the Dubs Amendment to give safe passage to unaccompanied child refugees shows with alarming clarity where things may be tending in this country unless they are very firmly resisted. These are matters that properly concern this Synod. Can we not make space during our four days together to engage with them?

Of course, we have a full Agenda. We always have a full Agenda because we always fill it up, but not all the scheduled items are time critical. With the exception of *Setting God's People Free* and, possibly, the item on fixed-odds betting terminals, it is also an inward-looking Agenda, including a whole afternoon on an item which clearly traumatises us but causes little anxiety to anyone else in our society.

By contrast, the recent actions of the US and UK Governments will have a direct

impact on UK citizens and on some of the most vulnerable people in our world whom Christ specifically commands us to protect and assist. We will rightly be criticised if we spend long hours discussing our own internal affairs and not responding to urgent events on the world stage which are causing harm and suffering to so many.

Under Standing Orders, any adjustment to the Agenda at this stage rests with the Presidents. An additional debate is not necessarily the answer but, surely, something is needed. Archbishop Justin, you and the Archbishop of York have taken a commendable public stand on these issues but we should not expect you to tackle them single-handedly on our behalf. As Christians and as a national Church we have a responsibility and a desire to speak out. Can you find an appropriate way of enabling us to do that within the envelope of this Synod?

Mr Simon Baynes (St Albans): Madam Chair, I will be very brief. We have heard much about the arrangements for Wednesday afternoon. Given the importance of the debate that we shall be having on GS 2055, I want to say that the time set aside for debate on Wednesday seems to be totally inadequate.

A huge amount of time, effort, money and heartache has gone into the Shared Conversations and I simply cannot understand why only 90 minutes has been allocated for debate on this important topic. Basically, once the Bishop of Norwich has been given ten minutes to introduce the motion and five minutes to sum up the debate, we shall be left with slightly less than 75 minutes.

Even if the speech limit is reduced to three minutes for all speakers, simple arithmetic tells me, at most, 25 members of Synod will get to speak. I would imagine many times that number will wish to speak and most will go home disappointed.

Madam Chair, I should like to ask the Presidents to liaise with the Business Committee about the possibility of extending that debate. Thank you.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Point of order: may I propose a motion for closure on this item?

The Chair: That has my consent, and so we now have before us a motion for the closure of this debate on which I will call a vote.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I now invite the Chair of the Business Committee to reply. Canon Booy, you have up to five minutes.

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): Thank you very much. I want to begin by thanking all members of Synod, those who have spoken and those who have not, for their careful consideration of this Agenda, and I want to follow that thanks by thanking Jayne Ozanne, Simon Butler and Zoe Heming in particular for what I think are costly and heartfelt speeches that I believe express the views of a number of you. I take the criticisms about the Agenda on the chin. It is perhaps not the Agenda that I would write this afternoon.

Canon Butler spoke particularly about safeguarding advice. I took some advice on safeguarding this morning and was advised that there are no specific safeguarding issues of which we are aware, but I am conscious that at a time like this, when people are feeling extremely vulnerable, that sense of needing to feel safe is an extreme and sharp one. It is clear to me that each one of us in this chamber has a responsibility to each other one of us for the feelings of safety, and I am distressed to have heard of the text which Canon Butler spoke about in his speech. I am grateful to the Bishop of Southwark and the Revd Canon Charman for drawing our attention to items of national and current interest which I agree it would be great to have on the Agenda and which might have received our attention had we not been meeting in early December.

I need to tell you that whilst I acknowledge that the time allocated for debate seems inadequate, the Business Committee has no freedom in terms of the starting time of the afternoon sitting that is published in the Agenda. Our Agenda and the Report which introduce it are documents that belong to the Business Committee. When we meet to consider that Agenda, we do so in the light of requests that come to us from different Houses, boards and councils and we do the best job that we can in putting together an Agenda that seems as if it will reflect the needs that have come to us. If you are genuinely dissatisfied with the form of the Agenda, it seems to me that one option that is open to you is to refuse to take note of the Report standing in my name. Thank you.

The Chair: I now put Item 2 “That the Synod do take note of this Report” to the vote.

The motion:

*‘That the Synod do take note of this Report’
was put and carried on a show of hands.*

REVISED DATE OF GROUPS OF SESSIONS IN 2018

The Chair. We now come to Item 3 on our Agenda and the Chair of the Business Committee will speak, I am informed, to both Items 3 and 4 now and then will formally move Item 4 when we come to that point on the Agenda. Canon Booy's has up to ten minutes.

Rev'd Canon Sue Booy's (Oxford): I beg to move:

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

Monday-Saturday 5-10 February

Friday-Tuesday 6-10 July

Monday-Wednesday 19-21 November (contingency dates)’

Thank you very much, Chair. Synod dates are generally set at least two years ahead. This enables us to ensure that the dates are in our diaries and those of the Archbishops and the venues at which we meet. It enables good forward planning for Synod members and ensures the smooth timetabling and efficient organisation of our meetings. It involves a good amount of forward planning.

Setting dates, especially for the February group of sessions, and so far in advance, is a tricky process (so tricky, in fact, that we got the date wrong in the Agenda for February 2020, and I would refer you to the Order Paper and Notice Paper). The dates proposed are Monday to Saturday 10 to 15 February. Please accept our apologies for this oversight.

Item 3 proposes revised dates for the February 2018 group of sessions which were set a few years ago.

In moving this item I am asking Synod to agree to include the possibility of meeting on a Saturday on a trial basis this time next year. This will mean starting Synod later in the week commencing 5 February 2018 (possibly on the Tuesday or Wednesday, depending on the amount of business) and extending it into the weekend, to Saturday. Many of you will know that this follows numerous discussions, and an online survey of members, that suggest that this would minimise the amount of annual leave members need to take from their week day jobs in order to attend Synod. The hope is that a change like this will encourage lay people of working age to stand for election.

The first step in undertaking something like this is to test your mind, Synod, and that is what I am seeking to do with this vote for a trial. If you vote in favour of a trial next February, the Business Committee will make appropriate arrangements for a similar length group of sessions, not longer, and then we will review the experiment. Because the dates for 2018 are already set, I have to ask you to agree formally the revised dates. For the sake of clarity, we are only proposing a change to the February 2018 dates. Other dates in 2018 remain unchanged. Also for clarity, the dates represent a timeframe during which the Synod will meet. The group of sessions could start later or finish sooner but only within that timeframe.

If this is well received in February 2018, it is proposed that the new norm would be to meet on dates that include a Saturday as the last day of the group of sessions.

If you do not, on balance, wish to trial including a Saturday, you will vote against Item 3 and we will retain the agreed dates.

If you vote against Item 3, or if you carry Item 3 but the consensus after the February 2018 group of sessions is that this was a mistake, the Business Committee will simply ignore the Saturday dates for 2019 and 2020 when deciding on actual dates for groups of sessions. Item 4 is therefore not affected. Item 4 proposes dates for the remainder of the quinquennium. In setting them, we have tried hard to avoid the sin of “Synod in half term”, and I apologise for the inconvenience this has caused some of you. Half term dates are not always set when we are doing our advance planning and the issue is further complicated by the irritating habit of local councils not to have half terms always at the same time.

In preparing Item 4, the Business Committee studied available information and made a best guess about February school breaks and has also taken into account a desire not to meet too far, if at all, into Lent and the pre-existing dates in the Presidents’ diaries. We will continue to do our best.

I move the motion at Item 3 standing in my name.

The Chair: Item 3 is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Amanda Fairclough (Liverpool): Every single one of us who is a member of General Synod has made sacrifices to be here today, so I do not want anything of

what I am saying to sound like my sacrifice is greater than yours. Many of us work full-time or part-time; some have voluntary commitments; some get paid when they are on holiday; some of us are self-employed and do not get any money for being on holiday; some of us are retired but still have family commitments. There is a cost involved to all of us attending whether it is a regular weekday or a Saturday.

Additionally, I guess that pretty much everyone in this room has some kind of duty to carry out on a Sunday, whether they are clergy, licensed readers, local missional leaders, church wardens or just heavily involved in their own church. Everyone—those of us on Synod, the staff and also visitors and the press—have things that they need to do on Sunday. Personally, whilst Sunday is holy to God, for me it is not really a day of rest, nor I suggest for most of you. Instead Saturday is the day for my Sabbath rest.

I already lose one Saturday a year for General Synod in July. I lose two Saturday mornings for diocesan synods. I lose two for summer fairs and Christmas fairs, one for Team Vision Day this year, however many marriages that I do in the summer for people who insist on getting married on a Saturday. I am giving up quite a few and I think I have already sacrificed quite a lot. The nightmare scenario for me is losing a day of rest to be spent here at the end of a long, tiring, emotionally demanding group of sessions, having a long journey home, which most of you who live outside the Greater London area will have, and then having to get up at the crack of dawn and do at least two services the following day. It is just too much. I know this is supposed to be a trial, it is supposed to be permissive, but the very thought of giving up yet another Saturday fills me with dread. I implore Synod to vote against this motion and let us draw the line for the sake of all of our health and sanity and keep just the one Saturday in February special. Thank you.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I am not calling for the renationalisation of the railways, but if you are going to try getting back from London to East Anglia or Cornwall or certain parts of this country on a Saturday by train, you can forget it. Thank you.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells): When I started on Synod I had a long conversation with my HR manager. I said, “What are the provisions that I can have some time off to be part of this public body?” I was very relieved at that time that I was able to have a considerable amount of time to enable me to come here and also to be involved in the Pensions Board and all sorts of other things. Gradually over time that became more and more restricted, but, funnily enough, my involvement became more and more. I found that my experience was that when I came to

Synod or when I came to the Church of England Pensions Board, or whatever, I was not taking a day off my work; I was taking a day off my holiday, and I found it very important that I was able to have time with my family as well as with my Church. I think it is important, clergy, for you to realise that for most of us in this Chamber and for most of the 98%—you will hear that figure later on in the week—who are laity in the Church of England, this is part of our hobby and we think (those of you are ex officio may be absolved) that those of you who got elected to this body perhaps ought to think of this body in the same way as the laity do; it is part of your hobby, it is part of your service and it is something that you do sacrificially.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Point of order. Madam Chair, after the next speaker I propose a motion for closure.

The Chair: I am minded to hear one more speaker, who is the gentleman standing there, and then I would really welcome a motion for closure, thank you.

Mr Philip Geldard (Manchester): I think most people will realise that society has changed and not everyone works a Monday to Friday week. There are some people, and more and more people, who are required to work shift work and weekends, I myself being one of them being a charge nurse in a hospital. The sick are still there and still need looking after on a weekend.

One thing I do want to ask is when will we find out what days Synod is actually being held on? How far in advance? This has implications on people who work shifts to actually arrange when they can be in work and also upon their travel arrangements to and from Synod. This obviously has a cost implication on Synod as well. If you book your trains well in advance, as we all know, the cheaper they are. As one member mentioned earlier, travelling on a Saturday becomes quite difficult, with the majority of rail “improvements” being held on a weekend. We may not agree with that.

One other thing is I wonder how many people will vote with their feet on a Saturday and actually leave Synod and go back to their home diocese on the Friday evening. Thank you.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Point of order: motion for closure on Item 3.

The Chair: Yes, I would like to hear the speaker I have called and then I would welcome that motion for closure.

Mr Graham Caskie (Oxford): As someone who works for a railway company I am grateful for this conversation so far. Like many people here, I am a family man. I have a wife and two little boys. I get 25 days of annual leave per year. A fifth of that annual leave is taken up coming to Synod. I only ask that for one year we try so maybe one day we think about having a Synod on a Saturday. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Freeman, the motion for closure has my consent. I now put that that to vote in Synod

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I now invite the Chair of the Business Committee to respond to this debate. She has to up to five minutes.

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): That is very kind; I shall not be using them all. I simply want to thank you for speaking and to tell Mr Geldard that the finalised dates for Synod are always announced as soon as possible, usually the day after the Business Committee that sets the Agenda, which is in mid-December for the February group of sessions and in May for the July group of sessions.

As far as this motion is concerned, the job of the Business Committee is to listen and to endeavour to enable what you ask for. In bringing this proposal that is what we have done. I am very relaxed. We are in your hands: Saturdays or not Saturdays; what seems best to you, Synod?

The Chair: I now put Item 3 to the vote.

The motion:

‘That this Synod meet on the following dates in 2018:
Monday-Saturday 5-10 February
Friday-Tuesday 6-10 July
Monday-Wednesday 19-21 November (contingency dates)’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

DATES OF GROUPS OF SESSIONS IN 2019-2020

The Chair: We now move swiftly on to Item 4 and I invite the Chair of the Business Committee to formally move Item 4.

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

‘That this Synod meet on the following dates in 2019-2020:

2019 Monday-Saturday 18-23 February

Friday-Tuesday 5-9 July

Monday-Wednesday 25-27 November (contingency dates)

2020 Monday Saturday 10-15 February

Friday-Tuesday 10-14 July

Monday-Wednesday 23-25 November (Inauguration).’

I do so move.

The Chair: Item 4 is now open for debate and again I am setting a three-minute speech limit. I see no one standing and I will not invite you to reply because there is nothing to reply to. I now call for a vote on Item 4.

The motion:

‘That this Synod meet on the following dates in 2019-2020:

2019 Monday-Saturday 18-23 February

Friday-Tuesday 5-9 July

Monday-Wednesday 25-27 November (contingency dates)

2020 Monday Saturday 10-15 February

Friday-Tuesday 10-14 July

Monday-Wednesday 23-25 November (Inauguration).’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR, *The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker)* took the Chair at 4.09 pm.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION (GS 2044)

The Chair: Synod, we now move on to Item 5 on our Agenda, the Anniversary of the Reformation for which you will need GS 2044. You will notice from the Order

Paper we have an amendment in the name of the Revd Angus MacLeay. When proposing to structure this debate, as we have timed business at 5 o'clock, as you will recall, the Bishop of Coventry in a few moments will speak to propose the motion that stands in his name. I will then immediately invite Angus MacLeay to speak to and move the amendment, giving him three minutes to do so. We will hear from the Bishop of Coventry whether he is minded to accept or resist the amendment. We will then have a couple of speeches on the amendment. Then I will want to test your mind as to whether you want to spend most of this time debating the amendment or the substantive motion, so I will be looking for a motion for closure on the amendment fairly early which, if you want to debate the amendment, you can resist and we can do that. When we have finished with the amendment we will go back to the substantive motion that stands in the Bishop of Coventry's name. We will conclude in time for the timed business at 5 o'clock. I therefore call upon the Bishop of Coventry to speak to and move the motion that stands in his name. He has up to ten minutes.

The Bishop of Coventry (Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth): I beg to move:

'That this Synod, in the context of the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the European Reformation and the church of England's understanding of the doctrine of justification as expressed in our historic formularies:

- (a) welcome signs of convergence between the churches on the doctrine of salvation, noting Resolution 16.17 of the Anglican Consultative Council in 2016 regarding the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* and its relation to the Helsinki Report and ARCIC II's *Salvation and the Church*; and
- (b) commend initiatives in this anniversary year to foster mutual understanding and reconciliation between churches, for the sake of our deeper renewal in the grace of God and our ability to share the gospel of salvation with all the world.'

Dear Friends, let me take you back to the inauguration of this General Synod in November 2015. In his powerful sermon, Father Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Papal Household, reminded us that, "The Christian world is preparing to mark the fifth centenary of the Protestant Reformation. It is vital for the whole Church that this opportunity is not wasted", he said.

The Presidents of Churches Together in England have taken up this challenge, calling the churches in this land to mark the anniversary by *rejoicing* in the Gospel that unites us, *remembering* the past that divided us, *reforming* the Church by

coming closer to Christ together, *repenting* of the stereotypes that we have formulated of each other and *reconciling* our differences.

Today's debate is Synod's chance to join in a movement across Britain and other European nations, indeed across the world, and actively support those developments and initiatives that serve God's purposes of reconciliation, and to do so by deepening our renewal in the grace of God and our readiness to share the Gospel of salvation with all the world.

That Gospel of salvation, put succinctly in Ephesians, is that "God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus". These are "the immeasurable riches of [God's] grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus' (Ephesians 2:4-6).

Solus Christus, through Christ alone: that is the heart of the gospel, the cry of the Reformation and the true centre of the Catholic faith of the Church. It is why Father Cantalamessa described Paul's confession of "Christ crucified" and "Jesus Christ as Lord", as "the essence of the Christian faith". It is why in their call to Christians at the beginning of the week of Christian Unity, our own Archbishops said, "This [Anniversary] year is a time to renew our faith in Christ and Him alone". It is why our Homily on Justification tells us that because of the "precious jewels of Christ's body and blood", broken on the cross and poured out in death, "Christ is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in him'.

The doctrine of Justification by Faith extolled by the Papal Preacher was once the ground of fierce controversy and furious disagreement that drove the Western Church into division and led Lutherans and Roman Catholics into mutual condemnation of each other. The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed between those two communions in 1999 expresses, in their words, "a consensus in the basic truths of justification" which, in the mind of the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation, does not "fall under the condemnations of the Council of Trent [or] the Lutheran Confessions'.

It was a momentous event in the story of the Church: a remarkable healing of the wounds of history. As the Anglican Consultative Council recognised, it is one of a series of agreements on the doctrine of salvation, among them the Helsinki Report between Anglicans and Lutherans, and *Salvation and the Church* between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. They have dug deeply together into the well of

salvation and discovered a common understanding of the life-giving goodness of its waters. I believe we can say of the coherence of contemporary Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic confessions of the Doctrine of Justification, “This is the Lord’s doing: it is marvellous in our eyes”. That is not to mention the way the World Methodist Church has aligned itself with the declaration.

By way of method, the Joint Declaration sought to uncover what of the Gospel of Salvation in Christ each side was seeking to defend and promote in its particular expression of justification, without denying the different emphases of each approach. On this basis, it was able to agree that what each communion feared was being denied by the other is, in fact, today fully affirmed by both.

For example:

- that the favour of God reaches us before we have begun to be worthy of it *and* that such mercy renews us;
- that the cause of our justification is God’s love for us not ours for God, *and* that God’s love for us is such a love that it is capable of making us love;
- that good works are a consequence not a pre-condition of justification *and* that they are, therefore, intrinsic expressions of salvation freely given to those who, in Luther’s words, have taken “hold of Christ our Redeemer” by faith.

“Together we confess”, says the Statement, “By grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works”.

We are back to where we began: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2.8), says Ephesians. “Self-justification”, said the Papal Preacher, is the flawed human instinct. The Gospel, says the Homily on Justification, is that “Justification is the office of God only”. God has liberated us from reliance on human capacities. We are free from human assessment of worth. It is not how clever we are, how rich we have become, how attractive we feel. It is not our popularity ratings, our physical prowess our economic potential. It is not even our strivings for piety or sanctity. It is God’s view of us that counts—and Jesus proves that God sees us and loves us as we are and calls us to believe that and to put our trust in that.

The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, which began with Luther’s courageous insistence that salvation is not for sale, invites every Christian to join with the whole

Church to be renewed in the grace of God and share the astounding news of God reaching out to the world, running to meet us in Christ and embracing us into his life by the Spirit with an infinity of love that lifts us into the full stature of our humanity and raises us into the joyful responsibility of being human.

I am glad to propose the motion standing in my name.

The Chair: Synod, we do have with us two guests this afternoon for this item: the Revd Torbjørn Holt, who is the Chair of the Council of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain and is also Rector and Senior Chaplain at St Olaf's in Rotherhithe, the Norwegian Church, he is on the platform, and the Very Revd Dr John Arnold, the Vice-President of Faith in Europe, Dean Emeritus of Durham and the former President of the Conference of European Churches is in the gallery. Can we welcome them to this debate?

I am going to call on the Revd Angus MacLeay to speak to and move his amendment. You have up to three minutes.

Revd Angus MacLeay (Rochester): I beg to move:

‘After “historic formularies;” *insert-*

“(-) give thanks to God for the rich spiritual blessings that the Reformation brought to the Church of England;”

The reason for this amendment is to seek to inject a note of joy into this important motion: (a) we welcome signs, (b) we commend initiatives, but what about giving thanks to God for the great spiritual blessings, to include that within the motion?

Of course, in any situation which involves sinners, mistakes will be made and there were plenty of faults evident even in our most cherished reformers. However, this should not stop us appreciating and giving thanks to God for the incredible spiritual blessings which we have received through the Reformation and which set the course of our nation over the following centuries, and especially the emphasis on justification by faith which lies at the heart of the Gospel.

When we turn to Article 11 on justification it says: “We are accounted righteous before God only by the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith and not by our own works or deserving”. This article highlights that our greatest problem, due to our sin, is being required to stand before a Holy God. Justification is not about what we do; it is all about what God has done, so it is by grace. Justification is based on the wonderful work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the Cross. As Romans 5:9 says, it is by justification by His blood. Justification is all about

what God declares, which is received by putting our confidence in what he has done for us revealed in his Word, and so it is by faith.

As a result, that same article goes on to say: “Wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort”. That is wonderfully true, because it is so easy to fall back on our performance to measure our relationship with the Lord, so if we serve well we are okay, but if we have stumbled and fallen we are no longer accepted or acceptable. Yet the doctrine of justification is a wonderful reminder of the power of the Gospel, that it is all about Christ, what He has done for us, not what we do for Him, and that through Him we are accepted eternally. It was never an ivory tower doctrine for puzzling over; it was a doctrine which breathes spiritual life, vitality and assurance into the Church.

In the articles, justification flows out of an understanding of the sufficiency—

The Chair: I think time has just run out. Would you move formally your amendment?

Revd Angus MacLeay (Rochester): Sorry, I did not see a yellow light coming on at all.

The Chair: I did. It was clearly here. Thank you.

Revd Angus MacLeay (Rochester): I just wanted to say it was at the heart of the Reformation we want to rejoice in the doctrine. I want to move the amendment standing in my name. Thank you.

The Chair: The Bishop of Coventry to respond. He has up to three minutes.

The Bishop of Coventry (Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth): Thank you very much for the amendment. How can we not rejoice in the gifts that the Reformation and, indeed, the doctrine of justification by faith, which I hope I have propounded today, have given to the Church of England, and all the cultural and educational gifts that came to the nation?

I do not want to oppose the motion at all and welcome it. At the same time, I think we have an opportunity here to say the gift particularly of a closer defining of justification than the medieval Church had managed up to this point is something that has now been engaged with in our day in a way that the Church was not able to do in that day. With the Joint Statement on Justification we do have a wonderful

example of that actually happening and people trying to get under the skin of what the other was trying to say. I hope I have shown some of the balances that were made there.

Yes, it is important, of course, that mistakes are recognised. We have all made mistakes. We do need to recognise that this anniversary has been quite a complex process of ecumenical journey, particularly on the Continent. I was much moved by some comments recently by Bishop Feige, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Magdeburg in which Wittenburg lies. He talks about how the Roman Catholic Church has moved away from a counter-Reformation and talks about a co-Reformation that we want to journey together. I think that is something to be rejoiced in. We do not want our own joy at celebrating what we have received to eclipse both a sense of pain at division but also joy at a remarkable theological rapprochement. Thank you.

The Chair: Debate on the amendment is now open. Two minutes, Brian, and then, whichever way you go, I would like a speech perhaps the other way and then we will get a bit of a sense of where we are getting to with Synod. I am told that Luther nailed the Theses to the Church door because the PA system failed when he tried to deliver them verbally.

Mr Brian Wilson (Southwark): 1517 was the year that Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Chapel in Wittenberg. Luther had, for the previous two years, been lecturing to his university students on Paul's letter to the Romans. In Romans 1:1-17 he read that: "He through faith is righteous, shall live". The Church had at that time understood this to mean that sinners could be made righteous. Luther understood it to mean that sinners could be declared righteous. This truth was the start of the Reformation. It is interesting to note that in 1517 Erasmus had not yet published his Greek New Testament. Luther's understanding came from a fresh look at the Latin text, and I believe by inspiration sent by God.

So salvation by grace alone was the great Gospel truth rediscovered by Luther and taken up by the 16th century reformers of the Church of England. I would like us today to remember the great men and women who, in 16th century England, took up the task of reforming the Church in this country.

I was at school for seven and a half years in Lewes in Sussex. In Lewes there is a Martyrs' monument as a memorial to the 17 men and women who were burned to death in barrels in the town centre for the sake of their unshakeable stand for the doctrines of the Reformation. I was at Oxford for four years, where there is

also a Martyrs' monument and there is a plaque in the road in the Broad commemorating the place of deaths by being burned at the stake of three of the men who established the Church of England: Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley,

I think that today is the most fitting time to thank God for the stand taken by all who gave their lives in this country for the cause of the Gospel truth in the 16th century.

The Chair: Thank you. Do we have anybody wishing to speak to oppose the amendment? Yes, we do.

Revd Canon Patricia Hawkins (Lichfield): I certainly do not want to speak against the spirit of giving thanks to God for His grace in Jesus. That should not need saying. I would be sad if anything were put into the context of this motion that has any sort of sectarian feeling to it. I also think it is quite hard to hold (a) the amendment with (b) which reminds us where we are now and giving thanks to God for the appropriation by the whole Church of the benefits of the Reformation. For me, while understanding the spirit of this amendment, to single out the Church of England, although we are of course the Church of England, and to have something that could be interpreted in a slightly sectarian spirit would be sad.

The Chair: I was wondering whether anybody might have a point of order at this point.

A Speaker: Point of order: motion for closure on this amendment.

The Chair: A motion for closure on this amendment has my consent. Does it have the consent of Synod?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: We go straight to the vote on Item 19, the amendment.

The motion:

'After "historic formularies;" *insert-*

"(-) give thanks to God for the rich spiritual blessings that the Reformation brought to the Church of England;"

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: We have therefore completed the amendment. The substantive motion now stands in its amended form and we come to debate on that.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Dr Philip Plyming (Guildford): I want to bring a physical contribution to the Reformation debate in the form of this Playmobil model of Martin Luther which a parishioner gave me for Christmas. It has everything: the hat, the gown, even the cuffs. It is what he is holding in his hand that is so special and I want to suggest gives us real reason to thank God for the Reformation and hope for the future, for in his hand is the Luther Bible; Luther's first translation of the Holy Scriptures from the original languages, a step only made possible by the pioneering work of scholars such as Erasmus, and distributed through the Gutenberg Printing Press. It was a ground-breaking work. As Neil MacGregor so beautifully argues in his book, "Germany: Memories of a Nation", Luther's Bible created a whole new language to bring Germany together.

But language was not Luther's primary aim. His aim in translating the Scriptures was to bring God's Word into the hands of ordinary people. As we know, it was his aim that the boy at the plough should know as much as the most senior cleric. It was not just Luther. Alongside his example, other Reformation figures sought to bring the Bible into people's hands in their own language. William Tyndale was to die for his own translation, but within ten years the great Bible, so substantially his work, was in every Church in this land with the aim "that parishioners may commodiously resort to the same and read it".

In a week where we are celebrating and debating lay leadership and discipleship, this is something to be celebrated. That the Word of God found its proper place in the midst of all God's people and not just the clergy is a lasting legacy of the Reformation that every generation is called to inhabit.

I believe there is another reason to celebrate the Reformation focus on bringing the Bible into the heart of the Church. The motion before us today commends initiatives to foster "mutual understanding and reconciliation between Churches". I would not want us to avoid the obvious point that the Bible itself can serve as a focus for growing understanding and reconciliation in a divided Church. Finer scholars than me will bear witness to the profitable partnership of Roman Catholic and Protestant exegetes in their work in the academy.

For myself, I want to pay tribute to the outstanding contribution of the former Pope Benedict in his three-volume work *Jesus of Nazareth*. He writes with a sensitivity and faithfulness to the Scriptures that I found brought passages alive in a new way. I remember wondering as I read it what Luther would think of the Pope opening up the Scriptures to all. I hope we can affirm with thanksgiving this motion, thank God for the gift of the Bible which has brought into the life of the Church the Reformation, see its hope for the future, and I will be asking Playmobil to make a model of Thomas Cranmer.

The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Julian Henderson): The Diocese of Blackburn is linked with the Lutheran Church in Germany and the landeskirche of Braunschweig. I am making a visit in May to the so-called famous door in Wittenberg. The Report is therefore of special interest and I welcome that momentum of convergence around the message of salvation and the doctrine of justification and the various events planned to mark this 500th anniversary.

In paragraph 23 of GS 2044 the Report asks what the continuing relevance of the Reformation might be for us today, with further questions in paragraphs 26 and 27. The answer surely lies in the truth that as the people of God we continue to need to be reformed or, as the extended preface in one of the Common Worship liturgies says, “Learning to be the people of God once again”.

The surprise for me in this Report is the absence of any reference to that key factor in the Reformation struggles in the 16th century that have just been spoken of by the previous speaker: the place of Scripture; the importance of it, its authority and its application in what we believe and how we behave. It was fascinating to hear the comment of Pope Francis on 31 October last year at Lund Cathedral in Sweden at an ecumenical event marking this 500th anniversary. He said, “With gratitude we acknowledge that the Reformation helped give greater centrality to the sacred Scriptures in the Church’s life”.

While it is right that we apologise for the violence of intolerance that took place in the 16th century, we do not apologise for the reintroduction of the Scriptures to a central place in Church life and welcome, as our amendment already passed does, the benefit and blessings that reintroduction has made to Christian ministry and mission.

Our Anglican roots are found in that Reformation rediscovery and the continuing relevance, therefore, of the Reformation for today is the claiming of a central place for Scripture in the life of our Church, not allowing it to be side-lined or ignored but

rather respected. We should not be ashamed to assert this central place and if our Catholic friends can say it so should we. Thank you.

The Chair: I am told the second microphone is now working, so if anybody has faith in things as yet unseen they may wish to try it out in a moment or two.

Revd Canon John O'Toole (Ecumenical Representatives): I thank you very much for the great privilege of speaking today and I very warmly welcome this motion on the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. I recall also the great privilege of being in Westminster Abbey during the Eucharist to mark the inauguration of this current General Synod in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen.

You will recall that on that occasion, as the Bishop of Coventry has mentioned, the sermon was given by Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, the Franciscan Capuchin friar who is Preacher to the Papal Household. He is the small friar with a big smile. He also has a big heart and a fine mind. During his sermon he said the following: "Justification by faith ought to be preached by the whole Church—and with more vigour than ever. Not in opposition to good works—the issue is already settled—but rather in opposition to the claim of people today that they can save themselves thanks to their science, technology or their manmade spirituality, without the need for a redeemer coming from outside humanity. Self-justification!" Martin Luther's key insight was that all is gift and grace.

We cannot save ourselves; we are saved by Christ through grace and in faith. On this, thank God, we can all agree. It is ironic that the very doctrine which divided Catholics and Protestants 500 years ago is no longer Communion dividing, but is precisely the doctrine that can now unite us in our service and mission to the world. Thank you

Revd Canon Dr Dagmar Winter (Newcastle): Chair, I welcome this debate drawing attention to the Reformation. It is clearly an event in history that in popular understanding in this country is completely overshadowed by focusing on Henry VIII and his several wives, thus raising more of a smirk than any deep appreciation of the enormous cultural and theological significance of the Reformation across Europe, including England.

As a parish priest, it strikes me again and again how the core theological insights of the Reformation—Sola Gratia—remains complete news to many, many Anglicans. Time and again I encounter the blending of a Christian world view with

an understanding of morality requiring a mix of compliance and the earning of Brownie points from a benevolent deity who nonetheless needs to be kept sweet. We are so much more enriched in our faith by a greater appreciation of the central purpose of Christ—Solus Christus—and liberated by living understanding of the Solo Gratia—justification by grace alone as previous speakers have outlined—leaving us in turn to serve the Kingdom not in order to save ourselves or to earn God’s good will but in joyous response and liberated commitment. Sola Scriptura, the third of the great Solas—Scripture alone—we do well here once again to look at how many descendants of the Reformation in other parts of Europe have a high view of Scripture, which is wide open to biblical criticism and scholarship seeking an honest, contemporary and hermeneutically reflected theological engagement with the biblical text. The forthcoming Epistle readings from Romans during Lent in our lectionary provide but one opportunity for learning and reflecting on the Reformation and its theology.

Finally, reflecting on the Sola Fide—by faith alone—we could do worse than rediscover the depths of that great invitation to Holy Communion, infused as it is with Reformation theology if less by Luther directly than by Calvin mediated by Martin Bucer: “Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which He gave for you and His blood which He shed for you. Eat and drink in remembrance that He died for you and feed on Him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving”.

I support the motion and any endeavour to encourage a deeper appreciation of the Reformation. Thank you.

Revd Peter Breckwoldt (Salisbury): Do you remember anniversaries? This anniversary is amazing and should be greatly valued by us as a Church. Five hundred years ago Martin Luther’s work did not seem important, but it would change the world for the better. He wanted to start a debate in the Catholic Church with his campaign over indulgences. Amazingly, within four years this monk stood before Charles V, the then leader of the world, and said that he was bound by the Scriptures: “My conscience is captive to the Word of God”. Here is a lesson for the Church today to be captive to the Word of God.

By 1529 those who thought like Luther were given the name Protestants. The occasion was another top-level meeting organised then by Charles V, where he heard a group of German princes this time declare: “We are determined by God’s grace and aid to abide by God’s Word alone, the Holy Gospel contained in the

biblical books of the Old and New Testaments”. Within a few years, this protest had spread across Europe and within 100 years it had reached North America.

Now, 500 years after Luther, Protestants can be found across the world numbering over half a billion people. As we celebrate the Reformation we can see Protestants shaping and influencing cultures. Historically, Protestants have been identified closely with a number of Europe’s most significant cultural achievements, such as the music of Bach, the artistry of Rembrandt, the science of the British Royal Society. What will the next period bring: a Bach for East Africa, an artist for South America, a new dawn of science in China?

The Reformation has caused three great things to happen that still bless us. The reformers began shaping Christian teaching exclusively on the Bible. Secondly, it reminded us to teach justification by faith and that this truth the world still needs to hear. Thirdly, they began translating the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into the language of the people. The Bible over the years has been influential in shaping culture and this gave birth to great values with respect to authority, self-worth for the individual, equality under the law and the abolition of slavery, the freedom of speech, the liberty to meet. If society forgets the Bible it loses these values and truth becomes relative, gender differences are distorted and purity of marriage is lost.

Today I want to support this motion. It is a terrific day and a day and a year we should celebrate.

The Chair: Hannah Cleugh, after which I think I will be looking for a motion for closure.

Ms Hannah Cleugh (Universities & TEs): Those of us for whom remembering the Reformation is a professional occupation are finding our 2017 diaries getting very full. It is very exciting. Among the things that I am doing this year is taking part in a project headed up by Alex Walsham in Cambridge and Brian Cummings in York on “Remembering the Reformation”, which calls us to explore ways in which history and memory were contested and constructed in the formation of confessional and, indeed, national identities during and after the Reformation itself.

I am really excited by the kinds of opportunities outlined in paragraph 22 of GS 2044 for increased and widespread reflection on the nature and legacy of the 16th century Reformation and for dialogue between academy and Church on the

subject. I applaud the Report and the motion before Synod, but I would like to draw out a couple of points from paragraph 2 which notes the contested nature both of this year's anniversary and of the thing we are calling "The Reformation".

Decisive as Luther's theological protest undoubtedly was, as viral as his account of justification *ex Sola Fide* infinitely went, irrelevant as it is whether or not he nailed his thesis to the door of the Schlosskirche in Wittenburg; this is but one snapshot, albeit the album cover, among many of the early Reformation, that complex, fluid, diversifying and evolving set of religious upheavals that so shaped and reshaped western Christianity.

Synod, I would like to invite you to look with me at one other snapshot, one taken in Zurich in 1522 when Huldrych Zwingli sat at the table for supper in the house of the printer, Christoph Froschauer, as they ate sausages for their dinner and called into question received doctrine and Church practice. Martin Luther's decision to marry ex-nun Katharina von Bora set a new pattern for godly living across Protestant Europe, new understandings of what the Christian household might be. These too are snapshots of reformation. There are myriad others I could choose, but I would like to end with quoting my Durham colleague—

The Chair: I think you need to end more quickly than that, actually, Hannah.

Ms Hannah Cleugh (Universities & TElS): All I wanted to say was it is much more complicated than all of that.

The Chair: Point of order, Mr Freeman.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Can I tempt the Chair with a motion for closure on Item 5?

The Chair: A motion for closure would have my agreement. Does it have the assent of Synod?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: The debate is, therefore, closed and I call upon the Bishop of Coventry to respond to the debate. He has up to five minutes.

The Bishop of Coventry (Rt Revd Christopher Cocksworth): Thank you very much indeed, Chair, and thank you to everybody who contributed and to those who also

wanted to but were not able to and for the level of engagement in the debate.

Going back to the little discussion on the amendment, thank you to Brian Wilson. Yes, I was principal of Ridley Hall for a while and we remembered him and those killed with him on 16 October every year. At the same time, of course, we do want to, and it is proper to record at this point our deep regret for those faithful to the Roman Catholic Church who were also hurt and killed, and the Archbishops have reminded us of that. I very much agree with Pat Hawkins about the Reformation being appropriated by the whole Church, its good and godly dimensions, and that I think is what we are recognising today.

Philip Plyming, thank you very much for the Luther Playmobil. I gather it is an absolute money-spinner. You are quite right about the emphasis on the Bible. It is important to draw attention to Roman Catholic scholarship. Many of us have deeply benefited from that. Thank you for mentioning Pope Benedict's writings on Jesus. I had the opportunity to go to see him to thank him for that and give him a copy of my book, actually.

That was actually brokered—and this is quite important—by the Archbishop of Birmingham. He took me to see him. It was very moving meeting the Pope, but also very moving praying with the Archbishop in St Peter's Basilica, as he said to me, "I'd like to pray for your ministry here", and I said, "I'd like to pray for yours". It was deeply moving.

Apologies to the Bishop of Blackburn, following on from that, for not giving sufficient attention in the paper to the importance of Scripture. Vatican II, this great document on the constitution of the sacred liturgy, talks about drawing the faithful to the feast of the banquet at the table of God's Word, and I have learnt a great deal about that.

John O'Toole, thank you very much for your speech. May we pay tribute to you for your contribution here. Some of the Bishops, thank you for the part you played in organising and steering a residential meeting that some of us had with our Roman Catholic colleagues. Your statement, if I may say, was absolutely fantastic, a wonderful example of that coherence that I talked about; utter consistency with the Church of England's understanding of justification by grace to faith.

I worked with a Roman Catholic chaplain for several years. I absolutely loved that time with him. He would often preach on justification by faith and I would say, "Father Robert, did you know you preached on justification by faith?" and he would

say, “No, I didn’t”, but he did preach on it, and you did the same there. Dagmar Winter, thank you very much for reminding us of the importance and the abiding significance of the application of the Reformation principles to contemporary Christian living.

Peter Breckwoldt, thank you for reminding us of the gifts of the Reformation in all sorts of wide and really significant ways. Of course, pre-Luther, the medieval Church was also committed to serious translation of the Bible and it was an example of, in a sense, that prior commitment to reformation that in the medieval Church through all sorts of historical and theological complexities got lost but has been recovered. I draw you back to the words of the Roman Catholic Bishop, Bishop Feige, who I talked about, of co-Reformation.

Hannah Cleugh, thank you very much for all your work. You are absolutely right to remind us that everything is much more complicated than that.

Thank you everybody again. I am sorry we did not get a chance to hear from many others, including the Bishop of Leeds, who has done, of course, great work and will be taking part in the ecumenical Kirchentag in Germany this year with I think 100,000 people—Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed—a great example of what we are talking about: the appropriation of the Reformation and the working together in the common task of Christian mission. Thank you very much.

The Chair. Thank you. We now put Item 5 as amended by Item 19 to the vote.

The motion

‘That this Synod, in the context of the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the European Reformation and the church of England’s understanding of the doctrine of justification as expressed in our historic formularies:

(a) give thanks to God for the rich spiritual blessings that the Reformation brought to the Church of England;

(b) welcome signs of convergence between the churches on the doctrine of salvation, noting Resolution 16.17 of the Anglican Consultative Council in 2016 regarding the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and its relation to the Helsinki Report and ARCIC II’s Salvation and the Church; and

(c) commend initiatives in this anniversary year to foster mutual

understanding and reconciliation between churches, for the sake of our deeper renewal in the grace of God and our ability to share the gospel of salvation with all the world.'

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: It brings us to the end of Item 5. I will leave you to reflect on what Luther would have made of small graven images of himself being sold for purposes of veneration, and the Archbishop's address, which will follow shortly.

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark)* took the Chair at 4.56 pm.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. We now come to Item 6 on the Agenda and I call upon his Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to give his Presidential Address to Synod.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): In around 1905 the Orthodox Churches began to consider that, since it was well over 1,000 years since their previous fully recognised Synod, it was about time for another one. They began preparatory work in earnest in around 1965 and so last June, for two weeks in Crete, the Great and Holy Synod was held. Although some people did not attend, it was generally considered a success, and the conclusions it reached are now being widely studied.

I wanted to begin there to put a little perspective on our practice as Synod. I am not, to be clear, suggesting we move to a once in a millennium regularity of meetings, neither am I raising any question as to how often we do meet. By most standards of churches, including other Anglican ones, we meet very frequently. This is especially true amongst those churches where there is a historical and personal episcopacy, rather than an episcopacy found in a conference or gathering. That is a consequence of our history and of our delegated power to make national law in England.

We live and think synodically, in terms of parties, procedures and attitudes. We work on winning votes which means we develop well-organised parties which meet and co-ordinate speeches and responses even to quite routine bits of legislation. We may not be at the stage of the House of Commons, with three-line whips, but

we have some resemblance to the Lords, with party groups as well as a mass of cross-bench members whose vote is far less predictable. People become experts in the ways and procedures of the Synod. When looking at proposals, all of us think about what the response of the General Synod will be, how to get things through or block them. That is both normal and proper.

Yet, because we are followers of Christ, participating in this Synod in His name, we need to remember the dangers and temptations of our gathering. It is for that reason that I am going to look at Luke 4:1-12 on and off through this address, Luke's account of the temptations. In all three temptations Karl Barth sees Satan encouraging Jesus to, "Take from now on a direction which will not need to have the Cross as its end and its goal." We cannot ever forget that as Christians we are a cross-shaped people.

We are to follow the One who was crucified, expecting the same or worse treatment at the hands of the world. That is the promise and warning of Jesus to his followers. We are to carry the Cross as we follow. We are to be publicly, openly and convincingly those who are Christians. We are to abandon—and we have discussed this a bit already this afternoon—all other forms or hopes of salvation, of safety and hope, than those which come from belonging to the fellowship of the Cross. We are only to rely on God. Barth comments again that we are, "To live only by this word and promise of God."

The temptations (which, of course, are mentioned in all three synoptic Gospels, and arguably in different forms in John) have been commented on and applied millions of times, and there are many different ways of seeing them as they apply to us. In a few moments, I am going to pick three things which seem relevant to a synod at such a time as this.

First, a word though about "at such a time as this". The word "uncertainty" to apply to where we are is surely one of the most overused words of recent times and, I have, to be honest, contributed to its overuse, especially in my Christmas sermon, deeply unpopular with one or two people. Perhaps a better way of expressing things is that we are at a time when the future offers a wider range of opportunity, or of threat, a wider range indeed than we have been used to culturally, politically and economically.

There are a thousand ways to explain the Brexit vote, or the election of President Trump, or the strength in the polls in Holland of Geert Wilders, or in France of Madame Le Pen, and many other leaders in a nationalist, populist and even fascist

tradition of politics. Almost certainly there is no simple explanation of why this is happening around us. Almost certainly the impact of globalisation economically or marginalisation politically and of post-modernity culturally have some role to some extent. That will be the material of a thousand PhDs and no consensus in the next 50 years. We are now in the middle of it all and we see neither the destination nor the road we must travel.

Whether one was a supporter of Brexit or of Remain, there is now, as a matter of fact, a wide and liberal choice of future for this country. In a recent meeting which I spent an afternoon with some economists, we reviewed the very serious—and you will see some graphs coming up on the screen—ultimately unsustainable balance of payments deficit; the appallingly low levels of investment by the corporate sector; the near absence of research and development funding; the dreadful levels of educational aspiration amongst those who have the least opportunities—we are the orange line—the growing demands of care for an older population to a degree that will put massive strain on government funding; the skills gap; the lack of progress towards our goals of a carbon-neutral economy, and so on and so on and so on. I really do not wish to sound like Cassandra, who was never believed, but it did not seem entirely and unreservedly optimistic.

Yet, at the end of an afternoon of bludgeoning ourselves with figures, not even having reached the end of it, the economists and social scientists and (I am so sorry but I must use the word) the experts (short pause for you to hiss if you like) agreed on one thing: at the heart of all the issues is one of culture and of values. We are in a moment of reimagining Britain, a moment of potential opportunity, certainly combined with immensely hard work and heavy lifting. It is a moment of challenge, but challenge that as a nation can be overcome with the right practices, values, culture and spirit.

This could be a time of liberation, of seizing and defining the future, or it could be one in which the present problems themselves seize our national future and define us, which is where we the Church come in. Let us not be too self-important. I do not mean we, the Church of England, are the answer but we can be part of the answer. We have a voice and a contribution and a capacity and a reach and, above all, a Lord who is faithful when we fail and faithful when we flourish.

We educate a million children. We are in every community. We are embedded in the national history. We can work in partnerships, ecumenically—inter-faith and across society—partnerships that have grown stronger in this century. When we consider that the Office of National Statistics ranks people defined as ‘White British

on free school meals' as the third lowest of 18 ethnic categories for educational achievement at GCSE, that educational provision beyond 16 is struggling and that we are a major provider of education as a Church, our first question must be addressed to ourselves. We have the skills, the strength, the heritage, most of all the Christ-given vocation, what are we, the Church of England, going to do as Britain is reimagined? How are we going to contribute to the national future?

There is before the churches of this land over the next many years an extraordinary opportunity to be part of reimagining a new Britain, its practices, its values, its aspirations and its global role. To do so, we must ourselves be cross shaped, Jesus following, confident in faith and humble in service, above all outward looking. Our temptations are those that will make such a national role, which we can have in partnership with many others, impossible.

The only witness for the temptations was Jesus himself. He must have known his disciples would have similar times of trial, so he shares this story with them that they might know his presence with them in the midst of it being hard, his example and his leading. There is, first, the temptation to self-indulgence, to satisfying our needs within the Church first and foremost. Luke writes, "He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread'. Jesus answered him, 'It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone'."

One aspect of this temptation is to meet his own needs, to indulge an appetite that is both urgent and reasonable. To do so though is to avoid the way of the Cross. Jesus came for a purpose, and that purpose takes him through the Cross to the resurrection and the ascension and the sending of the Spirit and will bring him to his eventual return. All of that would be shipwrecked by self-indulgence, by using his power for himself rather than continuing in the full and limited humanity of hunger and frailty at the end of a great fast.

Wanting to win votes is normal. Wanting our point of view to prevail now is reasonable, yet our vocation as God's people is to subordinate our interests to God's call to be Christ in the world in which we live. That is costly. It requires restraint, sense and care for the most vulnerable. There are no structures of our meeting that guarantee safety or feeling safe. Only right attitudes will do that. The text received by Simon Butler, to which he referred earlier, was, frankly, an inexcusable self-indulgence by the sender—a perfect illustration of how not to act. He rightly said that it, or all actions like it, eliminate any sense of safety and, as Jayne Ozanne said, any sense of trust.

Recent revelations about abuse is another example, about which I cannot directly comment because they are the subject of a police investigation. On one principle let me be blunt and clear: abuse has occurred across every tradition of the Church, and in every other institution and in society as a whole and, above all, in families. It is part of the human tragedy and something against which we are all committed to struggle.

That struggle begins by showing genuine concern for survivors. They are people to be loved, as much as we are able, as one united Church. We resist this first temptation to self-indulgence through simplicity and the open and genuine expression of love in action. We pray together, read Scripture together, live as God's family in the world. We are called to be truly synodical, on the way together, the literal meaning of the word, "synod". It is a way of the Cross, as we will be reminded in what will be painful discussions on Wednesday, and it involves listening, travelling, loving and changing. It is a hard lesson and we have often failed in the past, but there is no reason to think that we cannot succeed in the future.

The second temptation includes a desire for power and glory, for relevance, through demonstrating that our way is effective. "Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world and the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority, for it has been given over to me and I give it to anyone I please. If you then will worship me, it will all be yours'. Jesus answered him, 'It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him'."

This temptation is one into which the Church historically has fallen continually, and still does, whenever the post-Constantinian tendency to exercise power overtakes us. The Church of England retains influence. We have at present the extraordinary privilege of sitting in Parliament, the remarkable gift and responsibility of educating, chaplains in every sphere of life, and a role in the public life of the nation. We have a heritage of presence across England, burdensome though of its buildings may sometimes be, and the vocation of being the default point of help and support in times of trouble, or celebration in times of joy.

It may not be what it was, although Golden Age nostalgia syndrome is a deeply unreliable guide to history, but it remains a gift and heritage beyond value, offering opportunities for service and love beyond all our deserving. It is a heritage to be used confidently but not arrogantly. We are not to seek to rule but to love and to

serve, to validate what God alone has given us, by grace and not by our deserving, through our commitment to be with the people of England in all circumstances, regardless of whether they agree with us or not. We wash all feet indiscriminately and this must affect our language, our attitudes and must give us a profound desire to do good rather than to be given influence and power.

In the necessary reimagination of our country we cannot dictate but we must participate. Participation means being a listening, suffering and reconciling presence, not a hectoring, self-interested, self-righteous one. The language of public life at present is deeply and savagely divided and may become worse. Our example in response is crucial to the reimagination of our values. Our power is found only in selfless service and the Cross.

Lastly, one aspect of the third temptation in Luke's account is to seek impact and effect through drama and crisis, to tempt God to make it clear we belong to God. "Then the devil took him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written', 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you', and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him: "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'." It is the temptation to shortcuts and easy solutions, to grand gestures which are no solutions because they avoid the Cross. It says to us that, "If only we do X or Y then the Church will flourish and grow", but unless X and Y include discipleship and prayer then the answer is wrong, for prayer takes us to the feet of the crucified, risen and glorified Saviour.

The tapestry at the east end of Coventry Cathedral is one from which I have drawn huge inspiration and comfort, but I only want to take one aspect here. Sitting in my Canon's stall on the eve of another overseas journey, often likely to be what one might tactfully call "complicated", I would look at the tapestry during Evensong—that was, if you talk to my colleagues, when I did not fall asleep. Between the feet of Christ in glory is a human figure. The person is safe, secure, protected, looking outward into the world. Yet they cannot see Christ, only the wounds of his feet, and they are naked, exposed and unprotected except by the Christ they cannot see. It is in the closeness to the crucified, in sharing in the burdens of that crucifixion by our own cross-carrying, that we are truly secure in our future in this world at this time.

We are called to be the people of the Cross, to live as those whose only hope is God, closely nestling in the presence of Christ, seeing and loving the world around as Christ does, so that in this time of a choice between national hope and

opportunity or threat and fear, we, as God's people, as the Church of England, may play the part to which we are called in reimagining our country and seizing, in God's grace, the best future that lies before us. Thank you.

The Chair. Thank you, your Grace. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 5.20 pm.

The Chair. We have come to Item 6 which is questions but before we do, the Archbishop of Canterbury has an announcement.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): I must apologise that on my list of those present, I failed to notice that the new Bishop of Lichfield, the Rt Revd Michael Ipgrave, is present, I am told. I was going to say you might like to welcome him, but thank you.

QUESTIONS

The Chair. Thank you. Synod, we have 73 questions to try to get through tonight. You have all been emailed them over the weekend and there are paper copies on your seats. If you wish to ask a supplementary question, could I ask that in the interests of time you position yourself near a podium ready to speak? Do not forget to give your name and number and the diocese that you represent. May I also remind you, Synod, that supplementary questions are meant to do with the question that you have asked. May I also remind you that this is not an opportunity to make a speech. I will be strict in making sure that it is a question and it comes quite quickly in what you have to say; and, finally, that you are seeking information and not opinions from the person you are asking a question to.

We begin with Questions 1 to 21 which have been addressed to the House of Bishops.

Sexuality

1. *Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the House of Bishops inform us what progress has been made by individual dioceses to continue with the Shared Conversations in the context of their own diocesan family?

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft) replied on behalf of the Chair of

the House of Bishops: I know from conversations with fellow Bishops that the Shared Conversations have continued in different ways in different dioceses. Some dioceses took part in the conversations some time ago, others more recently. There is a sense in which over the last few months some will have been waiting for the Bishops' response and the General Synod debate before knowing how to take them forward; and whether or not to do so following a similar style and direction.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford: Does your answer imply that if the vote on Wednesday is lost, the Shared Conversations will wither and die? Many of us have found them incredibly helpful and useful in understanding the situation and would regret their passing.

The Bishop of Oxford: Thank you for your question, Jonathan, and, in short, no. I would like to begin the session of answers by saying how much the Shared Conversations have been appreciated by many who took part in them, often, as we heard earlier, at significant cost. I would pay tribute to all those with whom I shared conversations in the Diocese of Sheffield as our preparatory work, at the General Synod, particularly those who were in a triad with me, in the various conversations we have had in Bishops' gatherings and in the Synod. I think they have been mutually enriching and transformative and deepening. Therefore, on any scenario, for the outcomes of our debates this week I would hope that we would find ways of continuing deep and personal engagement around these questions in ways that are safe and facilitated and which build mutual understanding.

Dr William Belcher (Gloucester): One of the aims of the Shared Conversation process that we have been through over the last three years was that the full range of perspectives on this issue should be heard. Where dioceses now are planning to hold their own Shared Conversations, would the House of Bishops confirm their expectation that these diocesan conversations should be facilitated to enable that same full range of positions to be heard?

The Bishop of Oxford: I certainly think that is highly desirable. Having worked this through in one diocese and now beginning to reflect on it with others in a second diocese, it is actually very difficult to translate a three-day residential facilitated event with the depth that that engagement brings into an evening that might be relevant for a deanery synod or a group of PCCs spending a day or an evening together, but I certainly think the models for doing that, which include facilitation and the listening to alternative voices with respect and understanding in such a

way that we engage as people with each other, is a key part of this process.

2. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Paragraph 152 of the Pilling Report (GS 1929) reported statistics supplied in 2012 by the Office of National Statistics regarding the prevalence of homosexuality which were described as the “most recent British data”. Are these statistics still the most recent, reliable and accurate data available? If they have been superseded by more recent data, which is regarded as equally reliable and accurate by the House of Bishops, what are those equivalent statistics, and what is their source?

The Bishop of Willesden replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The latest data on sexual identity in England are from the Public Health England Report: “Producing modelled estimates of the size of the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population of England”, published January 2017.

This systematic review, based on 15 relevant national surveys representing the general adult population of England, estimated that 2.5% of people identified as LGB or “other”. Applying this to the census-based mid-2014 population estimate suggests that there are 1,358,848 people identifying as LGB or ‘other’ in England.

These figures should be used with caution. 2.5% is likely to be an underestimate as it is derived from general social surveys that did not have the specific aim of enumerating the LGB population. Assuming those responding “prefer not to say”, “don’t know” or gave no answer (ranging from 0-10% for individual surveys) were all LGB—which is unlikely—gives an upper limit for the estimate of 5.9%.

Mr Adrian Greenwood: Thank you, Bishop Pete, for the statistics. Would you recommend that these latest statistics from Public Health England published in January 2017 are circulated to the dioceses and other constituent parts of the Church of England so that they can be used in their teaching, policy documents and other publications on these issues, including in Church of England schools and colleges, until, of course, the national data is updated again?

The Bishop of Willesden: Statistics are above my pay grade. I defer to the Bishop of Manchester on these matters. What I would say is where we are producing documentation which tries to assess impact, obviously we try to use the most up-to-date statistics, and our statistics department is always on top of these things, so what you have here is an estimate from January 2017. It seems to me that we use those resources as they are required and when they are needed, but I do not think

we would go hunting for them unless we are compiling a report or a diocese is compiling a report which requires those statistics.

3. *Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the House give some examples of its learning (referred to in GS 2055) from having paid careful attention in the Shared Conversations to the experiences of LGBTI clergy and laity?

The Bishop of Willesden replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As Synod is aware, the Shared Conversations were conducted under the St Michael's House Protocols which entail strict confidentiality, so I cannot give individual examples. The facilitation team for the Conversations gave the House an anonymised summary of every one of the regional conversations which we studied with great care.

We were strongly impressed by the courage of those who made themselves vulnerable to each other in the process—those whose lives and beliefs made them feel vulnerable within the Church and those whose beliefs made them feel uneasy in contemporary society.

Among the ways the feedback shaped our thinking was that the conversations demonstrated relatively little appetite for changing the Church's teaching on marriage, but a considerable agreement that the tone in which we have conducted the debate so far was unhelpful and wounding. Both points, of course, are at the heart of our Report to Synod.

Revd Canon Simon Butler: I need to crave your indulgence, Chair, because there is an error of fact in the answer that the Bishop has provided. The St Michael's House Protocols say, "We expect participants to be free to use any information received". They do not require confidentiality, and I would ask the Bishop to correct that error in the answer a little later. Whatever the understanding of the protocols, the Bishop does seem to be quite willing to share one piece of learning from the Shared Conversations: that there is no appetite for change in the Church's teaching on marriage.

The Chair: Your question?

Revd Canon Simon Butler: So I would ask the Bishop if now that we know the St Michael's House Protocols positively encourage sharing on learning, he might share just a single piece of learning that the House has taken on board from that

group of Christians. After all, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.

The Bishop of Willesden: I am disappointed by the way in which people have represented what went on in the House when people were not present. We were actually discussing under enhanced protocols in the House and the College. It was a long process from September onwards. There were several meetings, both in the College and the House, and we used for our reflection some raw material—and I use that word “raw” advisedly—that came out of the Shared Conversations. The Report that you have before you in GS 2055 is a report. It does not seek to be a barometer of all the various information that came to us, but you can rest assured that we heard very clearly the voices both from the product and summary of the Shared Conversations and from our work in our own dioceses. You may not believe that, Synod, but that is actually how it is, and our learning was about how some of those questions of vulnerability, which have been expressed in the previous debate on the Agenda, had deeply affected people. You may not see that in the Report; it is a report and not a barometer.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): I would like to know if the Bishop was in a Shared Conversation other than with the House of Bishops. Given that I have been in three and there was obviously a very strong appetite for change, I must have been in the wrong Shared Conversations. I would like to understand how many Bishops actually took part in conversations in their regions.

The Bishop of Willesden: I am afraid I do not have that information.

4. *Canon Jenny Humphreys (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Re Paragraph 60 of the House of Bishops' Report GS 2055, will the “listening and learning with other churches in and beyond the Anglican Communion” include not only Primates, but also laity, clergy, and bishops from as wide a range of cultures and traditions as possible?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: “Listening to and learning with” other Churches should be an integral part of discipleship for all who would know the mind of Christ; in the words of the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, only “the whole Church knows the whole Truth.” The whole Church includes all the faithful, in all their cultural diversity.

Canon Jenny Humphreys: I thank the Bishop for his answer and ask, whether or

not Synod takes note of GS 2055, what steps are being taken to ensure that listening to and learning with the other Churches on this issue, being an integral part of discipleship, is core to good disagreement?

The Bishop of Norwich: I think there are two ways in which listening and learning continues. They are formal and informal. I am very conscious, for example, of inter-church discussions, not least between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in this country and elsewhere, and the Anglican Consultative Council. As well as that, I think some of the most interesting discussions with other cultures take place between dioceses which are linked with one another. In my diocese we are linked with the province of Papua New Guinea. Arranging formal consultations is very difficult, but one of the things that is very intriguing, as I went to Papua New Guinea last year, is to discover just how much you are asked about this in a culture where you would not necessarily expect to be asked about it and how much learning you do about the relationships as they are there and here. I think our links are really powerful and they do need to be very well used. I think in some dioceses they are.

5. *Revd Christopher Newlands (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In a recent statement to the press, the Bishop of Blackburn made the comment that “The Church of England has a zero tolerance policy on homophobia.” Is there a definition of what “The Church of England” considers to constitute homophobic behaviour?

The Bishop of Norwich replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: I refer the questioner to paragraphs 174-192 of the Report of the House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality (GS 1929 - the Pilling Report) - that is, the chapter entitled “Homophobia”.

Revd Christopher Newlands: I am grateful for the response pointing to the Pilling Report and also the work of *Don't Throw Stones*. I was a member of the group which produced that *Don't Throw Stones* Report which does not really answer the question of, “What is homophobia?”

The Chair: Could we have your question, please?

Revd Christopher Newlands: Is it not a fact that the Crown Prosecution Service defines a homophobic incident as “any incident which is perceived to be homophobic by the victim or any other person”? Can the Church not learn from that and adopt a similar definition?

The Bishop of Norwich: I am grateful for that information. I did not know that, although I am not surprised by it. I carefully reread that chapter of the Pilling Report, having recalled it, and I think it defined it in not a soundbite way. It talked about it being “a term in common use” and is “usually seen as analogous to racism or sexism” and “understood to combine unfair treatment, bullying and belittling”. It put that in a wider context and I think what was found in the Pilling Report bears repetition. I am grateful to you for drawing attention to it and I hope that members of Synod will go away and read that chapter, which we did not reproduce on the Order Paper to save the trees, but it would be worth looking at.

6. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Under what canonical provision is it possible for the House of Bishops or the General Synod to give “maximum freedom” to the clergy to bless (or give the appearance of blessing) as holy that which the Scriptures and the official teaching of the Church of England regard as sin?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Para 22 of GS 2055 refers to ‘interpreting the existing law and guidance to permit maximum freedom within it, without changes to the law or doctrine of the Church.’ Thus the phrase ‘maximum freedom’ has to be viewed in the context both of the current canonical provision as a whole (the parameters of which are set out in Annex 1 to GS 2055) and the Church’s teaching on marriage.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Chair, in order to ask this question I do need to refer to some bits in the Report. At paragraph 26, the bishops propose no change to ecclesiastical law or to the Church of England’s existing doctrinal position on marriage and sexual relationships. In paragraph 54 they refer to the Church’s teaching that sexual relations were properly conducted only within heterosexual marriage and in paragraph 63 to maintaining the common doctrine of the Church of England on marriage and relationships.

The Chair: Are we getting to the question?

Mr Clive Scowen: We are getting very close, Chair. In the light of that, and indeed of the Legal Office’s advice about what the Church’s current teaching is, is it intended that the maximum freedom, which is referred to in terms of the clergy’s practice, would extend to allowing services which sanctioned or condoned sexual relationships outside heterosexual marriage?

The Bishop of Norwich: I think the Report is very clear that maximum freedom is

spoken of within the parameters of our current law and guidance. I am surprised we fear, if we do, the words “maximum freedom” because they seem to me to have a bit of a Gospel ring and I hope that we do not take fear of maximum freedom in any of our disciplines.

7. *Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TEs)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that:

- the recent Report by the House of Bishops (GS 2055) states “The Church of England affirms ... that marriage is in its nature a union permanent and lifelong, for better for worse, till death them do part, of one man with one woman” (para 18, citing Canon B 30.1); and
- the House of Bishops feel that the new teaching document on marriage and relationships should “Reaffirm our current doctrine of marriage as between one man and one woman, faithfully, for life” (para 34);

when will Synod hear of plans to withdraw the advice to clergy on re-marriage after divorce in Church (Annex 1 to GS 1449), and to abolish the faculty system under Canon C 4.5, which permits the ordination and consecration of individuals who, being married, have a former spouse(s) still living, and/or are married to someone with a former spouse(s) still living?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House has no plans to take either step.

Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby: In order to provide a useful context for our take note debate on Wednesday and given the frequent emphasis in the Report that marriage is lifelong and that clergy must be exemplary, can we be provided with statistics or estimates in the three following areas: (1) an estimate of the number of remarriages after divorce conducted in church under the advice by the House of Bishops issued in 2002; (2) the number of faculties issued under Canon C 4.5 for the ordination or consecration of individuals who, being married, have a former spouse(s) still living and/or are married, et cetera, et cetera; and (3) finally, taking seriously the Report’s emphasis on the exemplary standards required of clergy and Bishops, may we have an estimate of the number of clergy and Bishops who have divorced or remarried after ordination or consecration or after ordination or consecration have married someone with a former spouse(s) still living at a time when they were lawfully exercising their orders?

The Bishop of Norwich: I do not know whether all those statistics are available or not. Some of them will be there, I would imagine, in the mission statistics. Others may require quite a bit of work to do. I cannot promise that they will be available

by Wednesday but there seems to me no reason why they should not be available, although quite what use you might make of them in relation to all this, I am not entirely sure.

8. *Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the course of its preparation of a new teaching document on Marriage and Relationships, will the House of Bishops undertake an exploration of the ethics, effectiveness and safeguarding risks of the practice of so-called “Reparative Therapy”?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: It would be a mistake to expect a teaching document, which ought to deal mainly in matters of doctrine and ethics, to cover every topic related to human relationships, but as the scope of the document has not yet been discussed beyond general terms, and the group who will be tasked with drafting it has not yet been nominated, I think the question is simply premature.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester): Is the House of Bishops aware of materials offered by Core Issues Trust, NARTH, Living Waters and others highlighting that expressions of sexuality can be fluid for many people, especially young people, and that those who request help to change behaviour may benefit from professional counselling and/or therapeutic help?

The Bishop of Norwich: I am sure some members of the House of Bishops rather than the House of Bishops as a whole are aware of what you are speaking of. I am not personally very familiar. In fact, I am sympathetic to the point Simon Butler’s raises in the question, although whether that can be addressed in the teaching document is another matter.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Is the Bishop aware of the statement of 16 January 2017 of the Council for Psychotherapy, the Royal College of General Practitioners and others, that “the practice of conversion therapy has no place in the modern world, is unethical, harmful and not supported by evidence”?

The Bishop of Norwich: I am aware of that. I am also aware of a Private Member’s Motion that has been placed before the Synod which relates to that. I am not meant to give an opinion, am I, so I shall not give an opinion.

9. *Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations (GS

2055), and bearing in mind paragraph 57 of that Report where it is stated that “The Church’s participation in the mission of God requires constant and prayerful attention both to the truth of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and to what is happening in the particular culture in which we live”; what recent research has been undertaken on attitudes amongst young people (particularly students) to the Church of England, given its stance on sexuality?

The Bishop of Ely (Rt Revd Stephen Conway) *replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops*: The Church of England has not commissioned any specific research in this area. However, we are committed to hearing the voice of children and young people to inform and shape the Church’s mission and ministry, including our work in education. This year we published a Report *Rooted in the Church* following research to identify some of the factors which root young people in the Church of England as they grow in their Christian faith. One of the key findings was that young people value church communities which welcome them and offer a safe space for asking questions.

Mr Anthony Archer: I thank the Bishop for his answer. Given the urgent task to preach the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a spiritually hungry generation of young people, might it not be found useful to conduct some fresh research on this given that all the evidence is that the vast majority of young people currently outside the Church are bemused at an issue which seems, as another speaker put it, to traumatise us within?

The Bishop of Ely: The Education Department at the moment does not have either the financial or the staffing resources to carry out such research. Even if that research were desirable, which it may be, there are not the resources available to us at the moment.

The Chair: Questions 10 and 11 I am going to take together.

10. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the Chair of the House please outline the process on the issue of human sexuality up to the end of the July group of sessions of General Synod?

11. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How much time will it take to complete the further work on human sexuality that needs to be undertaken, as referred to in their Report (paragraphs 23 and 26), and when will the House be able to report to General Synod?

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission, I should like to answer Mrs Minichiello Williams's two questions together.

Para 23 of GS 2055 sets out a number of steps that the House is minded to take in the light of Wednesday's group work and the take note debate. We judged it helpful to set these out.

But we do want to listen to members of the other two Houses on Wednesday, and have deliberately not sought to define further, or prescribe a timescale for, what happens next.

12. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the Church of England's current codes and practices towards LGBT members, particularly those who seek to be employed by Church institutions, what evidence is there to refute the charge that the Church of England is "institutionally homophobic"?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Church of England comprises many hundreds of employers. LGBT applicants and colleagues should be treated equally by Church employers. They, as with all other employees, should be welcomed and their difference valued and included in their work life. That said, it would be unrealistic to suggest this will be something that Church employers have always got right in terms of tone and action. I am able to explain more specifically the situation within the national Church institutions (NCIs). As employers they have tried to take proactive steps to ensure inclusion of LGBT colleagues. Their Chief Officers have sought to provide public and meaningful reassurance that employees are equally valued and important. Their employer values also state respect for difference and the value of diversity. They have recognised publicly that the wider institutional debate on human sexuality is particularly difficult for LGBT colleagues. They have reiterated the support that is in place through networks, equality advisers and HR. Staff have also been reminded of the NCIs employer commitment to protect employees. This is stated in their Dignity at Work Policy and also in the guidance that was provided to Synod members about working with staff.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: I am grateful for the Bishop's answer. Given the universally accepted Macpherson definition of institutional racism as a model, one could rightly define "institutional homophobia" as "the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their sexual

orientation. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantages LGBT people”.

The Chair: And your question?

Ms Jayne Ozanne: My question is: was it unwitting prejudice, ignorance or thoughtlessness that led to no co-opted LGBT member on the Bishop’s Working Party which you chaired?

The Bishop of Norwich: The Bishops’ Reflection Group was not a Working Party because it did not take evidence from anyone. It was simply a process group for the House of Bishops and the College of Bishops dealing with the subject. It did not write a Report itself, that came from the whole House. I did not appoint the group; I was appointed to chair it. I think that something that was internal to the House and its procedures was likely to have only people from within the House on it. I think if there are future groups that would follow this one, it will be absolutely essential for there to be people who are lesbian and gay on those groups, people from outside the House, because they would be the ones who would be producing the documents which might reshape, develop or even change Church teaching. Those are the things that are there for the future and I think this was a very preliminary and provisional exercise. It is important when we get to the Report on Wednesday to recognise its provisionality. It calls itself provisional. It is not in any sense the end of the process and what you are suggesting I would welcome entirely in the way we move forward.

13. *Miss Deborah Buggs (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Paragraph 63 of GS 2055 says “the House of Bishops has affirmed that stable, faithful homosexual relationships can ‘embody crucial social virtues’ of fidelity and mutuality”. This phrase is taken from a response to the Government’s consultation on civil marriage (paras 9 and 14) at <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1475149/s-s%20marriage.pdf>. Are responses to this sort of consultation normally seen as being authoritative statements beyond their original context? If so, what is the nature of the review and approval process for responses to consultations?

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The line in question was signed off by the House of Bishops and the Archbishops’ Council at the time of the Government consultation, so it can fairly be said to represent the mind of those bodies. It was also repeated

in the HoB guidance on same sex marriage, which reinforces its standing as the collective view of the Bishops.

Once submitted, there is no process for reviewing responses to consultations unless or until similar questions arise again.

The statement as it stands is not particularly contentious. Faithfulness and mutuality are not virtues unique to heterosexual marriage. But unpacking the question of how those virtues are best embedded in social practices and institutions is a subject on which Christians (including Bishops) will have a variety of views, so the sentence should not be pushed to carry more weight than it can bear.

14. *Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In view of the apparent erasure of people identifying as BTQIA from the recent Report GS 2055 Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations, what work is being undertaken to examine the issues facing these groups who seem often to have been ignored or bypassed in the process thus far?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: References to LGBTQIA (and similar formulations) refer to an alliance of people united in the challenge they wish to pose to what may be termed “conventional” sexual categorisations but, as most people who so identify would surely agree, having specific characteristics in each case. The questions which each group poses to Christian theology and ethics are similarly distinctive.

The House deliberately avoided referring to LGBTI, or any other extended acronym, because we were only too acutely aware that we had only touched on the L and the G.

I think the House was right to avoid treating diverse groups as if they were all one category, even though we recognised that they have interests in common. The question does demonstrate that there remain many issues concerning human sexuality that could keep us busy for some time to come.

Revd Canon Priscilla White: I am not sure you have answered my question, to be honest.

The Bishop of Norwich: I am sorry.

Revd Canon Priscilla White: So I am going to ask it again. What steps, if any, are planned to look at the issues facing bisexual, transgender, intersex and other people in relation to issues of sexuality and if there are not any planned steps, why not?

The Bishop of Willesden: There is no group set up to do that. Although we have spoken in the House of Bishops that it is essential that that is done, the sheer fact is we recognise it needs some specialist material, reflection and we need some assistance to do so and we simply have not given the time to do it. We recognise the importance of it and this is something we resolve to do. There is not the shaping of it there yet and we would welcome any ideas as to how you go about it.

15. *Revd Christopher Newlands (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the Report of the House of Bishops on *Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations* there is no reference to the situation for bisexual, transgender and intersex people, and their eligibility for services of blessings and marriage in Church of England churches. Will the House of Bishops be issuing a further statement to clarify their position?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: My answer to a previous question explained why the House had not extended its deliberations to include bisexual, transgender or intersex issues. It would not be helpful to address all these three categories as if they were identical. But the proposed new teaching document on marriage should help clarify that aspect of the question and there is, in any case, no restriction on clergy offering informal prayers for relationships involving B, T or I people.

16. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the debate concerning human sexuality in the Church of England there is an ongoing debate as to whether being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is a first or second-order issue in relation to salvation. What is the teaching of the House of Bishops on this matter?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The teaching of the House of Bishops is that sexual orientation has no bearing upon a person's salvation. All of us, however, may resist God's will for our salvation with choices that lead away from the path of life.

Sometimes Christians disagree deeply about whether or not this is true of particular choices. The Faith and Order Commission's Report *Communion and Disagreement*, circulated as GS Misc 1139 in July last year, presents a useful analysis of the issues here. In particular, it proposes a more nuanced typology than that of "first- or second-order issue", and notes that one of the characteristic features of truly serious disagreement in Church life is lack of consensus about the type of disagreement that is at stake.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: I am glad for the clarification that my sexuality is not a salvation issue. I think I understand from what Bishop Graham has said that it is what I do in relation to my sexuality that is the problem, not my desire for a woman or my love for her but it is the fact I act on it. Could I therefore ask, in all seriousness, given we understand that the Anglican Communion might break over it, that the Church of England faces a split over it and I cannot get ordained because of it, what actually is "it" for lesbians like myself? It is the nub of our discussions.

The Bishop of Norwich: I think the House of Bishops is entirely clear that no-one's orientation or sexuality is in any sense a barrier to their salvation. I would prefer, rather than the House of Bishops decides who is saved, to leave it to God myself, and I think that is what most of us do. I would not like to make any sort of judgment because it might reveal a rather inclusive theology that might not gain agreement from everyone.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: Forgive me, Bishop, but that was not my question.

The Chair: The Bishop has answered.

17. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What was the financial cost to the Church of England of each phase of the Shared Conversations, and has any assessment been made of whether the benefits of those exercises were proportionate to the money expended?

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The full cost of the Shared Conversations between September 2014 and August 2016 was £384,525. The majority of this cost (about £370,000) was for the costs of running the Regional Shared Conversations in the dioceses. The additional administration costs of the Shared Conversations at the July 2016 General Synod came to £14,572.

Of these costs, £300,000 was covered by the Church Commissioners. The remaining costs were met by the dioceses either through direct charges for regional conversations or through the usual Synod admin fee.

The organisers of the Shared Conversations have collected anonymised feedback from participants on an on-going basis. The feedback has generally been very positive. As yet, it is too early to assess the long-term benefits of the Shared Conversations exercise.

Mr Clive Scowen: If it had not been used to enable members of the Church to talk to each other about sex, could this third of a million pounds that was spent on the Shared Conversations have been allocated to help us all to talk to the people of England about Jesus Christ?

The Bishop of Willesden: I do not think that is actually what we need to think about. The fact is we embarked on this process and it is something which Synod and the House purposed to be useful. You have heard testimony from many folk that this was a worthwhile though difficult and dangerous experience for them. For us to try to solve a major internal question that faces the Church of England, and use money wisely on that, seems to me to be a perfectly appropriate use of the money. Of course, it is perfectly possible to conjecture the money could be used elsewhere, but there was a disciple who tried doing that and it was not a particularly helpful interchange that he had with Our Lord.

18. *Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The seventh bullet point in paragraph 34 of GS 2055 reads: “Explore the distinction that has opened up between the state’s conception of “equal marriage” and the Church’s doctrine of Holy Matrimony, and consider the implications of this.” Why are the words “equal marriage” bracketed by inverted commas while Holy Matrimony is given capital letters?

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: “Holy Matrimony” is a phrase used in the liturgy and formularies of the Church of England, including the Book of Common Prayer and the Canons, with varying conventions regarding initial capitals, including initial capitals for both words, as in paragraph 34 of GS 2055. “Equal marriage” is a phrase used by some people in the contemporary context to describe the situation brought about by legislation such as the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013. The use of inverted commas is intended to convey that this terminology is contested and would not necessarily be used by all.

Revd Canon Giles Goddard: Thank you, Bishop Pete, for your answer. That may have been the intention of putting “equal marriage” in inverted commas, but the trouble is when you use inverted commas in that way it is often seen to imply that you think something is not real. I think the way the Report read implies that the House of Bishops thought that equal marriage is not real in some sense, causing great pain and distress to many people. How does the House of Bishops intend to undo the damage that has been caused by poor use of language in this Report?

The Bishop of Willesden: I do not accept that we have done that. I think the point about the phrase “equal marriage” is not actually what the law says; it is what folk in society describe this particular issue as. The problem we have got is that the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 established an understanding of marriage which for the first time split between the way in which we have understood marriage in both Church and State over the years. It established a new pattern of understanding which I do not think the parliamentary drafters actually thought through. So it is quite legitimate for some people within Synod to say they do not accept it as being an expression of equality between what the Government established and what the Church has understood and what we have shared together over the years, and we have never really resolved that particular issue. I would much prefer us to use the language that is in the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, which is a provision within society, but I do not think that we should trade whether this is a phrase that can be used within the Church with a degree of unanimity; it clearly cannot.

Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford): Would the Bishop accept that the first distinction between the law of the State and the role of the Church was made by the Deceased Wife’s Sister’s Marriage Act 1907?

The Bishop of Willesden: I think the issue you have got is that there is an understanding of marriage expressed in our Canons which is consonant with what the State held up until the day before yesterday. Of course, there are slight deviations but the reality is that we held together something which we shared as a nation. That is no longer true.

19. *Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the recent growth in the number of assurances required of ordination candidates on matters such as the Five Guiding Principles and the House of Bishops’ Guidelines on Human Sexuality, what plans are being developed to require candidates to affirm the credal doctrine of the Trinity, defined

in Article 8 of the 39 Articles, that “the whole Three Persons are co-eternal and co-equal”?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Declaration of Assent made by all ordained ministers in the Church of England at their ordination and each time they take up a new appointment thereafter requires them to declare their belief in “the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness”. Besides the explicit mention of the “catholic creeds” in this context, the “historic formularies of the Church of England” include the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby: Thank you, Bishop. Given the high importance rightly placed in the Ordinal as Bishops as “guardians of the faith”, when might we expect a teaching document from the House of Bishops on the Trinity, reaffirming that “in this Trinity none is afore, or after other, none greater or less than another; But the whole three Persons are co-eternal; and co-equal”, as stated in the Creed of St Athanasius, contained in the Book of Common Prayer, affirmed by the Thirty-nine Articles and is clearly at odds with teaching the subordination of the Second Person to the First Person.

The Bishop of Norwich: That is a theological task that you have challenged us with. I think I will consult the Bishop of Coventry and see whether the Faith and Order Commission has a bit of time. Nonetheless, one of the things that I know from Directors of Ordinands and theological teaching institutions that they would do is to make certain that those who are being ordained recognise the substance of the teaching of the Church, not least in relation to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and all those documents which make up our understanding of the faith which are referred to in the Declaration of Assent. That does seem to me to be absolutely central to what preparation those to be ordained receive. You raise an important point.

20. *Revd Mark Lucas (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of Bishops: The Report from the House of Bishops on Marriage and Same Sex Relationships (GS 2055) endorses the Church’s traditional teaching on marriage—one man, one woman for life—yet does not mention the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1:10 which upholds that same teaching on behalf of the Anglican Communion. What plans does the House of Bishops have for publicly endorsing Resolution 1:10 to diminish the threat of fracture within the Communion in general and especially the Global South which represents the vast majority of worldwide Anglicans?

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2055 gives an overview of the process in which the House of Bishops has been engaged since the last sessions of Synod and outlines a number of areas for further work. It does not include a survey of relevant texts and statements, such as may be found in the Report of the House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality (GS 1929), generally known as the Pilling Report. Paragraph 101 of that Report identifies Resolution 1:10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference as one of “three key statements which define the current position of the Church of England about human sexuality” (see also paragraph 106).

Revd Mark Lucas: Thank you for affirming the historic place of Lambeth 1:10 in your answer, but how are the Bishops looking forward to affirm the historic standing of the Church of England in line with the majority of the worldwide Anglican Communion, especially in light of the Bishops’ recent comment that they may be reshaping, developing and changing the Church’s teaching?

The Bishop of Norwich: The Church’s teaching always gets reshaped for each succeeding culture. That does not mean that it necessarily changes in its essentials. It is certainly true that Resolution 1:10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference has been referred to in a good many of our documents and formularies. Having been a veteran of a number of Lambeth Conferences I am surprised that is the only one that people ever mention. There are resolutions on sexuality from the 1978 and 1998 Lambeth Conferences, which we do tend to ignore, and I am not entirely certain why one Lambeth Conference Resolution is elevated above all others. It seems to me to be against the spirit of Lambeth Conference Resolutions, which are not statements of faith for the whole Church; they are resolutions of a gathering of Bishops at a particular time in a particular place.

Mrs Susannah Leafe (Truro): For the third time of asking, does the House of Bishops have any plans to affirm the teaching of Lambeth 1:10 in the future?

The Bishop of Norwich: I think if you read GS 2055 you will see that is mentioned as one of the documents which has been part of our history in this matter. I think to give it the status of Holy Writ is just not right in relation to a Lambeth Conference Resolution.

Mrs Susannah Leafe: That is not what we are asking.

The Bishop of Norwich: That I think is what you are asking for and I would not want it to happen, although I am giving an opinion again.

21. *Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: In the context of the Renewal and Reform agenda and the urgent task facing the Church of England in fostering a 50% increase in vocations by 2020, what plans exist for Ministry Division to monitor the effects on recruitment of potential ordinands not being sponsored through their inability to provide assurances in accordance with *Issues in Human Sexuality*?

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: I agree wholeheartedly with the note of urgency in the question about the need to increase the number and widen the range and diversity of candidates for ministry. Ministry Division staff do not monitor the individual outcomes of discernment processes in a diocese. However, through their regular interaction with Directors of Ordinands (DDOs) they are aware of the issues which DDOs face in their work and can note general trends.

Mr Anthony Archer: I thank the Bishop for his answer. Might it not make sense, given the prominence of the point in GS 2055, to monitor this closely? Will MinDiv do this, given that if we are not careful as a Church we might be losing out on otherwise excellent ordinands when we can least afford to?

The Bishop of Oxford: Thank you. The situation has been reasonably stable for some time. One of the suggestions in the document we will consider later in the week is that we do some fresh work and fresh thinking in this area, which will take some time before implementation. I am sure when that fresh work is implemented it will be extremely timely to monitor carefully and closely the impact of that on vocations into the future.

22. *Revd Andrew Foreshew-Cain (London)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Given the detail available on Candidates' Sponsoring forms, how many candidates in Civil Partnerships have there been in the last two years and what percentage have assented to the House of Bishops' *Issues in Human Sexuality*? Is the Chair aware of how many potential candidates have refused to do so and withdrawn from or been denied consideration?

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: In 2015 seven candidates from a total number of 581 indicated on their registration form that they were in a civil partnership. In 2016 the same number

from a total of 591 candidates indicated this. 100% of candidates attending Bishops' Advisory Panels (BAPs) in 2015 and 2016 had a note in their sponsoring papers to confirm that the Director of Ordinands had discussed *Issues in Human Sexuality* with the candidate and the candidate was content to live within the guidelines contained in the Report. Since this discussion is held solely in the dioceses, the Ministry Division has no information about those candidates who in the context of a discussion in the diocese have refused to agree. Nor am I aware of how many candidates have been in that situation.

Revd Andrew Foreshow-Cain: I want to welcome GS 2055 suggesting they might abandon the intrusive questioning of lesbian, gay and bisexual candidates about their intimate lives. Paragraph 54 of that same document suggests that all candidates are going to be questioned and essentially the Church's teaching is that all sexual activity should be within heterosexual marriage. I want to ask the Bishops will there be a requirement for either public or private repentance from candidates who have strayed from that standard and are they proposing to produce public or private liturgies to be used for that repentance?

The Bishop of Oxford: That work has yet to be done. We shall see what those charged with that responsibility emerge with and be listening very carefully to the insights of the Synod on Wednesday as to how it should be done.

Revd Amanda Fairclough (Liverpool): I cross-reference the Bishop of Oxford's answer to this question with that to question 30. I am wondering why is it that it is possible to give with such alacrity and accuracy the stated civil partnership status of ordinands and yet similar information is not available about the breakdown of clergy marriages.

The Bishop of Oxford: That is not because one is relatively more important or significant than the other. It is simply because as ordinands are passing through the selection process statistics are collated and held nationally about them and it is not the case that we collate statistics nationally from dioceses other than in the limited way referred to in the answer to the later question.

23. *Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: What representations has the Mission and Public Affairs Council made to the Government in respect of the oath of allegiance to British values for all holders of public office that the Communities Secretary, Sajid Javid, is reportedly considering (Sunday Times, 18 December 2016) in response to a report by Dame Louise Casey, in particular having regard to her answer in

Parliament on 9 January 2017 to the Communities and Local Government Committee that “religious conservatism” can be “anti-equalities”, with the implications of this for anyone holding and expressing a traditional view of marriage?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied as Vice-Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: There have been no Government proposals, nor has a consultation been issued on the subject of an oath of allegiance. Accordingly, no representations have been made by the Council to the Government.

Mr David Lamming: Can Synod be assured that if and when the Government does consult on this particular proposal for an oath of allegiance to British values that the Mission and Public Affairs Council will give appropriate representations, in particular in support of the issue of religious freedom which is contained within the concerns raised by the question?

The Bishop of St Albans: Yes.

24. *Mr Jeremy Harris (Chester)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: During a parliamentary hearing on 9 January 2017, Dame Louise Casey, the Government’s “integration tsar”, indicated that “it is not OK” for church schools to be “anti-gay marriage” (she referred to “Catholic schools”). What position will Church of England schools take on so-called same-sex marriage?

The Bishop of Ely (Rt Revd Stephen Conway) replied as Chair of the National Society Council: All pupils are entitled to good quality sex and relationships education (SRE) which enables them to understand the world in which they live, form their own views and make decisions about relationships. The Church of England teaches that marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman. SRE will explain the Church’s teaching on marriage as well as the legislation that has made it possible for same sex couples to marry in England and Wales. *Valuing All God’s Children* sets out this legal framework and offers helpful guidance demonstrating that it is possible to engage with a range of sincerely held views in a way that is consistent with the Christian ethos of love and welcome and avoids any suggestion of being dismissive of people or other views, particularly emphasising the need to stand against homophobia wherever and whenever it is to be found.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester): Is the Church of England aware

of a number of schoolteachers who have been disciplined for seeking to uphold the Church's teaching on marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman? What will the Church of England do in order to defend those teachers?

The Bishop of Ely: Certainly in Church schools, the only schools over which we have any authority at all, teachers are clearly able to uphold the Church's teaching on marriage. Obviously it is also important that in schools children find themselves in a safe and supportive place at all times.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams: At the Christian Legal Centre we are dealing with four teachers who are currently under disciplinary measure for upholding that teaching.

The Chair: Mrs Minichiello-Williams, are you wanting to ask another supplementary?

Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams: In response to that.

The Chair: I am afraid you are not able to, but anyone else can.

25. *Revd Bertrand Olivier (London)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: Given the fact that, according to a 2012 Stonewall report, more than half of LGBT pupils have experienced homophobic bullying in their schools, is the National Society Council aware of Stonewall's recent initiative that is freely available to 500 faith schools to help them tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (HBT), and what is it doing to encourage full participation?

The Bishop of Ely (Rt Revd Stephen Conway) replied as Chair of the National Society Council: In May 2014, following the Archbishop of Canterbury's public commitment to eradicating homophobic stereotyping and bullying in our schools, The Church of England Education Office published a guidance document *Valuing All God's Children*. The guidance has proved to be an excellent resource for all schools and is widely viewed as having made a significant contribution to work in this important area. Stonewall are very impressed with our resource, recognise its effectiveness and have agreed to use part of the grant they received from the Department for Education to fund our own development of it to include material on transphobic bullying. This newly updated guidance, in addition to materials and programmes offered by organisations such as Stonewall and Barnardo's, will provide schools with a variety of resources to use as appropriate for their own context.

Revd Bertrand Olivier: Thank you, Bishop Stephen, for this encouraging answer. Given the recent reports from Oasis that state that 52% of young LGBT people report self-harm either now or in the past and 44% of young LGBT people have considered suicide, what safeguards do we have in Church of England schools to help lead the identification and support of vulnerable young LGBT children in our care?

The Bishop of Ely: As I said in my written answer, *Valuing All God's Children* provides a framework with which our schools closely to identify and support children who find themselves in this situation, which of course is deeply to be regretted. Also, of course, we are working to update that piece of work to ensure that children are not facing transphobic opposition or violence either. As far as guarantees are concerned, these are things to be guaranteed by schools, but we would encourage such good practice to support children who are in any way vulnerable.

26. *Revd Andrew Foreshew-Cain (London)* asked the Chair of the Council for Christian Unity: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway has recently approved (30 January 2017) the marriage of same-sex couples in its churches. What 'consequences' does the CCU believe there will be for our relationship with that Church within the community of Churches that have signed the Porvoo Agreement?

Dr Rachel Jepson replied as Vice-Chair of the Council for Christian Unity: The Porvoo Agreement, signed in 1996, which enabled the Porvoo Communion of Churches to come into being, was a landmark in the history of ecumenism, and we continue to value the unique relationship that the Church of England has with other European churches through it.

As a communion of churches who belong to two different global communions—the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation—its difference in character from such a global communion needs to be understood. Member churches will continue to differ on a wide range of subjects, and to benefit from the many bonds between them.

Revd Andrew Foreshew-Cain: Thank you very much for the response. Given that the Porvoo Agreement allows for interchangeability of ministry between the Church of England and the Porvoo Communion Churches, would a “married to their same-sex partner” minister of those Churches be licensed in this country if they were to

come in with a job to go to?

Dr Rachel Jepson: Just to be aware, clergy from churches in the Porvoo Communion are eligible to serve in the Church of England. I quote the Porvoo Declaration, section B5, which states that: "By invitation and in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force" and insofar as they would be able to minister in the Church of England they do so under the discipline of the Church of England which has not changed on this matter.

Finance Committee

27. *Mr Keith Cawdron (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Finance Committee: Please provide a report showing the following information:

- (i) The funding provided for each Diocese in 2016-17 for ministry support under the "Darlow" formula;
- (ii) The funding provided for each Diocese in 2016-17 under the programme of Strategic Development Funding;
- (iii) The funding allocated to each diocese in 2017-18 and 2018-19 under the programme of Support for Lower Income Communities, showing transitional funding separately;
- (iv) The funding allocated to each Diocese in 2017-18 and 2018-19 for restructuring funding;
- (v) The funding so far promised to each diocese for each year from 2017-18 onwards under Strategic Development Funding;
- (vi) The funding so far awarded to each Diocese for capacity building under Strategic Development Funding; and

The agreed allocation to date of the £6m of Strategic Development Funding set aside for non-diocesan purposes and the £1.3m set aside for research, additional data capacity, and the dissemination of learning.

Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Finance Committee: I have arranged for a report with this information to be put on the noticeboard. It is available by email on request to lynnette.bonner@churchofengland.org. The Strategic Investment Board will consider how information around grants can best be provided on a regular basis.

Mr Keith Cawdron: I thank Canon Spence for the information that he has provided, but would he please reconsider the decision taken only to provide general and non-specific information on the use of the money allocated for non-diocesan purposes? Will he also reconsider the decision not to give specific information on the allocation of transitional funding which was requested in the question asked originally? Will he reflect on the fact that giving vague information does give the implication that there is something to hide?

Canon Dr John Spence: Keith, thank you very much for the question. Can I just take my hat off to all of the officers who have provided a legion of information in the time since the question was asked. There is nothing at all to hide about this. The transition finance is there for use and the restructuring finance is there for the use of dioceses according to what they want to use it for. In terms of the non-diocesan piece, as the programme unwinds we will be very happy to provide you with those details. There is nothing at all to worry about on that score.

Ministry Council

28. *Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What evidence is there to suggest that theological colleges understand how to change communication of our Christian faith so that its meaning becomes clearer to the majority of the population who question its relevance to their lives, and how are teaching methods changing to accommodate that understanding?

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: Mission, evangelism and the capacity of ordinands as passionate communicators of the Christian faith are at the heart of the curriculum in Theological Education Institutions (TEIs). Mission modules within the Durham Common Awards emphasise understanding the culture where the Church is situated, in apologetics, defending the faith and creative ways of communicating faith. Modules require students to put that communication into practice and to reflect on learning gained from their experience in contexts. The growth of context based training enables deep engagement in those contexts and gives them tools to develop their skills and practice. Many TEIs give students opportunities to share their faith through corporate mission activities, including in conjunction with the current Evangelism Task Group initiative for ordinands to work with bishops in evangelism. All TEIs have in their curriculum attention to preaching which includes a focus on clarity of communication and the message being proclaimed.

Mr Gavin Oldham: More specifically, is it now mandatory to include working with young people in ordination training? If not, why not since these are age cohorts where affiliation with the Church is lowest?

The Bishop of Oxford: Thank you, Gavin. I agree with your sense of priorities. I would be surprised if there was any recognised programme of training which did not include working with young people or if an ordinand could pass through training without some experience of doing that and reflecting upon it, both in their initial training and in their curacy.

Revd Charles Read (Norwich): Referring back to Gavin's original question asking for evidence, could the Bishop of Oxford say to what extent the inspection and monitoring processes test to see how well TEIs are doing on the matters that Gavin refers to in his question?

The Bishop of Oxford: Thank you, Charles. To some degree they test that. We have been in a process of change and adoption of the Common Awards in recent years, which is only just now beginning to settle as the first students come through to graduating from the Common Awards. I would envisage it would be appropriate in the next triennium to explore exactly which modules are being taught and how. It is also the case that with the new RME funding arrangements, as and when those come into place, hopefully this autumn, there would be, I hope, increased dialogue between Bishops and dioceses and training institutions about what kind of training is needed and how it will be delivered.

29. *Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: When recent Government legislation was introduced to compel employers with annual pay bills in excess of £3 million to pay a substantial levy to participate in a new apprenticeship scheme, what steps were taken to advise the Government that this presented a significant challenge to the Church at a time of acute financial pressure, and that the Church is a stipendiary and not a salaried body?

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Steven Croft) replied as *Chair of the Ministry Council:* Staff from the NCIs have been working with the Department of Education to develop options for apprenticeships which enable the Church to more than recover the levy taken through the stipend payment process and to achieve a net financial benefit. Representations were made by the Second Church Estates Commissioner to the Secretary of State and other ministers that as office holders rather than employees clergy should be exempt from the levy. These were not

accepted as under National Insurance Contributions legislation the Church Commissioners have an employer liability which makes the stipends of priests subject to the levy. Therefore a constructive approach has been taken to gain maximum benefit from the apprenticeship scheme for the national church and dioceses. It is recognised that it has significant potential, including for the Church to support the purpose of increasing skills and opportunities, particularly among young people seeking qualifications and good employment options.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford: When are we going to find out exactly what is going to happen with this change given that a very prominent member of the Archbishops' Council told a gathering of the Chairs of the House of Clergy: "This is merely an exercise of the Government to raise money for a project it doesn't want to fund"?

The Bishop of Oxford: We do not know exactly when we will have an outcome from this process of negotiation that is being pursued between the Archbishops' Council and the Government on drawing down funds from the apprenticeship levy. However, it is being pursued very diligently and very seriously. We see significant benefits for the Church across a number of areas of training.

Revd Canon Jane Charman (Salisbury): Given that all dioceses may not be in a position to benefit from the funding that is being raised by the apprenticeship levy, would it be wise to consider whether the levy should be borne by the national Church instead of being apportioned to dioceses as presently proposed?

The Bishop of Oxford: Thank you, Jane. I am sure that question has been heard and can be weighed and considered as part of taking this exploration forward.

30. *Ms Christina Baron (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: In the light of paper HC(17)1 on Clergy Wellbeing (due to be considered at the meeting of the House of Clergy earlier today), can the Council please supply figures for the breakdown of clergy marriages, by age, sex and clerical role?

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The Ministry Division does not collect or hold this information. Anonymised returns are regularly received from diocesan bishops with information about the breakdown of clergy marriages in their dioceses for the purposes of national monitoring and the development of policy in the House of Bishops. In view of the confidential and sensitive nature of this information, it is not available outside the House.

Ms Christina Baron: Given that these figures exist, so no additional cost would be incurred in collecting them, would it be helpful to the Ministry Division in its work to have figures at least for trends of clergy marital breakdowns over time?

The Bishop of Oxford: Thank you. That may well be helpful and may well be a useful input to the overall reflection on clergy wellbeing that is taking place and which I welcome. We will, as the Ministry Division in Council, consider that question carefully.

Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells): In view of the work that the House of Clergy is looking to take forward about clergy wellbeing in general, will the House of Bishops commit to at least supplying that information about clergy marriage breakdown to that Working Party so they actually know what we are dealing with?

The Bishop of Oxford: I cannot commit the House of Bishops to a decision, but what I can commit to is careful consideration being given to that request and in general everything possible that can be done being done to support the work on clergy wellbeing.

31. *Ven. Jackie Searle (Gloucester)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: In the last five years how many stipendiary clergy have been granted early retirement on the grounds of ill health? Is there any evidence that this number is increasing?

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The annual figures for stipendiary clergy retirement on grounds of ill health from 2012 to 2016 are available on the noticeboard. There is no evident pattern of increase over this period.

The following table of information was provided on the noticeboard:
Annual figures for clergy retirement on grounds of ill health

Year	No of ill health retirements among stipendiary clergy	Average age
2010	41	59.54
2011	41	59.26
2012	56	59.48
2013	61	60.04
2014	37	59.33

2015	54	59.71
2016	38	60.74

Grand average: 59.73

Note: these figures have been supplied by the Church of England Pensions Board. They are from data that applies to the pension scheme as a whole. Stipendiary clergy make up 95% of those in the scheme.

Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee

32. *Mr Timothy Hind (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: Given that clergy wellbeing is not merely the province of the House of Clergy, and that there appears to be a number of institutions within Church House with some responsibility for it, which institution, and which division within it, holds overall responsibility for clergy wellbeing in the NCIs?

Ven. Dr Michael Gilbertson (Chester) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: Wellbeing is multifaceted. The experience and perception of one's physical, mental and emotional health, personal and professional relationships, sense of vocation, financial security, and of networks and institutional structures all contribute to a sense of wellbeing. Those facets are often interrelated and call for a holistic approach to improving wellbeing.

Just as wellbeing is multifaceted and interrelated, so is the response of the NCIs' divisions and departments. For example, the *Living Ministry Project*, longitudinal research into clergy wellbeing and ministerial outcomes, has involved collaboration between Clergy HR, Ministry Division and Research and Statistics.

RACSC keeps Terms of Service under review in the context of Renewal and Reform, drawing from expertise and insight across the NCIs, diocesan officers, the wider Church and others currently engaging in this space. We welcome the House of Clergy's work as an opportunity to explore how this may be developed in the future.

Mr Timothy Hind: Following on from question 30 and the answers given, and given the very helpful answer that you have just given, how can we have a holistic view of this issue when some of the statistics are not widely available?

Ven. Dr Michael Gilbertson: I can simply refer you to the answer that you have

just been given that we will do our best. If the statistics are not available then we cannot do what you are asking for. I can say that we are working as a committee with a whole range of different people and we will be taking forward with the House of Clergy from the discussions that we had earlier today about the possibility of a Covenant for Clergy Wellbeing. We are very committed to this area but it is a difficulty of getting the information that you are asking for always. We will do our best.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Can I ask you as Vice-Chair to make clear to the House of Bishops and House of Laity that it is not the intention of the House of Clergy to take this forward on its own but to work holistically with the whole Synod and by virtue of the Resolution of the House this afternoon we intend to bring this matter before the whole Synod in July.

Ven. Dr Michael Gilbertson: Absolutely. That was very much the tenor of the discussion earlier on and I can say categorically that RACSC and indeed the other committees that were mentioned will be working very closely with you. I think the idea is to bring something to Synod. It is not just the House of Clergy working at this by themselves but with a whole range of other people, and we will gladly do that with you.

Mission and Public Affairs Council

33. *Mrs Enid Barron (London)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Following the resolution on the EU Referendum which was passed by Synod on 8 July 2016, which dioceses have identified champions to assess what more the Church could do to bring communities together?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied as Vice-Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: There is no obligation on dioceses to inform MPA about things like this. The person appointed as champion in the Diocese of Chelmsford has discussed the role with MPA staff and is thinking creatively about how he can make a worthwhile difference in divided communities. But as yet, there does not seem to be a critical mass of diocesan appointments which would enable common approaches and shared learning to develop. That may come as the nature of the post-Brexit landscape becomes clearer.

It is important to remember that the Church's ministry of reconciliation in local communities goes on day by day, often under the radar, through the faithful discipleship of numerous laity as well as parish clergy, chaplains and others. The

appointment of champions is only one element in this.

Mrs Enid Barron: Bishop, I am grateful for your answer and what you say about the work of reconciliation that is going on within dioceses, but you say that much of it does not hit the radar and that there is not a critical mass of champions. My question is: is there anything more that the MPA can do to encourage and increase the amount of reconciliation ministry given how important it is to enunciate those core Christian values of inclusion and building bridges and love? I do think that this type of work needs a higher profile possibly than it has at the moment.

The Bishop of St Albans: I think there are huge amounts that can be done. There are massive issues that we are grappling with. On the language of having a champion in each diocese, I want to say we have 10,000 clergy champions across the country and lots of Readers, indeed millions of people who are working at grassroots in their places of work and so on. It seems to me this is a really important issue that we need everybody to engage in in all sorts of places to try and think about where we are going, not least at the moment with huge opportunities. I am aware some dioceses, for example, are thinking about rebooting their European links with other partners. It seems to me this is a moment of opportunity for us and we need to grasp those as best we can. I am very grateful to you for raising this question and giving us a chance to think a little more about it.

34. *Mrs Enid Barron (London)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Following the resolution on the EU Referendum which was passed by Synod on 8 July 2016, what action has been taken by dioceses and by the national Church to investigate the divisions in society underlying the Referendum vote and to take steps to work with civil institutions to address them with the aim of building a generous and forward-looking society?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied as Vice-Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: A number of MPA staff are involved in post-Brexit initiatives with and within dioceses. The document, *Hatebusters and Neighbourlovers*, issued in July, lists organisations, campaigns and actions by dioceses in which active steps are being taken to address divisions within communities post-Brexit. The Mission Theology Advisory Group has done some in-depth research in Thurrock and Lincolnshire to identify particular issues for Churches arising from Brexit and some resources for more focused social engagement at local level will be forthcoming. The blog, *Reimagining Europe*, hosts an ongoing conversation about a Brexit for the common good.

Mrs Enid Barron: My supplementary to this question ties up with what you have said. The MPA answer to me is very much about work being done in England to bring about reconciliation. Given that the tenor of the debate on the Brexit motion was also about what we need to do to make links with our European friends, I would like to know what plans the MPA has to strengthen our links and build reconciliation with our friends in Europe in order to promote human flourishing throughout the world.

The Bishop of St Albans: Well, I think MPA will do all it can to encourage, but the Church of England is actually a whole lot of different dioceses and, indeed, in a diocese like mine there are many individual parishes which have had longstanding links with European colleagues in the Roman Catholic Church, in the Lutheran Churches and so on. Again, I would like to reiterate what I said earlier: it seems to me this is a wonderful opportunity to think how the Churches can actually forge new links, have deeper discussions and come up with imaginative ways of us expressing our European ideal, even if it is not going to be expressed through the EU and through its institutions.

35. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: What consideration, if any, has the Council given to deciding from a Christian perspective whether the use of representative democracy (such as through Members of Parliament or councillors) is preferable in principle to the use of direct democracy (exercised through referenda) to make important national or local decisions?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied as Vice-Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: The Council has not given any consideration to this question. Given the wide variety of forms which both representative and direct democracy take around the world, I am not sure that it is possible to generalise about the two approaches. Many of us remember the controversies surrounding proportional representation in this country, which suggested that different forms of representative democracy have different strengths and weaknesses—and the example of the Swiss system involving frequent referenda is a very different thing to the occasional use of direct democracy in the UK. In all systems, the devil is in the detail—and that is as near to a theological statement on the issue as I think it would be wise to go on such a general question.

36. *Revd Charles Read (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: To what extent has the Mission and Public Affairs Division been

able to respond to the many issues raised by the acts of the new President of the United States of America since his inauguration and the British Government's response to them?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied as Vice-Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: MPA's approach is not to attempt a running commentary on current affairs but to support the Church in its efforts to serve the common good. So, for example, our work on the refugee crisis—which includes supporting the bishops when they lobby ministers, and resourcing dioceses and parishes to welcome refugees into their communities—long predates recent changes to US policy and expresses our position on that issue very clearly. MPA's engagement with some of the moral issues of the day was commended recently for “basing its ethical conclusions on a rigorous engagement with the evidence.” By continuing to model that evidence-based approach to ethical and social issues, the Church can offer an example and encouragement to all those who confront the potentially corrupting pressures of politics—not least those who bear the burdens and face the temptations of high office.

Revd Charles Read: I am tempted to say to the Bishop of St Albans thank you for this, which, of course, is the best answer to any question we have ever heard in Synod. I am very encouraged by what you say and the answer, but could you say something about to what extent MPA proactively offers advice or information to people in public life and to what extent MPA waits to be asked to offer such advice?

The Bishop of St Albans: I think the MPA has a particular role within the synodical system. For example, with this particular question you are asking, I am aware, for example, that quite a number of bishops immediately and very quickly spoke out without feeling—quite rightly—that they needed to consult MPA. For example, the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of Durham and Liverpool, among others, have spoken out. That has been picked up and reported very widely in the media both in newspapers and, indeed, there are tens of thousands of people who have been following the Facebook and the Twitter discussions. Again, I think this is somewhere where, of course, there is a role for MPA but, even more importantly, please do not look to MPA with its very limited resources and limited time. This is something we need grassroots to engage with in every area. I think if we can all be engaging, we are much more likely to make progress.

37. *Very Revd Dr Frances Ward (Deans)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: How have the Church of England and the Anglican Communion responded to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* of May 2015, and what further

response is planned to enable a global ecumenical response to address the very serious environmental issues the world now acutely faces, and which are increasingly borne by the poorest communities of the world?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied as Vice-Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: *Laudato Si* immediately preceded the Paris Climate Summit. Our involvement included pilgrims walking from London to Paris, two bishops leading events in Paris and Germany, and the Second Lambeth Declaration signed by faith leaders, and also Synod members. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Pope initiated a day of prayer to begin Creationtide, for which we produced new liturgical resources. Dioceses are supporting green energy, managing churchyard trees and enhancing biodiversity. The EWG received briefings on the science of climate change and is working with the St Paul's Institute on an event for faith communities, politicians, and the water industry on the importance of churches in the management of water. One member briefed civil servants of the Department of Business, Energy and Business Strategy. Note the fringe presentations on the Transition Pathway Initiative, the Church's new investment research tool, and launching a tree initiative for London's churches.

Very Revd Dr Frances Ward: Given the excellent initiative of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*, what plans are there for a more enthusiastic and sustained response from the Church of England and Anglican Communion? For example, can the next Lambeth Conference engage globally with the Roman Catholic Church and other Christians to address the challenges facing the environment, particularly in those parts of the world where those challenges are increasingly acute?

The Bishop of St Albans: The answer is, yes, I am sure the Lambeth Conference can. In fact, I would be astonished if that is not going to be a theme that is going to recur again and again. It seems to me there is a lot of work going on. We have listed some of it here. There are other areas. I regularly lead meetings of bishops to, for example, Defra, which I have a particular interest in and I am the President of the Rural Coalition. We are doing a lot of work with other groups and bodies to try and engender this—I think you used the word—enthusiasm for it. Again, I think this is a grassroots thing. A lot of very good work is going on at parish level, actually working at practical ways of everything from bees and pollinators right through to the other things that are mentioned here. Can I commend the Synod Environmental Group, which is doing important work.

38. *Revd Canon Catherine Grylls (Birmingham)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Given that the first anniversary of the excellent A Rocha initiative, EcoChurch, has just occurred on 5 February, and given that the House of Bishops launched Eco Dioceses in September of last year, how many Dioceses/Cathedrals/Churches have signed up for EcoChurch and how many bronze/silver/gold awards have been made to date?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied as Vice-Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Nine Cathedrals—Guildford, Portsmouth, Salisbury, Peel (Isle of Man), Bradford, St Paul's, Coventry, Chelmsford and Leicester—have signed up as eco-churches. 488 churches have signed up, of which 62% are Anglican. Five Dioceses have registered, with two more in the pipeline, and others having conversations which we hope will lead to them joining the EcoDiocese movement. There have been 65 awards. These start with bronze and progress to silver and gold as churches do more – so the number of awards in each category is changing over time. 5 Feb 2017 was the first Anniversary of Eco Church with many churches celebrating with Green Communion.

Revd Canon Catherine Grylls: Thank you, Bishop, for your answer. By my maths, about 300 churches signed up is about eight per diocese on average. What plans are there to promote EcoChurch in dioceses? What targets have been set and how will progress be monitored?

The Bishop of St Albans: I am not aware of what goals have been set. I am sorry, I have not got that information, though we can try and find it out. What I would suggest is, just as people here are putting down questions and raising the issue, why not go back and put down questions for forthcoming diocesan synods to ask some of these questions to engender responses? Certainly, this whole area is an important one for the Church of England and will not be going off the agenda any time soon, I know.

39. *Revd Dr Sean Doherty (London)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: What steps is the Church of England taking nationally to tackle modern day slavery?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied as Vice-Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Last September, the Mission and Public Affairs Council recruited two new members of staff (Project Officer and Communications Officer) to head up the Clewer Initiative against Modern Day Slavery. This is a three-year fixed term project, externally funded, set up to help dioceses in building

new relationships between the Church, statutory and non-statutory agencies to develop a community-wide response to a modern-day evil. At a grassroots level it will help the Church detect instances of modern day slavery and to provide support to its victims. It will do this by providing bespoke training and mentoring that uses a community development methodology. This project, based on work trialled in the Diocese of Derby, has grown out of the collaborative work undertaken over the last few years between the Bishop of Derby and the Mission and Public Affairs Division as a result of the Modern Day Slavery Act (2015).

Revd Dr Sean Doherty: Thank you for your answer. Given that this Initiative is clearly going to be an important and, indeed, urgent one, especially in the light of the Archbishop of Canterbury's intervention into the Government's premature closure of the Dubs scheme last week, what can Synod members do to raise awareness locally and regionally of this initiative to ensure take-up is as effective as it can be?

The Bishop of St Albans: First, it is very good that you have put this question down and raised it for us. If I may just in passing pay tribute to the Bishop of Derby who has done a huge amount of work on this and many of us are very grateful for the lead he is giving to what is the most appalling situation in our own country. This is very important. It seems to me again the answer is for most of us to do what we can to raise the issue. Indeed, those of you that are sitting here at this very moment tweeting, will you please tweet about it now? Let us use the media to talk about this initiative, to raise the facts and the figures. There is a lot of stuff on the internet. It seems to me this is just the sort of area that we can make a real, significant long-term difference if we put our minds to it.

40. *Revd Jonathan MacNeaney (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: The Ministry of Justice states that in 2016 there were 119 self-inflicted deaths in UK prisons, the highest number since records began in 1978. It also reported a record high of 37,784 self-harm incidents and 25,049 assault incidents. Have additional resources been secured to strengthen the Church's ministry to prison inmates and officers?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied as Vice-Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Our prisons are in a serious situation. Self-inflicted deaths are up 32%, and assaults on staff up 40%, while self-harm incidents have risen by almost a quarter. Serious assaults on staff have trebled since 2012. The work of chaplains is vital, the more so as the number of other staff has fallen in recent years. The Bishop to Prisons (the Bishop of Rochester) is

working with the Chaplain-General to provide support for Church of England Chaplains. Many chaplaincies are well-supported by local churches and Christian charities. The Bishop to Prisons is one of the sponsors of a new national initiative called Prison Hope, strengthening the links between chaplaincy, local churches and Christian and wider community organisations. There are major resources there which can strengthen the work of prison-employed chaplains, and I commend the Prison Hope website.

Business Committee

41. *Mrs Anne Martin (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: Will the Business Committee review the organisation and scheduling of General Synod fringe meetings and flyers in the light of the delayed sending out of flyers for this session of General Synod?

*Revd Canon Sue Booy*s replied as Chair of the Business Committee: The Business Committee carries out an annual review of General Synod policies and procedures at its March meeting. The Fringe and Displays Policy will be considered as part of this annual review at its next meeting.

Mrs Anne Martin: I thank the Chair of the Business Committee. I am very glad that there is going to be a review of procedures and organisations of fringe meetings next month, but I would like to ask: was under a week realistically sufficient time for both Church staff and the organisers of fringe events to receive bookings from attendees to fringe meetings?

*Revd Canon Sue Booy*s: Thank you, Mrs Martin. I apologise to you and to other fringe meeting organisers for the slight delay in getting out those details. The distribution of flyers was delayed for a short period whilst I dealt with some correspondence with organisers of other meetings.

Dioceses Commission

42. *Mr Andrew Williams (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the Dioceses Commission: Following on from the creation of the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales in 2014, are there any plans for future mergers of dioceses, and is there an optimum size that the Commission believes that a diocese should be?

Professor Michael Clarke (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Dioceses Commission: The Commission currently has no plans for any further reorganisation schemes for

the amalgamation of dioceses. In our consideration of such matters, we are resistant to 'a one size fits all' approach, believing that account has to be taken of what would best serve the mission of God's Church in a given pastoral context. In this regard, members of the Commission have had a preliminary meeting with the Director of the Renewal and Reform programme. We stand ready to play such part as may be appropriate in the implementation of the Renewal and Reform agenda.

Mr Andrew Williams: Would the Dioceses Commission consider taking a leaf from secular government's book where small borough and district councils through shared services providing back-office services save them money? Would they further consider that this would then allow smaller dioceses which would allow better pastoral care with bishops closer to their people?

Professor Michael Clarke: Mr Williams, you have asked a number of questions rolled up in one. Let me say that we would, indeed, be interested in looking at back-office functions and the capacity and potential for the sharing of services. We shall be reflecting on that at our forthcoming meeting and talking to interested parties.

Church Commissioners

43. *Ven. Andy Piggott (Bath & Wells)* asked the Church Commissioners: Whilst very grateful for the short-term (CSA) loan funding which is being made available from the National Church, Bath & Wells DBF nevertheless remains short of liquid funds for longer term projects in pursuit of the diocesan vision and strategic priorities. Since loan funding is a relatively cheap source of finance compared with the sale of income yielding investments, will the Church Commissioners make long-term loan funding available to DBFs, thus saving a considerable amount of admin time for hard-pressed diocesan secretaries and finance officers as well as the fees payable to commercial institutions?

Sir Andreas Whittam Smith replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: The Church Commissioners' legal powers mean that any loans they make must be on commercial terms. The Commissioners' Assets Committee has a longstanding policy of seeking to reduce its loan exposure over time on asset allocation grounds. This is, in part, as loans are inflexible assets: the lender has little, if any, control over the timing and extent of investments and disinvestments. The Committee confirmed it did not wish to make longer term loan finance available to dioceses earlier this month when it reviewed its formal process for time-limited overdrafts on

the clergy stipends accounts. Dioceses needing funds for longer term projects in pursuit of their vision and strategic priorities are encouraged to apply for strategic development grant funding: £24 million is available for such projects in 2017.

Ven. Andy Piggott: Thank you for your answer. Given our shared aspiration across the Church to increase the number of vocations to ordained ministry in the coming years, and the fact that when—I say when—our prayers are answered, newly ordained deacons and priests will need to be housed, strategic development funding grants will not help. May I ask that the Church Commissioners please be invited to revisit their current policy to enable this very evident need to be met through loans to DBFs.

Sir Andreas Whittam Smith: Thank you very much. We are aware that as the objective of increasing the number of ordinations begins to develop, there will be financial needs and we fully expect to be asked to make a substantial contribution under the Renewal and Reform programme. We have not reached that moment yet. Meanwhile, I do not think you would terribly enjoy us making loans, as you describe, because we would ask for security. We would look at security to see whether it was an up-to-date valuation and it would become a very tedious operation. At the moment, you have the central stipend account which provides a sort of overdraft facility or you can go for strategic funding, but in between there is not very much and I do not think there are any plans to do anything in between.

44. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Church Commissioners: When determining the suitability of particular properties for use as see houses, what documented standards on matters such as number and size of public and private rooms, office space, capacity for providing hospitality, chapel, et cetera does the Bishops and Cathedrals Committee utilise in the interests of achieving reasonable consistency between dioceses and will the Commissioners please publish these?

45. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Church Commissioners: When, and by whom, were the standards referred to in question 44 approved?

Mr Andrew Mackie replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner: With the Chair's permission, I will answer Questions 44 and 45 together. There have been numerous discussions and documents over several decades, including guidelines agreed by the Commissioners and House of Bishops in 2005. We utilise all this accumulated knowledge in assessing suitability. The financial climate is also relevant and has changed very sharply: in the 2005-07 triennium, we spent nearly

£15.7m on see houses, excluding Lambeth Palace, but in 2017-19 we will operate under an £8.5m cap set by the Archbishops' Spending Plans Task Group. There will, of course, never be complete consistency or uniformity but, as Synod knows, we seek suitable office and domestic accommodation, cost effectiveness and suitable hospitality space. Often, there are other aspirations. Many factors combine to make a house suitable and it is not helpful to debate them in isolation or to attempt to publish a definitive statement. Instead, the Commissioners balance all the factors and make an overall judgement.

Mr Nigel Bacon: I thank Mr Mackie for his answer. As the factors in decision-making on see houses are identical to those for parsonages, for which the Church Commissioners maintain the non-prescriptive green book, why should see houses be treated with less clarity and does he not recognise that such a document for episcopal residences can only help the Commissioners in their right desire to cut costs?

Mr Andrew Mackie: Thank you very much for that. I think there are a number of points that you have very helpfully raised. I think the question of costs is very important. As you will know from the answer to the question, the Church has asked us, through various groups with diocesan bishop representation on them, to cut our expenditure on see houses very significantly. Equally, we are conscious of there being some concern in some dioceses about the nature of provision of see houses. We are consulting with the House of Bishops and with Bishops individually, increasingly, to see whether we can somehow square this circle in a different way. But I do not accept that there is lack of clarity in the way that we are going about this.

Mr Nigel Bacon: As its proceedings should be clear and transparent and open to scrutiny, what are the courses for appeal against decisions made by the Bishops and Cathedrals Committee and what mechanisms for external review are applied to the Committee's workings?

Mr Andrew Mackie: Thank you very much for that. I am not aware that there are avenues of appeal. I would point out though that the Bishops Committee is a representative committee with members drawn from all parts of the Church. I think, crucially, the sorts of concerns that I understand to have been raised by the question include diocesan bishop representation, but I do not think that there is a lack of transparency and I do not either think that we ought to equate an ability of the Committee to debate some things confidentially with a lack of transparency.

Pensions Board

46. *Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: How are the National Investing Bodies planning to promote the work of the Transition Pathway Initiative, which is an Initiative developed with the Environment Agency Pension Fund, and represents a wider coalition beyond the CofE, working with Lord Stern's Team at the LSE, to hold energy and mining companies to account with regard to their management competency and performance to meet the target of 2 degrees set by COP 2 in Paris in December 2015?

Dr Jonathan Spencer (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board: In January 2017 the National Investing Bodies have launched, along with other investors with £2 trillion of funds under management and the support of the UN, the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI). TPI independently assesses companies in key carbon intensive sectors (not just energy and extractives) on management quality and future projected carbon performance. TPI assessments will provide the basis for the NIBs' engagement of the largest companies in each sector. We will encourage companies to reach level 4 of the TPI management quality assessment and to adopt 2 degrees aligned business plans. At a minimum, we expect companies to adopt, by 2020, business plans aligned with the Paris Nationally Determined Contributions to global emissions reduction. The TPI is a transparent annual assessment, the results of which will be made public.

Revd Canon Giles Goddard: Can I, first, commend the Transition Pathway Initiative. I think it is very significant and I would like to thank EIAG and the NCIs for supporting it and working so hard on it. I am coming to the question. In that context, I am a little disappointed by your answer because the parish NDCs are likely, if fully implemented, to lead to a 3.5 degree increase in global temperatures; how will the NCIs ensure that companies we are engaged with work to more ambitious targets?

Dr Jonathan Spencer: We have to see this in a series of stages. The first stage is to encourage, through the engagement process, businesses to align with that which their host countries have already committed to, which is the nationally determined contribution. As part of our engagement with companies, it will be apparent whether they are going beyond that and towards compliance with a 2 degree model—which we will certainly be seeking to encourage them to do—and, indeed, beyond that there lies the ambition in Paris to get to a 1.5 degree world and that lies beyond the 2 degrees, but I think we have to do it step by step.

Revd Canon Catherine Grylls (Birmingham): How will the TPI assessments, given the urgency referred to in your answer just now, inform shareholder action at general and annual general meetings this year of companies such as ExxonMobil?

Dr Jonathan Spencer: I think the focus this year is, on the one hand, getting people started, but also on things such as executive remuneration.

47. *Mr Bradley Smith (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: As is well-known, the Pensions Board's only nursing home and specialist dementia care units are due to close by 31 March 2017. On what basis does the Board consider that this decision, made without consultation either with those affected by the planned closure or with the Church, is an acceptable and responsible way for a Church organisation to act?

Dr Jonathan Spencer (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: Given the situation we faced, it would have been completely irresponsible not to close Manorstead Nursing Home. In running a nursing home, our primary responsibility is to keep the people in our care safe. On both legal and moral grounds, their safety must outweigh any other concerns. Because of increasing difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified nursing and care staff, we could no longer guarantee the long-term safety of our residents and, therefore, we had to act. We could not wait for the staffing situation to decline still further and risk a serious incident.

Mrs Sarah Finch (London): The way that closure of Manorstead was planned and executed and subsequent actions by the Board have reinforced the belief that the ultimate aim of the Board is to be able to sell the Manorstead site. Would the Pensions Board please give Synod the assurance that this is not, in fact, the Board's intention?

Dr Jonathan Spencer: It is absolutely untrue that that was our intention.

48. *Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Why is the Pensions Board unable to secure staff for Manorstead Nursing Home, although private nursing homes in the area are able to do so, and to take in the residents from Manorstead? What consultations were undertaken and what advice did the Board seek externally before taking the decision to close Manorstead?

Dr Jonathan Spencer (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: We have had a loyal and committed staff at Manorstead Nursing Home. But as our qualified nurses and carers retired and left, we struggled—despite offering good pay rates—to replace them with others wanting regular employment. We know that we are not alone in this. It reflects a wider issue about the number of people in the nursing/care professions. Most of our residents are choosing to move to other parts of the country, so are not being taken in by local homes. There was no consultation prior to the decision being made. With the long-term safety of residents at risk, we had no alternative but to close the home. As the trustees of an independent charity, it was our legal duty, and ours alone, to keep the residents of the home safe and, therefore, to act if we did not believe that we could continue to do that.

49. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What provision is the Pensions Board now making for those clergy and their dependants currently resident in their excellent retirement homes for when they need nursing or dementia care now that these facilities at Manorstead are to be closed; and who will pay for it?

Dr Jonathan Spencer (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: The Pensions Board has never directly provided, or funded, such care for the vast majority of retired clergy who might need it. With only 33 beds, and over 14,000 retired clergy, Manorstead has only ever been available for a tiny fraction of them. All other clergy needing nursing or care (including those moving from Pensions Board accommodation) have had to source and fund it for themselves. Now that Manorstead Nursing Home is closing, the Pensions Board will no longer provide any nursing care. Where needed, residents in its supported housing schemes will continue to be able to buy in care services provided by others. Retired clergy who need nursing care in future will all need to make their own provision, as has always been the case for the majority of our customers.

Central Readers Council

50. *Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the Central Readers Council: Amongst the Diocesan Wardens of Readers, how many are

- a) Clergy;
- b) Lay; and
- c) Is there any Diocese that does not currently have a Warden of Readers?

Miss Rosemary Walters replied on behalf of the Chair of the Central Readers Council: There are 29 Diocesan Wardens of Readers who are clergy and 11 who are lay. Four dioceses do not currently have a Warden. (Please note: several dioceses have two Wardens and therefore the total number of Wardens exceeds the total number of dioceses).

51. *Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the Central Readers Council: How many people are currently training for authorised lay ministry (Reader training)

- a) in the Province of Canterbury
- b) in the Province of York and what is their profile by
- c) age (under forty/over forty)
- d) gender

Miss Rosemary Walters replied on behalf of the Chair of the Central Readers Council: The Central Readers Council does not hold this information. The responsibility for selection and the care of candidates in training and for their information lies with the diocese in which they are selected.

Mrs Jay Greene (Winchester): Why do you not collect the information?

Miss Rosemary Walters: The selection of Readers is the responsibility of the dioceses and there are no national selection criteria as there are for ordinands, so those statistics for Readers in training and selection are kept at diocesan level.

Mrs Anne Foreman: Thank you for the answer to 51. I think your reply means that the Church of England does not have readily to hand the information about these statistics. May I request then that either the Central Readers Council or someone make this information available to those who are preparing the forthcoming report on authorized lay ministry?

Miss Rosemary Walters: There are statistics for the number of licensed Readers, those already licensed. Those are within the Ministry Division statistics. The responsibility for those in training and for the selection of those in training does, at the moment, lie with the dioceses. You might like to refer your question to the Secretary of the Central Readers Council.

Mrs Anne Foreman: Thank you very much. I shall.

Ethical Investment Advisory Group

52. *Mrs Katherine Alldread (Derby)* asked the Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group: In light of the new American President's stated intent to reintroduce torture of US detainees amongst other declarations and orders that are profoundly at odds with core Christian values, what are the Ethical Investment Advisory Group's rules regarding torture and what action would be taken should the President's stated intent to reintroduce torture be implemented? Has the EIAG reviewed the nature of Church investments in the United States and can an assurance be given that the Church will divest from areas that support the new administration's policies where they undermine core Christian values of justice, peace and the flourishing of God's creation?

The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker) replied as Deputy Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group: The EIAG has not, to date, specifically reviewed the issue of torture although any company providing instruments of torture would fall foul of the Statement of Ethical Investment Policy recommended by the EIAG and adopted by the National Investing Bodies (NIBs) in 2014. This states that companies in which the NIBs invest should demonstrate conscientiousness with regard to human rights.

Mrs Katherine Alldread: Thank you, Bishop, for your answer. Is there a way Synod might be reassured that the NIBs are not investing in US companies whose actions undermine core Christian values? And can Synod be assured that the NIBs will not invest in the US Government itself, for example by refusing to invest in US treasury bonds, or in foreign currency markets that help to strengthen the US dollar if the US Government fails to respond conscientiously regarding human rights?

The Bishop of Manchester: The Ethical Investment Advisory Group works with the investing bodies to seek to ensure that the Church's investments are put in the right places. Our policy is normally one of constructive engagement with the companies, typically with whom we have our resources invested. We seek, with a whole range of policies which are in the public domain, to influence those companies for good. On the rare occasions we find a company has behaved egregiously and refuses to change its pattern of behaviour, then we divest. You are tempting us towards a return to an ethical investment programme really led by disinvestment rather than by investment and engagement, and engagement and investment is the way that we see our work going forward.

Archbishops' Council

53. *Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What is the diversity of the pool from which members of the peer review panels described in GS Misc 1150 will be drawn, in terms of numbers of male/female/BAME clergy and male/female/BAME laity?

Canon John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: We are keen to achieve diversity in all its aspects in the peer review pool membership and also to include as wide as possible diocesan representation. All dioceses were invited to nominate individuals with the necessary competence and capacity which gave us the core panel membership, supplemented by centrally nominated individuals. Peer review is a new process which must be owned by the dioceses. We will continue to reach out to ensure that the pool comprises a mix of individuals with a spread of experience and background so that all groups and all dioceses feel part of the process. The 56 peer reviewers include three BAME clergy (two male, one female) and one female BAME member of the laity. Significant efforts were taken to identify BAME peer reviewers at the start of the process and further efforts will be taken in due course when seeking to appoint new reviewers. A full breakdown has been placed on the notice board.

Mrs Carolyn Graham: Thank you for the full data, which I now have. In view of the fact that getting on for twice as many men, both clergy and lay, are appointed as women, do you have any plans to improve the selection procedure to ensure a better-balanced pool?

Canon John Spence: I am very grateful that the question has caused the statistics to come into the public domain. We are in the hands of dioceses. It is a diocesan-owned process and we are very committed to continuing to work with dioceses so that the people with the necessary competencies come through. What I would not want to do is to get into a quota system of 50/50 male and female. I want this to be owned by the dioceses. We will continue to work in that space and, also, by the way, to encourage other aspects of diversity apart from gender, such as BAME. I am not complacent but to have four out of 56 is better than in many other Church representations, but also issues such as disability and age.

54. *Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What is being done to ensure the pool from which members of the peer review panels described in GS Misc 1150 will be drawn come from a variety of theological positions?

Canon John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The pool was formed primarily from nominations from dioceses, yielding a good range of people with the right skills and experience, but no particular steps were taken to determine the theological positions of peer reviewers before their appointment by the Archbishops' Council.

Mrs Carolyn Graham: This is about the theological range. As members of General Synod we are asked to provide our theology when applying for committees. Is there any reason why this sort of information has not been obtained, again, to ensure a balanced pool?

Canon John Spence: I think there is a very good reason, actually, because the role of the peer review groups is not anything to do with churchmanship and will not be influenced by theological aspects. The training that members of peer review groups have received is very much focused on helping to understand the underlying financial and management competencies and performance of the dioceses and we should be utterly objective in that space and not move from a position of any sense of bias according to where one's theological position is. I would always want to maintain that very clear analytical objectivity in the work that the peer review groups do. It is pleasing to note that many dioceses tell me that the advice they are giving is very helpful

55. *Mr Keith Cawdron (Liverpool)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Will the Council publish to Synod members the impact report on the use of distributed central funds referred to in paragraph 6 of GS Misc 1150?

Canon John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The impact report is envisaged as a report to the Archbishops' Council and Commissioners' Board of Governors as the trustee bodies overseeing the distribution of funds. When they consider the first impact report in mid-2018 they will decide how best to communicate the findings across the wider Church. We are, however, committed to sharing the results from individual initiatives to promote sharing of best practice and a spirit of learning. In particular, we are looking to hold a symposium in due course where participants can not only hear the impact of a range of diverse initiatives, but also the lessons that were learned as they developed.

Mr Keith Cawdron: Will Canon Spence undertake that he will ensure that the bodies he mentions will consider the viewpoint that that having told everybody that they are receiving a report, by far the best thing to do is simply to publish it?

Canon John Spence: I will be delighted to publish the report when we have got a report to publish, Keith. I think one has just got to expect a gestation. This is a system that we have just brought in. We are only just agreeing the first round of strategic development fund bids under the new programme, though I appreciate some money did go out in the previous triennium. There are very few of those projects yet that have come through to a state where there is something meaningful to report. I do, incidentally, encourage Synod to work with your dioceses to submit more applications for funding as we have surplus funds available. We are all very committed to ensuring that learning is shared at every step of the process, so actually the symposium to which I referred in my answer will take place long before we are at final closure report stage so that people can talk about what is going well and what is not going well. The new Strategy Investment Board, whose membership has only just been agreed or is only being agreed by Archbishops' Council, as soon as it meets this will be an item on the agenda. I really do thank you, Keith, for keeping our feet to the fire and I invite you to keep doing so on this issue.

56. *Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Bishop of Peterborough, in his recent Visitation Charge to Peterborough Cathedral, concluded with "Reflections for the House of Bishops and the National Church Institutions" that included this paragraph:

"I urge the Archbishops' Council, the Church Commissioners, and the House of Bishops, to look at whether the current Cathedrals Measure is adequate, and to consider revising it. The Peterborough situation has convinced me that the high degree of independence currently enjoyed by Cathedrals poses serious risks to the reputation of the whole Church, and thus to our effectiveness in mission. A closer working relationship of Cathedrals with their Bishop and Diocese would be of benefit to all, both practically and spiritually." (para 30).

In response, a spokesperson for the Church Commissioners, in a formal statement published by the Church of England media centre (<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/01/statement-on-visitation-charge-to-peterborough-cathedral.aspx>) said:

"The Commissioners and the Archbishops' Council will consider carefully Bishop Donald's reflections concerning the governance of cathedrals under the Cathedrals Measure. Any considerations would include consultation with the House of Bishops, dioceses and other cathedrals prior to deciding whether to bring forward any proposals for change."

Will the Archbishops' Council please indicate their timetable for considering Bishop Donald's reflections and the indicated consultation with the House of Bishops, dioceses and cathedrals?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as President of the Archbishops' Council: The Archbishops' Council has not met since Bishop Donald's Visitation Charge was published and has, therefore, not yet had the opportunity to consider the matters raised in the Charge. I am sure it will wish to consult the Church Commissioners, House of Bishops, Deans, Chapters and Dioceses as part of the process of developing any response to Bishops Donald's Charge.

Mr David Lamming: Given the important place of cathedrals in the worship and mission of the Church, and given that the situation that led to the visitation at Peterborough Cathedral is not unique—and I have in mind also the financial difficulties experienced at Exeter—will the Archbishops' Council treat Bishop Donald's reflections as an urgent matter for their consideration when they next meet and when will they next be meeting?

The Archbishop of Canterbury: I am sure someone can whisper when we are next meeting. I cannot remember, to be honest. Next month, in March. And, "Yes"—answering your questions the other way around.

57. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Given the importance of correct data submitted on a timely basis, has consideration been given to requiring those charged with compiling and submitting Annual Returns of Parish Statistics to presenting the returns to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting? And if so, what is the answer?

Mrs Mary Chapman (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: There is no such requirement: adding another layer of bureaucracy might prove counterproductive. However, we strongly encourage churches to make use of relevant information to help them plan their mission and ministry. Information is readily available directly to all churches that make use of the online parish returns system (through which over 80% of churches submit their returns), and through other resources for parishes regularly produced and circulated by the Research and Statistics Unit. Significant improvements in timeliness have taken place in recent years—almost 6,000 Statistics for Mission returns were submitted online in January 2017, up from around 3,500 two years ago—which is a testament to the efforts and increased engagement with parish

information of those in churches and diocesan offices. The increased availability of such information will improve its usefulness, accuracy, and timeliness, and we encourage churches to consider presenting this information at their APCM.

Mr Adrian Greenwood: Thank you, Mary, for your answer. I am delighted to hear that the Archbishops' Council encourages churches to consider presenting their annual statistics to the APCM. Would one further way of encouragement be to put a simple statement on the bottom of the form suggesting that the return is presented to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting?

Mrs Mary Chapman: Thank you, and I am sure that suggestion has been heard and will be considered. I think I would add perhaps that the direction of travel at the moment under Renewal and Reform, and particularly through Simplification, is actually to reduce the burden of requirements on parishes and dioceses rather than to increase. That has been complemented by the provision of more supportive frameworks that enable people to use the statistics they are gathering and, indeed, to use the statistics of others. There is a balance, I think, in these things. It is a question of judging what might be most effective.

House of Bishops

58. *Revd Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the excellent liturgical resources that have been developed to mark Creationtide, alongside our Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant brothers and sisters, how does the House of Bishops intend to promote Creationtide amongst dioceses and congregations?

The Bishop of Hereford (Rt Revd Richard Frith) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Many of the texts in the Environment Task Group's resource list are drawn from the widely-used volume *New Patterns for Worship* (2002), and from *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* (2006), which was at its publication commended for use by the House of Bishops. Both include overt models for services with Creation as a theme. In 2014 the Liturgical Commission expressed its renewed support for such services. The other resources, drawn together by the Task Group, are examples of good practice and are intended to show how dioceses and congregations might be able to include thanksgiving and prayer for Creation in their own liturgical lives and particular circumstances, and in partnership with our ecumenical partners, especially in the period between 1 September and 4 October.

Revd Andrew Yates: Thank you, Bishop, for your answer and especially for highlighting the dates of this year's Creationtide. In the South West, our diocese is already planning a carbon fast during that time. Synod does not meet in Creationtide, so I am wondering might there be a way in which we could showcase these excellent texts so that in our liturgy as a Synod we might be able to demonstrate our care for Creation sometime in our worship here?

The Bishop of Hereford: Thank you for that publicity that you have already given. The provision in *Times and Seasons*, as you know, already includes material for the agricultural year, which I hope you will do all that you can to promote.

Mr Clive Scowen: Will the House of Bishops request the Liturgical Commission to look at the question of whether Creationtide should have a proper place in the lectionary?

The Bishop of Hereford: The normal means for the House to endorse liturgical matters would be to commend them for use, which in the case of the relevant materials in *Times and Seasons* has already been done. In terms of adopting Creationtide as a season for the liturgical year, revisions to the calendar require synodical process.

Mr Clive Scowen: Yes. Will the Bishops initiate it?

The Bishop of Hereford: I will certainly pass on that request.

Mr Clive Scowen: Thank you.

59. *Mr Andrew Williams (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of the increase in people being diagnosed with coeliac disease, has the House brought forward any good practice recommendations for the handling of gluten-free communion wafers, particularly with regard to preventing cross-contamination when used at the same time as standard communion wafers or bread?

The Bishop of Hereford (Rt Revd Richard Frith) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Legal Advisory Commission in 2014 noted that canonically permissible 'gluten-free' wafers are made of wheat but processed in such a way that the gluten content is greatly diminished. Subsequently the document highlights the potential effects of even a small quantity of gluten for some with coeliac disease, and makes provision for those who cannot therefore

receive even a wafer of this type, namely that Communion can be received in one kind if necessity dictates. The Canons indicate the bread for Communion should be brought to the table 'in a paten or convenient box'; appropriate steps can be taken to ensure separate storage and handling of both types of bread.

Mr Andrew Williams: Would the Bishop consider bringing forward good practice to be distributed to the dioceses to prevent such issues as cross-contamination, for example from a pyx containing a gluten-free wafer on a paten with a normal roll of bread, which I have seen happen.

The Bishop of Hereford: I will certainly put it to the Liturgical Commission that that is considered.

Revd Amanda Fairclough (Liverpool): Could you also consider including in the guidance a restriction on the dubious habit of intinction which can undo all the good work that is done by separating the two types of host simply by having the bread dipped into the wine and contamination happening as a result, please?

The Bishop of Hereford: I will certainly ensure that that matter is considered as well.

60. *Ms Christina Baron (Bath & Wells)* asked the House of Bishops: In the light of the paper (HC(17)1) on Clergy Wellbeing to be considered by the House of Clergy, has consideration been given to whether there are any opportunities to develop the role of Bishops' Visitors in that connection?

The Bishop of Ludlow (Rt Revd Alistair Magowan) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As the paper (HC(17)1) on Clergy Wellbeing indicates, these matters are still at an early stage and without firm proposals. The paper recommends the establishment of a Working Group to enable specific proposals to be brought forward at a future date. For 25 years the Bishops' Visitors network has worked to the specific remit of providing a role of accompaniment to clergy spouses following the fracture of their marriage. It has not as such had a role in relation to the clergy themselves.

Ms Christina Baron: Given that a Working Group is likely to be established, would the establishers consider including one or more bishops' visitors on the Working Group?

The Bishop of Ludlow: Thank you for your question. I think every option is possible. As I said in my first answer, to date the bishops' visitors have not been dealing with clergy wellbeing but with the spouses rather than with the clergy themselves, but I think we are open to whatever will be useful.

Dr Yvonne Warren (Coventry): Given that the laity care passionately about their clergy and in the light of *Setting God's People Free*, will the House of Bishops and the House of Clergy in all their deliberations please think of laity being part of the whole wellbeing of clergy in a really creative way?

The Bishop of Ludlow: Thank you for your question. I think that has been heard. As I said, I think that is a separate issue to the bishops' visitors per se.

61. *Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of the increasing number of moral issues presented by modern life which are not covered by biblical teaching, would the House of Bishops consider preparing a paper on the principles of defining right from wrong, the extent to which we can rely on "let our conscience be our guide" and how the Church can move away from its close public association with a sense of personal guilt which so often obscures its message of unconditional love?

The Bishop of Coventry (Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: According to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation". Its teaching is relevant to every person in every age, and is "a light unto my paths" (Ps. 119.105) in every situation where there is a choice between right and wrong. The House of Bishops has no plans at present to issue a comprehensive report on general principles of theological ethics but remains committed to the responsibility of preaching the good news of God's unconditional love, and of fostering consciences formed by that Gospel and by divine teaching.

Mr Gavin Oldham: Since my reading and possibly that of others of the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Holy Scriptures does not seem to address issues of morality on intergenerational matters such as global warming and medical genetics and struggles to provide guidance on our modern understanding of issues such as slavery and corporal punishment, would the House of Bishops consider whether an upgrade to the Thirty-nine Articles might be useful?

The Bishop of Coventry: Thank you for your question. I had expected that little

twist later. In a moment I think I am going to answer a question on the Thirty-nine Articles. The Thirty-nine Articles are not what you call a sacred text but I think they are one of those fixed texts and I cannot see that there would be any enthusiasm for a rewrite of the Articles.

62. *Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: While the rest of us were recovering from our previous day's Christmas lunch in front of the television, on 26 December 2016 the National Secular Society launched what they call a major new report titled *Rethinking religion and belief in public life: a manifesto for change*. Cheery recommendations include the disestablishment of the Church of England and an end to faith schools. Could the House of Bishops tell this Synod if it has had time to consider this report, and maybe respond with some of the omitted benefits of the established Church in England, and the important benefit to the tax payer and communities from the work we do?

The Bishop of Coventry (Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops has not felt it necessary to consider this report formally, not least because we constantly make the case for the Church of England, and for the Christian faith in this country, in numerous contexts. We do so by drawing attention to the practical contributions made by Christians to the common good, the historical embeddedness of the Christian faith in valued institutions of the nation and emphasising—especially through Church of England Schools in their many forms—that we seek the good of all, especially the most vulnerable, and that the Church of England is not one of those bodies that seeks only the welfare of its own members or exists only for those who agree with it.

63. *Mr Jeremy Harris (Chester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In this 500th anniversary of the Reformation, what steps will be taken to restore the central place of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion in the Church of England?

The Bishop of Coventry (Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2044 outlines three significant opportunities for the Church of England presented by the Reformation anniversary. The first two of these concern relations between Churches, and the third reflection on “the

continuing significance of the theological themes of the Reformation, with the good news of Jesus Christ being at the centre of that". Attention to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion (referred to in GS 2044) as one of the historic formularies of the Church of England will be a proper part of how we respond to these opportunities.

64. *Dr Chris Angus (Carlisle)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Church of England Director of Communications, writing in *The Times*, criticised the lack of originality of BBC religious television programmes at Christmas. Given that the BBC has recently abolished the post of Head of Religion & Ethics, what representations has the Church made to attempt to ensure that religion is better reflected and understood by broadcasters at a time when, in world affairs, it has large and growing influence?

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: A number of meetings with the BBC are taking place at various levels.

The Director of Communications is to meet with commissioning editors at the BBC and others, whilst other meetings are due to take place with BBC Management in the near future involving both Bishops and the communications office.

Dr Chris Angus: I would like to thank the Bishop for his answer insofar as it goes. Can I prevail on him to say something of the nature of the representations being made?

The Bishop of Chelmsford: There is a small informal group of bishops who meet regularly with the BBC and with other broadcasters, and it is in those places that representations are made. Also, I sit as a member of the House of Lords Committee on Communications and so in reports, such as the recent report on the BBC Charter Renewal "Reith not Revolution", you will see very definite recommendations made to the BBC on matters such as religious broadcasting. I could go on but I will not. I will happily let you buy me a cup of tea and I will tell you more.

65. *Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops discussed how diocesan bishops are

responding to PCCs of conservative evangelical churches who request, on grounds of their theological convictions, that arrangements be made for them under the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests, with particular reference to the Bishop of Maidstone's ministry, and, if so, with what outcome?

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House has not discussed this matter.

Revd Canon David Banting: I have to confess I found the brevity and implication of the answer a little disappointing. In view of the growing diversity of responses by diocesan bishops, when will the House of Bishops rectify this omission and publish criteria by which petitioning parishes are responded to consistently across the country?

The Bishop of Chelmsford: I think it is a bit premature to call this lack of discussion an omission. The Resolutions only ceased to exist at the end of November this year. Certainly in the diocese where I serve, as you probably well know, I am still in discussion with a number of parishes on these matters, and I expect that is the same across the Church of England. The fact that it has not happened yet is simply a matter of I do not think the timing is right yet. I imagine that in due course such a discussion will take place.

Revd Canon David Banting: Am I allowed another supplementary on this one?

The Chair: No, I am afraid not.

66. *Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Who or what is in place to monitor how the Five Principles "held together in tension" are working in practice across the dioceses to ensure mutual flourishing, with particular reference to the formation of Mission & Ministry Units (or equivalent) and the processes and outcomes of clergy appointments?

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: While the House itself has overall collective responsibility for the outworking of the Five Principles, it is for individual diocesan bishops as to how they inform pastoral practice in their dioceses. I see no reason why those Principles need not be wholly consonant with the formation of Mission & Ministry Units, or reflected in the processes for clergy appointments.

Revd Canon David Banting: To my own diocesan Bishop, would you like to suggest your criteria for monitoring the outworking of the Five Principles?

The Bishop of Chelmsford: Could you repeat the question, David?

Revd Canon David Banting: Since you have suggested that it is up to individual diocesan bishops to monitor these Five Principles, would you like to suggest your criteria for doing that?

The Chair: David, you are asking a question to the House of Bishops, is that right?

The Bishop of Chelmsford: I am happy to briefly reflect on it.

Revd Canon David Banting: The answer refers to an individual bishop. My supplementary question is about that. Would you like to suggest your criteria as a diocesan bishop for monitoring—

The Chair: David, I think that is out of order but do have a word with him in the tea room afterwards.

67. *Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the wake of President Trump's Executive Order restricting immigration from seven named Muslim majority countries

- (a) What action is being taken by the national Church to make representations to Her Majesty's Government about a Christian understanding of welcome for refugees and aliens; and
- (b) What recommendations will it be making for individual action by Christians and local church communities?

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Bishops have frequently set out in the House of Lords the importance of welcoming the stranger, and the practical implications for welcoming refugees, reinforcing the message of the Synod's motion in 2015. The Bishop of Durham has been, since its inception, co-chair of the National Refugee Welcome Board.

Guidance is issued from time to time by MPA and is on the website: most recently, advice on supporting those seeking asylum. We work closely with ecumenical partners and other groups.

The Community Sponsorship scheme was launched at Lambeth Palace, and much groundwork is taking place with the Home Office and with local church communities, so many of which have expressed a real determination to step up and welcome refugees. Many churches, too, are working closely with local authorities to welcome and support those resettled in our country under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.

Revd Canon Priscilla White: Thank you for the answer which helps us to understand how things are happening in relation to events in this country and for the work that the bishops in the House of Lords are doing. How about things in other countries? How about our prophetic voice from here to the United States and the Executive Order that Trump signed a little while ago?

The Bishop of St Albans: I think a great deal has been said, not least by individual bishops, both to the national media and, for example, in the House of Lords on things such as the Dubs Amendment. Indeed, many of us were involved in the original legislation when that was passed. Most of our comments have been widely reported. I think this is an absolutely crucial, fundamental Gospel issue, both for the bishops but, if I may say, it seems to me for teaching in our parishes as well; so that all of our diocesan synods and deanery synods, our parishes, schools and chaplaincies could be debating what sort of society we want as we are looking to the future. Clearly, we are at a time of huge change with post-Brexit, with events over the pond, with a whole lot of elections coming up in Europe, and so I hope that we will be vocal in our engagement at every level. If I may say, often when we are asked the hope is that something will be done on Radio Four or something. Actually, there is a huge debate to be had with ordinary people getting in touch with their local newspapers. A lot of people do not do a lot of national media; they do local media. I think this is a place where Synod members can engage with these sorts of things, not least through things such as articles in parish magazines and on parish websites and so on. I hope there will be a concerted approach right across the board.

68. *Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Since our witness to minorities, the vulnerable and the persecuted is significant in showing the world the value we place on all God's people, has consideration been given to the justification for the current situation in which the Equality Act 2010 does not apply to all clergy office holders in the Church of England?

The Bishop of Newcastle (Rt Revd Christine Hardman) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Clergy office holders are not employees and do not

work under any form of contract. They are not, therefore, generally covered by the provisions of the Equality Act that are concerned with equality in the workplace. However, stipendiary assistant curates and the incumbents of Crown benefices are within the Act as—unlike incumbents generally and priests in charge—they come within the Act's definitions of office holders. Bishops are not office holders for the purposes of the Act. The position of other senior office holders is a complicated one. The Guidance to Good Practice approved by the House of Bishops' Standing Committee therefore recommends treating all clergy appointments, for practical purposes, as if they were subject to the Act.

69. *The Revd Charles Read (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What mechanism exists for the House of Bishops or the General Synod to express its unease with statements or actions made by Bishops in other provinces of the Anglican Communion?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as *Chair of the House of Bishops*: The House of Bishops and the General Synod have the same range of means for expressing their views with regard to statements or actions in other provinces of the Anglican Communion as they have with regard to any matter not covered by the ecclesiastical law of the Church of England. In addition, members of the House of Bishops attend meetings of the Lambeth Conference, and the Appointments Committee of the General Synod recommends to the Archbishops appointments to the Anglican Consultative Council.

Secretary General

70. *Mr Michael Todd (Truro)* asked the Secretary General: Recent changes to legislation have given greater freedom to charities to invest in 'social investments'. Since questions have been raised as to the extent to which these new powers extend to Church institutions, can the Legal Office be invited to consider the position in that respect and issue some general guidance to dioceses and others?

Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General: Yes, general guidance will be issued in due course.

Mr Mike Todd: Can I thank the Secretary General for perhaps the briefest answer on the Order Paper today. Could the Legal Office give particular consideration to the situation regarding the stipends capital account and the glebe estate? My own diocese last autumn finally approved a socially proactive investment policy which has taken over two years to develop.

The Chair: Question, please.

Mr Mike Todd: Half the question I have already asked. Could the Legal Office give particular consideration to the stipends capital account, and if they discover that there is indeed an unintended limitation of the application of the general opportunities given to charities with regards to the stipends capital account, could they consider making recommendations on how to overcome that difficulty and report to Synod accordingly?

Mr William Nye: Thank you for your question. We will do our best to try to cover issues which are of interest to dioceses, including the stipends capital account and glebe, and we will also try to cover issues of interest to PCCs. If it looks like there is a problem, we will try to cover that in the guidance as best we can.

71. *Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells)* asked the Secretary General: In 2019, the centenary of the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act (usually known as the Enabling Act) will occur. The Act brought into being the current arrangements whereby this Synod can pass Measures which have the force and effect of an Act of Parliament, thus providing the foundation of the formal polity by which the Church of England now legislates, with bishops, clergy and laity working together. What plans are there for marking this significant milestone by way of a Service of Thanksgiving, or by the production of academic or (relatively) popular materials, in order to enable a wider appreciation of the role of everyone in Church governance?

Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General: At present there are no plans to mark this centenary.

Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas: I realise that Question 71 is a slightly Synod nerdy question on the face of it. Would the Archbishops' Council like to consider that the effect of the Act of 98 years ago has been to create this rather bizarre Synod, as well as PCCs and all the other deliberative bodies of the Church of England? That is worth celebrating and will they consider thinking about whether it is an act of worship or a report looking into the next hundred years of Church governance or a simple book that will encourage people to take seriously democracy as part of the prayer life of the Church?

Mr William Nye: Thank you very much for drawing it to our attention two years ahead. I confess to not having spotted it until it came up in your question. We will

certainly give some thought to whether there is an appropriate way of marking this anniversary.

72. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Secretary General: Despite all the resources that have recently been put into enabling the national Church to develop its media platforms, there currently appears to be no publication devoted to giving an understandable summary of the business carried at each group of Sessions that Synod members could circulate within their diocese, such as to deanery synod and PCC members-e.g. “Business Done” is likely to be too brief for most readers, and *In Focus*—although useful—reports only a few items of Synod business, alongside other news. Is this the result of a deliberate policy of encouraging each Synod member to express themselves in their own words, or might consideration be given to such a document being produced for future groups of sessions?

Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General: We will give further consideration to how best Synod proceedings can be communicated to the wider Church.

Clerk to the Synod

73. *Mrs Anne Martin (Guildford)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Is there any reason why prices for meals and audio equipment cannot be sent out with the initial booking material so that Synod groups can sort and consult on pricing for each meeting and therefore have information ready for returning prepared flyers?

Dr Jacqui Philips replied as Clerk to the Synod: The Synod Office is not responsible for setting the prices for meals and audio equipment at London Synods. These costings are set by external suppliers and are reviewed at the beginning of the calendar year. The prices were not available when the fringe meetings booking period opened. Staff did not want to delay the fringe application process for applicants, and therefore opted to open up the bookings at the pre-arranged time. As soon as prices were known, these were circulated to meeting applicants.

Mrs Anne Martin: Thank you very much for your reply. It says quite a great deal in few words, but can I ask is AV equipment brought in from outside for all conferences at Church House or is there permanent equipment in all large rooms available for conferences?

Dr Jacqui Philips: I would need to ask the conference centre for information on

their AV procurement arrangements but I can do that and write back to you separately.

Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield): Point of order, Mr Chairman. May I just invent a point of order and say in all my time on Synod we have never finished all the questions. May we congratulate the Chair.

Revd Dr Hannah Cleugh (Universities & TElS) led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Archbishop of Canterbury dismissed the Synod with the blessing at 7.00 pm

Full Synod: Second Day

Tuesday 14 February 2017

THE CHAIR *Canon Linda Ali (York)* took the Chair at 10.30 am

The Chair: Synod, I have been given permission to wish you all a happy St Valentine's day, full of love. I would like also to bring to your attention and remind you that the prayers for this morning are provided by the Community of St Anselm, as it was yesterday.

Also I would like to remind you that for the collection for the Mothers' Union you can put your donations in the box at the information desk.

FAREWELL TO THE FIRST CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONER

The Chair: We now come to Item 8 on your Order Paper, and that is farewell to the First Church Estates Commissioner. I will be inviting the Archbishop of York to give a farewell tribute to Sir Andreas. The Presidents have invited Sir Andreas to make some brief farewell remarks to Synod after the Archbishop has spoken. I will now invite the Archbishop of York to make his farewell tribute.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): Madam Chair, Sir Christopher Wren, John Wesley, Horatio Lord Nelson, Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Theresa May...Sir Andreas Whittam Smith. As diverse a group of men and women as you could imagine, each in their time making a notable contribution to the life and character of this nation, and they have one thing in common: all spent their formative years as clergy children in Church of England parsonages.

Andreas Whittam Smith grew up during the Second World War in a tough and much bombed parish in Birkenhead where his father was the incumbent. Canon Whittam Smith's churchmanship was, in Andreas' admirable description, 'on the Equator', that is, in the very middle.

Church life in Birkenhead seems to have had some of the characteristics of a grocer's shop where each member of the family had to do their bit. In Andreas' case that meant ringing the bells, singing in the choir, putting out the hymn books and—here is the clue—counting the collection.

After national service, spent in the ranks, Andreas went to Keble College Oxford. As a *Guardian* columnist once wrote, “being an Oxford graduate is like having a permanent source of emotional central heating. Whatever happens to you later in life, the fact that you were once at Oxford marks you out as someone who was destined for greatness—before accountancy beckoned”.

In Andreas’ case it was not accountancy but financial journalism that beckoned. By his own admission he carried with him from Oxford two important lessons. One, after an excessively relaxed time there, was the value of sheer hard work. The other was that cleverness was not the same as intelligence and wisdom. This latter truth had been brought home to him when he tried to impress a tutor with a clever fact only to receive the unforgettable put down, “true, but trivial”.

Through hard work and exceptional ability Andreas rose to become City Editor first of the *Guardian*, then of the *Daily Telegraph*, as well as Editor of the *Stock Exchange Gazette* and *Investors’ Chronicle*. But for a restless risk-taker like Andreas these roles were not sufficient.

In 1986 he became the founder and editor of what by then was that rarest of beasts, a new daily broadsheet newspaper. Within a few years *The Independent* was outselling *The Times*, until the latter embarked on a price-cutting war. In 1987 Andreas won the Journalist of the Year award from the British Press Association and two years later the Granada Editor of the Year award, an unusual double.

When he was editor of the ‘Indie’, *Private Eye* always used to refer to him as “the saintly Andreas Whittam Strobes”. I am not sure about the “Strobes”, but the relevance for our purposes is “saintly”. “Let your light so shine before men.”

Andreas stepped down from full-time work in the newspaper industry in the 1990s and started to assemble an unlikely combination of new responsibilities. They ranged from the worthy—Chair of the Financial Ombudsman Service, Chair of the Sir Winston Churchill Archive Trust—to the lurid—President of the British Board of Film Classification, or, as it had been known in less squeamish times, The British Board of Film Censorship. The worthy and the lurid, not a bad preparation for the life of the General Synod.

It was in 2002 that Andreas accepted the Crown appointment of First Estates Commissioner. After their difficulties of the early 1990s the Commissioners had gradually rebuilt their strength under the determined and shrewd leadership of Sir Michael Colman. But Sir Michael’s successor had been able to serve for only two

years, so when Andreas arrived the jury was still out on whether the reforms of the 1990s would bear fruit.

Those changes had included not only improved governance for the Commissioners and a sharper focus on their asset management responsibilities but the creation of the Archbishops' Council of which the First Estates Commissioner was also a member.

Andreas' early days were not without their dramas. An initial attempt at some radical thinking produced a memorable scene in the House of Bishops worthy of a Batman cartoon and the subsequent denunciation of Andreas' ideas in a Synodical debate by the then Bishop of St Albans as "brutality with a smirk". But this proved a mere momentary setback and Andreas quickly recovered.

He did so because he understands the importance of listening and of trying to get to the heart of the matter. Partial knowledge is dangerous. Good decisions require insight, intelligence and a determined focus on outcomes. It is crucial to work out the right thing to do and then think about how to deliver it rather than simply clutching at a politically convenient solution. That is the 'Andreas' philosophy.

He likes to quote, mischievously, the provocative classification that the former Chief of the German General Staff, General Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord, made of his officers divided into four groups: namely, clever, diligent, stupid and lazy.

Some, he said, were clever and diligent and their place was the General Staff. The General, like Andreas, was also not too hard on those who were clever and lazy, indeed he saw them as qualified for the highest leadership duties because they possessed the intellectual clarity and composure necessary for difficult decisions.

Then there were the stupid and lazy. According to the General, they made up 90% of every army and they too had their place; so long as they were given only routine duties. The really disastrous combination was stupidity and diligence since such people always cause mischief.

Well, in Andreas, we have for the past 15 years had the benefit of someone who is not only supremely clever and diligent, immensely knowledgeable of financial markets and above all robustly independent in his judgments. He has been loyal to the institutions he has served and to his colleagues, but he is no lover of conventional or convenient solutions.

As Chair of the Assets Committee he has stoutly defended the responsibility of that body to reach judgments that will maximise the financial return to the Church, subject always to the Commissioners' ethical investment policies.

He has also had the courage to strengthen the Commissioners' professional expertise at staff level and to do what is necessary to secure people of the required quality. The results, as we have seen each year, have been outstanding—absolutely outstanding. When he arrived, the value of the Commissioners' assets stood at £3.5 billion. Fifteen years on they stand at somewhere between £7.5 billion and £8 billion. And that is after the Commissioners have spent, on the mission and ministry of the Church of England, some £3 billion over the same period.

The Commissioners' exceptionally demanding target is to grow their fund over the long term by at least 5% more than the increase in the Retail Price Index. Over the past 30 years they have actually achieved RPI plus 6.3%.

As Jesus reminded us in the parable of the talents, money is entrusted to us not as an end in itself but for a purpose: money is an asset for mission. As a Commissioner and member of the Archbishops' Council he has been relentless in encouraging a sharper focus on Church growth, building an evidence base and putting resources behind intentional diocesan plans. The disciplined yet far seeing way in which he opened up the debate about whether the Commissioners should make additional funding available for the Renewal and Reform programme was indeed exemplary.

This Synod has before it a report on lay leadership and we have in Andreas someone who, through vision, clarity of thought and expression, has modelled for us outstanding servant leadership. When he has given the Synod one of his masterly interviews and overviews of the world financial scene we have hung on his quietly spoken words. And when he has urged the Synod in response to a delaying amendment, to quote, said "make a decision and stop fooling around". Indeed, we have heeded his advice.

More than a decade ago he wrote this in a book: "I shall never desert Anglicanism even if I'm the last man standing on the bridge as the ship goes down—there's nothing that would drive me out. There are three things I might be prepared to die for: I'd die for my Church, I'd die for my country and I'd die for my family."

Well, we all hope, Andreas, that it will never come to that. We also hope that you will not, as you threatened in that book, take to stacking supermarket shelves rather than stopping work. No, just keep writing, enjoying music, praying and being Andreas. When you step down in June it will be for us, as for you, the end of an era. We are deeply grateful to you, to Valerie who has loaned you to us, and to Almighty God for all you have done.

The Church of England owes you a huge debt of gratitude. In the name of our Lord we thank you.

“For all that has been—thanks.

For all that shall be—yes.”

The Chair: Synod, I would like to invite the outgoing First Church Estates Commissioner to make some farewell remarks to Synod. Sir Andreas, you have got ten minutes.

Sir Andreas Whittam Smith (ex officio): They never let you off, do they? I am overwhelmed by what the Archbishop has said and by your presence and applause; it is simply fantastic, I think would be the right word.

The Archbishop has always provided me with memorable occasions. I joined him for a day on his pilgrimage around his diocese last year and for a day we walked the highways from village to village. We even went to a travellers’ camp and we had not been there more than five minutes before the Archbishop had some of the travellers saying the Lord’s Prayer, and I think that is a fantastic example of mission and holiness on the ground. These memories for me are unforgettable.

I would like to say a little bit about the Commissioners’ funds and then I would like to say why I am extremely optimistic for the future of the Church of England.

We have more or less got the results for 2016, which is that we will have, as the Archbishop mentioned, grown our fund from just over £7 billion to just under £8 billion. We paid out £220 million to a wide variety of beneficiaries, including some old pension payments. Our growth was 16%. Those figures are not yet confirmed but I think it will be 16%.

The thing I would want to say to my successor, whoever he or she should be, is to work from the strength this fund gives you. It is a perpetual endowment with only one client—the Church. A perpetual endowment gives you time. You take very long views. You have the luxury of patience, which is denied to most investors as

a matter of fact; they have liabilities to meet coming up quickly. That is denied to pension funds. It is not denied to us. We do have patience.

Having only one client and not having to meet a whole variety of demands means that we can be single-minded. I think I know what the Church wants. It wants us to be consistent. To me, the greatest defeat would ever have been to cut our distributions. To me, that would have been a moment when I should push off and do something else. Consistency seems to me to be very, very important. We should produce real growth, which we have done, to pay for things such as Reform and Renewal. We should bear in mind all the time the ethical considerations which the Church wishes us to hold. We do not take decisions without checking whether they fit with our ethical policies. We have a Head of Responsible Investment who is in the office with us all the time, so you only have to walk two desks along and you can ask advice, "What do you think of this? What do you think of that?"

These strengths all spring from being a perpetual endowment with one client. That is what I would want to say to my successor: just work off that base.

I am very optimistic for the future of the Church. I have mentioned on perhaps previous occasions to various groups the tests I have for successful institutions, whether they be commercial businesses, churches, National Health hospitals, charities, schools, whatever. I think the tests are always the same.

The first one is whether you are capable of innovating. I think innovation is of the highest and greatest importance. The very good thing is that the Church of England is ideally structured to innovate because the widely dispersed authority, the fact that we are hundreds, perhaps thousands of individual units legally separate from each other, gives everybody a chance to do what they think is best and to experiment and take risks. If you are in a top-down organisation, on the whole you do not take risks because it is probably going to be bad for your career. The Church is not like that, so it is perfectly prepared to be good at innovation. I think that the development of Fresh Expressions of Church in the late 1970s was an act of spontaneous combustion. I do not think anybody told the Church to do that; it just happened. I think enterprising clergy and lay people got it going. Progress was slow but it was steady. However, innovation alone is not enough. Other things have to come to the party.

The first thing that has to come to the party is funding. In 2002, the Commissioners created a special parish mission fund and then in 2007 the Commissioners and the Council created the Spending Plans Task Group, which was brilliantly chaired

by the Bishop of London and since then, as you know, grants totalling millions of pounds have backed enterprising mission plans put forward by dioceses.

Innovation plus funding, however, is not enough, something else has to come to the party and that is research. It is tempting to rely upon one's intuition and anecdote, and they are pretty good but they are not sufficient. I think the moment when *From Anecdote to Evidence* was published in 2014 was very important. As far as I can tell that was very influential in the way people thought about the future of the Church and Church growth.

Still we do not have all the elements in place: innovation plus funding plus research. There is another one we have to bring to the party, which is training. People will know that I have always been very keen on training. I believe 100% in training. Everybody from top to bottom can be trained to do their work better and it makes a huge difference. At the moment there are very good training schemes underway for the leadership of the Church. I think 75% of bishops and 40 deans have been on leadership programmes. I think this is terrific. Those I have met who have been on them have found them very helpful and useful.

Finally, there is one more guest we need at this party: innovation plus funding plus research plus training and, finally, facing up to reality across the Church. I think that, in essence, is what Reform and Renewal does. I think we have a very full hand. That is why I am optimistic about the Church.

I say farewell happy in the belief that the future looks good. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Sir Andreas. This brings us to the end of this item on the Order Paper. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 10.55 am

The Chair: Good morning, everyone. Just before we move on to Item 9, the Chair of the Business Committee, Sue Booy, would like to make an announcement. Thank you.

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): Chair, thank you very much. Yesterday I told you that your paperwork for groups tomorrow would be in your trays this morning, and I know some of you have collected it, following which you came to speak to me. I gather it would be helpful if I told you that the groups you are invited to meet in tomorrow are those groups that you met in July in York and for the first part of

the group meetings they will be sub-divided into two smaller groups. I thought it might be helpful for Synod to know that this morning. Thank you.

PRELIMINARIES TO MARRIAGE (GS 2045A AND GS 2045B)

The Chair: Now we come to Item 9 on the Agenda, which is the Revd Stephen Trott's Private Member's Motion Preliminaries to Marriage. Members will need Stephen Trott's paper, which is GS 2045A, which is salmon in colour, and the companion notes from the Secretary General, which is GS 2045B, which is also salmon in colour.

I would like to draw your attention at this stage to the Financial Statements relating to this item which can be found at paragraphs 6 to 9 on page 4 of the Financial Memorandum. That is stated on the Sixth Notice Paper, the green one.

I would like to give members an idea about the shape of the debate. In a moment I shall call upon the Revd Stephen Trott to move his Private Member's Motion. I shall then take two speeches before asking the Revd Neil Patterson to speak to, and move, his amendment. Then Stephen Trott will make his response, followed by the amendment being debated and voted on. Then debating the motion will resume before voting accordingly. I call upon Stephen Trott to move Item 9, Preliminaries to Marriage. He has up to ten minutes.

Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough): I beg to move:

'That this Synod, noting the Registration of Marriages Regulations 2015 and the growing burden and complexity of the legal requirements imposed on members of the clergy who conduct weddings in the Church of England, invite the Archbishops' Council to bring forward draft legislation to replace ecclesiastical preliminaries to marriage by universal civil preliminaries, such as those which have been in operation in Scotland since 1977, when banns were replaced by a Marriage Schedule issued by the civil registrar.'

Thank you, Chair. I have always been uneasy about the banns, which I have been publishing for 32 years in parish ministry and 15 as a surrogate, not least when confronted with the dilemma as to whether to publish my own banns of marriage.

A little bit of research revealed that I was operating a system which was designed by the Church to address the circumstances of 1215 A.D. and the world has certainly moved on since then. Eight hundred years ago the publication of banns was served on everyone in the community; not so in 2017; not in major

conurbations nor even in rural England. Parish boundaries are often meaningless in urban areas. In rural areas there are sometimes not enough services to ensure three publications in the three months before the wedding.

Banns no longer does what it says on the tin. It is a hopelessly ineffective means of inquiry almost to the point of pretence. In last Sunday's Gospel reading we were bidden not to take oaths but to let your yes be yes and your no be no, but here we are still going through with this performance.

I remember the discussions which took place in 2002 to 2004 about a one-stop shop and the decision not to opt into a marriage schedule system such as that which operates very successfully in Scotland. Even in 2004 the premises for the argument were flawed. There is always a proportion of couples who need a marriage licence either from the diocese or the civil registrar.

Banns cannot be published for those who are resident outside England and Wales; they do not exist elsewhere. So we do not really have a one-stop-shop system as things stand.

Most recently, and most significantly, since 2015 we are actually forbidden to marry non-EEA citizens by way of banns or common licence. They have to go to a special registry office for interviews and apply for a superintendent registrar's certificate.

The clergy are now required to check the passports of all applicants. It sounds good, but I have attended a training day as a surrogate provided by the Border Agency to show us how to detect forged or bogus passports. At the end of the day they admitted that they find it difficult; what hope do the clergy have when presented with a passport for inspection?

The publication of banns is fraught with difficulties. The clergy must become familiar with 75 pages of the Marriage Act, 60 pages of 'Guidance for the Clergy' issued by the General Register Office, and 62 pages of the 'Guide to the Law for the Clergy' issued by the Faculty Office. I am a law post-graduate and I struggle with all of this. The language and terminology is arcane in the extreme. It causes great concern and even stress to those who must operate it.

I am aware of many mistakes being made and, worse, unwise shortcuts taken by some clergy around the country in an effort to make sense of it all, opening themselves up to discipline by both the Church and the courts. Mr Nye's paper

reflects the mind-boggling difficulties involved in mastering the current law of marriage. I am perplexed by his assertion that abolishing banns would mean that parishioners would cease to have a right to marry in their parish church.

We already marry couples without the use of banns and we are now prohibited from doing so in certain places. More to the point, a change to the law by way of an Act of Parliament or a Measure would authorise whatever decision we might take about civil preliminaries. An Act of Parliament definitively changes the law in the United Kingdom.

Whatever decision was taken about a one-stop-shop in 2004 concerning preliminaries to marriage has, in any event, been overtaken by history, the criminal gangs obtaining marriage certificates by organising sham marriages, and even a number of clergy collaborating and finding themselves in prison as a result. There are serious potential consequences for clergy acting as untrained registrars who bend the rules for any reason, including failure to understand what is at stake.

Perhaps most seriously, for the first time there is now a whole category of people against whom we must discriminate on account of their nationality, excluding them from banns or a common licence. I find myself very uneasy at having to treat people differently on account of their nationality. Is marriage a Christian ordinance or a legal ceremony?

What my motion proposes would result in a Steering Committee being set up to bring forward proposals for reform, to reform the vacuity of banns which achieve little or nothing because publication is so limited; common licences, in which there is not even that degree of publication; and, now, discrimination against foreign nationals which has nothing to do with sacramental marriage services in our churches; and clergy, who have no way to verify any of the documents with which they are presented, unlike civil registrars who have access to the entire Government database against which they can check applicants.

I am keenly aware that banns are used in some churches as an important means of evangelistic outreach to wedding couples, although there is actually no connection between the purpose which is stated for banns and the marriage preparation which we offer to those preparing to be married.

We could, if we chose, keep banns as a requirement of Canon law but for banns to cease to have any legal effect according to the Marriage Act by replacing them for that purpose. We could continue with banns as we always have done, if we

wanted to do so. I have to say from my own experience that nobody is deterred from seeking a church wedding if they need to obtain a common licence from a third party—the diocesan registrar in most cases—or a certificate from the town hall.

In fact, the concept of obtaining a licence to marry is far more readily understood than banns, which usually requires two interviews and two sets of banns in two separate churches. In Scotland, the civil registrar is, genuinely, a one-stop-shop for all the legal requirements and since 1977 couples there have routinely completed the legal requirements and have gone on to the church to celebrate a wedding, uncluttered by legal challenges and legal language.

The clergy do not need to wrestle with regulations about legal registration on the day or produce a marriage certificate or send certified wedding returns to the civil registrar once a quarter. The couple bring the marriage schedule to the service where it is signed by the minister, the couple and the witnesses, and returned afterwards to the civil registrar. It is much simpler for the couple and much simpler and safer for the minister concerned.

Members of Synod, we have made considerable progress towards redirecting our efforts and our energy into intentional evangelism, Renewal and Reform. Here is an opportunity to simplify an ancient tradition by which we have become hidebound and, in the process, to lift the burden of the law from wedding couples and from the clergy and, indeed, from our diocesan registrars. It is time to hand back to Caesar the laws which Caesar has imposed on us and hand over our marriage preparation and wedding celebration to God. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair. The matter is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Ms Carol Wolstenholme (Newcastle): On Thursday this chamber will be considering the paper *Setting God's People Free*, which is all about lay leadership through discipleship and influence. It suggests a change of culture is needed to equip lay people as disciples and, also, for clergy and lay to believe they are equal in worth and status as partners in mission.

I wonder whether one of the solutions to the heavy burden on clergy due to the complexity of the legal requirements that is quoted in GS 2045 might be to encourage clergy to enrol and enlist some of the skilled lay people or those with a

particular bent towards administration and legal work, to work with them on those aspects of weddings.

Indeed, I would suggest lay people might also go further and share in the preparation of those to be married and marriage teaching. This would be one of the ways of changing the culture, to equip lay people as disciples, and encourage partnership working. For me, let us leave the reading of banns as they are but let us indeed use them as an opportunity to develop discipleship and to grow the Church.

The Chair. After Michael Todd, I would like Revd Neil Patterson to speak to and move his amendment.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): Point of order: the audio system is still very difficult, I wonder if that desk might be better than this one?

The Chair. Thank you very much, April Alexander. Will members please take note of her suggestion, thank you.

Dr Michael Todd (Truro): My 2010 PhD thesis on the theology of marriage spent some time looking at the relationship between State and Church with regard to marriage and their very different interests. Our present situation remains very much the child of the 1753 Hardwicke Act which first introduced universal registration. It did so as part of its role of granting and monitoring access to rights for the better regulation of clandestine marriages.

Key was the establishment of watertight evidence that a marriage had, indeed, taken place and could not be unilaterally repudiated. It was very much to do with property and what happened when a marriage came to an end either by death or at that time, sadly, by abandonment. Subsequent legislation covered other rights: divorce; access to children; pension rights, particularly pension rights for surviving spouses; welfare payments; immigration, and so on.

More recently, the State dealt with the definition of “next of kin”, especially the right to be consulted over the treatment of a partner suffering from a serious, possibly terminal, illness. The Church’s interest is surely very different. Are we not principally called to announce God’s grace and, in this particular, enable it to flow into and through and around long-lasting married relationships? Not just the couple but children and other dependants, or, as GS 2055 puts it, “The sustenance of viable, warm, reciprocal and loving human relationships.”

The debate leading up to the Hardwicke Act was not unlike some of the current opposition to change, with the suggestion that if the Church did not have this role to act as the agent of the State, then somehow no one would ever come to church to seek God's blessing on their union ever again. There is no indication that more people are married in church in this country than, say, in France or Scotland where the separation of the roles of Church and State in marriage has long been the case, but the cost of the 1753 deal was considerable.

In so doing, we, the Church, lost the ability to define for ourselves the boundaries of marriage, ceding it to the State. We continue throughout the period in between and today very much at the mercy of secular change. Our Church has found its role in the regulation of marriage seriously impacting on our ability to carry out our mission and pastoral roles.

The proposal of this motion has far greater implication than mere administrative convenience, welcome though that would be. Loosed from being the agent of the State, we could focus much more on the long-lasting role of helping people to find God's grace in their relationship throughout its existence, not just at its beginning. This liberation could transform not only our theology of marriage but also the approach to many people who have limited contact with the Church and who, at present, all too often see our stance as predominantly negative.

We already see around half of children now born to parents who are not formally married at the time of birth. Many parts of society see marriage as something that follows childbearing not preceding it. This is an opportunity to welcome all people regardless of social position, former marriages, colour of their skin, gender, or any of the other reasons why the Church in the past has provided obstacles for people being married in our Church.

God clearly cares for everyone. This is a great opportunity for us to embrace that care and to play a part in enriching the lives of so many more couples. God's grace works through people. Let us grasp the opportunity and live it to the full, unshackled by being the agent of a State.

The Chair: I call Revd Neil Patterson to speak to and move his amendment, which is Item 20.

Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford): I beg to move:

'*Leave out* all the words after "draft legislation" and *insert* "which greatly

simplifies the current system of ecclesiastical preliminaries in order to reduce the administrative burden on clergy whilst retaining so far as possible the one-stop-shop and pastoral benefits of the local arrangement of marriages.”

Madam Chair, members of Synod, I have supported Stephen Trott’s Private Member’s Motion since it was first proposed because I agree with him that the ecclesiastical preliminaries to marriage, as they now stand, are a problem as I shall explain, and I will continue to support his motion. However, you will all have seen the response from the Secretary General, supported by the Weddings Project team, and you may well be thinking, because of that, that you are minded to resist the main motion.

There are, I think, three main strands in the paper from the Secretary General: that the calling of banns offers a pastoral opportunity with couples, bringing them to church to hear them; that the one-stop-shop improves our offer to wedding couples; and that the State does not want the cost and the burden of taking over this work from us. This is a friendly amendment which preserves key benefits of Stephen’s motion but meets those concerns. It is an opportunity to have your cake and eat it. It is also quite non-specific in detail.

I shall make some suggestions, but these would need to be worked out in future consultation. The impact of the motion, if passed with my amendment, is that marriage preliminaries are too complicated and cumbersome and can and should be simplified in the spirit of that wider agenda. Some of what I had to say about banns has been said by Stephen as well.

The majority of couples now, of course, notwithstanding the teaching of the Church, live together and, presumably, sleep together before marriage and have only one address; but, with increasing numbers of marriages conducted under qualifying connections, banns are being called very often in multiple places. How often is that really very useful? It is certainly not the one-stop-shop.

Then there is the threefold reading of banns. It is an unusual privilege in this place to ask that the Church of England ought to disregard the decree of the Council of Trent, but I think there is perhaps a case for ‘back to 1215’ and a single reading arranged at a service to welcome and pray for the couple. As Stephen has said, in rural churches, where perhaps the banns book must be passed from church to church or minister to minister, it has lost even more coherence.

If we keep the preliminaries in-house but simplify, we can roll up the banns fee into

the wedding fee and not lose the income, as detailed in the costs paper. Then, of course, we also come to the complicated cases, those that currently call for common licences, superintendent registrar certificates or Archbishops' licences. Surely, we can do better than all the pages of complexity that some of you will know in the Legal Office booklet.

I am not going to go into the detail. Some of you will know the system well and those who do not would probably rather not, but we would not start from here nor do we need to now. We could ask for the general use of superintendent registrar certificates or perhaps we could draw up a concept of a new ecclesiastical schedule that parish clergy could seek from diocesan registrars for all the complex cases of nationality or location of the wedding or residence as a way forward.

I do want to comment on a particular effect of the present licence system, perhaps in our own minds and the minds of some of the wider public. Aficionados of ecclesiastical law—I confess to being one—are prone, I think, to go a little misty-eyed when we think of the Archbishop of Canterbury's legatine powers under which special licences are issued.

There is a certain excitement in thinking that under the trim figure of our latter day Archbishop of Canterbury lurks the vast scarlet form of Cardinal Wolsey and all the legates who before him dispensed from the Canon law in past centuries. I, for one, am relieved that the legatine powers do not seem to be feature in the Renewal and Reform programme, nor should they.

The existence of such powers, the idea that a marriage may only be able to take place after a surrogate has sworn, or a clerk in a dusty tower of Lambeth Palace has consulted the parchments and besought the Lord Archbishop, perpetuates an illusion we have about ourselves; the illusion that we own marriage, that we control marriage, that we permit it to those we consider worthy. That illusion is very deep-seated in the history of our Established Church. It contributes to the painful mess we shall be in tomorrow and it is time to be done with it.

I commend to you Stephen's motion but, if you find the portion of the Secretary General convincing, vote for my amendment to have your cake and eat it. I move the amendment standing in my name.

The Chair: I call Stephen Trott to make his response.

Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough): Thank you, Chair. I am grateful for the

friendly spirit in which the amendment is intended but I do not see how it actually will change things significantly to deal with the problems of both the administrative burden on the Church and also the fact that we are perpetuating a system that is actually ineffective, so I would like to resist the amendment at this stage.

The Chair: Thank you. I would appreciate it if those who would like to speak in favour of the amendment would please stand. Thank you. And those who wish to speak against the amendment. Let us move forward then.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Chair: Remember, we are debating the amendment. That is where our focus is. Could those people who are in favour stand up.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): I am grateful to Mr Patterson for proposing this amendment. If this amendment is carried then I shall probably be able to vote in favour of this motion, which otherwise I would not have been. Clearly, there is an administrative burden on the clergy and if something could be done to reduce that, that would be clearly beneficial.

I would very much counsel against getting rid of banns altogether for the following reasons. First of all, because of the pastoral opportunities that they present. I hope that some of the clergy may be able to talk more about that, not only in relation to banns being called where couples are to be married but also the pastoral opportunities connected with away banns where perhaps couples may be being married under qualifying connection and the calling of banns in their own parish church enables them to have some contact with the local clergy that they might otherwise not have had. So not too much simplification in that regard, please. That is the first consideration.

The second thing is about the nature of Establishment which is referenced in the Secretary General's paper. If we believe in Establishment, which I think most of us do, and certainly the Church of England still does, then let us not be about forever trying to unpick the ties between Church and State and the role that the Church has as the Established Church in our country. These things have symbolic significance which goes beyond the immediate trappings of administration. It is important, if we believe in the Establishment of the Church of England and if we believe in our place as a Church for the nation, that we should not be in retreat from those things.

The third thing I wanted to say was as a member of a congregation. The church that I attend is in a city centre and it does not have a resident population, but for those that do have resident parishioners they will have possibly even more weddings than we do. Very often, the people who come to get married in our church are not regular members of the congregation but people who have some connection with the place and want to come back and get married there. They come to hear their banns being read.

That gives us a chance to welcome them and to get to know them and say “hello” to them and, I would like to think, in some cases increases the chance that they may then become regular worshippers because they have had a welcome not only from the clergy but from the congregation. I can see an orange, oh well. Anyway, I beg to support this amendment.

The Chair: Thank you. After the Bishop of Warrington, Richard Blackburn, I would like to invite Stephen Lynas to speak against the motion, please.

The Bishop of Warrington (Rt Revd Richard Blackburn): I apologise, Chair, just because I am limited to one vote wearing two hats. I was not trying to get two speeches in. I would like to support this amendment because I think it helps us find a way forward to actually grasp this issue and perhaps allow us a bit more time to reflect on how we do so.

When I became an archdeacon, one of the earliest phone calls I received was from a registrar elsewhere in the country advising me that a couple living in my diocese, although they believed they were married, were, in fact, not married and would I please sort it out. My first instinct, I have to confess, was to ask who the culprit was. It was not a clergyman in my diocese and, in fact, God had got there before me and had called him elsewhere.

The consequence pastorally, as well as trying to sort out other legal issues, was not a pleasant one and was, in the end, well-handled by the local vicar involved. With the number of uncollected banns certificates that, as an archdeacon, I found lying around in vestries and in other places, I was, frankly, surprised that I did not receive more phone calls like that. The process around the calling of banns is unsatisfactory and risks serious pastoral as well as legal consequences.

Many clergy, alas, adopt a pretty gung-ho approach to banns: “Oh, who believes in that sort of old-fashioned stuff anymore” was a frequent response that I would get. Some do not really ever get their heads around it. This notion that there is a

sort of one-stop conversation, I think, ignores the fact that it is often now parish administrators who find getting their heads around banns equally as difficult as parish priests.

I think we do need to grasp this nettle. I think Fr Trott is right, banns do not do what it says on the tin, but I hope he will see that he is best supported in this by supporting this amendment in order to enable us to find a way through the complexities. I do not believe that we should just continue as we are. We do owe it to our clergy and parish administrators to lift the burden that is becoming increasingly complex in understanding this system. I beg to support the amendment.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): Point of order. Could I repeat my request we use that desk rather than this one?

Mr Graham Caskie (Oxford): It might not be fine that side but this side is absolutely fine.

The Chair: Let us move on. After Stephen Lynas, I would like to hear another speech against the amendment, please.

Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells): I sense around the floor there is a resistance to this whole motion, partly because it has got tied up with this thing about banns and, as Stephen Trott has pointed out, it is not just about banns; they are a reasonably easy thing to sort out. Neil Patterson's amendment is something people want to go for because it offers a halfway house, but I do want to encourage Synod to resist the amendment and to go the whole hog. I see this motion unamended as a St Valentine's Day gift to a lot of clergy and lay parish administrators, who struggle with the system as we have it. If you look me up in *Crockford's* you will see it says in invisible ink: "Lynas, nice chap: has never run a parish". What I do as a bishop's chaplain is take a lot of phone calls from parish clergy who are struggling to deal with the marriage regulations we have. The famous yellow book of advice from the Faculty Office is something people ring me up about and I say, "Have you looked in the yellow book?" and they say, "Yes, but I don't understand it", and I tell them to ring the diocesan registrar.

Neil's amendment is a nice try at clinging to the wreckage, but I do not think phrases such as "greatly simplifies" and "while retaining so far as possible" are going to help us out of this particular pickle. GS 2045B, to which he refers strongly, is, to my mind, about as unenthusiastic a background paper as I can remember

during my time on Synod. There is scaremongering, in my view, in the green finance document about the loss of fees. It talks about £2 million being lost if we change the way we do things. It sounds horrendous, but if we really do 44,000 weddings a year, even allowing for the fact they are not all under banns, that comes out at about 50 quid a wedding. It is not big potatoes and it is not a reason not to go down the Trott road. There is a joke here somewhere. I have not quite got it, but if some gets it before me, please do tell us.

I am really sorry that people are fussing about the banns issue when it is about more than that. Some years ago, when we invented the Qualifying Connections, Mark Ireland, who was then a Lichfield representative and is now an archdeacon in an even better diocese, said, “We want to be the Church that likes to say ‘Yes’.” That was a great phrase which has stuck in my memory since then, but actually what we are is a Church that likes to say, “Gosh this is very difficult; I need to look at some forms and can we do this, that and the other before we fix the date?” We know that we do better weddings than civil venues. We know that we do preparation. We know that we root people in their community when we marry them and we know that we bring the life of God into the lives of these couples. None of that is affected by us going with Stephen Trott’s motion and handing stuff over. Please resist the amendment.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Madam Chairman, after the next speaker I would propose a motion for closure on the amendment. Are you tempted?

The Chair: Yes, definitely, you have read my mind. Thank you, John Freeman.

Revd Kate Stacey (Oxford): I was surprised and saddened when I read the proposal before us today, even as amended, but perhaps I should not have been when the mission, evangelism and discipleship opportunities offered by the occasional offices are, it seems, bafflingly absent from the Renewal and Reform rhetoric.

May I share just one of many stories I could tell about the wonderful mission opportunities offered by weddings, baptisms and funerals—occasional offices or, as we are now calling it, life events ministry, and, in particular, banns. Monica and Joe tentatively asked if there was any chance of them being married in church, fully expecting the answer to be “No”. When I was able to say a warm and welcoming “Yes”, they were quite overwhelmed. I love those moments in ministry. We have been planning and preparing and are now having their banns read. They are there each time bringing members of their families with them, each time being

welcomed, feeling more and more part of the community; each time being prayed for by name, knowing they are held and valued by this Church and by God. And here is the thing: now they come between the reading of their banns. Now they are not visitors; they are part of us. Now they have seen something of the love of God and are intrigued through the reading of their banns.

Now let us imagine that instead of a warm and welcoming “Yes”, I had had to redirect them to the local registry office, to be faced with efficient, faceless bureaucracy. Let us imagine that there was no need for them to meet the church community, but instead the Church was reduced to a building, a pretty venue. Is that what we want? If there are clergy colleagues who find banns a terrible burden, I am yet to meet one. I urge you to consider that the solution is not to take away this wonderful ministry but rather to invest in re-envisioning them about the mission opportunities offered by our life events ministry, which sees around half a million people a week in our churches. In our benefice alone that was more than 5,000 people last year, 478 of which were personal, meaningful pastoral conversations about significant moments in their lives and where God is in those. Banns are not a burden, but rather a gateway for non-Church couples to encounter the Church and God. I implore you not to support this motion.

The Chair: I would like to point out that that was Kate Stacey’s maiden speech.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Do you need a point of order again, Madam Chair?

The Chair: I see no one standing, thank you, John Freeman.

A Speaker: I want to speak in favour of the amendment. Is that all right? I will give way to the point of order.

The Chair: I am conscious of the time for the rest of the debate.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Madam Chair, a motion for closure on the amendment.

The Chair: That has my consent. Does it have the consent of Synod?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: Thank you. We move on to vote on the amendment. This is Item 20 and if you look at the big screens you can see the wording and how it fits in with

the rest of the motion as well.

The motion

‘*Leave out* “draft legislation” and *insert* “which greatly simplifies the current system of ecclesiastical preliminaries in order to reduce the administrative burden on clergy whilst retaining so far as possible the one-stop-shop and pastoral benefits of the local arrangement of marriages.”

was put.

The Chair. That is looking very close so I think we are going to need to use our gadgets in a moment.

The motion was put and lost after a counted vote of the whole Synod, 146 voting in favour, 148 against, with 13 recorded abstentions.

The Chair. The amendment was lost. I am conscious of the time and, therefore, it would be good to get back to debating the main motion. I am going to start with Prolocutor Cherry Vann and then I would like to invite Sally Lodge to give her maiden speech.

The Chair imposed a three-minute speech limit.

Ven. Cherry Vann (Manchester): I confess that dealing with the complexities of ecclesiastical preliminaries is not one of the things that I miss about being an archdeacon, but I would urge Synod to vote against this motion for the simple reason that it will reduce significantly the opportunities for mission and evangelism that the reading of the banns gives.

The Church of England conducts, as we have read, around 45,000 weddings a year. This means we have a potential to have direct contact with 90,000 people, largely in the 18 to 45 age group, the very group that we particularly struggle to engage with. The vast majority of those weddings are done by banns. This gives us a real opportunity to make connections, to build relationships and to demonstrate something of God’s love to the couples who come to us through our care and concern.

Research done by the Weddings Project suggests that where couples are invited to church to hear their banns read, they respond positively and often attend. They

particularly value hearing the church's prayers for them on those occasions. This builds on other findings from the Weddings Project, that couples who want a Church wedding want one for spiritual reasons, such as wanting to make their vows before God, wanting God's blessing on their marriage, wanting a wedding that is "proper" or "special", the implication being that only a church wedding fulfils those criteria.

All the research shows that contact with local clergy and experience of Church services works positively towards drawing people into a deeper relationship with God and God's people. There is anecdotal evidence, for example, of the long-term effects of these invitations, including one vicar who said how going to church to hear her banns read was the key starting point in her own spiritual journey. And the couple who are now regularly involved in the Church as a result of a growing relationship that sprang out of an initial invitation to hear their banns read. Banns provide us with a missional opportunity to the younger generation. Let us not shoot ourselves in the foot by abolishing them. I invite Synod to vote against this motion.

Revd Sally Lodge (Chelmsford): I would like to introduce you to Paula. Paula is in her late 60s. She is a regular and faithful member of the congregation who hardly misses a Sunday. Paula came through the doors of the church for the first time nine years ago. Although she had been baptized as a baby, she had rarely been to a Church service anywhere in her adult life. She came that morning to hear her son's banns being read. Paula would be the first to tell you that the only reason she came that day was because she had been asked to do the flowers for the wedding and she wanted to count the pews so she could count how many pew ends she would need. Coming to hear the banns read gave her an excuse—permission if you like—to come through the doors. Something stirred in Paula. She came the next week for the second reading and the following week for the third reading and she continued coming week after week until the wedding itself was a distant memory. The banns experience changed Paula's life and in due course she was confirmed. She is now an active PCC member. She is part of the Messy Church team. She helps with the weekly toddler group and she is a baptism visitor. She is in church most Sundays and if she misses a Sunday, chances are that she will be there at the midweek Communion instead.

But, most of all, Paula is a natural evangelist. She exudes faith. Her love of Jesus and the desire to share her faith with others simply overflows out of her. Through Paula's witness others have come to faith. Paula's story is not unique. There are others in the congregation who are there because some time in the past they came to hear their own banns being read or they came to support sons and daughters

having their banns read.

I know the legal and admin burden is a heavy one. In our team we have over 40 weddings a year and we call banns for another 20 or so happening elsewhere. I speak from experience about this burden. However, the Paulas of this world make it a burden worth bearing. I will be voting against this motion for several reasons, but mainly because it fails to recognise the pastoral significance of the calling of banns.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Madam Chairman, after this speaker can I tempt you with a motion for closure on this item?

The Chair: I would like to hear a couple more speeches first and then I am sure that would be a good thing to do.

Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln): Chair, this motion presents an opportunity for furthering the simplification process and to free the Church for mission and evangelism. I would encourage members to look at GS Misc 1157 which sets out the Mission Statement in terms of identifying constraints to mission and growth, adaptations and proposals for simplification and deregulation.

I know from my own professional life that there are rules and regulations which at their inception are intended to be permissive but over time, as societal changes overtake them, can become burdensome and complex. If anybody here takes the opportunity to open the 2015 Regulations, to which the main motion refers, and sees what they impose in terms of additional complexity, it is my view that they introduce a compliance culture which our clergy should not be managing. Rules which were not created by us and which demonstrate the intention for which banns were originally introduced, as explained by the Revd Trott, have really lost their currency and value in my submission.

If one looks at the Regulations, one can see that there are requirements to check nationality. Many of the protocols that clergy are required to do reflect those routines that one goes through if one is opening a bank account—the anti-money laundering steps that you have to take of taking a passport, a utility bill or a driving licence—or looking out for forced or sham marriages, which might involve some other criminality. I think it is wrong that what is being imposed on clergy is the expectation that they are the eyes or ears of the State. These are things that, in my view, the State—civil government—should be responsible for and should not be passed on to clergy. Checking certificates and notice periods in the certificates

that are issued; checking photographs—all of this is a compliance culture which we ought to be resisting. Therefore, I would ask you to think carefully and support the Revd Trott's motion because it is my view that this is an opportunity for greater simplification and to push back the frontiers of the State where there is ever-greater encroachment upon the more important work that we really want to be concentrating on.

Synod, I commend the main motion to you. Thank you.

The Chair. After Tiffer Robinson has spoken, I will be looking for a motion for closure.

Revd Tiffer Robinson (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Banns—I would be happy to see the back of them. To nick the Archbishop of York's joke: this is my first time of asking. Here are my reasons. First, as others have said, the current system is now unintentionally discriminatory and, of course, come Brexit it is likely that we would have to send all non-British citizens to the registrar. That is just not appropriate—to me anyway.

I think they make us look very unprofessional. Increasingly, when I explain it to couples, they find it bizarre that they have to find out which parish they are in (not always simple in a city) contact the vicar there, or in a vacancy the rural dean, and pay them some money to read their names out. This is something they have to organise, despite it being within the remit of the Church of England. Then they need to pay for a certificate where an email would suffice and bring it to me, and only then can I marry them. Increasingly, they do not understand how significant that rule is. I am afraid it just looks bizarre to the younger generation we are marrying more and more of today. Being able to point them in the direction of an office with a receptionist, an appointments system and professional identity checks would be far preferable.

Despite the system being an archaic one, the clergy are still getting it wrong continually. In curacy I had a couple asking me to read their banns—they did not live in the parish nor were they marrying there—because their vicar thought it would be nicer for them to be read where the bride grew up. How many clergy are still telling couples they have to be present to hear the banns being read? That is also not true. Some clergy will refuse to read the banns for remarriages, causing great distress for couples—only very occasional thankfully. Then there is the issue of what happens when they do not get read for whatever reason, a humbling and expensive experience for parish clergy. Ask any diocesan registrar. It happens

more than we might think.

I completely see that it is a good way to retain some sort of connection to their local parish church, but how many clergy do not even meet with the banns couples that send them a form? There is nothing to stop us saying in place of banns, "We will be praying for you at the Sunday service [on this date] and would encourage you to attend". I hope the Wedding Project team will encourage such a gesture.

Please, Synod, do not waste this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to replace this beloved but clunky mechanism. This is for the second time of asking. I hope there will not need to be a third. Thank you.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Point of order: motion for closure on Item 9.

The Chair: That has my consent. Does it have the consent of Synod?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That was clearly carried. I ask Stephen Trott to respond to the debate, please. You have up to five minutes, but hopefully you will not quite need that.

Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough): I am very grateful to everyone who has spoken. It has been a very interesting debate and has given us an opportunity to consider something that we experience regularly but have not had an opportunity to question. I am very grateful to all the speakers. I am not going to list them all because that would take time, but a number of key points have been made and I would like to draw attention to some of them.

Mike Todd has pointed out that the interests of Church and State have become very different indeed and the time really has come for the Church to be allowed to set the definition of marriage for itself. It is not just an administrative burden. Thank you, Neil Patterson, for your speech and for your proposal, it is more than just an administrative burden. The question is whether it is appropriate or honest to continue a method of enquiry that is self-evidently ineffective and for that to be a legal requirement with legal consequences.

A number of speakers have pointed to the pastoral opportunities which are afforded by banns, but I need to say that banns are published as a legal not a pastoral requirement. They could continue after reform suitably re-envisioned. Marriage itself, however, is the real pastoral and evangelistic opportunity for the

Church. If we are doing our preparation effectively and thoroughly, then we will have the pastoral opportunities that we need and can take advantage of. While that preparation is obscured by being peppered with legal challenges throughout the procedure, we are saying something about marriage which does not really ring true. It is another debate, but we could say “Yes” to many more couples by reforming the equally confusing Qualifying Connections system which is part of the current marriage law. This, too, imposes artificial constraints on who we may and may not marry. I would hope that a reform to the banns system might lead in turn to a reform of this equally difficult part of our marriage law and enable us not to turn away someone who wants to be married in our churches but to be able to say “Yes” to them. We should be, as Stephen Lynas says, a Church which says “Yes”.

I would like to sum up by saying that our preparation for marriage is the key thing that we do, and if we do it properly and pastorally and evangelistically I think we will find we have no need of banns. Take the opportunity now. Let us have a Steering Committee set up. Let us consider what kind of changes we can make, one of which might include the retention of banns in some form, but let us tackle the problem.

A number of speakers have pointed to the problems that are caused by banns particularly when they are disregarded. Let us become a Church which says “Yes” and not constrained by saying, “If and but and when and have you signed the forms and have you remembered the marriage certificate?” Let us be a Church which says “Yes”. Thank you, Chair.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Point of order. There are occasions when a vote appertains to the rights and duties of the clergy and, because this one does in my view, I would like to test the mind of the Synod about a vote by Houses, please.

The Chair: Thank you. Are there 25 members standing? Clearly yes. I am going to order a count by Houses.

The motion:

‘That this Synod, noting the Registration of Marriages Regulations 2015 and the growing burden and complexity of the legal requirements imposed on members of the clergy who conduct weddings in the Church of England, invite the Archbishops’ Council to bring forward draft legislation to replace ecclesiastical preliminaries to marriage by universal civil preliminaries, such

as those which have been in operation in Scotland since 1977, when banns were replaced by a Marriage Schedule issued by the civil registrar.'

was lost after a counted vote by Houses: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 10, those against 16, no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 74 in favour, 87 against, no recorded abstentions. In the House of Laity, those in favour 79, those against 81, with seven recorded abstentions. Therefore, the motion was lost in all three Houses.

The Chair: That concludes this item of business. In a moment we will move to the next item on the Agenda. Thank you, everyone.

THE CHAIR *Dean of Southwark (Very Revd Andrew Nunn)* took the Chair at 12.08 pm

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. We are going to now begin the rest of the day on legislative business. I can see eyes sparkling with pleasure out there.

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

DRAFT MISSION AND PASTORAL ETC. (AMENDMENT) MEASURE (GS 2014B)

The Chair: We will now take the final drafting and final approval stages of the Draft Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure. Members will need the Draft Measure, GS 2014B, and the Report of the Steering Committee, GS 2014Z. I must draw your attention to the financial comment on this Item at paragraphs 10 to 13 of the Financial Memorandum, which is on the Sixth Notice Paper.

I call on the Bishop of Willesden to move Item 500: "That the Synod do take note of this Report". Bishop, you have up to ten minutes to address us.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): I beg to move
'That the Synod do take note of this Report'

This particular bit of the debate is where I try and turn you all into Synod geeks, because we are looking at a Report which is GS 2014Z and that deals with the final drafting. As you will see on the Report there are two sorts of amendments that can be made at this stage; there are drafting amendments and special amendments.

If you turn GS 2014Z over, you will see a fair amount of quite oblique commentary which explains what amendments are being made, and they are all drafting amendments. The easiest way to follow what I am putting forward is to look at the page numbers at the top of 2014B otherwise you get lost in the paragraphs.

Let me whip you through what is being proposed in final drafting and see where we get to.

The first bit you need to look at is clause 1 on pages 1 and 2 of 2014B. What that does is to make sure that our new proposals for deanery plans are called up by the Measure itself. There are two places where we insert the word “plans” in terms of interested parties. Are you with me so far? Exciting, isn’t it?

You then go to clause 6 and page 8. On page 8 there is a proposal there to make sure that someone who does lose their office through pastoral reorganisation and is appointed to an office with a higher emolument gets dealt with fairly and properly.

On page 10 there is an amendment which clarifies something that was always intended but which deals with the compensation provisions that are being put forward here and are basically saying that if Archbishops’ Council decides in the light of experience to adjust the compensation levels it cannot reduce them, it can only look at increasing them. In other words, it is not a way in which the Archbishops’ Council can reduce compensation down to nought. I think we knew that anyway, but this is to make sure that everyone understands that is the case.

On page 16 there is an amendment which is correcting a drafting error.

On pages 22 and 28 there are consequential amendments to excite and make your blood run with sheer delight.

I beg to move:

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

The Chair: Thank you, Bishop. Item 500 is therefore open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Revd Tiffer Robinson (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Sorry to be back so soon. After this came to First Consideration last February I put forward a petition on social

media to ask that the clause on compensation for dispossessed clergy be removed from the Measure. Within 24 hours it had 120 signatures and was submitted to the Revision Committee, which I was honoured to be appointed to. A lot of those who signed were younger ordinands, lots of lay people, plenty of clergy and Synod members.

It has been changed and it is slightly better for those who are dispossessed as they have 12 months' housing stipend plus the six months' notice period to find an alternative post or, of course, alternative employment. I was not really asking for more money for such clergy, but to keep the legislation to reorganise incumbents out of a job prohibitively expensive unless a priest is near to retirement.

It is okay, I am usually on the losing side of such debates, as I was earlier today, and I will vote in favour today. But I want to express as strongly as I can that this should not be used as a capability procedure by the back door. "But that's against the rules", I hear you cry, "It can't happen", and I would respond, "Yes, it is; don't do it". It is dishonest and it is not appropriate for the Christian community.

I hope where clergy really are in the wrong place, mutual agreement will always be the intended method to overcome this or, indeed, improving our frankly useless capability procedures, which I would happily support. Let us improve the trust between parishes and the clergy who serve them and those who make these decisions about pastoral reorganisation for the furthering of the mission of the Church. Thank you.

The Chair: I see no one standing, therefore I ask the Bishop to respond to the debate. You have five minutes.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): I will not take that. Tiffer, thank you. You have been assiduous in pursuing this all the way through. I can assure you that there is a Privy Council judgment in the case of *Cheesman* from some years ago—some of you will remember the case—where the Privy Council said, "No, you can't use this particular clause in order to deal with capability". I agree entirely with him that our capability procedures are not good. We have looked at them and we may come back to them through the Simplification Process, this is not a mechanism for doing what you cannot do anyway. Who would I be to argue with the Privy Council?

The Chair: I therefore put Item 500 to the vote.

The motion

'That the Synod do take note of this Report'
was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: We move to Item 501 and I call upon the Bishop of Willesden to move that item:

That the Measure entitled "Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure" be finally approved.

Bishop, you have ten minutes.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): I beg to move
'That the Measure entitled "Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure" be finally approved.'

This is the final approval stage of this wonderfully titled "Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure". You will recall we had a fairly extensive debate at revision stage in July. What is now before you is something that enacts the next tranche of proposals from the Simplification Task Group. You will recall that these stem from concerns expressed from dioceses in particular after we asked them about blockages to mission.

Later on our Agenda we will get to the revision stage of the Draft Legislative Reform Measure which aims to streamline our consideration of these sorts of changes. Later still we have a wonderfully titled Measure, the Draft Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure. That will be a First Consideration debate on the simplification of, among other things, Church Representation Rules and the Measure which governs the notoriously complicated Ecumenical Canons. We are on our way with a programme of reform that will, I hope and pray, make life a lot easier for incumbents, bishops and dioceses alike.

Just to remind you what you are passing. This Measure makes changes to consultation procedures on pastoral schemes and orders. It introduces the concept of the deanery plan for pastoral reorganisation and it skims off the face of the Measure various over-stipulations about the ways in which teams and groups should operate.

There are, as we have just been discussing, new provisions for the compensation of officeholders displaced by pastoral reorganisation. I think they do represent a

good compromise which will enable fair treatment of such clergy without the previous compensation until the age of 70. I think Tiffer's *Facebook* friends need not to worry quite as much as they clearly did at the time.

It was helpful to have worked through that in Synod and clause 7, Schedule 4 gives the Archbishops' Council the remit to monitor the operation of these provisions in practice.

Bishop's pastoral orders are new and they enable a swift procedure for making changes to, among other things, boundaries and names. The hope is that bishops will consult widely, locally, informally, come up with something that works at grassroots level and then just do it.

We are simplifying the way in which bishop's mission orders work which will allow them to become more clearly a part of the missional mixed economy Church. These days the Church of England is both parish and network and that reflects the new normal. A Code of Practice which accompanies these changes will need to be approved by the House of Bishops and by Synod in due course.

Managing expectations on how far and wide we consult on glebe transactions is always difficult. We have had that expressed in Synod. The Measure makes consultation a bit simpler but does not extinguish consultation completely. Here is something that we know from bitter experience can be a major cause of concern, particularly in rural communities.

We also extend the period before lapse and presentation to a benefice from nine months to twelve and presentation to a benefice on lapse will normally fall to the bishop in future, but there is built-in provision at the PCCs' request that the Archbishop handles the lapsed benefice as they do currently.

It is a mixed bag, plenty of et cetera. I commend the Measure to Synod and ask that you vote in favour and give it final approval.

The Chair: Item 501 is now open for debate.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I rise to thank Bishop Pete and his team for doing a really, really good job. I want to say my wife does not let me loose in the garden very much because what I like to do is to hack things down. I enjoy it immensely. It is probably where I dispense the frustration I have with some of the organisation of the Church of England.

It is not just that you are clearing away the deadwood; you are giving us a set of sharp tools to do some very important work quickly and easily. It is central to the modernisation of our Church to meet the pastoral needs we find in this century. It should be thanked and supported and helped.

I also want to say that one of my colleagues, sounding a little bit like a used car salesman, said, "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity". Well, actually on this occasion it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of the second Reformation of the Church of England, reforming it to do the job God wants it to do here on Earth. I want to record my thanks and the thanks of many for the work of those who have done this and brought it to us today. Thank you.

The Chair: I see no one standing, therefore I invite the Bishop to respond to that debate.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): Thank you for your kindness.

The Chair: Thank you. The question is: That the Measure entitled "Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure" be finally approved. In accordance with Standing Order 37 I order a counted vote by Houses.

The motion:

'That the Measure entitled "Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure" be finally approved.'

was put and carried after a counted vote by the Houses. The voting was as follows: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 23, none against, no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, those in favour 90, none against, two recorded abstentions. In the House of Laity, 120 in favour, none against, one recorded abstention. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

The Chair: Now the Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure stands committed to the Legislative Committee. Thank you very much indeed. One down; more to go.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Newcastle (Rt Revd Christine Hardman)* took the Chair at 12.27 pm

DRAFT ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION AND CARE OF CHURCHES MEASURE (GS 2031A)

The Chair: We now move on to Items 502 and 503. That means taking the Final Drafting and Final Approval stages of the Draft Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure. If you are to follow anything, you will need the draft Measure itself, GS 2031A, and then the Report of the Steering Committee, GS 2031Y. I now call upon the Vicar-General of Canterbury to move Item 502: “That the Synod do take note of this Report”. Chancellor Briden has up to ten minutes.

Rt Worshipful Timothy Briden (ex officio): I beg to move
‘That the Synod do take note of this Report.’

Thank you, Chair. The subject of a recent newspaper obituary was said to have spent her life “doing good by stealth”. A consolidation Measure also tries to do good by stealth. It does not change the law. Instead, its purpose is to bring together all the existing law on a particular topic to reconcile inconsistencies and to eliminate obscure language. These are the objectives of the Draft Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure.

It collects into one place a large body of material currently spread over more than a dozen principal Acts and Measures, some of which have been amended several times over and have become traps for the unwary. Schedule 5 listing the repeals gives a good overview of what has been done. The new Measure, for example, includes the provisions of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963 concerning Church courts, judges and registrars. The Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 is repeated and re-enacted. A home has even been found for the Parochial Libraries Act of 1708.

Since the draft Measure will not make any substantive changes to the law, it is unnecessary to tax the patience of Synod by explaining its content in greater detail. Neither, I think, is it necessary for me to take Synod through the drafting amendments listed in the Report which are, if I may say so, very largely cosmetic.

One matter, however, is worth highlighting. In the July 2006 group of sessions, General Synod preferred to retain the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955 as it stood rather than to enable schemes for the inspection of churches to be the subject of nationwide regulation. Synod’s choice is reflected in clauses 45 to 48 which mirror the content of the 1955 Measure. Quinquennial inspection schemes will continue to be the responsibility of diocesan synods which, by clause 45(3),

will also continue to enjoy the power to make replacement schemes.

I encourage diocesan synods, assisted by the advice from the Church Buildings Council, to make good use of their power in clause 45(3) in order to refresh the diocesan schemes and to remove present anomalies. Some provisions in current schemes are now causing real difficulties in our relations with the providers of grant aid and with the professional organisations of the architects and surveyors.

For example, an architect authorised in one diocese to inspect Grade I listed churches may be restricted in a neighbouring diocese to inspecting Grade II or unlisted churches, despite having appropriate accreditation in conservation architecture. Harmonisation in this sort of area will be very welcome.

The Steering Committee has a special cause to be grateful to the Revd Alexander McGregor and to Legislative Counsel, Mr Christopher Packer, for their industry and attention to detail. Without their hard work this draft Measure could not have been brought in its present form before General Synod. I hope that the end result will commend itself to Synod and that, as the next step, it will see fit to take note of the Steering Committee's Report. I so move.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Chairman, I rise really to register a protest about process because I think it is an important matter of principle, although it does not actually affect the substance or the merit of the substance of the Measure. If I can refer Synod to GS 2031Y, the Report of the Steering Committee, we are reminded in paragraph 3 about the two categories of amendments. We are told that, "Drafting amendment' means an amendment to clarify any remaining uncertainties of meaning or to improve the drafting."

Then, the special amendments, on which if there had been any we would have had a vote, are other amendments, "considered necessary or desirable... and which does not reopen an issue which has been decided by the Synod..."

Then, in paragraph 4 we are told that, "Most of the amendments [this is drafting amendments] make minor amendments or improvements to the existing law and, accordingly, are explained in the Drafting Notes prepared by Legislative Counsel that accompany the Measure."

Well, firstly, we have not seen those Drafting Notes. They were not circulated, they are not part of the Steering Committee's Report and neither were they part of the paperwork for this Synod. I am sure those notes are admirable and I am sure

that the changes that have been made as a result are perfectly good and sensible, but that is not the point. The point is that changes have been made to this Measure which do, as the Report says, make improvements or minor amendments to the existing law. That is substantive changes to this Measure on which this Synod has no opportunity whatever to vote.

I am not really questioning that it is proper to do this by drafting amendments in terms of the legality. I suggest it is wrong in principle for a Measure to be brought for final approval with material inserted in it which actually does make substantive changes to the law, albeit minor, albeit improvements.

I hope that in future this will not happen again, and that where Legislative Counsel does find amendments that need to be moved of this sort that they will come as special amendments and that we will have the chance as Synod to say “Yes” or “No” to them. Could I also respectfully question Chancellor Briden’s assertion that this Synod decided against passing or progressing the replacement of the Inspection of Churches Measure.

As I recall, this Synod voted to adjourn debate because the Archbishop of Canterbury pointed out that a proper case for the change had not been made. What many of us who voted for that adjournment expected was that the Measure would come back with a proper case for it. I do not think it is fair to say that Synod decided to keep the 1955 Measure with all the potential inadequacies that it had. It was because a proper case was not made to this Synod for making a change.

Just with that little observation, Chairman, I do not wish to approve this Steering Committee’s Report because of the principle that I have referred to, but I have no problem at all with the substance of the Measure.

The Bishop of Chester (Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster): The Vicar General in his introduction said that the Measure would do good by stealth. I would like to just comment upon an implication or a consequence of the stealth, taking a slightly different tack from the previous speaker.

This Measure makes no substantive changes to the Measures that are consolidated, but it would be easy to think that, therefore, there was an implication that the aspects of previous Measures that were being consolidated were fit for purpose. There is one glaring example, I believe, of where that is not the case. That is the maintenance of the Court of Ecclesiastical Causes Reserved in clauses 16 and following, page 8 and following, in the Measure.

This Court essentially deals with matters of doctrine, ritual and ceremonial, either in a faculty case where something about proposed changes to church furnishings or arrangements raises serious doctrinal questions or, indeed, in any disciplinary matter that arises in relation to doctrine, ritual or ceremonial.

There are two problems with what we have, which was drawn up about 60 years ago, and a lot has happened since then. If something goes to the Court of Ecclesiastical Causes Reserved in these sensitive areas, it is very likely to have to go to appeal to what is called a Commission of Review in clause 19 and following. The Commission of Review is constituted of three members of the Supreme Court who declare that they are communicant Anglicans and two Lords Spiritual.

There are two problems with that. The first is are there three members of the Supreme Court who can make that declaration? Some members of the Supreme Court come from other parts of the UK. You could assume that 60 years ago, but can you assume it now? Can we assume it in the future? That is what we are consolidating into law.

The other problem is that we are saying that, at the end of the day, disputes over doctrine, ritual and ceremonial should be decided by a Commission where there is a majority of secular judges. Again, that might have seemed appropriate 60 years ago, is it really fit for purpose in the 21st century?

This could not have been addressed in the consolidation Measure, but I just want to make the point that we are consolidating provisions here which I think we will have to return to and the fact of this consolidation Measure does not mean all this can be left safely for many years to come.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): I have great sympathy with what the Bishop of Chester just said to us because I do think that we need to think carefully about how we roll forward our Church law. In the last discussion we had on final approval on the previous Measure, we were updating various parts of the Vacation of Benefices Measure which, again, is almost impossible to use.

We have various bits of Church law which sits there theoretically to deal with major cases and we, as a Synod, have basically declined to do anything about them, and they are not used by Bishops. The Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure and the doctrinal work around those who are taken to complaint about things under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure have both been lying dormant for a very

long time. I think probably we do need somebody to give some consideration to whether in our Simplification work we should try and sweep these things up or readdress them.

There is a sense that we do not want to because it would take a lot of Synod time in order to deal with it, but it does seem rather weird to me that we have precisely these problems which have not been addressed for a very long time—I am grateful to the Bishop of Chester for saying this—and yet we are kind of hiding from addressing what will be major questions for us at some stage down the line. Let us consolidate, but let us not consolidate stuff that is actually meaningless as Church legislation these days.

The Chair. I see no one standing so I now invite Chancellor Briden to reply.

Rt Worshipful Timothy Briden (ex officio): I am very grateful to the speakers for their contribution. So far as my friend, Mr Scowen, is concerned, I am told that the material that he referred to was made available on the website for consideration by members of Synod even if it was not produced in paper form. The substance of his concern, I think, goes to the point that those involved in the carriage of the Measure were advised that the matters coming forward for amendment did not change the effect of the law in a substantive way.

As I said previously, they are effectively cosmetic changes to improve the wording. While it may very well be that the dividing line between special amendments and drafting amendments is a sensitive business that may have to be considered Measure by Measure, so far as this Measure is concerned for my own part I am satisfied that what is before Synod constitutes a legitimate collection of drafting amendments.

So far as the demise of the draft replacement of the 1955 Measure is concerned, although probably Mr Scowen is right on a technical basis that the Measure was not actually killed off by Synod, the effect of Synod's decision upon the timetable meant that it was impracticable to include alternative provisions in this consolidation Measure and our objective was to get the consolidation Measure before Synod in its final form as expeditiously as possible.

One does not rule out the possibility that the arrangements about quinquennial inspections will be revisited in the future, and neither is this Measure intended to pre-empt in any way the legitimate questions which the Bishop of Chester and Bishop Broadbent have alluded to in relation to particularly difficult provisions in

surviving legislation which Synod should not shy away from considering at the appropriate time, but for present purposes let us get on with the work of bringing this Measure into effect. I hope, as I say, that members of Synod will think it appropriate to give appropriate support to the work of the Steering Committee by taking note of the Report. Thank you.

The Chair. I now put Item 502 to the vote.

The motion

‘That the Synod do take note of this Report’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. I now call upon Chancellor Briden to move Item 503, “That the Measure entitled ‘Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure’ be finally approved”. Chancellor Briden, you may speak for up to ten minutes.

Rt Worshipful Timothy Briden (ex officio): I beg to move

‘That the Measure entitled “Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure” be finally approved.’

I have nothing useful to add, save formally to move that the Measure entitled the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure be finally approved.

The Chair. Item 503 is now open for debate. This is a final approval debate, so I remind members that under Standing Order 64 there can be no motions for closure, changes in speech limit or call to the next business in this debate. I see no one standing, so there is nothing to reply to. The question is: “That the Measure entitled ‘Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure’ be finally approved”. In accordance with Standing Order 37, I order a counted vote by Houses.

The motion

‘That the Measure entitled “Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure” be finally approved.’

was carried after a counted vote by Houses. The voting was as follows: In the

House of Bishops, those in favour 23, none against, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 86 in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 113 in favour, none against, with one recorded abstention. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

The Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure now stands committed to the Legislative Committee.

That concludes this morning's business and we begin again, brothers and sisters, at half past 2.

THE CHAIR *Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 2.30 pm

DRAFT LEGISLATIVE REFORM MEASURE (GS 2027A)

The Chair. Good afternoon, Synod, I hope you have had a nice lunch. We are now coming to Item 504, the Draft Legislative Reform Measure. You will need for this Item GS 2027A and the Revision Committee Report GS 2027Y. I would also like to draw your attention to the financial comments on the Sixth Notice Paper in paragraphs 14 and 15.

I now call upon the Dean of the Arches and Auditor, the Chair of the Revision Committee, to move Item 504 "That the Synod do take note of this Report". You may speak for no more than ten minutes.

Rt Worshipful Charles George (ex officio): I beg to move

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

Mr Chairman, Members of Synod, this Measure is a small but important part of the programme of Renewal and Reform and Simplification. It will dramatically speed the process of ecclesiastical law-making, and what could otherwise only be done by Measure and requiring at least three separate sessions of General Synod will be achievable by legislative Order in a single session. The length and content of the associated parliamentary consideration will also be reduced. The new Order-making power will, in the memorable phrase of the former Secretary General, "render us more fleet of foot". If your eyes are already clouding over, please turn to the diagram at appendix 4 of the Report GS 2027Y, which is a dazzling composition by one of the more technically competent members of the Revision Committee.

There is a downside to such an Order-making power. Without proper safeguards, there is a risk that sound law-making takes second place to the demands of convenience and speed. Your Revision Committee has been very aware of this risk, which is why, most unusually, we devoted three long sessions to our task. Nor did the fact that the Measure had received strong support on its first reading or that the proposals for amendment were received from only four individuals deter us from asking ourselves, once our business of revision was completed, whether, in principle, we considered it right that the Measure should proceed. We unanimously concluded that with the safeguards now standing part of the draft Measure its underlying principle was justified.

The safeguards can be summarised thus: first, the Measure is only concerned with the removal or reduction of burdens resulting from ecclesiastical legislation. Its scope is thus strictly limited. We have given illustrative examples of burdens that could be addressed by Order in appendix 2 to the Report. In other words, we can only make small but cumulatively significant removal of obstructions to the missions of the Church.

Secondly, the most foundational legislation of the Church of England, as spelt out in clause 3(1) is exempt. Further, we have amended clause 3(5) so as to exclude the previous reference to "supplementary, incidental, transitory or saving" provisions in respect of such legislation.

Thirdly, we have included a specific restriction so that an Order may not prevent a person from receiving or continuing to receive a financial benefit.

Fourthly, in clause 6 we have spelt out the role of the Scrutiny Committee and what it has to consider in addition to any representations made to it, including, in particular, considering whether it is appropriate for the provisions in the draft Order to be made by way of Order rather than by the alternative procedure of Measure.

We have also been very conscious, not least from warnings sounded by Peter Bruinvels in the debate in York and by the Second Church Estates Commissioner in addressing us at our second meeting, that a Measure such as this might prove unpalatable to the Ecclesiastical Committee in Parliament. That concern explains why, first, an amendment has been made to reduce the scope of the Order-making power so that it does not allow amendment or repeal of public, general or local legislation save insofar as that legislation forms part of the ecclesiastical law of the Church of England.

Secondly, we have introduced a requirement that before consultation begins, the consultation documents must be laid before each House of Parliament, which will ensure that any proposed Order is in the public domain and that Members of Parliament and the public can make representations at an early stage.

Thirdly, there is now included a sunset clause, clause 10, limiting the duration of the powers under section 1 to 7 to five years from the date of laying the first draft Order, unless a longer period is expressly approved by Parliament under the affirmative resolution procedure. Peter Bruinvels, who cannot be here today, has authorised me to say that he is reassured by the amendments and supportive of the Measure as it now stands.

For the reasons set out in our Report, we did not consider it appropriate to expand or qualify the meaning of "burden" beyond what is there in clause 1(2). We wish to avoid the possibility that if the burden had to be "significant" or "excessive" then an additional area of subjectivity would be introduced. Also, the Order-making power should be available in the case of minor burdens since it is precisely these which are the primary candidate for the Order-making power. Nor did we consider it right to restrict the Order-making power to legislation already in force at the time of the Measure's enactment. If in any particular case Synod considers that a new draft Measure should be safeguarded from potential amendment by Order, then the draft Measure can expressly so provide.

We thought it inappropriate to determine the composition, chairmanship and procedure of the Scrutiny Committee, including the right of Synod members to appear in person before the Scrutiny Committee, in the body of the Measure. We preferred, in the interests of future flexibility, to leave that to Standing Orders, and I refer you to clause 6(1) and to the draft Standing Order in appendix 3 to our Report which will be for consideration perhaps in February next year. In paragraph 97 of our Report we have emphasised that the making of an appropriate Standing Order will be crucial to the acceptable functioning of the Measure.

Finally, we have added a clause 5(6) enabling the Archbishops' Council to withdraw an Order from consideration at any point during the process.

Synod will retain a key role in the ability of individual members to both make representations to the Scrutiny Committee and, as you will see in clause 7, reject an Order following debate in Synod, but we refused proposals that Synod should have a power to amend Orders. Our view, as set out in paragraph 77 of our Report,

was that if it were possible for a draft Order to be amended at a late stage that would undermine confidence in the consultation and scrutiny process from the point of view of Parliament and others outside the Synod.

For the reasons set out in paragraph 57 and following, we also rejected a proposal for a form of hybrid procedure whereby for part of its progress a draft Order would be treated as if it were a draft Measure. If the content of a proposed Order was such as to warrant that treatment, it should never have been the subject of a draft Order in the first place. So with gratitude to all who served on the Revision Committee and to those who advised us so well, I move that Synod take note of this Report.

The Chair: Item 504 is now open for debate. I am going to impose a speech limit of three minutes from the outset given the level of interest in this particular item.

Mr Mike Stallybrass (York): First of all, I would like to express my thanks to the Appointments Committee for having been asked to serve on this Revision Committee. It was something which came very much out of the blue as far as I was concerned, and I am not sure that the rest of the Committee appreciated what was going to hit them.

Initially, I approached this legislation with an extremely sceptical mind. If you know a bit of my background you might understand why. My mother grew up in Norway under the German Occupation and the Quisling Government. It was something which throughout my growing years we were very conscious of as a family and we discussed quite a lot the way that power could be used and abused. I must admit that when I first saw this legislation my, how shall I put it, antennae were rather tickled. I suspect that during the course of the Committee's deliberations I may have exasperated a few other members of the Committee by the way that I kept on looking at the way that the legislation as proposed could be abused and misused.

However, at the end of our three days of deliberation, I had in some ways had a conversion experience. By the end of our deliberations I was no longer sceptical of this Measure, but I had come to the conclusion that it was something which was necessary, that it was proportionate, and that, with the additional safeguards, checks and balances which we had actually introduced during our deliberations, this was something I felt was going to be a positive step forward. I commend to Synod this Report and ask for your approval of this draft legislation.

Revd Christopher Smith (London): My antennae were also tickled by this draft Measure. We will talk more about that on Wednesday, I dare say. This is really a note of thanks to the Revision Committee for having worked with alacrity to allay the fears of those of us who had concerns about the scope of this draft Measure and for giving us the greater clarity of the revised draft.

The new section 6(3) is particularly welcome outlining, as it does, the duty that is to be laid on the new Scrutiny Committee. It goes without saying that Synod should continue to take very seriously its role in the scrutiny of draft legislation, and I would respectfully submit that even in an era of reform and renewal that role is as important as ever. After all, what appears to one person as enabling an institution to be, to use the language of the original accompanying paper, “adaptable and fleet of foot”, might appear to another as a method of making changes too quickly and avoiding proper scrutiny. No doubt the last thing on the corporate mind of the Archbishops' Council would be to give any impression of a power grab. With the greatest respect, one might feel that the suggestion in the original accompanying paper GS 2018 that “circumventing an inconvenience or obstacle could be something as significant as the effective abolition of one of the Courts Ecclesiastical” was a little strong. Heaven forbid that we should lose the Court of Ecclesiastical Causes Reserved by accident.

I am also very grateful for the illustrative examples set out in appendix 2 of the Report before us and I note with horror, looking at example 10, that every time I send my curate to conduct a funeral at Golders Green Crematorium he is in breach of section 2 of the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1992, which may have the unintended consequence that I have to go myself on Friday.

Thank you also for the inclusion of a sunset clause after consultation with the Second Church Estates Commissioner. No doubt, as she suggested, this will reassure Parliament and it should also reassure Synod. I am happy to support the Report and draft Measure as revised.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): As you will see from the Report, I too was a member of the Revision Committee. I want to just make a few brief observations and the first one is to express my thanks—I am sure that is on behalf of the Revision Committee—to the legal officers of the Synod. We required them to do an extensive amount of drafting during the course of our deliberations. We met on three occasions in November last year and especially we have them to thank especially for the draft Standing Orders which are an appendix to the Report. Obviously, as Charles George has said, they will have to come back for approval

at Synod, but they are a vital part of the overall scheme of this legislative reform. In total, I think we met for about eight hours over those three sessions in November.

Secondly, I am grateful that we have the examples in appendix 2. That was something I called for in the debate in July.

Thirdly, I want to record my appreciation for the attendance at the second meeting of Dame Caroline Spelman. She showed a very clear grasp on her part of the issues that were raised by this proposed legislation and it was very helpful to have that, as it were, liaison between our Committee and the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament.

I wanted to highlight that members of General Synod will be involved at an early stage whenever an Order under this Measure, if approved, is laid before Synod. You will see that from the flowchart.

That leads me to my final comment, which is to thank Mike, who spoke a moment ago, for the flowchart. It was very helpful. He proposed it and it has been refined somewhat, but I hope we all find it useful in understanding the process proposed under this Measure.

I also would invite Synod to approve this Report.

The Chair: I should have said that it was Fr Christopher Smith's maiden speech. My apologies.

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford): I will not take Synod's time because I largely want to repeat my thanks. I was on the Revision Committee. One of the reasons we took so long was because of questions from people like me who were teasing out the potential and, as David Lamming has just referred to, the concern as to where it could lead. Caroline Spelman also referred to that. I just want to say that we went through this document through the eyes of potential doubters and people with suspicions. I want to pay tribute to the patience and the long suffering of Charles George and his team as they addressed and sought to allay our fears. I too can recommend it.

The Chair: I see no one standing so I am going to ask the Dean if he will reply to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

Rt Worshipful Charles George (ex officio): Mr Chairman, it is sufficient to say that if this Measure has been a conversion experience for one and an educational experience for a member of the clergy, it has performed a useful function, and it appears that what we have in the form it now takes seems to have general support. I commend it therefore to Synod.

I would only add, "Use it or you will lose it". That is because of the sunset clause. If in five years' time you have not passed a number of these Orders, you probably will not retain this Measure.

The Chair: I am now going to put Item 504 "That we do take note of this Report" to the vote.

The motion

'That the Synod do take note of this Report.'

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: Now we come to the revision stage. There are no amendments. The motions to be moved on behalf of the Steering Committee have appeared on the Order Paper which you will have received this morning. I have given my permission for the stand part motions for the clauses to be moved *en bloc*. I am going to call upon the Revd Paul Cartwright, a member of the Steering Committee, to move Item 512, "That clauses 1 to 11 stand part of the Measure". He has up to ten minutes but I hope he might not need all that time.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): I beg to move

'That clauses 1-11 stand part of the Measure'

I am a member of the Steering Committee. I need no time at all. I have nothing at all to add to what the Dean of the Arches has said, and so I move Item 512, "That clauses 1 to 11 stand part of the Measure".

The Chair: That is now open for debate. I see no one standing so I am going to put that to a vote.

The motion

‘That clauses 1-11 stand part of the Measure.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I am now going to call upon Mr Cartwright again to come and move Item 513 "That the Long Title stand part of the Measure".

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): I beg to move

‘That the Long title stand part of the Measure’

I do so move.

The Chair: I see no one standing so I am going to put that to the vote.

The motion

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

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: The revision stage has now been completed and the Measure stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting. That concludes our debate on the draft Legislative Reform Measure.

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark)* took the Chair at 2.54 pm.

DRAFT STATUTE LAW (REPEALS) MEASURE (GS 2030)

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. We now come to the next item on the Agenda and members will need the draft Measure, which is GS 2030. The Revision Committee has given notice that it has received no proposals for amendment and has no other matters to report. Synod will therefore proceed immediately to the revision stage.

No notice of any amendments has been given for revision stage. The motion to be moved on behalf of the Steering Committee appears on Order Paper II. I have given my permission for the stand part motions to be moved *en bloc*. I call upon the Revd Paul Cartwright, a member of the Steering Committee, to move Item 514.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): I beg to move

‘That clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Measure.’

I move Item 514 “That clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Measure”.

The Chair: The item is now open for debate. I see no one standing so I now put Item 514 to the vote.

The motion

‘That clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Measure’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I call upon Mr Cartwright to now move Item 515 “That the Schedule stand part of the Measure”.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): I beg to move

‘That the Schedule stand part of the Measure.’

I do so move.

The Chair: That item is now open for debate. Once again I see no one standing and I therefore put that item to the vote.

The motion

‘That the Schedule stand part of the Measure’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That is also clearly carried.

The Chair: Finally, I call upon the Revd Cartwright to move Item 516, “That the Long Title stands part of the Measure”.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): I beg to move

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

I move Item 516 “That the Long Title stand part of the Measure”.

The Chair: The floor is also now open for debate. I see no one standing so I put Item 516 to the vote.

The motion

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

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That item is also clearly carried. That completes this item of business. Sorry, there is one more thing. I thought I had got away from the Chair quickly. I now announce that the revision stage has been completed and that the Measure stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting. That completes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 4.28 pm.

DRAFT PENSIONS (PRE-CONSOLIDATION) MEASURE (GS 2032A)

The Chair: Good afternoon, everyone. We come to Item 505 on the Agenda which is the Draft Pensions (Pre-consolidation) Measure and members will need GS 2032A and also GS 2032Y. First of all, we will go through the Revision Committee stage Report. I call upon the Dean of the Arches and Auditor, Chair of the Revision Committee, Charles George, to move Item 505 "That the Synod do take note of this Report". He has up to ten minutes.

Rt Worshipful Charles George (ex officio): I beg to move that

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

Chairman, members of Synod, you are doing absolutely splendidly this afternoon; do not disappoint me.

I need not detain you very long. This Measure, as its Title says, makes a number

of amendments to our pensions legislation in advance of a consolidation which is to be introduced next year. These are all explained in the Explanatory Memorandum GS 2032X, which you have all read.

The Revision Committee did not receive any submissions from members on the draft Measure. Our attention was, however, drawn to the fact that consequent on the proposed transfer of sums standing to the credit of the Clergy, Widows and Dependants Pension Fund to the Church of England funded pension scheme it would be anomalous if there were still a statutory requirement for a valuation of the now fund-less Widows and Dependants Pension Fund at least every five years.

Accordingly, the Measure now before you includes a new paragraph after paragraph 5 to the Measure disapplying the requirement for a separate valuation following such transfer. Some ecclesiastical legislation is anomalous; it would be an error to create new anomalies.

Members of your Revision Committee were unanimously supportive of this small amendment which I commend to you.

The Chair: Thank you. Item 505 is now open for debate.

Mr Brian Wilson (Southwark): I was slightly baffled why in clause 2(5) there is a reference to the “Channel Islands or either of them”. There are more than two. Could you tell me the reason?

The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Trevor Willmott): In this I am acting under the Bishop of Winchester who cares for the Islands. There are in fact two bailiwicks and therefore legislation passed by this Synod may be, by the Bishop’s intention, carried to one or both of the bailiwicks for their state’s attention. It is a matter of discretion that lies with the Bishop. I hope that is helpful.

The Chair: I see no one standing so I call on the Dean to reply.

Rt Worshipful Charles George (ex officio): I waive any right of reply, the jurisdictional matter having been so admirably clarified.

The Chair: Let us move straight on to the voting then. We are now going to vote on Item 505.

The motion

'That the Synod do take note of this Report.'

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: Let us move swiftly on to the revision stage. There are no amendments. The motions to be moved on behalf of the Steering Committee appear on the yellow Order Paper, so I hope you have them to hand. I have given permission for the stand part motions for the clauses to be moved en bloc. I call upon Fr Paul Cartwright, a member of the Steering Committee, to move Item 517.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): I beg to move

'That clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Measure.'

I move Item 517 that clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Measure.

The Chair: Item 517 is now open for debate. Paul, would you like to make any further comment? As I see no one standing we will move straight on to voting. We are now voting on Item 517.

The motion

'That clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Measure.'

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: Let us move on to Item 518. Paul Cartwright is now going to move that. Thank you.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): I beg to move

'That the Schedule stand part of the Measure.'

I do so move: "That the Schedule stand part of the Measure."

The Chair: Would anyone like to make a speech on this topic? No? We will go straight to the vote.

The motion

'That the Schedule stand part of the Measure'

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: Now we are going to move Item 519. Again, Paul Cartwright is going to comment on that.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): I beg to move

'That the Long Title stand part of the Measure'

The final one. I beg to move Item 519: "That the Long Title stand part of the Measure."

The Chair: The item is open for debate? No? Let us move straight to the voting.

The motion

'That the Long Title stand part of the Measure.'

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That now completes the revision stage that the Measure stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting. Thank you, everyone, for your help.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Newcastle (Rt Revd Christine Hardman)* took the Chair at 3.07 pm

DRAFT CHURCH REPRESENTATION, ECUMENICAL RELATIONS AND MINISTERS MEASURE (GS 2046)

The Chair: Brothers and sisters, we now come to Item 506, the Draft Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure, which is before the Synod for First Consideration. For this members will need the draft Measure, GS 2046, and in this regard please can I draw your attention to the Eighth Notice Paper which gives details of a correction to the text of GS 2046. You will also need the Explanatory Memorandum, GS 2046X. I now call upon the Chair of the Steering

Committee, the Ven. Dr Jane Steen, to move Item 506: That the Measure entitled “Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure” be considered for revision in committee. Archdeacon Steen may speak for not more than ten minutes.

Ven. Dr Jane Steen (Southwark): I beg to move

‘That the Measure entitled “Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure” be considered for revision in committee.’

Thank you, Chair. This Measure, and indeed the associated Amending Canon, represent some fruits of the work undertaken by the Simplification Task Group. This group was set up to bring forward proposals to remove constraints to the mission and growth of the Church of England caused by existing legislation and process. The Church Representation Rules were an obvious candidate for improvement.

The current Rules date back to 1919 and they are showing their age. The Task Group identified three major ways in which they might be reformed. First, they needed to be made less burdensome; unnecessary provisions should be identified and removed; other provisions streamlined.

Secondly, parishes should be given greater flexibility over their constitutional arrangements enabling them to operate in the way most effective for the mission, life and work of the Church.

Thirdly, the administrative burdens experienced in multi-parish benefices, especially in the rural context where the number of parishes in a benefice can be considerable, needed radical reduction.

The group was persuaded that it should be possible to establish benefice-wide structures, relieving benefices of the need for multiple PCCs. Chancellor Timothy Briden submitted a helpful set of proposals in relation to reforming the Rules. The Task Group established a sub-group to carry out detailed work and was very glad that he agreed to be its Chair. Thanks are due to him and also the entire legal team for clarity and for clarity of drafting.

Clause 1 and Schedule 1 of the Measure before Synod replace the existing Church Representation Rules with a new set of Rules. Many concepts are familiar: church electoral rolls, annual meetings, PCCs, deanery and diocesan synods all remain.

But there are significant presentational and substantive changes. First, on presentation, the new Rules have been completely redrafted and are a great deal easier to understand; they are in English. Long sentences have been avoided and provisions are broken down into more comprehensible sections.

Secondly, all the provisions relating to parish governance are now in a self-contained part of the Rules rather than, as currently, partly in the main body and partly in an appendix. This should make navigation around the Rules easier.

Part 2 provides one of the most significant substantive changes. Model Rules, detailed in Part 9, set the default position for parish governance. One size, however, may not fit all and so, with certain exceptions, Part 2 enables the annual meeting of a parish to make a scheme to amend, supplement or replace the Model Rules. A parish may therefore make governance arrangements best suited to the life of the Church in that place, tailoring the Rules to its particular needs and aspirations and deliberating for mission; energy which might otherwise be consumed in process and required meetings. Some essential provisions will be mandatory and a scheme making parish rules will require the Bishop's Council's approval before it takes effect.

Another major reform in Part 9, Section C, allows for joint councils. The existing Church Representation Rules make provision for joint councils in multi-parish benefices and other special cases in addition to PCCs. Joint councils currently, therefore, represent a further layer of synodical government. Under the new rules, joint councils replace individual PCCs. The number of local bodies and number of meetings is thus reduced, in some cases very significantly. This should result in a significant reduction in the administrative burdens imposed on clergy and laity in multi-parish benefices.

Members of Synod should note the proposed Rule 49 of the new Church Representation Rules under which the General Synod will make supplementary rules relating to the conduct of elections in the House of Laity. These new Laity Representation Rules will deal with such matters as the nomination of candidates, entitlement to vote in elections to the House of Laity and the method of voting. These matters are currently provided for in the Church Representation Rules. Leaving them to be dealt with in Laity Representation Rules avoids pre-empting any recommendations that may be made by the Elections Review Group and any possible consequent decisions of Synod. The draft Measure makes transitional provisions so that the lay franchise and other provisions relating to elections will

remain as they currently stand and will change only if the Synod makes different provision in the Laity Representation Rules in due course.

In summary, unnecessary or unduly burdensome provisions of the current Rules are pruned away, anomalies addressed and doubts as to meaning removed. The Legislative Council has produced drafting notes, which I believe you have had, and details of the changes that have been made are helpfully described there.

Moving on, clauses 2, 3 and 4 of the Measure give effect to proposals originating with the Council for Christian Unity which the Simplification Task Group agreed to support. These proposals update the Church of England Ecumenical Relations Measure 1986 so that it, and the Canons made under it, reflect ecumenical development over the past 30 years. Members of Trinitarian Churches not designated under the 1986 Measure will be able to participate in worship in Church of England services in various specified ways. Members of the Salvation Army will, additionally, be able to preach at Church of England services. The term “local ecumenical project” is replaced with “local ecumenical co-operative scheme” as a new omnibus term that should capture the now wide range of ecumenical activity that takes place at the local level.

Bishops are given new power to give temporary designation to churches which have not been designed by the Archbishops at national level so that they can participate in the various forms of local ecumenical activity authorised under the Measure. Provision is made in the Measure for a House of Bishops’ Code of Practice so that detailed requirements about authorising ecumenical activity can be set out there, leaving the Measure and Canons to deal with matters of principle.

Clause 5 enables the General Synod to make canonical provision to extend the range of situations in which a newly ordained deacon or priest can serve a title.

Clause 6 amends existing legislation to remove the requirement that a person must have been in Holy Orders for six years to be eligible for appointment as dean or archdeacon, thus bringing parity between these offices and that of bishop. All will be required to be in priest’s orders but for no minimal period.

Synod members can doubtless offer improvements and suggest refinements to the current draft legislation. Assuming that you are content for the Measure to proceed to revision, I would encourage any of you, and I know there are several, who have proposals to submit them to the Clerk for consideration by the Revision Committee. Thank you.

The Chair: The motion is now open for debate. I remind members that as this is a First Consideration debate, under Standing Order 51 speeches must be directed to the general purport of the Measure rather than to points of detail. We have had a considerable number of requests to speak, so after the first couple of speeches I will be reducing the speech limit to three minutes.

Mr Keith Cawdron (Liverpool): I wish to direct my comments particularly to Part 9 of the document, page 46 and following. These are headed, as the Archdeacon has already explained, "Parish Governance Model Rules". In fact, these are the Rules that will apply, as I understand it, to every church council unless the church brings forward a scheme requesting change which must go to the Bishop's Council. We are doing a significant piece of work here that will affect all of us and we need to get it right. It will apply to parishes with an electoral roll of 30 or 500, a turnover of £10,000 or £500,000. This is a difficult task we take on, but there are models for doing this.

The Charity Commission has model governance rules for different types of charitable organisation. It seems to me important that we should take note of those. They do not apply directly to us, but in particular we should not find ourselves being more restrictive on our church councils than the Charity Commission is on the charities it regulates. I think that is an important discipline and I was rather sorry that I could not see evidence of that kind of learning very obviously in the draft that is in front of us.

Examples of the sorts of things I noted are that you must have a standing committee but it cannot actually do anything; you must have a treasurer; we will not say what he or she does but we will say that you cannot pay them for doing it. The DBF has ten months to send its accounts to the Charity Commission but it expects the PCCs to send their accounts to it in five. Perhaps most important for me, the word that is so important in Charity Commission models is the word "delegate" and as far as I can see that does not appear here.

I do not think we have got this right. I think that the document we have got is still not fit for purpose and we need that degree of scrutiny to go through the whole thing at this point saying wherever it says, "You must do this", we need to ask, "Why?" and wherever it says, "You must not do this", we must ask, "Why not?". We should give our PCCs the absolute maximum flexibility that we feel is possible. I feel that the bringing of schemes by churches to a Bishop's Council is a second

best which we ought to do everything we possibly can to avoid. I hope that in our revision we will look at it with those kinds of concerns in mind. Thank you.

Revd Dr Graham Maskery (Ecumenical Representatives): Those of you who know me know that I have got ecumenical DNA running within my bloodstream, within my spirituality, and a lot of that came from the mentor in my early days and the presiding Bishop at my ordination, Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, who I am always grateful to. Lesslie Newbigin told me on the night before I was ordained that I was called to push the boundaries out. I did that early on in ordination and I always got into trouble. Nothing changes.

In those days, you did not ask if you could do something, you just got on and did it and then repented afterwards. It was much easier to repent afterwards than to find the Archbishop of York saying “No” in the first place. I shared with him on more than one occasion my joy and celebration of what I called the “art of the possible” and that is what I saw Canon B 34 and B 44 standing for. During my time in York, he was even prepared to set aside some money that he gave Paul Ferguson and I, the now Bishop of Whitby, to go round the diocese and other neighbouring dioceses to share this picture of the art of the possible. It did get me into trouble sometimes. There was one occasion when a diocesan Bishop said, “I’ll give you permission to do such and such a thing in my diocese, but don’t tell the Archbishop”. Of course, I told the Archbishop everything and on one occasion he walked away from me rather than, I think, chastise me. He did not speak to me for about two hours. I think that was a blessing more than a curse.

What I want to say is that these new ecumenical regulations should be seen as a point of celebration because one of the things I have worked for, and I know many other people have worked for in many different places, is to bring some of these new emerging churches closer to the mainstream. We have got to learn from these good folk. We have got to take on board their ecclesiology and their sense of mission imperative. What is being presented to us in these new Regulations, and I hope also in the Code of Practice when the Bishops produce it, will liberate us to respond to the needs and challenges of local mission, of presenting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whilst as an individual I am always happy to see Archbishop Sentamu as my father confessor, I do not always want to have to confess to him and repent because of what I have done to try and further the ecumenical movement.

You never know, through something like this it may be that we are given the strength and the power of the Holy Spirit to become more the Church in England

becoming the Church that God wants us to be. So we do repent and we pray Jesus, have mercy upon us, and we pray that Jesus, along with the saints and with His mother Mary, will keep watch over us until we become the people that He wants us to be, and so may it come soon in His name. Amen.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): As someone who wrote an article some 11 years about the Church Representation Rules and, in particular, the electoral roll for the *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, I welcome this proposed rewrite of the Rules. It is long overdue. It is significant in the latest edition of the Rules, which I hope perhaps every member now has, 2017—it is good to start from where we are going to amend—it is an embarrassment to have the footnotes highlighting errors in the Rules.

One of the points I drew attention to in that article, which is unchanged, is the provision about enrolment, now in draft Rule 1. Synod might like to note that it provides a process of self-certification so that a member of the Church of England is someone who declares himself or herself to be a member of the Church of England. There is also, as members will know, an alternative to the requirement of residence in the parish for enrolment and that is that the applicant has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months. I wonder how that is variously interpreted in different parishes and by different electoral roll officers.

By being a draft Measure rather than a draft Order, this Measure enables the Rules to be subject to full and detailed consideration by a Revision Committee line-by-line. That is clearly necessary and something which I welcome.

I particularly welcome too, the provisions in Parts 2 and 9 providing for local flexibility. Again, we have Model Rules and we have already had a comment this afternoon about those Rules. Local flexibility is clearly important and in particular it is important in rural multi-parish benefices. Obviously there are provisions that the Revision Committee will want to consider, and I just highlight one: Model Rule 20(1) on page 58. It seems to me that that provision about a PCC having a “sufficient number” of meetings could be seen as a way of getting round the decision of the Synod in the previous quinquennium that voted very decisively against reducing the number of PCC meetings that need be held in any year from four to one.

The Explanatory Memorandum and drafting notes I suggest are very helpful, especially in flagging up where there are policy considerations to be considered and decisions to be made, initially, of course, by the Revision Committee.

I do question, however, the wisdom of tacking on to a Measure rewriting the Church Representation Rules provisions about ecumenical relations and ministers. The effect of this has been for the Legal Office to rule that this is Article 7 business. I understand that is because of the ecumenical relations provisions. I suggest that when this goes to Committee it gets split, as we have done with draft Amending Canons 36 and 37. Thank you.

Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield): I want to speak to the Explanatory Memorandum paragraphs 13 and 15. I should explain that I am a member of a local ecumenical project, as it is at the moment, a United Reformed Church/Anglican Partnership. We had a church meeting ten days ago—we have church meetings as well as ECCs (Ecumenical Church Councils)—and at that I said, “The Church of England would like to change the title of this project to the Local Ecumenical Co-op ...”, and I got no further when everyone started to laugh. I think it has a different connotation maybe for some people and I did wonder about this title, whether it is a wise one. Can I ask you to reflect on that, please?

The second point is I did not realise until I read the Explanatory Memorandum that for about 20 years we have been doing things that we should not have been doing. It is rather difficult when you belong to a covenanting group of Churches where there is a convent, Roman Catholic churches, URC churches, Anglican churches, nine of us all involved together, praying for each other monthly, conducting our Lent courses together so we may choose where we go, having Lent lunches together, and in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity attending each other’s services. I had not realised that every time I have gone into another Church and been passed the intercessions or been invited to take them, or been invited to read a lesson, that I have been breaking some kind of rule.

Local ecumenical projects, because of the nature of them, require a great deal of flexibility in what they do. I wonder if people in similar situations who have been into other Churches have had the same difficulty. When I was handed a folder in a Roman Catholic church that said, “Would you pray the Hail Mary?” of course I would. It did not occur to me to actually question that. In just the same way, if a nun pops up into our house group or pops into our service those people are always welcome. Flexibility is absolutely essential for local ecumenism and I hope the

comments I am making here will be noted. We need the widest flexibility possible in order to further our joint mission together as the Church.

Revd Barry Hill (Leicester): Thank you, Chair, and thank you, to echo the thanks of others, to those who have put so much hard work into this Measure, which I broadly welcome. I particularly would like to address my comments in light of Sir Andreas's comments this morning on the importance of missional innovation to Fresh Expressions of Church.

The latest research (which I am sure we are familiar with, the Church Commissioners and the Church Army's research) shows that somewhere between 10% and 15% of members of the Church of England are part of a Fresh Expression of Church. It is in this area where I wonder if there may be a little bit more which could be done at the revision stage.

One area to welcome and one question in particular. The area for me to welcome in light of Fresh Expressions of Church is in clause 5, the allowance of people to be ordained to a title rather than a particular parish, which hopefully allows greater creativity and flexibility in the area of Fresh Expressions of Church.

My concern, I think, falls mostly in the area of representation. The eyes with which we look at someone, I think, are in part responsible for what is created. If we look at someone with disdain, lo and behold they feel disdain. If we look at someone with trust, they, hopefully, feel trusted. If we look at someone with eyes of maturity and respect, hopefully they respond in kind.

In this area, where parish churches are mandated to have representatives at deanery and diocesan synod and yet Fresh Expressions of Church, it reads more a kind of, "Well, if you must", and, "diocesan synod may" and "a bishop may", rather than an expectation.

Whilst I think it is fair to say there are not a considerable number of Fresh Expressions of Church that knock down our diocesan office doors in order to be represented at diocesan and deanery synods, if we were to look with eyes of expectation that as places which are not playing at Church but are integrally Anglican, ecclesial communities seeking the transformation of society in the love of Jesus Christ, if we treat them as full Christians, as full brothers and sisters and as those whose voices we need to hear and hear from us, I hope that would create a better environment for us all.

I wonder if there may be a little bit more creativity and boldness in the area of representation of Fresh Expressions of Church and Bishop's Mission Orders. Thank you.

Ven. Dr Peter Rouch (Winchester): I would like to endorse everything that Barry Hill has said. I would like to take it slightly further. We heard this morning from Bishop Pete that the Church of England is now in a "new normal." We now have network Christian missional communities. Very often, those will be held within a BMO which, since we passed a Canon to enable it, has an enduring and permanent place in Anglican polity.

Barry is quite right that it is possible with this redraft of CRR for lay participants in BMOs to be represented at deanery and diocesan level, but there is one place where they are constitutionally unwelcome and that is in this General Synod. Unless they are part of a religious community or a TEI, they must be on the electoral roll of a parish to stand for election here to General Synod.

These are people who are giving their lives, their energies and the lives of their families into developing missional priorities in the name of Jesus Christ and for the flourishing of this Church. They are acting in faith. If we do not give them a ready route to a voice here and accord them that respect, it is not faith, it is bad faith.

This provision was asked for when we passed the Canonical Enabling for Enduring BMOs and it was asked for in correspondence with the Simplification Task Group that followed it. It was asked for again when we looked at Pastoral Measure in July in York and it was asked for again in correspondence that followed it. The answer has always been, "Yes, it is coming." But if it does not come in Church Representation Rules, when will it come? If not now, then when?

We have tried asking questions. We have tried writing. Maybe Tracy Chapman would be better: "If not now, then when. If not today then why make your promises. A love declared keeping it for days to come is as good as none."

The Chair: I am very aware that we are hearing a real preponderance of voices from the brothers in this debate; if there is any sister who is wondering whether to stand, please can I encourage you at some point as the debate proceeds.

Mr Philip French (Rochester): I warmly welcome this draft Measure, especially the ecumenical aspect. My comments concern the revision to the Church Representation Rules and, in particular, the provision of Model Rules for PCCs

where I have three suggestions for improvement.

First, it would be helpful for those Rules to be published separately, being made available for download without charge from the Church of England website. Expecting PCC secretaries and incumbents to buy the full Rules and to keep them up-to-date places an unnecessary burden upon them and has not proved effective so far.

Secondly, let us hope that most parishes can adopt the Model Rules without amendment. For those which do not, I understand the intent of new Rule 11(2) that any variation of these Rules is subject to the approval of the Bishop's Council. However, there may be unforeseen consequences here where the parish is part of a Local Ecumenical Partnership, or similar.

An LEP typically operates under a constitution which honours the traditions of all its participants concerning Church governance. Those sorts of arrangements are often supervised by a joint council representing all the denominational authorities. That would be the natural point of reference, not unilateral reference to a Diocesan Bishop's Council.

I realise I am straying here into the territory of the ecumenical Canons, but it is striking that neither the proposed new Canon B43 nor the new Church Representation Rules have anything to say about local church governance in an ecumenical context. Without expecting the Rules to cover every eventuality, it would be helpful for the subtlety to be acknowledged. A formulation such as having regard to ecumenical agreements would be a start at least.

Thirdly, Model Rules M5 (1), (3) and (4) on the Annual Reports and Accounts raise some questions. Many parishes, operating on advice from diocesan offices, ultimately deriving from the Charity Commission and the statement of recommended practice on charity accounts, have adopted a single Annual Report which incorporates the various elements set out in these Rules, amongst other things. This might at least be acknowledged and reference might be made to external regulation such as the charities sought.

More importantly, it seems curious to make the General Synod Business Committee the authority for setting the format of parish reports and accounts. It is outside that Committee's usual remit—estimable though the Committee is—and it is possibly even outside its competence, dare I say. It would surely be impractical for that Committee to exercise any meaningful compliance or oversight function at

parish level. I would have thought that to refer to the Diocesan Bishop's Council would be more appropriate and effective, expecting that the Diocesan Bishop's Council would, in turn, be advised by the centre.

Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I would like to speak to clause 6 of the Explanatory Memorandum about the years in orders for deans and archdeacons. My favourite quote from *King Lear*—all right, the only quote I know from *King Lear*—is when the jester accuses Lear of, “having gotten old before thou has gotten wise.”

I am not a card-carrying person who insists that all archdeacons should be elderly, grey-haired white males—heaven forfend—but I do think before the poacher apocryphally turns gamekeeper, they should have been a poacher first. How do you get wisdom without years?

I am not sure if there is any magic recipe, but I do know that having been around the Church of England for a bit does help you help those in the Church of England. I would find it difficult to have someone promise to defend me in my office who had not been in office themselves.

Yes, there may be pertinent exceptions to this. Amongst those of us who are in the privilege positions of being permitted to be married, some of our spouses having spent a long time in the vicarage may know more about the Church of England than the bishop even, so there may be some permissive point here. If the motivation before this is that we must make deans and archdeacons the same as bishops, who apparently are born fresh as in the early Church, maybe we need to ask that bishops should be in orders for six years entire before being consecrated?

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Chair, I want to both agree and disagree with David Lamming. Firstly, now this Measure has been designated under Article 7, it really, surely, makes very little sense to require that that whole procedure should apply to consideration of the Church Representation Rules.

We are going to have difficulty enough handling something of that complexity in Synod without having to require it to be considered by each House separately. I would agree with David Lamming that it would be very sensible for the Revision Committee to consider removing the provisions that do need to fall under Article 7 from those that do not and for them to proceed as separate pieces of legislation.

Where I do not agree with David Lamming is that I do not think the Church

Representation Rules need to be done by Measure at all. They clearly do not because we have power to change them by Resolution. He is right that they do require a Revision Committee, undoubtedly, but we can have a Revision Committee without having a Measure.

As members who were here in the last quinquennium will remember, when we revised the Election Rules we had a full revision procedure but we did not end up having to go to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament to try to explain to them all the minutiae of the changes we were making because we did it by Resolution rather than by Measure. I would invite the Revision Committee to consider not only separating this into two pieces of legislation but, actually, for the Church Representation part to be done by Resolution as we are empowered to do under the Synodical Government Measure.

Turning to the Church Representation Rules, like others I welcome the redraft. It is long overdue and much of it is extremely helpful. I do think the flexibility given by Rule 10 to enable parishes to opt out or modify the Model Rules according to their needs is sensible, but I suggest it maybe goes a little far. The number of things that you cannot change are very small and so, as it stands, an APCM could exclude from the PCC all Synod members, deanery, diocesan, General Synod and, indeed, even churchwardens, all of whom are currently *ex officio*.

I suggest that would strike at the heart of the interconnected way that synodical government is supposed to operate. I do not entirely agree with Mr Cawdron that the Charity Commission's approach to regulation should be a model for us. PCCs are not just a charity; they are a representative body for a parish which actually has to keep that balance of democratic representation much more than many charities need to do.

I am grateful to Archdeacon Steen for her explanation of Rule 49. As Chair of the Election Review Group, it is helpful to know that that has been done so that we can make recommendations without having to upset this particular applecart, and that is useful. I do think, Chairman, in closing, that it would have been very helpful, and would now even be very helpful, to have a more detailed exposition of the philosophy underlying the new Rules in a GS Misc perhaps or something of that sort.

The Chair: Mr Scowen, the red light has gone on.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Thank you Chair, I am very grateful.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells): I would like to thank the Committee for the way in which they have produced an English version of the document. I have had long conversations with Stephen Slack on the amount of Latin that we have had in things before. In fact, until I met Stephen I thought a lacuna was a type of Renault.

I am also grateful for the fact that, by virtue of bullet-pointing some features, some things have now become a lot clearer. In fact, it was not until I read the revised version that I realised that some of the things that we have been doing in our parish have been slightly wrong in the past.

It is these edge effects that I want to highlight particularly in relation to the number of people that are supposed to be on our PCCs by election. We have an electoral roll in our parish that varies between around about 95 and 105. If we did things properly, we would go from 9 members to 12 numbers to nine members to 12 members every other year as the numbers go up and down.

I was particularly interested in the way in which that was constructed. It is quite clear that not only are the numbers 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15 within that passage within the Rules, but there is also a very helpful Rule that enables us to vary those numbers though it does not actually give the importance of how you might vary those numbers.

It might be worthwhile, whilst thinking about it, to put something about proportionality into those so that people do not go wild whilst trying to change their numbers from, say, 1, 7, 12 and 55. It might not quite work the way you want it to.

Revd Canon Debbie Flach (Europe): I refer to number (4) and Canon B 43 of Ecumenical Relations. I must admit when I was reading this late last week—in fact, very, very late last week—I was much amused to see that half of my congregation would not fit any of these current Rules.

We are, indeed, the Church of England, but in Europe, and particularly in my church in Lille, I am not ever sure if there are any Anglicans present. I never ask because we come from all seven continents usually on a Sunday and I do not know how many denominations. It is a moment of great encouragement to know that I can carry on asking members of my congregation to read Holy Scripture, to lead the intercessions and to assist at the distribution of the Holy Sacrament.

On a slightly more serious basis, it also allows the ministers with whom I work

closely under the Reuilly Agreement of the *Eglise Protestante Unie*, Jan-Albert Roetman, we can work much more closely together with these ecumenical relation permissions. This would also help in the work that we do in CEC Lille with other ministers from the Russian Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, as well as the *Eglise Protestante Unie*, to know that we are able to offer these invitations legally and properly to contribute to our working together for the Gospel in our various Churches.

The Chair: After the lady over there, I am calling Revd Jonathan Alderton-Ford and then, after that speech, I would welcome a motion for closure.

Mrs Sue Adeney (Worcester): I was not really prepared for my maiden speech, it is going to be very short but I thought I ought to stand up with some of the ladies, as requested. In the light of the debate on Thursday, *Setting God's People Free*, it seemed that this is an opportunity to write this particular code of Rules and document in a less divisive manner, by which I mean dividing the clergy from the laity so much of the time. It is perhaps premature to be thinking about this, but why does the Chair of the PCC have to, in the first instance, be a cleric? Why, for example, does the equivalent Chair of the Laity have to be a Vice-Chair rather than, equally, the lay Chair? I do not think that the laity have a speciality in vice.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Apologies for the third time St Edmundsbury & Ipswich have spoken in this debate. Thank you, Chair, for calling me because the batteries in my iPad are running out. I draw Synod's attention to page 58, point M20(1)—interesting paragraph: "Each year, the PCC must hold a sufficient number of meetings to enable the efficient transaction of its business."

That seems to be a very good idea, except it does not take into account cunning Suffolk peasants and crafty clergy who—particularly the peasants, that is—if they all live in one house and they hold between them both the churchwarden's, the treasurer's and the secretary's job, you will find that PCC meetings take place on Sunday afternoons after Sunday lunch, without due notification and often with the connivance of the local clergy person.

As Chair of the House of Clergy, I was castigated for opposing this last time it came round to Synod until I asked my clergy, "Well, what is it you don't like about this?" "Well, I don't like holding PCCs at all if I can get away with it", were the comments. I gave them my best wither and reached for my CDM Rules.

Nonetheless, the point is Synod looked at this closely in the last quinquennium and, after two Synods of debate on this, we said, “No, you have got to have some basic rules in otherwise abuse will happen.” There are issues around safeguarding, and safeguarding applies even if you do not have children because there are vulnerable adults. There are issues around mission and finance which require, in my opinion, a minimum of four PCCs a year, otherwise the only PCC can be a quick meeting after the AGM, and that is not good enough. Oh, sorry, it is ACPM or something now, I know that.

However, I would ask us to reconsider this and build in proper safeguards although I am, of course, in favour of the spirit of the thing to make things much easier and more flexible. My final point is this. Having served in an ecumenical parish for 27 years, I am looking forward to telling my people we are no longer a Church, we are a co-operative. Thank you.

The Chair: Point of order, Mr Freeman.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Madam Chair, a motion for closure on Item 506.

The Chair: That has my consent. We now have a motion for closure before the Synod.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I now invite Archdeacon Steen to reply to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

Ven. Dr Jane Steen (Southwark): Thank you, Chair. Members of Synod, thank you so much for your thoughtful and well-considered contributions. It would be invidious to try to name all of you, not least because I may not be able to read my own handwriting and have your names correctly. If I may say, in sum, you have made particularly good points, I think, if I am so bold, about the detail of the Rules. I would reiterate what I have said before: please write in to the Revision Committee. Please do not hold back on that.

I am not going to shame myself and you all by imitating the Archdeacon of Bournemouth’s singing, but if he would care to come and sing to the Revision Committee, I am sure we would be delighted to hear him. In terms of ecumenical governance, it is perhaps fair to say that the laity in all matters ecumenical have much more freedom than the clergy, and the intent of what is before you is not to

prohibit but simply to make provision for what would otherwise be unlawful, and that may be rather less than people sometimes think.

I greatly welcome the positive note that has been struck by several people on the ecumenical aspects of this Measure, a sense of celebration, a sense of welcome and a sense of coming together. The term, “Local Ecumenical Partnership” can remain. The new designation is simply for the purposes of Church of England legislation. It does not, I think, affect what you choose to call yourself at local level.

Might I perhaps conclude by thanking particularly the speaker who talked to us about the European context? At a time when European relations may seem a trifle strained, it is very good to know that the Church is making provision for excellent relations with other Churches in Europe, whether the members are Europeans or otherwise. I think that is all I am going to say.

I do not wish to deny, however, Synod the chance to hear a response to Mr Scowen’s point about why we are doing this in a Measure at all. The answer is, first, that this is part of a package of Simplification, so we have put it as a package. It does not have to be as a package but that was the logic. It is also not entirely clear that the provisions under the 1969 Measure enable you to completely rewrite the Measure, the CRRs, rather than simply to amend them.

The resolution making power does not provide, also, for making consequential amendments to other legislation for transitional purposes, which we are also doing here. Those are some of the reasons why we have presented this to you as an entire Measure but, of course, we are only on the starting blocks. The Revision Committee is open—well, it will be if you vote for it—and I look forward to hearing from many of you again. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair. I now put Item 506 to the vote.

The motion

‘That the Measure entitled “Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure” be considered for revision by committee.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. The draft Measure is now automatically committed to a Revision Committee. As stated in the Agenda, any member who wishes to submit proposals

for amendment should send them in writing to the Clerk of the Synod to reach her no later than Monday 20 March. That ends this item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker)* took the Chair at 4.00 pm.

DRAFT AMENDING CANON NO. 38 (GS 2047)

The Chair. Synod, it is Valentine's Day and no draft Measure is complete without its draft Amending Canon, so we are now moving on to Item 507, which covers some similar territory to what we have just been talking about. This is Article 7 business at its First Consideration. You will need the draft Amending Canon itself, which is GS 2047, and the Explanatory Memorandum, which is GS 2047X. I am going to call on the Chair of the Steering Committee, the Ven. Dr Jane Steen to move Item 507 "That this Canon may be considered for revision in Committee". She may speak for not more than ten minutes.

Ven. Dr Jane Steen (Southwark): I beg to move

'That the Canon entitled "Amending Canon No.38" be considered by revision in committee.'

Like the Measure, the Amending Canon originates from proposals developed by the Simplification Task Group and, having already set out the general background policy in introducing the Measure, I will deal with the Canon more briefly.

Paragraphs 1 to 3 are intended to help the situation of multi-parish benefices, especially those in rural areas where a number of parishes are spread across a wide area. The Canons providing for the services of Morning and Evening Prayer and the celebration of Holy Communion in parish churches are currently drafted on the basis that these services will take place in every parish church on every Sunday and every Principal Holy Day. The reality in many cases was already very different. In fact, the reality was very different even in the 1960s when the current Canons were originally devised. A parish priest cannot be in two or more places at once, though many may have wished it were otherwise. In many benefices, in some cases where the number of parish churches is in double figures, it is simply not possible for there to be services in every parish church every Sunday and every Principal Holy Day. No one realistically expects it but the Canons do. If the statutory services are not to be held in a particular parish, the priest should obtain a dispensation from the bishop.

Paragraphs 1 to 3 amend the relevant Canons so that the statutory services have to be held in at least one church in every benefice on every Sunday and Principal Holy Day. There is therefore no change in the canonical requirement for a single parish benefice. In a multi-parish benefice, the Canon may not result in any practical change, but it will mean that the parish priest is no longer in breach of the Canons if a dispensation is not obtained from the bishop so as to not hold the statutory services in every one of the parish churches in the benefice.

Paragraph 4 replaces existing Canons B 43 and 44 with a single new Canon that covers ecumenical activity. This reflects the amendments being made to the Ecumenical Relations Measure, to which I have already referred. It is hoped that this new single Canon on Ecumenical Relations will be easier to follow than its predecessors. The policy has been to include only as much detail as is necessary and to leave other matters to the Code of Practice to be made by the House of Bishops. This should mean that practical changes may in future be made without needing to revise the Canon.

Paragraph 5, which extends the range of situations in which a deacon or priest may serve a title, relies on clause 5 of the Measure already discussed. Under the existing Canon law, an ordinand must normally be ordained to the title of assistant curate in a particular benefice or parish. Under this new provision it will be possible for ordinands to be ordained to serve in any office held under common tenure. This would include being licensed to a bishop's mission initiative or a non-parochial institution.

Paragraph 6 makes amendments to Canon C 8 so that any member of the clergy who is beneficed or licensed in a diocese will, in effect, also have permission to officiate anywhere in that diocese at the invitation of the minister having the cure of souls. This is intended to allow beneficed and licensed clergy the same flexibility in terms of providing cover and general deployment as those who hold the bishop's permission to officiate.

Paragraphs 7 and 8 make amendments to the Canons that are to the same effect as clause 6 of the Measure. They remove the requirement for a person to have been in Holy Orders to be eligible for appointment as a dean, archdeacon or residentiary Canon. They therefore bring parity with the appointment of bishops, although the eagle-eyed among you have will have noticed that the Canons offer us an age limit for consecration as bishop and that is not being imposed in relation to deans, archdeacons or residentiary canons. I leave you to do the maths and no

doubt write to the Revision Committee as you have previously been invited so to do. Thank you so much.

The Chair. This item is open for debate. I will remind members that under Standing Order 51 speeches must be directed to the general purport of the Canon rather than to points of detail.

Mr Philip French (Rochester): Even with the proposed amendment, Canon B 11 will still require that Morning and Evening Prayer is celebrated in at least one church in every benefice or plurality every Sunday unless special dispensation is agreed by the diocesan bishop. Is this transparent, realistic or effective? I know of no church in my locality where Morning and Evening Prayer are routinely celebrated every Sunday. Nor, I dare to suggest, has our good diocesan Bishop been much involved in permitting this delinquency. Instead, there are many patterns of worship, well-adjusted to the needs of the parishes and the availability of ministers, including weekday services and Fresh Expressions, which is well attuned to being the Church in the present age.

Why must we maintain the fiction of Canon B 11 even as amended? Yes, Canon B 14A allows for its requirements to be set aside, but what is the point of a Canon that simply is not normative and where the defined exception procedure is unlikely to be followed with any great enthusiasm. Sadly, Canon B 11 describes a 19th Century Church of England, not a 21st Century one. A general duty to provide a service scheme which is locally appropriate, which encourages mission and which meets with the approval of the diocesan bishop might be a more fruitful way to proceed.

And now for something completely different. As someone who worships in a Local Ecumenical Partnership, I thoroughly welcome the intent of new Canon B 43, a simpler single ecumenical Canon which gives greater flexibility both now and for the future. I understand the language of a co-operative scheme being to help with that. I am just a little surprised at what it does not even mention. It is largely concerned with ministry and worship—so far so good—but it does not even touch on questions of governance, finance or the relationship of a local congregation to the wider councils of the Church and its administrative structures. As I said earlier, these things matter, but our legal and regulatory framework is almost silent on them. I am certainly not asking for rules that cover any eventuality—they would be bound to fail. I note what the Archdeacon said about a future Code of Practice, but surely we could at least acknowledge the need for sensitive attention to matters such as managing financial contributions to more than one denomination,

statistical and financial reporting likewise, and balancing the approaches of different Church traditions to local Church governance, without overwhelming laity or clergy with ever-more meetings.

I hope the Revision Committee might consider those two points.

Rt Hon Sir Tony Baldry (Oxford): As I go around the country in my capacity as Chair of the Church Buildings Council, I come across, as I am sure we all do here, many churches which are rarely used. We do not want to see these churches closed, we want to keep them open as buildings for Christian witness, but I think we have to be realistic that the pattern of our church buildings owes as much to the Norman Conquest, and the whole system of manors that followed from that occupation, as it does to any rational reflection of the distribution of our population.

The Church Buildings Council, as you may know, in an attempt to keep churches open, has set up the Association of Festival Churches. The idea is that churches that are not used that often might have services about six or seven times a year to raise sufficient money to pay the insurance, keep the guttering cleared and also bring the community together from time to time. Hopefully, we will see a revival of Plough Sunday, Rogation, Candlemas—which is Christingle for grownups—anything that you can think of. If anyone has any good ideas for festivals, please will you share them with us because we want to keep our churches open and, in any event and no one wants a large number of redundant Grade I listed buildings. Thank you.

Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford): I want to make a general point about the language and I would ask the Revision Committee to consider it. For my day job I am a government lawyer and, as such, I sometimes draft legislation. Modern legislation has to be drafted using gender-neutral language, and it can get tricky, as it has here, in amending older legislation.

As an example, in the Explanatory Memorandum on page 6 in clause C 5(1), some of the deleted language refers to “he” and has been replaced, quite correctly, with the gender-neutral term “the bishop”. However, we then move on to paragraph 2(e) where it goes back to the gender-specific language “his”. There are two difficulties with this. First of all, it is messy jumping between different types of language, and, secondly, it does not reflect the modern situation where ministers and bishops come in both male and female varieties. If we were going to draft this legislation from the start we would not draft it like this nowadays, so can I suggest to the Revision Committee that when reviewing the legislation does not only

simplify it but improve it. Thank you.

Mr Michael Stallybrass (York): I want to draw members' attention to the nature of the Explanatory Memorandum that we have and, in particular, the appendix. It is very clear what is being changed because we can see at the same time both the existing Canon and the revised Canon. Stark contrast with the very able fleet-of-foot work which we had from the Bishop of Willesden this morning as he was taking us through some other revisions to draft legislation. The point that I am making may actually be better addressed to the Business Committee than it is to this individual issue, but I do believe that, as members of Synod, it is helpful, whenever we can, to see the before and after effect of drafting changes. I would commend that whenever we have modifications to legislation, as a Synod we are able to see in some form or another how the before and after reads. I know that being able to do this is actually possible. I am very happy to engage in further conversations to facilitate this.

Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford): I was interested to read in this proposed change to the Canon more Simplification Measures to make it easier if you are in a multi-parish benefice. I am afraid I am not sure that the multi-parish benefice is the best way forward. I think perhaps we need to think about creating larger parishes. Currently, in Oxford, we have 622 parishes, many of which are tiny. At Bishop's Council last week we approved a scheme to combine five of those so we will go down to 618. For many of our parishes, like the churches that Tony Baldry just spoke about, the boundaries were drawn up a very long time ago. I have lived in my town in Buckinghamshire for about a quarter of a century and I have seen, with the moving of the post office and the redevelopment of Sainsbury's, the centre of the town shift from one end to the other. Our populations have shifted as well. I think that our mission would be easier if we had larger parishes and the parish boundaries were redrawn. Although Simplification can make doing that easier, we actually have to attend to this issue. Thank you.

Revd Paul Hutchinson (York): I have three things to say. First, in relation to Canon B 11 I want to echo what Philip French said earlier about reflecting modern realities and just make the additional observation that that is precisely what we are aiming to do in our discussion on Canon B 8 about vesture; so why not do it with C 11 at the same time and enable things to go forward? We do not all say Morning Prayers in our churches—I say that in the presence of my Lord Archbishop—although of course we have morning worship of various kinds.

Secondly, as an ecumenical officer, I would welcome the Canons, as everyone

else has done. It is good that we are having change on that score.

Thirdly, and to focus for a moment on the Canons that are coming through almost on the nod—not quite—where the Revd Andrew Dotchin referred to the desire for seniority in the last debate, there is a detail of difference between what is going through in these Canons and what is going through on the Measure and the detail of difference is that in these Canons any residentiary canon appointment is being removed altogether from the requirement that the person be in orders. The drafting has taken them out of Canon C 21. Given all the complexity around cathedrals and all the hot-potato issues we have had recently, and all the questions as to where their governance appropriately exists in the cathedral, if this is a backdoor introduction of lay residentiary canonries it needs to be owned as such and perhaps we should have a rather more detailed report on the subject and perhaps we could actually have had a slightly deeper rationale on why we are taking away the six-year limit on the rest as well.

Mr Martin Kingston (Gloucester): I believe it is important to get a grip on what process is under way here, which is not at this stage to try to deal with the detail. The Standing Order reminder is important here. For example, should there be a requirement for both morning and evening worship? You might like to write to the Simplification Group, in whose work I confess a modest interest.

Abolishing parishes? If we want to spend the next part of this quinquennium looking as though we are firmly obsessed with the way we do things, then suggest in rural England that you might abolish parishes and we could spend the next three years firmly obsessed with our own business rather than propagating the Gospel. The idea of moving to a benefice-centred approach is perhaps rather like moving a piano foot by foot by foot, to discover at the end of process that, wow, the piano has moved and we thought it did not need to move at all. That is not to say that we are creeping toward abolishing parishes, but it is to say that this Measure is designed in the way it has been put forward to enable change to be tested, if you like, and allow people to get the flavour of how it could work in effective ministry of the Gospel in a larger benefice. That is what we need to focus on, not on promoting things that will make us look even more internally self-obsessed. Thank you.

The Chair: I do not see anybody standing. I therefore call on the Archdeacon to respond to the debate. She has up to five minutes.

Ven. Dr Jane Steen (Southwark): Again, I welcome your considered and thoughtful responses. I should say in terms of Morning and Evening Prayer, the

parishioners of a parish are entitled to expect Morning and Evening Prayer. You may feel that they would not expect it but they are entitled to expect it. Personally, I feel that we might do well as a Church to pray morning and evening in all of our churches, or as many as of them as we can, but this is not really a personal matter. If you are using some of the provisions under Common Worship, you may find that services of the Word, family services and so on do in fact fulfil the requirements of Morning and Evening Prayer in any case.

I thank Mr French for his observations but also for his comments about ministry, worship and governance under Canon 43. Ministry and worship, yes indeed; governance, finance and so on, we must be careful. We cannot in our Canons legislate for other churches and other denominations. So by all means do write in, but we need to be mindful of that ecumenical courtesy and sensitivity.

Carolyn Graham, and your point on gender-neutral language, yes, indeed, and if we were inventing the Church of England from scratch it might not look like this. If we were writing our legislation from scratch it might not look like this. I think the answer is we do what we can, but it is not always possible to redraft everything. Please, again, write in.

Paul Hutchinson's point about canons residentiary, I hope I have not misled Synod, but it is not my understanding that this Measure or Canon in any way intends to introduce lay canons residentiary or, to put it another way, to remove the requirement that canons residentiary are Clerks in Holy Orders. Nevertheless, you are not the only person who has raised this point with me and you may therefore wish to write in with the detail so we know exactly which bit of drafting needs to be improved, and I thank you for that observation.

I thank Mike Stallybrass for his endorsement of the presentation of the before and after effects of legislative change and again assure Synod that that will continue to be done as we go forward wherever practicable.

Finally, Julie Dziegiel and the question of larger parishes rather than multi-parish benefices. It is my understanding that if you can persuade the parishes and you can persuade your diocesan Bishop and Pastoral Committee to make a recommendation to the Bishop, the way is open to do that. The "ifs" may be rather large but I think it can be done.

Finally, Sir Tony Baldry on festival churches, the pertinence is not clear to me, but the speech was wonderful. Thank you all very much.

The Chair. Thank you. I now put Item 507 to the vote.

The motion

‘That the Canon entitled “Amending Canon No. 38” be considered for revision in committee.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. The draft Amending Canon is now automatically committed to the Revision Committee. As it states in the Agenda, any member who wishes to submit proposals for amendment should send them in writing to the Clerk of the Synod to reach her no later than Monday 20 March. That completes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn* took the Chair at 4.23 pm.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICES (TERMS OF SERVICE) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 (GS 2048)

The Chair. Good afternoon again, Synod. We come now to Item 508A for which members will need GS 2048 and GS 2048X. First, a member of the Archbishops’ Council will move Item 508A that the preliminary motion and the Regulations be considered. This will provide an opportunity to make general comments about the regulations or to raise specific points which do not relate to the amendments on the Order Paper. If the preliminary motion is carried, we will then move to the amendments. Members who wish to comment on an amendment should not do so on the preliminary motion, but should reserve their comments for the debate on the amendment.

I call on Mrs Rebecca Salter to move Item 508A, “That the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 be considered”. She may speak for up to ten minutes.

Mrs Rebecca Salter (Archbishops’ Council): I beg to move

‘That the draft Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 be considered.’

Good afternoon, Synod. Arguably, the Church of England manages to have it both ways where the retirement of its ministers is concerned. Clergy and licensed lay ministers are legally required to vacate their offices at 70 but may remain in full-time stipendiary office and even accrue pension after 70 for limited periods. This is provided that they wish to do so and the bishop and the parish consider it appropriate, although the great majority choose to retire before 70 and exercise their ministry with the bishop's permission to officiate. This flexibility is advantageous for both the Church and its ministers, but when you look at the detail of the legislation that provides for it, you find that it is complicated, inconsistent and not quite as flexible as it needs to be. For example, bishops, deans, archdeacons and residentiary canons can only remain in office for up to a year after reaching 70. Incumbents, however, can remain in office for up to two years. By contrast, priests in charge, assistant curates and licensed lay ministers may remain in office after 70 for any period of time provided this is fixed and the term of their office may then be renewed. It is also possible to appoint someone over 70 to a completely new office as a priest in charge, licensed lay minister or assistant curate but not as an incumbent.

As well as being complicated and inconsistent, the existing legislation is not very supportive of the Church's mission now. A huge contribution to that mission continues to be made by those with the bishop's permission to officiate after retiring from stipendiary office. Without them, the Church would not be able to provide a ministry to the whole nation or sustain its provision of weddings and funerals with all the mission opportunities that go with them.

Even with the support of those on PTO and even with Renewal and Reform increasing the numbers of new vocations, there will still be an overall drop in the supply of stipendiary ministers and a shortage of experienced clergy and lay ministers. We need to make it as easy as possible for ministers who have reached 70 and are still willing and able to stay in office to be able to do so, and that is going to require a change in the law.

The Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops' Standing Committee have come to the view that some clarification and greater flexibility would be helpful. Hence this legislation which makes a number of changes to the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations and to the Ecclesiastical Offices (Age Limit) Measure. These changes will make it easier for people to stay in parochial office after 70, or to be appointed to a new parochial post. It will also make it easier for cathedral clergy, bishops and archdeacons to stay on in their current office until 75 if the relevant bishop and Archbishop would find this helpful.

Some things to emphasise about these new provisions are that they are permissive. No one will be required to remain in office longer than they wish to. Equally, no one will be entitled to remain in office beyond 70 as it is in the Archbishop's or bishop's discretion whether to give a direction enabling a person to hold office beyond the age of 70. The new provisions will have no bearing on the age at which a member of the pension scheme can retire (at 68 without deduction of pension). So we will end up in a position where the Archbishop or bishop can give a direction so that dignitaries can remain in their current office up to a maximum of 75, parochial officeholders can continue in office or take up a new office on renewable time-limited appointments but without any maximum age limit. In all cases, the Archbishop or bishop has to be of the view that the person concerned will be capable of discharging the duties of the office for the period of the extension and the guidance will assist with how this is assessed.

It can often be the case that those least willing to retire are not necessarily the most suitable to stay on after retirement, and we have therefore taken the view that the initiative for enabling someone to stay on after 70 should lie with the Archbishop or bishop, who will be able to take a more detached view of the long-term needs of the diocese or the parish, and who can also arrange for occupational health advice to be advised.

Because the existing legislation itself is complicated, it requires some complicated amendments to get it to the point of being clear, consistent and flexible. There is also going to be some guidance for the Archbishops and bishops that they will be required to have regard to before deciding whether to give a direction that someone over 70 may exercise an office.

We hope that this will help clergy, bishops and parishes to understand what the position is. An illustration of what the guidance might look like is provided in GS Misc 1155. Any comments made during the debate will be taken into account by the Archbishops' Council before any guidance is issued.

I therefore move that this Synod approve the Draft Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations.

The Chair: Thank you. Item 508A is therefore open for debate. If anyone wishes to speak would you please stand.

Revd Damian Feeney (Lichfield): I am very much in favour of the broad thrust of this proposal. I want to make a plea for creativity in local contexts to assist appropriate deployment and indeed to prioritise the mission and growth of the Church, and also to make the point that there are clergy of a certain age who are actually in their prime at the time that we are talking about, the ages 70 to 75.

Let me read you an email that I received yesterday from a colleague. “Dear Father, I see that Synod is to debate the clergy retirement age tomorrow. I confirm that my wardens have been told that I have to go this year as I become 72, even though we are a growing church with a respected place within the community and the Archdeacon and Area Bishop told me they could not get clergy to fill these posts. The mad thing from our parish perspective is that I am House for Duty but work as a full-time priest and am more than happy to do so. We have grown year on year. We have always met our parish share and we now have a number of groups and activities linked to the church, including Beavers and Cubs. Our average weekly congregation has grown in this village church from about 27 when I came here to 50 last year. Our work within our school is described in a recent inspection report as ‘exemplary’, but we are told that I still have to go. We are suspecting that we are a target in a bigger plan to merge us with another parish or two, with services covered by OLMs, which, frankly, would be the kiss of death for the future of the Church in this parish. We see ourselves as a community church with its parish priest active in the community day-by-day. If you feel moved to quote us as an example during the debate, please do so. There are still older clergy like myself who feel called to love and serve God and His people.

I join my plea with that of my colleague and I hope that we can consider issues of this nature on a case-by-case basis without feeling that we are setting burdensome precedents which bind us, but that, as in all things, we make our priority the mission of the Church, her growth and the salvation of souls. Thank you.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe (Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes): I greatly value the ministry of retired clergy and the possibility of being able to extend the age at which clergy must retire from licensed post is broadly welcome. However, there are occasions when retirement comes as a relief, sometimes to the minister’s family or to the parish. These cases are deeply sensitive and difficult.

I am nervous about the granting of discretion in these cases to the bishop or even, in the case of bishops, to the Archbishop, because, before long, there will be

questions asked about, “On what grounds was discretion used in this case but not in another case?” and people will be looking for objective evidence that discretion was used appropriately.

I would appreciate some reassurance that the power of discretion that can be used here could not be open to at least moral or even possibly legal challenge that it had been used arbitrarily. Thank you very much.

Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells): I want to declare what one might describe as a deferred interest in this matter since I shall be 65 this April. All my friends and peer group are saying to me, “When are you going to retire?” There may be other people in this position. As it happens, I am not particularly keen to retire at this moment and I think I am doing a reasonable job, et cetera, but I am not a parish priest, I am a bishop’s chaplain, I am in a rather curious setting. For those who are parish priests, the question about retirement is absolutely full of those rather difficult, sensitive, personal pastoral issues that Bishop Robert has hinted at.

Paragraph 32 of this rather excellent draft guidance that we have been issued with under GS Misc 1155 says: “In the case of an extension, the bishop will need to have checked that the officeholder is willing to defer retirement”. That sounds pretty wise to me. What is troubling me is if anybody has checked whether the officeholder is not willing and wants, as we have heard from Lichfield, to stay in a job which they consider they are doing terribly well and everything in the garden is rosy, et cetera. Under this guidance and any revised legislation, how do we deal with the collusion and perhaps the delusion that will go on when the poor archdeacon or the rural dean or the bishop starts going round saying, “Well, what about Fr Fred? What about Freda? Do you think they’re happy to go on for a bit?” People do not always tell the truth in those scenarios.

While I am really happy about this whole project, and I think it is really important to do it, I just think we have got to be really, really careful, and I do not know how you build it into the Code of Practice or the legislation, that we do not get into a position where we collude with people who, like me, cannot actually see a future other than what they are doing. One of the things about clergy who are long in ministry and heading for retirement, some of them simply cannot think outside the box of being a parish priest and they do not know what they will do with themselves when they retire. That is not a good enough reason to stay in post; it is actually a good enough reason to talk to a counsellor or your spouse or grandchildren about what life might be like afterwards. Let us please be very careful about this and look at the pastoral

personal stuff and realise it is not going to be quite as easy as sorting out whether or not your car will last for another year before you sell it.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): On a point of clarification, I would really like to ask about the status of the European law which abolished the compulsory retirement age in about 2011/12 is in relation to the Church. I have actually got quite a lot of interest in this area because I have done quite a bit of study for the employment of different age cohorts and, in fact, in the UK since 2008 employment of over-65s has shot ahead whereas for those aged 18-24 it has completely flat lined. It is the reason why we have 50% youth unemployment in Greece, Italy and Spain, all because of this step-change about abolishing the compulsory retirement age.

Obviously this is about the Church and the Church does have all sorts of exemptions. Is somebody able to tell us whether the Church is exempt from this particular European directive?

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): As a member of the Archbishops' Council I am obviously fully behind these Regulations. It strikes me as I have listened to the debate that there are a couple of things that could usefully be said for a bit of joined-up thinking.

First, just to quote from the Clergy Wellbeing Report that was passed through the House of Clergy yesterday: "Retired clergy provide an invaluable source of ministerial support and are easily undervalued as fellow bishops, priests and deacons. The House of Clergy Standing Committee notes the lack of representation of this group in the Councils of this Church". In a sense that expands the point that Fr Feeney was making. It is not just about giving clergy more time to continue if it is considered suitable in a particular appointment, it is actually the role that they play as part of the body of the Church. We need to make sure that it is not just about giving someone more work to do and to carry on.

A more interesting point though is that of course the devil is always in the detail. The detail will be in paragraph 10 of paragraph 29A which says: "In deciding whether to give a direction under this Regulation an Archbishop or diocesan bishop shall have regard to any guidance issued by the Archbishops' Council." Without going into Fr Benfield's amendment, he does raise the question of what are the specific elements of guidance that will need to be given. Of course, one of the questions around is what role do the laity, the people of God, have in deciding whether a parish priest should continue, and that needs to be built into the Regulations. I would also say that perhaps it would be good to go beyond Fr

Benfield's point and ask the same question about appointing a dean or allowing a dean, a suffragan bishop or a diocesan bishop to continue. What role will the people of God have in that discerning?

That is where the joined-up thinking needs to come because on Thursday we will be debating *Setting God's People Free*. It seems to me that any decision that needs to be made about the continuing office of any ordained minister needs to be done not just for the good of the minister but the good of the whole Church, and sometimes the people of God in a particular place feel they are being done to for the good of a particular individual rather than for the good of the whole Church. I think we need to bear that in mind as we move forward to hopefully approve these Regulations.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Chair: Debrah McIsaac followed by Miranda Threlfall-Holmes, and then I would really be interested in considering a motion of closure on Item 508A.

Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury): I would like to endorse the comments made both by Stephen Lynas and Simon Butler. There is great difficulty as you get older letting go. Having been through very dear friends and partners retiring, it is a very difficult time no matter what your field of work and no matter what your calling. Often when it is the expectation that you will retire it comes both with anxiety but also a heavy element of relief, both on the part of the individual concerned but also sometimes the people with whom they work.

It is good to have a change of minister and ministries for the individual and it is important for the good of the whole Church that the whole Church is involved in taking these kinds of decisions.

One practical way this could be seen through is to require a sabbatical before somebody over the age of 70 continues. A period of three to six months might change everyone's orientation on whether this is a good idea to carry on or not.

Revd Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Durham): I have some concerns about this. I can see it is very practical to help address the approaching deficit of clergy, but we do have quite a lot of empirical research out there, thinking particularly of Bob Jackson's books, that vicars in general tend to attract people who are ten years either side of them in age to a parish and also the best work that someone does in

a parish tends to happen between seven and 12 years in post. I do not know if that research has been fully taken into account in making these proposals.

Again, I echo Stephen Lynas' points about the possibility of collusion, particularly bearing in mind Bob Jackson's research on those who are likely to have been attracted to the parish with somebody older in post. There is a fair chance that the PCC are likely to want that sort of thing to continue, so I think that does need to be taken into account.

Could I also echo Simon Butler's point about joined-up thinking in relation to *Setting God's People Free*. I was rather concerned by Damian Feeney's plea because the description of asking an OLM or a lay leader to lead a parish as "the kiss of death" was rather depressing in the context of *Setting God's People Free*.

Also a plea for joined-up thinking with all the work we are doing on encouraging younger vocations. There is a real danger that we end up with the role models we are putting in front of people getting older and older. If that is what people are seeing then it is likely to be less encouraging to those coming in, to younger vocations. It is also likely to tend to older senior appointments if the likelihood is that people will be in post for much longer, which again could be quite unhelpful. So a plea for this to be considered in relation to the young vocations work as well. Thank you.

Mr Keith Cawdron (Liverpool): I simply want to ask what we think we are doing by institutionalising discrimination on the grounds of age, because that is what we are doing here for those aged over 70. Some of you may not be aware of the massive change that was brought to nearly all our employers when employers ceased to be able to require staff to retire at any age whatever the pension age. Your diocesan employees, the National Church Institutions' employees cannot, as I understand it, be required to retire at any age. What do we think we are doing?

I am not an expert on equality legislation but I believe that potentially we are going to find ourselves open to challenge because of what we have done here. If we are lucky enough not to be open to challenge we should question it morally.

What we are introducing here is a position where clergy aged over 70 will have less—in my terms—employment protection than normal employees aged over 70. I really do not think we should be doing this. Therefore, late in the day and against the onrush of carrying this forward, I think we need to take time, pause, and,

frankly, I encourage the Synod to vote against these Regulations because I think we are doing a wrong thing. Thank you.

The Chair: Before the Archbishop of Canterbury speaks, I am still listening out for a motion for closure of debate of 508A.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): Thank you, Mr Chairman. Particularly taking into account the last speech and the one before it, I think we need to remember exactly what this is about. It was put very, very clearly and very, very well in the opening speech by Rebecca. It is first of all to clear up anomalies where different rules apply to different people. It is nothing whatsoever to do with dealing with declining numbers of clergy. It is easy to set up a straw target and knock it down. It is nothing whatsoever to do with that. It is about saying where people are capable and able and it is to the advantage of the Church that they continue their ministry at a given point that it is possible to do it and the same applies to everyone.

Thirdly, it is not institutionalising discrimination. The discrimination has been there for years where for officeholders the rules of retirement have always applied. There will be a capability requirement, but it is actually reducing the discrimination and giving slightly more scope where the capability is clearly there.

I urge this Synod to support this as a fairly basic bit of obvious clearing up and tidying up with no underhand agendas. Also, this is not going to solve, even if it was intended to, and I emphasise it is not, the issue of declining numbers of clergy because we are talking about small numbers here. What it is going to do is offer the opportunity to keep ministries that are flourishing in place where it seems that the Church and the Spirit of God and the people concerned are aligned on this.

Mrs Vivienne Goddard (Blackburn): Point of order: will you accept a motion for closure on this item?

The Chair: I am really interested in that after we have heard this next speaker. Thank you.

Mr David Ashton (Leeds): Thank you for calling me, Chairman. I was not going to speak but I am a little bit irritated by hearing the word “retire” coming up so often. I am 75 going on 76 and I have finished full-time work but I certainly have not retired from life. I have found that since I retired I have to get up in the morning and I have to get up early to do all the jobs that I want to do in the voluntary sector

and look after my grandchildren. Getting up early keeps you going, keeps you fit. A lot of people take the word “retire”, put on their cardigan and, by God, they do retire. They sit in their chairs and read the papers. It is an individual person that you look at. If someone is good enough to do the job and they are doing it well, whatever it is, but even more so in the Church, surely we should use that God-given gift to provide for our people out in the parishes. As my old father used to say, “Use it or lose it”, and do not let us lose it.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Chester 278, even though I am 79. Point of order: motion for closure on this item.

The Chair: “Age shall not weary them.” That was not an expression of opinion on this debate.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I am not being overly familiar but Mrs Salter says that is her Sunday name and she would prefer me to call her Rebecca. Rebecca, would you like to come and respond to the debate, please. You have up to five minutes.

Mrs Rebecca Salter (ex officio): That is because I am normally only “Mrs Salter” when I am in trouble. Thank you very much, everybody. I will try and get through as much as I can. The Archbishop summed up a lot for me, so that is quite nice.

Damian Feeney, this is exactly why we are trying to do what we are trying to do. Unfortunately, there is not much that can be done at the moment, but that is why we want to bring in these changes to give that greater flexibility to allow people who have that ministry at the right time in that place that is flourishing to be able to continue to do that.

There were a few comments about the concern people have about collusion and how discretion would be used. At the moment that already exists in the current legislation, it is just that the age limit on that is slightly lower. It would still be the case that you would have to have that discretion from someone else to carry on. At the moment people are used to using that and making those kinds of decisions.

Obviously we will take all those comments that have been made here and we will be able to feed them into the guidance to try to make sure that it gives that security for how people use it and apply it. If you do have thoughts on that let us know. That is what we are trying to do a little by presenting this today.

Gavin Oldham, I think the concerns were addressed about the Equality Act in the Explanatory Memorandum and there is a footnote on page 3, so that has been taken into consideration.

Thank you, Debrah McIsaac, for the comments about the sabbatical. Again, that is something we can consider putting into the guidance.

I think one of the things to stress is that we are still talking about very low numbers of people that wish to carry on doing this. The majority of people “retire” and then go on to use a PTO to exercise ministry. We are not talking about trying to plug a massive gap this way at all. We are not going to end up with loads of people deciding at 85—I do not know, they might wish to—that they wish to carry on. The numbers to date of people who have done these things are very low.

This is trying to tidy up the guidance and give it more coherence across all the different offices, because at the moment you could argue that there is actually less flexibility now than there will be if Synod pass this. This is a way of giving more flexibility rather than less.

I hope I have addressed everything that people have said. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. I put to Synod Item 508A.

The motion

‘That the draft Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 be considered’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: We come now to the amendments at Items 520 and 521. The 40-member procedure applies. That means the mover of the amendment will have not more than five minutes to speak to it. I will then call Rebecca to speak for not more than five minutes in reply. If Rebecca does not support the amendment, the amendment will lapse unless 40 members stand in their places to indicate that they wish the debate to continue and the amendment to be voted on. I call the Revd Prebendary Simon Cawdell to move his amendment Item 520. Simon, you may speak for up to five minutes.

Revd Preb. Simon Cawdell (Hereford): I beg to move

‘Regulation 2, paragraph (1), in the new regulation 29A, after paragraph (1)
insert—

“(1A) An archbishop may give a direction for the person holding the office of the other archbishop, once he or she has attained the age of 70 years, to continue to hold that office for the period specified in the direction.”

And

Regulation 2, paragraph (1), in the new regulation 29A, in paragraph (7), before “(2)” *insert* “(1A),”.

First, Chair, I would like to acknowledge the generosity of the legal department in framing the precise terms of the amendment that is before you.

Members of Synod, hard cases make bad law and any general provisions which we have before us now which leave in or take out a particular category raise questions that require clear answers, not least as they often have unintended consequences. My amendment seeks to remove such a piece of particularism which may have difficult consequences at some time in the future.

In general, I believe that these new Regulations are a very sensible measure to enable the removal of a restriction that currently prevents most officeholders from remaining in post beyond the age of 70 with only the limited possibility of an extension in exceptional circumstances, even where they are willing, capable and desirous of doing so.

The new Regulations give clear and sensible provision to enable such later-life ministry to take place with safeguards notwithstanding all the categories of bishops, deans, canons and parochial clergy included in the draft Regulations but inexplicably omitting any reference in these Regulations to our Archbishops.

First, Synod, I am sure, will be pleased to know that my amendment is not some sad attempt to curry favour with their Graces. We have already heard today from my diocesan colleague, Neil Patterson, the spectre of Cardinal Wolsey. The spectre of the many Archbishops who have died worn out by the cares of their office and the management, dare I say, of unruly Synods are also present. I acknowledge the oxymoron that is the capability process which probably ought to recognise the desire to remain in office as a peculiar form of insanity.

I can also see that the provision might have been left out because the conversation between Archbishops might be thought to be too difficult. I hope that is not the case. The Regulation already places upon bishops and Archbishops the likelihood of occasional difficult conversations where a colleague has to be informed that it would not be appropriate to continue. We expect them as part of their office to be capable of such conversations, hard as they are, and we understand that they accept that as they accept the burdens of office.

My amendment places upon the Archbishops no more than is expected of them in the main motion in the integrity of the conversation that we expect as they discuss extensions to ministry with any fellow bishops.

Nor are the issues of royal prerogative any different from the position in the draft regulations affecting Crown Appointments of bishops, deans and incumbencies where the Crown is patron. Despite all this, the omission of a provision for Archbishops in this draft regulation creates a serious problem for the future in the following way; in that whilst a general regulation like this is going through its provisions are understood as not pertaining to any particular individual officeholder.

As the draft presently stands if, in future, it became apparent that it was expedient and right for an Archbishop to continue in office, we would be left in the invidious position of having to move a new amending regulation to enable that to happen. That would require the same synodical process as this one now, inevitably creating the impression that Synod would be passing judgment for one time only on a particular Archbishop's tenure in office.

That would be invidious as well as being unkind, unnecessary and unfair. Our Archbishops bear great burdens on our behalf. We should not be in a place where we expose them at a personal level with conversations that should be happening discreetly, carefully and pastorally, should it ever become apparent in the future that an archiepiscopal officeholder should be capable and willing to continue in office up to the age of 75. The very idea of those conversations being held semi-publicly is, frankly, odious. My amendment eliminates the omission in the draft text and I ask you to vote for it.

The Chair: Thank you. I ask Rebecca to respond to that amendment. You have up to five minutes to reply.

Mrs Rebecca Salter (ex officio): I would encourage Synod to resist this amendment for a couple of reasons. First of all, the office of Archbishop makes considerable and exceptional demands on the holder. It is not like that of a diocesan or a suffragan post, which is limited to a single diocese or episcopal area.

It is simply not appropriate to make it possible, in the view of both the House of Bishops' Standing Committee and the Archbishops' Council, for it to be extended until the Archbishop is 75 years-old. Perhaps more importantly, the proposed mechanism for enabling the extension of the term of an Archbishop's office is wrong and does not provide the right checks and balances.

It is necessary for a diocesan bishop to secure the approval of the relevant Archbishop before issuing a direction to enable a suffragan bishop to hold office after 70. To enable a diocesan bishop after 70, his or her own Archbishop has to issue a direction. This amendment puts the Archbishops in the position of being able to extend one another's offices in a context which makes it very difficult for one Archbishop to refuse a request from the other.

Significantly, the current age limit Measure wisely does not provide for the extension of the term of an Archbishop over 70 by means of direction from another Archbishop. Instead, it enables the Queen, at her discretion, to extend the term for up to one year. It might have been possible, at least in theory, to have extended the term for which the Queen might extend an Archbishop's office from one to five years to bring it in line with these other provisions for other bishops, but this amendment does not do that.

In any case, the Archbishops' Council would not seek to confer additional powers on Her Majesty without first having discussions with the Crown. This amendment should therefore be rejected even if it were thought desirable to enable an Archbishop to stay in office until 75, which it is not.

The Chair: Please do not take this personally, that end of the table. Well, Rebecca has indicated that she does not wish to support the amendment; therefore, I have to ask whether there are 40 members ready to stand so that this amendment can be debated. There are not. Thank you, Prebendary Cawdell, but that amendment fails.

The Chair: I call on the Revd Paul Benfield to move his amendment, Item 521. Paul, you have up to five minutes to speak.

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): I beg to move

‘Regulation 2, paragraph (1), in the inserted regulation 29A, after paragraph (9) *insert*—

“(9A) A diocesan bishop may not give a direction under paragraph (5) in the case of a person holding the office of incumbent or priest in charge of, or vicar in a team ministry for, a benefice in the diocese or the office of assistant curate in the diocese unless the bishop—

- (a) considers that the pastoral needs of the parish or parishes concerned or of the diocese make it desirable to give the direction, and
- (b) has obtained the consent of the parochial church council of the parish or each of the parishes concerned.”

This amendment seeks to preserve the present position under the 1975 Measure. At the moment, if a bishop wishes to extend an incumbency or the office of a team vicar beyond the incumbent’s 70th birthday, the bishop must, first, be satisfied that the pastoral needs of the parish or the diocese make the extension desirable and, second, he or she must obtain the consent of the PCC. Without my amendment, these two requirements disappear.

The first part of my amendment, paragraph (a), that the pastoral needs of the parish or diocese make the extension desirable, puts explicitly in the legislation what at the moment is only in the guidance—guidance which can be changed in the future. The amendment makes it clear that it is the needs of the parish or diocese which are relevant and not the needs or desires of the incumbent. Without it, one could see arguments over whether the pastoral needs of the priest and his or her family were more important than the needs of the parish or diocese.

The second part, paragraph (b), preserves the need for the PCC to give its consent to the extension. It makes it clear that the PCC must formally consent, not just be consulted but consent. A formal decision is required. It will be no good for the Bishop just to discuss it with the churchwardens, he must get the consent of the PCC. We often say how important the laity are—or should be—in the life of the Church, yet without my amendment we are removing the rights of the laity in this regard.

Are we serious about the rights of laity or do we want to remove their rights? Do we want to allow a bishop to extend an incumbent’s term of office whether the laity

want it or not? The amendment also refers to priests in charge and curates, since the same principles ought to apply to them as apply to incumbents and team vicars. They, also, should not continue in office beyond the age of 70 unless the pastoral needs of the parish or diocese require it and the PCC agrees.

I urge you to support this amendment, which preserves the needs of the parish and diocese as being paramount and preserves the rights of the laity. I beg to move Item 521.

The Chair. Thank you. I call on Rebecca to speak to this amendment. You have up to five minutes.

Mrs Rebecca Salter (ex officio): Fortunately, I do not need five minutes. We would be happy to accept this amendment as it is bringing it in line with the legislation as it already is. This also does allow for some of the concerns that were raised earlier on around the voice of the laity to be fully recognised in what goes forward.

The Chair. Thank you. This amendment is, therefore, open for debate.

Revd Jonathan Macnearney (Chelmsford): I confess an interest in this item too. I intend to retire from the ministry of the Church in 52 years' time. I welcome Paul Benfield's amendment and the amended motion. I think it is vital that the pastoral needs of the parish are principally considered. As it has been noted, there is considerable scope for awkwardness in the conversations surrounding this matter and I can quite imagine the difficulty that bishops and other senior leaders will feel in selecting in favour of one priest whilst potentially selecting against a priest in the neighbouring parish.

Similarly, I can imagine members of the laity finding it difficult to express, even in private, to the bishop their concerns. It strikes me even further than Paul Benfield's amendment that we already have a system by which bishops are advised about the vocational callings on people's lives, namely Bishops' Advisory Panels. Further, local panels already exist in special cases, for example, where currently licensed lay ministers or readers are considering ordained local ministry. Could not a local panel be a valuable way to provide advice to the Bishop which reflects the mind of the Church inspired by the Holy Spirit?

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I just wish to draw attention to what I think is a typographical error in sub-para B. Should it not read, "Has obtained the consent of the parochial church council of the parish?" Yes, I think it

is right, actually, having looked at it again. I think that it is important and I wonder whether a simple majority is all that is supposedly required for this and, also, whether there would be a need or should be a need for any special notice of a resolution before the PCC to propose such an extension.

Mr David Martlew (Liverpool): I would like to speak in favour of this amendment, as a man older than 70 who has retired from gainful employment. However, I know of colleagues who have wished to continue in employment past their retirement age and their colleagues wish that they had not. I am nervous about clergy being given an open book to remain in service after their competency has passed. As a layman and a member of a PCC, I would welcome the idea that the PCC's opinion is sought and obtained by a proper Resolution to allow a clergyman or woman to proceed in office after retirement age. The Church needs that assurance of competence and pastoral ability. I would like to speak in favour of this amendment.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): I find myself in a rather odd position of feeling uncomfortable, not with Fr Benfield's amendment but actually the legislation as it currently stands, primarily for pastoral reasons. This could be a very divisive matter for a PCC to have to consider. How might it be for the ending of a ministry if a PCC has had to vote on this particular matter and have voted that the minister should retire, how will that affect the ending of what might have been a very fruitful and productive ministry?

Equally, if a PCC is divided on that matter, how is that going to affect the vacancy and the appointment of a new parish priest? I am a bit anxious about just nodding this through without giving that some thought. I entirely take the point of Fr Benfield and Mrs Salter that the people of God --- I am using that name because I really hate the language of laity, I have a book on my desk by a Baptist minister called *The Abolition of the Laity*. That is not because I want to get rid of the idea, but the laity as a sort of separate body of people is just bizarre.

Nevertheless, I do want to see the laity consulted, the people of God, but the role of the churchwardens as Bishop's Officers might be a more appropriate means of dealing with that question in a smaller, more contained way that would not have a wider effect on the ending of a priest's ministry or on the future mission and ministry of a parish. I find myself, unusually, having to oppose this amendment.

Mr Brian Wilson (Southwark): I believe I am correct in saying that PCC meetings should be chaired by the incumbent. I think it would be very difficult as a PCC, at a meeting where the incumbent is chairing, to vote either one way or the other on

this motion. It would put the PCC in a very difficult position. I do rather like the idea that the churchwardens perhaps might have some say in the matter rather than the PCC.

The Chair. Sir, and then the Bishop of Willesden, and I will be listening out for a very helpful point of order, please, for a motion for closure on the debate on this amendment.

Mr Peter Hart (Chester): I would like to support Fr Benfield's amendment here, but just to say, following that point, as a churchwarden I am not sure that I would want that responsibility left just to myself and the other warden. Obviously, I suppose we would have to consult the PCC. I understand the difficulty in the PCC making that decision with someone who has been in a parish for a long time. I am in a parish where an incumbent has been there 35 years. I would like it if it is going to be spread, please, to the PCC rather than just the churchwardens.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): We are doing what we often do in debates at this time of day, we are dribbling downwards. Fr Benfield has served us well by bringing us back to the fact that we have already got some legislation in place that makes this provision in terms of freeholders and he is looking for consistency to be applied as we bring new Regulations in. Please do not get to the stage, which we often do on these debates, of qualifying and qualifying and worrying.

In the end, we have got to be grown up about these matters and a PCC is going to have to take some hard decisions. That is just the way it is. What you do not want to do is to legislate for a bishop being arbitrary about decisions without taking fully into consideration all the different issues. Fr Benfield has helpfully given us the capacity to do that. Please vote for the amendment.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Mr Chairman, a motion for closure on Item 521.

The Chair. I would like to hear the Vice-Chair of the House of Laity and then could you tempt me again, please.

Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield): I am really sorry, I am going to have to speak against the Prolocutor. That is not what we, as a band of four, would really ever want to do, but on this one, I am sorry, Simon, I must. I feel the House of Laity as a whole would want to have some way of having a voice in the future of an incumbent who has reached the age of 70 and wishes to go on because they have

the talent, the energy and the enthusiasm for the mission that is their charge. Please, can we vote for this amendment and then put the laity within that process.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Point of order: motion for closure on Item 521.

The Chair: Thank you. That has my approval. Does it have the approval of Synod, would you indicate, please?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: Therefore, I put Item 521 to the vote.

The motion

‘Regulation 2, paragraph (1), in the inserted regulation 29A, after paragraph (9) insert—

“(9A) A diocesan bishop may not give a direction under paragraph (5) in the case of a person holding the office of incumbent or priest in charge of, or vicar in a team ministry for, a benefice in the diocese or the office of assistant curate in the diocese unless the bishop—

(a) considers that the pastoral needs of the parish or parishes concerned or of the diocese make it desirable to give the direction, and

(b) has obtained the consent of the parochial church council of the parish or each of the parishes concerned.”

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I call on Rebecca now to move Item 508B, “That the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 be approved”.

Mrs Rebecca Salter (ex officio): I beg to move

‘That the draft Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 be approved.’

Thank you, everybody, for your time this afternoon. There are some useful things for us to take away and incorporate into the guidance. There is nothing really more for me to say apart from to move. Do I have to say the whole thing or can I just move it?

The Chair. No, you do not. Thank you. This item is now open for debate. I see nobody standing. I put to Synod “That the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 as amended be approved”. A simple majority only is required and the vote may be by show of hands, unless 25 members require a division by Houses. I think it is a show of hands.

The motion

‘That the draft Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 be approved.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. Thank you very much indeed. The Regulations as amended will now be referred to the Archbishops’ Council and, once made, laid before Parliament under the Statutory Instruments Act 1946. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark)* took the Chair at 5.22 pm.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 (GS 2049)

The Chair. Good afternoon, again, Synod. We now come to Item 509. You will need the Regulations, GS 2049, and the Explanatory Memorandum, GS 2049X. I call upon Dr Jonathan Spencer, Chairman of the Church of England Pensions Board, to move Item 509, “That the Church of England Pensions (Amendment) Regulations 2017 be approved”. Dr Spencer, you have up to ten minutes to speak.

Dr Jonathan Spencer (ex officio): I beg to move

‘That the Church of England Pensions (Amendment) Regulations 2017 be approved.’

Good afternoon, Synod. The amended Regulations come to the Synod following a consultation carried out by the Pensions Board in October 2016 which proposed changes to the way certain places on our trustee body are filled.

There are 20 members of the Pensions Board. 8 of these 20 are filled by elections

from members of the various pension schemes which we administer and half of these eight are elected by the Synod's House of Clergy as a proxy for the members of the Clergy Pension Scheme. The other 12 are either elected or appointed in some manner. The proposals set out in the consultation concern the 6 places currently elected by the House of Laity.

At present, the House can elect anyone, whether or not members of the House. The proposal replaces these 6 places with 2 elected by the House of Laity from within its own membership and four places appointed by the Archbishops after consultation with the Chair of the House of Laity and the Chair of the Appointments Committee, following a conventional open selection on merit process. The Pensions Board unanimously takes the view that the existing structure and processes for the appointment or election of trustees needs to be improved.

The last decade has seen a torrent of new legislation concerning pensions which trustees have to grasp. Investment strategies have become much more sophisticated and the Board now raises finance direct from the market to fund the CHARM schemes rather than relying on the Church Commissioners. The trustees' Board has had to acquire and develop a whole new set of skills and knowledge in pensions, pensions law; investments, social housing finance, housing provision and management, charities law, and governance generally.

We have taken steps in recent years to improve the professionalism of trustees within the present elected framework for the House of Laity and for Scheme employers by advertising to attract better qualified candidates and by giving candidates more space in election addresses. This has helped, but we still need to do more to achieve a better professional skills diversity which these proposals would facilitate.

This is part of a trend in both UK and, for that matter, relevant EU law and practice towards the requirement for trustee Boards to be appropriately equipped in all such areas and to move more towards appointments on merit rather than elections. The Pensions Regulator last year carried out a consultation on what was needed from the 21st century pensions' trustee. In that response published late last year, the regulator felt that one of the crucial elements was: "Rigorous selection and appointment processes of the trustees on the Board, focused on the competence of the candidates and the current and future needs of the Board in terms of knowledge and skills."

The proposed amendments are designed to give the Pensions Board their own

more rigorous selection and appointment processes for trustees. During the consultation period we received a number of responses which helped to clarify our thinking and are incorporated into the amended Regulations. I am grateful to all members who took the time to write in.

At the end of the consultation, I wrote to all members setting out the way we proposed to take this matter forward and addressing some of the concerns which had been raised. I want to run quickly through some of these concerns. Some members felt that the proposed reduction in those trustees elected by the House of Laity weakened links between Synod and the Pensions Board.

I disagree. The new arrangement should, in fact, strengthen links. With the current arrangement, the House of Laity can elect anyone who stands, subject only to them being proposed and then seconded by members of the House. At present, we have only one person who is serving as an elected trustee on the Board who is a current member of the House of Laity. I should add that one of the appointed members is also a member of the House of Laity.

Under the new arrangements, at least two trustees must be members of the House at the time of their election and the other four appointments will be made after consultation with both the Chair of the House of Laity and the Chair of the Church of England Appointments Committee.

Others expressed the view that they hoped that there would still be space amongst the Board's membership for a person who is not a pensions or housing expert and who can ask the obvious or awkward questions. Such a person is a vital member of any board and I naturally look to the four clergy, the bishop and the three other member nominated trustees to fulfil this essential role, and they do.

Finally, there was concern that the terms of appointment between the Pensions Board and General Synod do not match up. We do not think this is a major issue. Individuals are appointed or elected to the Board for a term of six years, so someone who is a member of the House of Laity today could be elected for a six-year term later this year. They then might lose their seat at the Synod elections in 2020 or decide not to stand again. They would remain a member of the Pensions Board until their term expired in 2023. If they were not a member of the House of Laity at that point, they would then not be eligible to stand for a further term. It would not be necessary for them to step down in 2020 and to trigger a casual vacancy, though, of course, they would be free to do so if they wished.

The amended Regulations in paragraph 3 set out the transitional arrangements that we envisage. We have members elected by the House of Laity whose terms expire in 2017, 2019 and 2021. The Regulations phase in the new arrangements such that one member of the House of Laity is elected from within the membership of the House this year and the other in 2021, better to tie in with the pattern of elections to the Synod in 2020 and 2025.

In recent years the Board has made a conscious effort to become more diverse. When I became Chair in 2009 we had only one woman amongst the Board's membership; we now have five. The average age of trustees has also fallen in recent years. We want to improve our diversity further. This is partly about the protected characteristics set out in the equality legislation. It is also about diversity and the range of skills and experience that we need to deliver a high-quality professional service for those who have worked for or served the Church of England. A modest move from elected to appointed members in the manner proposed will assist us to do this as well as strengthen links with the General Synod. Please support these amended Regulations so that we have trustees who are appropriately equipped and skilled for an increasingly complex world and so enable us to improve the quality of the services we offer.

I commend these Regulations to the Synod for approval and move Item 509 standing in my name.

The Chair: Item 509 is now open for debate.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): When I was approached by Jonathan at last July's Synod and asked how I would feel about losing some powers in the House of Laity in relation to electing members of the Pensions Board, my natural reaction, of course, was to be cautious. I have always felt when I have been in July Synods that I should attend those debates relating to the pension requirements and needs of the clergy as a responsible lay member of the Synod. It struck me there were three particular groups who have an interest in this change. First, members of the House of Laity, who will give up, effectively, the ability to elect a number of folk to this trustee role, with their responsibilities and accountability as good lay people. Sorry, Simon, but lay people still exist in the Church of England and have responsibilities and accountabilities to the whole body. Then of course there are the members of the Houses of Clergy and Bishops, who have both an interest and a responsibility in this area. Thirdly are the current scheme members, all the other clergy for whom pensions do really matter.

I was not going to jump into this arrangement without careful thought and Jonathan gave me some of the reassurances that he has given us now: first, that only one member currently in the House of Laity is elected out of the six. It was entirely open for the House to elect clergy or laity to these trustee roles. There was going to be a consultation, and we have heard something of that. I was reassured by what he told me and what the consultation gave us. Also, the fact that the Archbishops were to be consulted, along with the Chair of the Appointments Committee, there would indeed be some scrutiny over a process which needed “professionalisation” (perhaps the most appropriate word). There was a need for greater capability, greater capacity and greater expertise, as we heard, particularly in relation to such things as housing as well as investments, charity law and the like.

I am grateful to Jonathan, along with the rest of the Pensions Board, for taking the initiative. I am grateful to the Archbishops for their willingness to be involved in the appointment in this way and I am pleased we will have two live and active members of the House of Laity as trustees. I hope you will support this wholeheartedly.

The Chair: I see no one else standing and so I call Dr Spencer to reply.

Dr Jonathan Spencer (ex officio): Thank you, Chair. I agree with Jamie.

The Chair: On that note, I now put Item 509 to the vote.

The motion

‘That the Church of England Pensions (Amendment) Regulations 2017 be approved.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: The Regulations will now be laid before both Houses of Parliament pursuant to the Statutory Instruments Act 1946. This item of business is now completed. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *Canon Linda Ali (York) took the Chair at 6.35 pm.*

THE SAFEGUARDING (CLERGY RISK ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 (GS 2050)

The Chair: Synod, we now come to Item 510 on the Order Paper, the Safeguarding (Clergy Risk Assessment) Regulations for approval under Canon C 30. For this item you will need the Regulations, GS 2050, and the Explanatory Memorandum, GS 2050X. I will now call on the Bishop of Bath and Wells to move Item 510. He may speak for up to ten minutes.

The Bishop of Bath & Wells (Rt Revd Peter Hancock): I beg to move

‘That the Safeguarding (Clergy Risk Assessment) Regulations 2016 be approved.’

The value of risk assessments as a tool in good safeguarding practice is now widely recognised and within the Church their use, including assessments on clergy, has been increasing. It is important for Synod to understand what a risk assessment is. A risk assessment is an analysis of all material considerations to assess the likely future conduct of the person being assessed, using the assessor’s professional knowledge and expertise. It is not a finding of fact or guilt. An assessment will not find a person guilty of an allegation or a concern. It is a professional assessment of future risk posed by an individual, resulting in a conclusion and recommendations. These Regulations before Synod represent an important step in improving the Church’s ability to use this tool, whilst at the same time ensuring that risk assessments are conducted in accordance with basic standards of procedural fairness, including by giving the cleric, who is the subject of an assessment, an effective way of challenging its outcome.

Before I explain the basis for saying that in more detail, I need to remind members of how we got to where we are today and how the regulations will fit in with the surrounding legal frameworks.

The regulations have their origins in a Report produced in August 2012 by the commissaries appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to undertake a visitation of the Diocese of Chichester in relation to safeguarding. That Report recommended that a diocesan bishop should, in appropriate circumstances, be able to “direct” a cleric to undergo a risk assessment. A wide consultation was undertaken by the Archbishops’ Council on that and, of course, the other recommendations arising from the Report, which in turn gave rise to the recommendations for legislative change endorsed by the Archbishops’ Council

and the House of Bishops that were set out in GS 1941.

Those recommendations include the proposal that Canon law be amended to enable a diocesan bishop, when justified in the particular circumstances of a case, to require a priest or deacon to undergo a safeguarding risk assessment. In February 2014, Synod called for legislation to implement those recommendations. A provision giving a bishop that power in relation to all clergy having authority to officiate in his or her diocese was accordingly included in the new Canon C 30 of safeguarding introduced by Amending Canon 34, which was enacted by this Synod in February 2016. Canon C 30 also provides that if a cleric refuses to comply with a bishop's direction without reasonable excuse that would be regarded as misconduct for the purposes of the Clergy Discipline Measure. To reduce the risk of the new powers being used inappropriately, the Canon goes on to provide for the President of Tribunals to be able to overturn a bishop's direction requiring a risk assessment to be carried out if the President considers the bishop's decision to be plainly wrong.

That is not the only safeguard that is built into these new arrangements. To achieve consistency across the dioceses and to put in place minimum standards of good practice, Canon C 30 also requires the House of Bishops to make Regulations providing for the persons who may carry out the clergy risk assessments and for the procedures both for carrying them out and for challenging their outcome.

To that end, the House has accordingly made the Regulations that are before you, but before they can come into force they must be approved by the Synod.

However, the Regulations will not be the only provision in relation to these matters. They will provide the basic structure for risk assessments, so if the Synod approves the Regulations, the intention is to supplement them with detailed guidance from the House.

Unlike other guidance of the House of Bishops, in relation to safeguarding those taking decisions or otherwise exercising functions under the Regulations will be required—and this is Regulation 2—to have due regard to the guidance, i.e. to act in accordance with it unless they have cogent reasons for not doing so.

Against that background what exactly will the Regulations require? Regulation 3 governs the appointment of the assessor who will carry out the risk assessment. In appointing the assessor, the bishop will be required to have regard to the advice

of the diocesan safeguarding adviser and must be personally satisfied that the proposed person is suitable for the task. Furthermore, to ensure appropriate standards of appointments across all dioceses, Regulation 3 provides that only assessors approved by the Archbishops' Council can be appointed. In practice, that role will be undertaken by the National Safeguarding Team which will vet and maintain a list of suitable candidates for appointment as risk assessors. Under Regulation 4, the terms of reference for a risk assessment will be prepared by the diocesan safeguarding adviser and approved by the bishop. These are not matters for negotiation with the cleric to be assessed. Were it otherwise, the process would risk being mired in dispute from the start.

The bishop will already have given a written explanation of the reasons for requiring a risk assessment, so it must be for the bishop ultimately to determine what the terms of reference are to be. Nevertheless, Regulation 4 requires important information to be given in writing to the cleric who is to be assessed. This will include the terms of reference, the reasons for requiring the assessment, the name of the assessor and how the assessment is proposed to be carried out.

There are provisions in Regulations 6 and 7 which will protect the privacy of third parties where a written assessment, either in draft or final form, would disclose information about another person which should not be disclosed without their consent. The written assessment can be appropriately redacted and the bishop will be required to give a written explanation to the cleric of the reasons for that redaction.

Having made provision for the procedure to carry out the risk assessment, the Regulations go on to provide proportionate and effective ways for the clergy to challenge its outcome. The first opportunity for challenge would be at an early stage under Regulation 6 when the written assessment is still in draft form. The assessed person will be able to put directly to the assessor written questions and submissions about the draft assessment. The assessor will be required to answer those questions and the cleric will then have a further opportunity to make written submissions directly to the assessor, both in respect of those answers and in respect of the draft report.

The second opportunity for challenge by the subject of assessment would be under Regulation 8 when the assessor issues the final written assessment. Before the bishop can take any action on the assessment, the bishop will be required to invite the cleric to attend a meeting with the bishop to discuss not only the opinions and recommendations set out in the assessment but also any action which the bishop

proposes to take in response to it.

There will be a third opportunity to challenge the outcome of the risk assessment. After the meeting with the cleric, the bishop will be required to give written notification of the action that is proposed to be taken (with reasons) and the cleric will be able to make written submissions about that proposed action. Those written submissions will be supplied to the chair of the diocesan safeguarding panel and the diocesan safeguarding adviser, who will also have received copies of the final written assessment. The bishop will be required to review the proposed action in the light of the cleric's submissions and, before making a final decision, the bishop will be required to have regard to the advice of the chair of the safeguarding panel, the diocesan safeguarding adviser and the diocesan registrar.

To prevent delays, there are tight time limits for the cleric to put any written questions or submissions and also for the assessor to respond to them. By these means the cleric will therefore not only be able to question and contest the outcome of the risk assessment but will have an important part in influencing the report's conclusions and recommendations during the formative part of the process. We believe that is a more effective way of challenging the outcome of a risk assessment than by an appeal. An appeal against the bishop's decision would not give the cleric the important opportunity that these regulations provide of being able to make an effective contribution towards settling the report's recommendations. Furthermore, as a means of challenging the outcome of a risk assessment, an appeal from the bishop's decision could cause practical difficulties. The Archbishop of the relevant province would be the logical person to determine an appeal, but that would present its own logistical problems at a time when a speedy conclusion is desirable.

Synod, I hope this explanation will show these Regulations will help to ensure both that the risk assessments are carried out in a fair and timely way by suitably qualified and experienced assessors and that the cleric being assessed will have effective opportunities to make appropriate challenges to the risk assessment outcome.

Accordingly, I commend these recommendations to you and invite you to give them your approval.

The Chair: This debate is now open for speeches.

Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln): Chair, I have brief observations under three headings

about these new Regulations. What I want to say is intended to encourage confidence in the system and a hope that the outcomes to assessments are robust, but I think there are some practical challenges which need to be identified.

The first is in relation to the terms of any referral because under Regulation 4 that needs to be determined ultimately by the bishop. There is some opportunity for the subject of the assessment to engage with the terms of that, but it is a crucial stage in the request for any assessment, in my view, and how that is drafted could determine the scope of any assessment that is ultimately received. The drafting is important because sometimes the neutrality of that drafting needs to be carefully attended to, and sometimes sloppy drafting, or drafting which is too swift or where the person who is the subject of the assessment does not have legal representation, can often lead to a bias in the report that is received. Certainly in a legal context where letters of instruction go to experts I know that the drafting of that letter of instruction can often be very critical in terms of the answers that you get, so some care is needed at that stage, and I hope very much that it will be given.

The second thing I want to say relates to Regulation 5(2) because I note that the assessor will not be making any findings of fact. If allegations are denied by the subject of the assessment, I think it is very difficult sometimes for the assessor then to provide a risk assessment where there are complete denials of all the allegations, and so the report that is received by the bishop who has to impose the outcome may find a report in those circumstances not very helpful at all. He is then faced with allegations which are made on the one hand, denied—perhaps vehemently—on the other, and then has to grapple with these allegations and has to decide, for the purposes of safeguarding, an outcome at the end which finesses the risk, and that could be a very difficult task indeed. I hope very much that there is experience there which is ready to face that challenge. I know again—and I am applying my professional experience here—that every day judges up and down the land make findings of fact in another context and they sometimes find hearing evidence from witnesses in respect of an incident a very difficult task to undertake. There is less experience in this very narrow set of circumstances. I do not want anybody to think this is not a daunting task for a very limited set of experience that is going to be called upon.

Thirdly, in relation to assessors, I do not know if the Bishop of Bath & Wells is able to indicate to Synod what the professional experience will be of the assessors who will be found on the list. Again, from my experience of doing work in the family court one tends to find that psychologists frequently produce work for the family

courts' risk assessments and they can be of a variable standard. I do not know if, again, the Bishop of Bath & Wells is able to say anything about what the selection process will be for those assessors who want to put themselves forward to be on the list, but I think it is important to know what their credentials and their professional experience will be so we know that when they are called upon there will be very high standard of work.

I know—and this is something that I have spoken about to other members of Synod who have legal experience—that not only can the reports that are received by the family courts be of variable standard but there can often be what is called “cloning” or cut and pasting of work between cases, so, for instance, the work a psychologist has done in relation to one case can be cut and pasted over into a new piece of work. I think that has to be avoided. We want the very highest standards in terms of the assessors we are going to be calling up.

The Chair: Mr Fender, the red light is on.

Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln): That is good timing because I have finished. Thank you very much.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): I am probably one of the very few people in this room who has ever had the responsibility of drafting risk assessments. I am retired now but as a child protection lawyer specialist I have certainly seen hundreds and I have probably drafted well into three figures. One of the problems in talking to you about it is that these Regulations look superficially reasonable and I can see how you would like to pass them, but if you have real expertise in how these things are done, you have to not only look at the words, you have to understand the culture.

You have been told, and quite rightly, that our safeguarding teams and registrars have much expertise. In terms of keeping children safe in our churches and schools, they are as good as anybody, and I do not want anyone to take away a criticism of them in that regard. But think of them as a rugby union team. Now think of clergy risk assessment as being a rugby league team. You need a different set of coaches and a different skillset. Although many of the skills are transferable, if you do not have the skills within the culture of what you are doing, that is when mistakes are going to be made. In the last year we have had three or four quite high-profile problems in our risk assessment area. I think that is because, and I will be quite simple about it, there are not enough of the specialist techniques going into that to understand how to stop these things happening. Let us be very specific.

This package we are getting—and we have been promised a package—is very incomplete. We have the Regulations but we have none of the guidelines. We have no data on the number of these assessments. If there were only a few, maybe we could afford to do a Rolls-Royce service and gold plate them, but if there are going to be a lot of them and you are going to have to run lean, you really need people who know what they are doing, to know how to cut a corner safely and when you should never cut corners.

I have spoken to a number of people about this including safeguarding officers and one of the suppliers. One of the safeguarding officers told me that if in doubt she would ask everything because she did not want to make a mistake, but that can be a hugely expensive exercise. Carl has told us we do not know who the experts will be, we do not know the criteria for choosing them and we do not know how they will be taken off the list if they do things badly. The quality control is just not there and you and I cannot judge how this scheme will work. We do not have to hurry this. Because the safeguarding officers have not received their three days of training—which is all they are going to get—we cannot start this scheme until all these things are in place.

Specifically, we have to look out for justice to the accused clergy. He or she is to be given a name, not the CV. Their lawyer will not know their professional discipline at that stage. There is no provision that if a woman is complained about and she has a sexually abused background, she could say, “Please could I have a woman to assess me?” That seems to me very basic, and it is not in here. What if the solicitor representing the clergy says, “I do not want an independent social worker. It must be, to be fair, a consultant psychiatrist”. Perhaps the dean has a drink problem or somebody is depressed and their wife has just left them and they get angry. These are many, many complex cases that will come before us.

There are some basic Article 6 right-to-a-fair-trial problems here. One of them is the right to challenge questions. There is always an argument on risk assessment as to what questions can be asked and sometimes you propose questions to be fair. There is no provision for that in here. I have got the orange light. I could talk for much, much longer.

What I want to say in conclusion is we have 42 dioceses and approximately 80 safeguarding officers. They are a mixture of probation officers, social workers and police. We do not know how we are going to get a consistent standard across the country under these Regulations. We have had no case studies; we do not know how this is going to work. I ask you, please, to take the view that we should ask

the safeguarding people to bring it back in a more complete package so we can really understand, because I certainly am very disquieted at what I have seen.

Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham): I am perhaps echoing some of what has just been said on the grounds of *quis custodiet ipsos custodies*—who will guard the guards themselves? I am in favour of risk assessments. I am in favour of protecting children and vulnerable adults throughout the Church, and I think it is a vital piece of work. Without legislating for people to be ridiculously awkward, it is very important to look after those who are undergoing such risk assessments.

I have some concerns about paragraph 4(4) which cites a failure to comply with a reasonable requirement imposed by the assessor as a possible grounds for further Measures and CDM. What is going to be regarded as a “reasonable requirement” imposed by the assessor? What rights will the assessee have in relation to the choice of assessor where the assessee may him or herself be vulnerable? What rights might there be if there was a break down in relationship between assessor and assessee, or if the assessor has serious concerns in relation to the terms of reference? The Bishop helpfully outlined checks and balances later in the process, but how about the ones early on?

There seems to be issues around natural justice because anyone must have the right to question without fear that their questioning itself may be penalised. Thank you.

Revd Paul Hutchinson (York): Point of order: I move that this debate be adjourned until the next sitting of General Synod so that all these concerns that have been voiced may be considered and we come back with a further Report. I have nothing more to say as a speech on that.

The Chair: Thank you. I will take advice. Synod, the Revd Paul Hutchinson has moved the procedural motion that the debate be now adjourned and resumed under the next group of sessions, which is in July of this year. Under Standing Order 34 the Revd Hutchinson has not more than two minutes to give us his reasons. I will then ask the Bishop of Bath & Wells as the mover of the main motion to speak for not more than two minutes. When I have heard those two speakers I will then decide at my discretion under Standing Order 34 whether to allow any more speakers on this procedural motion.

Revd Paul Hutchinson (York): I did say I did not want to speak again, but, for the sake of completeness and the record I will. I do believe that what we have heard

from the floor from all three speakers so far are a list of concerns that if this were in an earlier stage of procedure or a longer procedure would come back to further deliberation, but because this is a procedure which is about approving a set of Regulations which will be approved at the end of this debate then quite clearly some more thought needs to happen and, therefore, it should go away for that thought to come back before us in July.

The Chair: I will now ask the Bishop of Bath & Wells to speak for not more than two minutes.

The Bishop of Bath & Wells (Rt Revd Peter Hancock): I would like to resist that on two main grounds. First, it is premature in the debate and I would like to hear some other voices and other people speak. Secondly, I have reassurances that I would like to give Synod with regard to some of the practical matters that have been raised.

I would want to say this: currently the Church is facing a number of very serious safeguarding situations. I believe that risk assessments are a vital tool in responding to those. I believe that what we need is a consistency of approach which regrettably the Church of England has so far failed to achieve. I believe that what dioceses and bishops are looking for is consistency, confidence and cost-effectiveness. I believe that these Regulations would provide that.

The Chair: Thank you, Bishop. I would now like to hear a few more speeches before we take any further action. I would like to hear from someone who is for the procedural motion and someone who is against. Who is against the motion?

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): I support this procedural motion even though it might have been tabled slightly earlier in the debate that I would have done myself, but I was going to propose a similar motion. We do not have the complete package. Normally in these situations we have the draft guidance. We have no draft guidance, so we have all these questions which remain unanswered.

There are questions about legal representation. Martin Sewell talked about the cleric's solicitor, but there is no ecclesiastical legal aid for risk assessments. These things we need to consider.

Finally, if we do not adjourn now there seems to me to be quite a likelihood that we throw these Regulations out; we do not approve them. I think there is a political risk there that it will be reported that the Church of England is not concerned about

risk assessments, safeguarding and so on. That is not our point. We want to get it right. It takes a little more time for us to get it right. The guidance has got to be written anyhow, so why can it not be written in draft now and we can see it in July? I support this motion to adjourn this debate.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I too support this procedural motion and I also was going to propose it had it not been proposed by the Revd Hutchinson. It seems to me that the history of other business that has been brought before Synod tells us that it is unwise to proceed with particular proposals that envisage guidance without actually seeing the draft guidance. Perhaps I can refer to the legislation relating to women bishops.

One of the things that we did in the Revision Committee for the Legislative Reform Measure that we considered earlier today was to produce draft Standing Orders because they were part of the package, as we saw it, for that package of legislation.

As has been said, without that guidance in place these Regulations cannot be put in place in any event. It seems only sensible that we allow that time between now and July for the full provisions to be brought before Synod. By adjourning the debate we do not close down these Regulations. There is no provision with this particular item of business to amend the Regulations, we have to take them as a package or not, and therefore I suggest to members that it is wise to let the Regulations go back for further consideration and in particular to produce the draft guidance before we are asked to approve them.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): I think we should take very seriously the concerns that have been raised by Mr Fender and Mr Sewell and others. Normally I would be very sympathetic to the proposal to adjourn for all the reasons that have been given, but I do not think we can wait until July to put something in place.

These Regulations have been drafted, I trust, with the advice of the Synod's legal advisers, who we rely on constantly for all manner of legislation. They may be capable of improvement. Maybe they ought to be improved. I certainly think they should be reviewed in the light of the concerns that have been raised. There is no reason why further Regulations—revised, improved, enhanced, whatever one wants to call them—could not be brought in July, together with the guidance.

I think if today we fail to put anything in place in the extraordinarily sensitive area that we are in with safeguarding then I think that is as dangerous as defeating the

Regulations, and I do not think we should do either of those things. I think we should, and I am sure the Bishop of Bath & Wells and all those who have been responsible for preparing this guidance will want to go away and take Mr Sewell, Mr Fender and others seriously and see if they can improve this. What we have before us today is not wholly incompetent. It is something and it is a great deal better than nothing, which is where we will be for the next five months otherwise.

The Chair: Thank you. I will take just one more speech from the Prolocutor.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): I need to confess an interest to Synod. Of all the speakers who have spoken today, I am the only person who has actually experienced what it is like to be in a risk assessment. I have to say that my own experience of the actual assessment itself was very good. I had a policeman conduct mine and he was scrupulously fair and did the job extremely well. I could say more about the process but I will not because this debate is about the adjournment.

I think that having heard Clive Scowen make his points I would entirely agree with him, because if we do adjourn today it does mean that we are at the mercy of a much more mixed economy than is really comfortable. I have had some opportunity to talk to the safeguarding team and to the lawyers and I genuinely believe that what they offer us today is a package that is much better than what is on the table at the moment. Of course it could do with some reform, of course it could do with some improvement, but it is an important step forward.

I believe it is very unfortunate that Paul Ferguson has moved the adjournment so early in the debate because we could have listened and taken a wiser judgment. I think it would be very foolish for us to adjourn now. For the reasons Mr Scowen has said, we need to move on and get this business passed. Thank you.

The Chair: I will now put to Synod the motion: “that the debate be now adjourned and resumed in July”.

The motion

‘That the debate be now adjourned and resumed at the next group of sessions.’

was put and lost on a show of hands.

The Chair: We shall now resume the debate.

The Bishop of Guildford (Rt Revd Andrew Watson): This will be the shortest speech I have ever made at General Synod. I am very positive about these Regulations. I am so glad that we have not adjourned this debate. I very much look forward to seeing the guidance as well. I may be a bit over-sensitive, as you may understand at this time, to the phrase “vulnerable adult”. I wonder whether the phrase “adults with vulnerability” might be more appropriate here and elsewhere in our Safeguarding Regulations. There is a category of abusive behaviour that we might describe as “cultic”, not least with historic incidents like the Nine O’clock Service in Sheffield which can draw in young adults who would not obviously be identified as vulnerable. Thank you very much.

Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson (Chelmsford): Can I thank those who have done all this very helpful work and my apologies if the answers to the questions I have are contained elsewhere. I would be grateful if the Bishop or others could clarify for Synod the question of how long a risk assessment that has been undertaken lasts, whether there are any proposals that it should be repeated after a period of months or years, or whether that particular assessment remains with the cleric for the remainder of their ministry? It seems to me there are also questions which may be answered elsewhere but it would be helpful for Synod to hear in this context about what happens when a particular cleric moves diocese.

Lastly, looking at Regulation 7(5), it is entirely appropriate, I am sure, that the bishop should have the authority to share information with others who need to know it, but I wonder if the person who has been the subject of the risk assessment, the cleric or whoever, is aware with whom that information has been shared.

Mrs Margaret Sheather (Gloucester): I welcome the Regulations but I do share many of the concerns that have already been raised. I also want to make an additional point about timescales in relation to the speaker who has just spoken.

I think we will all be aware of the very problematic impact on everybody concerned in these kinds of situations if the processes of investigation or assessment become unreasonably extended. I would therefore be looking in what looks like being the guidance now for much stronger assurances about how the timescale for the assessment will be set out, potentially in the terms of reference, and that there is some assurance that the assessor is capable of completing the work in the timescale proposed. If we are looking for really expert assessors there needs to be a large enough supply not to leave both the alleged victims and alleged

perpetrators in these cases dangling for months on end while their assessments are completed. That is perhaps a slight overstatement but I think we have all seen in very public ways cases where people's reputations and situations have suffered seriously and I would hate to see us repeating that risk. Thank you.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell): I am glad that we resisted the adjournment of the debate to next time. It is impossible for us to underestimate just how extremely important getting our safeguarding right is, particularly in this area of risk assessment, though I do believe we have to listen very, very carefully to the concerns that were raised earlier. I trust, having now moved forward, we can find ways outside of Synod to bring those concerns to bear in the practical outworking of this. I cannot help but notice that Ben Te'o, Owen Farrell, and before him the great Jason Robinson, learned to play both types of rugby and, therefore, I have every confidence that our team can also learn these new skills.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): I am glad that the adjournment motion was not carried. Being an Archbishop, my dealings with assessment have come from totally different things and the timings were always quite wrong and the papers never in order. In there, everybody has got 14 days so you now know it is not going to go for three months before the assessment is done. It is 14 days before the bishop gets it; the person responds within 14 days; the appeals are done within 14 days. Friends, the timescale now has been done in the right way. We could not have looked for something better than that. When the Regulations come down, whatever people have said here will be taken into account.

This morning, Andreas told us that we must innovate and that if you are going to innovate that is not enough, you have got to research, to train, and face up to reality. We can innovate in our Regulations, we can train and research, but at the heart of it is facing up to the reality of safeguarding. People who have had a very long time in terms of risk assessment is not good for them, for their family or for the person who has made the allegations. It seems to me that this is another leg of improving our system. Please may we give it a resounding "yes" so that the Bishops can draw up the Regulations in light of the debate we have heard?

One final thing. I hope this is not about "them", those who are going to have risk assessments: it is about us. I hope that if I did something these Regulations would apply to me because I know they are going to be done in a timely fashion, whereas under the old system, although there was the phrase "risk assessment", it never did it properly. The processes are good but could be improved, we could do it

better, so let us please go for it. It is about “us”. I want to support the Bishop of Guildford when he talks about “adults with vulnerabilities” instead of “vulnerable adults” because that phrase does not quite catch it.

Please could we support the Regulations, then the House of Bishops will bring the guidance and I am sure we can improve it. At this particular point in time, please go forward.

Mr Andrew Gray (Norwich): On a lighter note, given the seriousness of this subject, I would like to say how delighted I was to hear from the real Bishop of Bath & Wells. The last time I heard the Bishop of Bath & Wells speak it was his fictional counterpart in *Blackadder II*, but I will not draw the comparison.

On a serious note, Synod, I was in favour of adjourning this because I belong to a very old-fashioned school of thought that says if you are going to do a job you should do it properly. This piece of legislation, these guidelines, are very well-intended and have clearly been thought through very hard, but the fact remains it is clear from what being said on the floor that a lot more needs to go into this. We are faced with a choice of do we put forward something that is only going to need drastic revision and drastic improvements six months down the line or do we actually adjourn it and try to think about it a little bit more.

My chief concern with this is there is no right of appeal. Yes, it has been thought through very carefully in terms of giving the clergy an opportunity to go back to the bishop several times to put in writing and say verbally what they think, but there is one major weakness in this, which is the reliance on the assessor themselves. What if the assessor gets it wrong, as assessors do? If you do not believe me look at the news outside. Take Lord Bramall, Paul Gambaccini, just two of the names who would have a very dim view of the way that the Metropolitan Police, which is an otherwise credible organisation, managed to make what I can only and frankly describe as an utter cock-up of their cases. In those particular instances, of course, those two were very high-profile individuals. There are others who are less well-known who have also suffered the same problem.

My question to the Bishop is why is it that having an appeal is considered to be logistically problematic? That was not the exact phrase he used but he said there was a problem with the logistics as to why there should not be an appeal and why the Archbishops, therefore, should not be brought in in the event of an appeal. I am struggling to see that one myself because if I were a bishop I would rely on the assessor, I would assume that their professional opinion was correct and,

therefore, I would be more inclined to follow what they say. Therefore, there needs to be an appeal process; it is basic justice. Otherwise what we are going to do is rush something through with the best intentions for safeguarding only to find that there will be clergy who suffer later through miscarriages of justice. Therefore, I would ask you to consider very, very carefully about supporting this because, in my view, I do not think it is ready to go forward.

The Bishop of Leeds (Rt Revd Nicholas Baines): I have a certain sympathy with what has just been said having read a number and even commissioned risk assessments, one of which was pretty shoddy when it came back and contained a number of ambiguities in the language which I had to get checked out. I think we do need consistency. How we achieve consistency needs to be worked on further across the Church.

The second element, apart from consistency, is justice. In my experience, I have yet to read a risk assessment that does not at best conclude that a person is a “low risk”. I can only say that makes all of us low risk, but at the end of it someone where there is no evidence to suggest they have done anything wrong at all still has an assessment that says they are a low risk. They are a risk is what you conclude from it. I think that is fundamentally wrong and we need to be looking at this a little bit further to ensure justice is done to all parties, including the accused.

Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield): I would like some clarity, please, about section 6(6). In the written submissions that are to be made by the person who has been complained about, if that is requiring witness statements or statements from other bodies, 14 days is not a very long time in order to amass that kind of evidence. I am using my experience in saying this insofar as a complaint was made about a member of clergy known to me and a witness statement was required to say he was not in that place at that time. That person who he needed the statement from was actually not available because he was away on holiday and could not be contacted in that time. There are always difficulties if we make a very tight timeframe for people and they cannot get the required evidence that they need to submit. I wonder if the 14 days is actually practical and whether we should look at that and there should be a variation when the persons who need to be contacted cannot be contacted to support the person about whom the complaint has been made. Could I have a response to that, please?

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Point of order: motion for closure.

The Chair: That has my consent. We will vote on that point of order.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I shall now call the Bishop of Bath & Wells to sum up and respond. You have now got five minutes, Bishop.

The Bishop of Bath & Wells (Rt Revd Peter Hancock): Chair, I must declare to being somewhat colour blind and to cover and respond to all of those in five minutes will be difficult, so I may need to prevail upon you to give me something of an extension. I will do what I can within the time that has been allocated to me.

The first thing to say is thank you to Synod for engaging with this debate. I think it shows that as a Church and a Synod we are very concerned about safeguarding; we are concerned to get it right. I was very taken by Carl Fender's view that we need the very highest possible standards, and that is where we need to begin and end our thinking.

With regards to the practical guidance, you will understand the National Safeguarding Team, which serves us extraordinarily well as a Church, have a considerable amount of work at the moment. The draft guidelines have been prepared and run to 83 pages. I think they address many of the issues and questions that Synod have raised this afternoon. They are not yet at a point where they can be finalised, but we hope very, very soon, which means within the matter of a few days, to be able to release those for the fullest possible consultation. I hope that reassures Synod about the seriousness with which the National Safeguarding Team are undertaking this work.

In response to Carl Fender, he asked particular questions about how assessors are to be chosen. If the guidelines that I have seen to date are promulgated, they point to a very robust selection and procurement process. We are talking about approved and independent assessors. With regard to the matters that they may consider, the criteria that they are being chosen against may depend on the circumstances of the cases that are being considered and therefore on that list, which will be approved and will be made public and certainly made available to all Church bodies, there will be a range of professional independent expertise.

Martin Sewell asked me a question about Article 6 with regard to the Human Rights Act. That is not engaged in this process as this is not, in this sense, a legal process.

Clive Scowen helped us, I believe, by saying that if we need to improve the Regulations that we have before us, or we may need to improve them, that this can come back to Synod and there is an urgent need at the moment to put these things in place. I believe these are good in law, good in practice and I would encourage Synod to approve them today.

I am also grateful to Andrew Watson and Simon Butler, who spoke to us personally about their own particular situations, and much of what they have said encourages me to commend these Regulations to you for your approval.

Jenny Tomlinson asked about how long these risk assessments would stand. It is quite possible for a bishop to direct another reassessment if circumstances change and that warrants it. She asked about terms of reference. It is very clear that those who are the subject of a risk assessment should know who this information has been shared with.

Margaret Sheather asked about timescales, speaking, I am sure, from experience that many of us have where cases have been delayed. In these Regulations, there is a very strong framework that gives clear timescales and that is re-emphasised in the guidance. I am grateful to the Archbishop of York for confirming that in the speech that he gave. Of course, it is possible for the bishop to extend timescales. That responds, I hope, to Penny Allen's particular concern.

Andrew Gray, thank you for your particular challenge, asking about the right of appeal. Just to say that Canon C 30, which Synod has approved, does not require a right of appeal. I believe that Andrew was speaking about police investigations, which are very different procedures from those that we are thinking of here in terms of risk assessments and it is important that that distinction is heard. I believe that there are within this process effective and proportionate means of challenging an outcome, and it is with that confidence I commend this to Synod for your approval.

The Chair: Thank you, Bishop.

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): Point of order: could you order a vote by Houses on this matter?

The Chair: I now need to see 25 people standing. Yes, we have. I, therefore, order a counted vote by Houses.

The motion

'That the Safeguarding (Clergy Risk Assessment) Regulations 2016 be approved.'

was carried after a counted vote by Houses. The voting was as follows: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 25, against one, with one recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, those in favour 93, against 22, with six recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 103 in favour, against 26, with five recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): Point of order, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, would it be in order for me just to make a simple statement, which is that ---

The Chair: No.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): Oh, no, it is very positive.

The Chair: I am sorry, no.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): I am going to be very positive, if you would let me.

The Chair: No. If you have a point of order to raise, please do so.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): Would it be in order --

The Chair: Would you please refrain from speaking when the Chair has said otherwise. Thank you. Under what Standing Order?

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): A Standing Order that when an olive branch is being offered, it is better to take it.

The Chair: Please take your seat. Thank you. That concludes this item of business. The Regulation will come into force on 1 March 2017. Thank you, Synod.

THE CHAIR *Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 4.40 pm

The Chair: Synod, you have done very well to get through as much legislative business as we have today. Before we go into Item 511, I am going to ask the Chair of the Business Committee to move a variation in the order of business.

Revd Canon Sue Booys (Oxford): Good afternoon, Synod. I am sure some of you have been hoping you would see me again and others have been hoping or feeling that you have seen rather a lot of me in the last couple of days. However, the Presidents have asked me to make some announcements about tomorrow's business, as a result of which I will be asking to seek your agreement to a variation in the order of business for tomorrow morning.

First of all, the Presidents have agreed to alter the times of the afternoon sitting tomorrow so that it will begin earlier than planned at 4.45 p.m. The debate on the take note motion, Item 14, will, therefore, begin at 4.45 p.m. rather than 5.30 p.m., allowing us an extra 45 minutes for our debate.

Following on from this decision, it is proposed that we should also retime the group work. The proposal is that the group work will start at 1.30 p.m. and conclude at 3.45 p.m., giving you the same hour's break to move from your group work to the chamber. We will be able to achieve this without affecting your lunch.

That is why I wish to propose a variation in the order of business so that Item 13, which is the Introduction to the group work, should begin not later than 11.30 a.m. rather than the rubric on the Agenda which states that it will begin not later than 12.00 noon. Synod, if you agree to that variation, arrangements will be made for your lunch to be served at 12.00 noon. Accordingly, I invite the Chair to put this proposed variation to you, my friends, for your agreement.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

Revd Canon Sue Booys (Oxford): Do you mind if I just have an additional word?

The Chair: Thank you.

Revd Canon Sue Booys (Oxford): Just to say thank you. For those of you who are concerned that there are people not here or that you have not perhaps taken this fully on board, this will be in writing tomorrow on Order and Notice Papers so that arrangements are available to everyone, whether you are attending the groups or feel you cannot. I would also like to make you aware now that the Community of St Anselm, who I had the privilege of spending time with earlier today, will remain here in the chamber in silent prayer for the duration of the group work. Thank you very much for agreeing to the variation.

DRAFT AMENDING CANON NO. 36 (GS 2029A)
DRAFT AMENDING CANON NO. 37 (GS 2029AA)

The Chair. Thank you very much. We now come to Item 511 and for this you are going to need the Draft Amending Canons GS 2029A and 2029AA and also a copy of the Revision Committee report, GS 2029Y. I call upon Gavin Kirk, the Chair of the Revision Committee, to move Item 511, “That the Synod do take note of this Report” he may speak for up to ten minutes.

Ven. Gavin Kirk (Lincoln): I beg to move

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

Ladies and gentlemen, although the Revision Committee met on just one occasion it considered a large number of submissions and had some interesting issues with which to grapple. Members will remember that at the First Consideration stage last July, a number of contributors to the debate asked for the Canon to be divided so that Synod might consider its two limbs separately.

The Committee received submissions in favour and against dividing the Canon in that way. We were conscious, as a number of members had noted in the debate last July, that the two areas covered by the Canon, vesture on the one hand and the use of the burial service in special cases on the other, were unrelated.

Dividing the Canon into two separate Canons would increase the costs involved, but not by very much. Our real concern was that the amendments concerned with the use of the burial service, which seemed largely uncontentious, should not be jeopardised were the amendments relating to vesture not to obtain the necessary level of support at final approval.

For that reason, we were unanimous in deciding that the Canon should be divided. We knew that there was likely to be a difference of opinion amongst members of the Synod about the amendments concerned with vesture. That was confirmed by the submissions we received, some of which were supportive and others of which were not.

We considered, in the light of these differences of view, whether we should include advice in our Report to the effect that the Amending Canon should be withdrawn. We were clear that we should not do that. The amendments relating to vesture

had been brought forward following the passing in 2014 of Canon Hobbs's Private Member's Motion calling for the wearing of a prescribed form of vesture to be made optional. We therefore went on to consider the detailed proposals for amendment that had been submitted to the Committee.

First, the proposals relating to vesture. As drafted, the Amending Canon would have left it to the minister to decide whether to adopt a form of dress other than one of the prescribed forms of vesture. The minister would have been required to consult the PCC, but it was for her or him to decide whether adopting some other form of dress would benefit the mission of the Church in the parish. The minister could proceed to dispense with vesture even if the PCC were opposed.

This position was, justifiably in our view, questioned in some of the submissions. A number of members sought amendments that would give the PCC a veto over proposals to dispense with the wearing of vesture. The Committee took the view that a PCC veto would go too far, not least when compared with the role that Canon B 8 already gives to the PCC when it is proposed to change from one form of vesture to another form of vesture.

In that situation, the minister has to ascertain, by consultation with the PCC, whether the proposed change would be acceptable. In the event of a disagreement between the minister and the PCC, the matter has to be referred to the bishop, whose direction must then be followed. The Committee decided that the same set of provisions should apply where it was proposed to dispense with the wearing of vesture altogether, and we amended the Canon accordingly.

Another issue the Committee had to grapple with was what to say about baptisms that take place during public worship on Sundays, as Canon B 21 says should normally be the case. While it seems to us perfectly reasonable to require the minister to obtain the agreement of the persons concerned before dispensing with the wearing of vesture at a wedding or a funeral or at a Sunday afternoon baptism, we thought different considerations ought to apply when the baptism took place during one of the usual Sunday services.

If it had become the practice in a particular parish for vesture not to be worn on Sunday afternoons, it did not seem right that the minister should have to obtain the consent of the candidate or the candidate's parents not to wear vesture at a Sunday service because a baptism was due to take place. We have, therefore, limited the requirement to obtain the agreement of the persons concerned to services of baptism that are not held during such public worship on a Sunday and

to weddings and funerals.

We received a large number of submissions about the requirement that any form of dress adopted by the minister should be “seemly”. While some submissions supported the inclusion of that requirement, others raised objections. The Committee thought that the word “seemly” was perhaps too subjective to bear canonical requirement.

We were also impressed by concerns that what might be regarded as seemly for a woman might not be regarded as seemly for a man—I am thinking of sequins or drop earrings or things like that—and we wish to avoid any possibility of gender discrimination. One of the submissions received provided us with a helpful alternative, which was to leave out the reference to “seemliness” and to deal with the point by cross-referencing to Canon C 27 and the general requirements set out there about the dress of ministers, and that was the course we took.

The Committee considered submissions which raised questions about the vesture of readers and for services in cathedrals and, in particular, ordination services. These points did not result in our making any amendments to the Amending Canon, but we hope that the answers that we have provided in our Report are helpful.

Only one submission was received on what is now Amending Canon No. 37, which abolishes the rule that the usual burial service must not be used where the deceased has not been baptized or has taken his or her own life while of sound mind. Instead, the position will be that the usual form of service is used in those cases, but the Amending Canon provides an exception for cases where the minister cannot in good conscience use the usual form of service.

That might be the position some clergy would find themselves in if the deceased had, for example, expressly rejected the Christian faith; in which case the minister would be required to use a form of service authorised by the bishop. The submission received by the Committee proposed omitting this conscience clause, the argument being that the general discretion that clergy have in relation to public worship was already wide enough to accommodate matters of conscience and that it was, therefore, unnecessary to provide a specific exemption in the Canon.

The Committee, however, did not accept that the consciences of individual clergy could be accommodated without making special provision. The discretion the clergy have in making variations in forms of service are limited in ways which the

Committee did not consider would meet the case here. We, therefore, resolved to maintain the conscience clause.

The Revision Committee was grateful to the members who had taken the time to submit proposals for amendment and other points for our attention. I hope we have done them justice in our Report and I beg to move this motion.

The Chair. This item is now open for debate. We have got six minutes left, so I would like to squeeze in two speakers.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd James Dudley-Smith (Bath & Wells): Chair, I am really grateful to the Committee and others who have played their part very patiently in bringing this draft Amending Canon to us like this. It sounds from reading GS 2029Y as though there were some games of linguistic Scrabble and some legal chess and some ecclesiastical Mousetrap along the way, but the end result seems to me to be a win for everybody.

I am Rural Dean of Yeovil where we have a not very affluent town of 45,000 people and around it some lovely villages in the Somerset countryside. The deanery has got some congregations that are posh and others that are not very; some that are quite large and modern and some that are not very; some that have fine ancient church buildings and others that certainly do not; we have some churches whose life in Christ has been blessed by newer forms of worship and others that feel blessed because they have not.

In that very mixed economy and in a generally less formal culture today, where in town, at least, even those who would like the vicar to be in robes actually dress fairly informally themselves on Sunday and do not wear a tie or a jacket as perhaps they might have done 20 years ago, it seems to me that it has to be right to provide a little more flexibility on what the clergy wear in services.

These proposals hardly represent a revolution and they do seem to encourage a happy co-operation between minister, PCC, bishop, baptism family, wedding couple and so on, as we have heard, over what should be worn according to the different settings and contexts and people involved. The Committee has achieved all of that while only making the Canon a little bit longer. Well done. The purpose behind it, as twice stated now in the draft Canon, is mission.

Jesus on his mission dressed down in order to reach us. In fact, since we are talking about robes, I could perhaps quote the hymn, “Alleluia Sing to Jesus”, where Dix describes our great High Priest as, “robed in flesh”, and so, for our mission as a diverse Church to a diverse nation, I support this motion. Thank you.

Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford): I was a member of the Revision Committee and I thank Gavin Kirk for his leadership of that Committee and for his excellent summary of our work that he has just provided. The proper way for us to change practice is formally to change the Canons rather than bringing them into disrepute by ignoring them. Making this change is appropriate to allow flexibility where this is judged to benefit the mission of the Church in the parish. It does not, of course, require any church or minister to dispense with robes if, in their situation, wearing robes will benefit their mission.

I am well aware of churches across the spectrum of churchmanship where the judgment is that robes do benefit their mission, but the flexibility is the important thing here. To benefit the mission of the Church is, of course, something we all want. We want people to feel at home, welcomed in church, to be enabled to meet with Jesus.

Some are put off by what they see as outdated and irrelevant. Anything that makes church more welcoming, especially to young people, and helps us to point them to Christ alone, not to us, must be good. I, therefore, ask you to vote in favour of the motion.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Members of Synod, we have got to just before 7 o'clock. It is clear we are not going to complete our deliberations today. I am going to adjourn this and this debate will be resumed, hopefully tomorrow, when a gap opens up in the Agenda. Just to thank, once again, St Anselm's for providing us the praying presence, and please stay in the Chamber for the act of worship led by Sean Docherty. Thank you.

Revd Dr Sean Doherty (London) led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Archbishop of York dismissed the Synod with the blessing at 7.00 pm.

Full Synod: Third Day

Wednesday 15 February 2017

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark)* took the Chair at 9.15 am

Revd Paul Hutchinson (York) led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Chair. Before we begin Item 10, could I thank the continuous praying presence for supporting us in prayer this morning. I should also like to inform you that the lunchtime Service of Holy Communion will be brought forward from its usual time to just after the end of this morning's session. The service will be held in Church House Chapel. Finally, I understand that the Chair of the Business Committee has one or two things she would like to say to us.

Canon Sue Booyes (Oxford): I apologise to Synod if this looks like the teacher in me coming out, but at our meeting earlier this morning, and further to my announcement yesterday, the Business Committee thought that Synod might find it helpful to understand how the Business Committee envisages the next 24 hours or so unfolding.

Following the early lunch that I announced yesterday, people have the details about the group work that they are invited to attend, which will begin, as you know, at 1.30 p.m., half an hour earlier than scheduled. You agreed a variation to our order of business which allowed this. The take note debate therefore will commence 45 minutes earlier at 4.45 p.m., giving us two and a quarter hours for the debate. You will be aware that there are two following motions and I thought it would be helpful for you to understand what space might be available for the debate of those motions. Yesterday we made good progress with our legislative business and this will allow me to come to you tomorrow with a proposal to vary the order of business allowing time for the following motions if this afternoon's vote is taken note of. I hope that this information, combined with the additional time for the take note debate, will allow us the space for the best and most helpful reflection on GS 2055 that we can manage together. I know that you will all be praying for one another, as I am for you, and I would remind you that the Community of St Anselm will remain in this chamber in silent prayer throughout the group work as well as during our debate. Thank you once again, Chair, for your time.

CREATION OF SUFFRAGAN SEE FOR THE DIOCESE OF LEICESTER (GS 2052)

The Chair. We come now to this morning's business. We begin with Item 10, Creation of Suffragan See for the Diocese of Leicester, for which you will need GS 2052. I should also draw your attention to paragraph 10 of the Financial Memorandum on the Sixth Notice Paper. I would now like to invite the Bishop of Leicester to move the motion standing at Item 10.

The Bishop of Leicester (Rt Revd Martyn Snow): I beg to move

'That this Synod approve the proposal to petition Her Majesty in Council to direct under the Suffragans Nomination Act 1888 that the town of Loughborough be taken and accepted for a see of a suffragan bishop as if it had been included in the Suffragan Bishops Act 1534.'

Good morning to you all. I bring before you a proposal for the creation of a new See in the hope that, with your agreement, we can then go on to appoint the first ever Bishop of Loughborough.

Let me be clear on three points. First, this proposal does not increase the number of bishops in the Church of England. This is simply a proposal to replace a stipendiary assistant bishop with a suffragan bishop. Secondly, there is no significant increase in cost involved in this proposal. As a diocesan bishop I receive a block grant from the Church Commissioners which currently pays for two bishops' stipends and, as the draft Financial Estimate included in your papers makes clear, the block grant will continue and it contains enough flexibility to cover any variance in cost. Thirdly, although I am standing before you this morning to propose this motion, it has the strong backing of our Bishop's staff team, our Bishop's Council and the Leicester Diocesan Synod, the latter voting by 76 to 0 in favour, with two abstentions.

Why then am I bringing this to General Synod? The simple fact is that we have no dormant See, as was the case in Newcastle. We could try to borrow a dormant See from another diocese, as explored in the paper, but this was felt by our Bishop's Council to be unsatisfactory. We have to go through this legal process to create a new See before we can appoint a new bishop. Behind all of that, the real reason for doing this is because there is, I believe, a compelling mission case for a reshaped episcopal role. During the nine months that I have been in Leicester, the Bishop's Staff Team have been refreshing our diocesan strategy

known as “Shaped by God”. Some existing areas, such as our call to establish as many Fresh Expressions of Church as inherited churches by 2030, are fairly well resourced—we have received Church Commissioners’ Strategic Development Funding to create a new diocesan post to enable that work—but other areas of work are less well resourced, or have been in recent years. Most noticeable to me on my arrival was a distinct lack of black, Asian and minority ethnic Christians in our churches as well as in leadership roles in the diocese. This will probably be no surprise to Synod, given the national picture, but I had genuinely believed that a city like Leicester might buck the trend. We were, after all, one of the first majority BAME cities in the country. However, the Anglican churches of Leicester simply do not reflect the communities in which they are set. This is not because all BAME people are adherents of other faiths—far from it—at the last count there were over 100 BAME majority churches in Leicester. Our issue is that only three of them are Anglican. By God’s grace we want to do something about that. I believe the Anglican Church has a unique gift to offer to UK minority ethnic people just as to UK majority ethnic people. If we truly want to be inclusive of all who live in our parishes then we have to heed these changes.

I am aware that we are being quite specific in our brief for a new suffragan bishop. Sharing faith with confidence and generosity is part of any episcopal role, but focusing this on a particular group of people is unusual and doing this in the context of a multi-faith city, such as Leicester, could even be seen as provocative. However, I believe this gets to the heart of the mission challenge facing us in our dioceses. The Presence and Engagement policy of the Church of England has been effective in some parts in developing good relationships between faith communities and in growing social cohesion. I am wholeheartedly committed to that. The real challenge now lies in how we combine this strategy with a confident, generous and sensitive proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If we fail to do that, we are denying our own identity and calling.

I realise I am being bold in my appeal to you today, but I am hoping you will support the creation of a new See and the appointment of a new suffragan Bishop of Loughborough who will help lead our diocese and play a part in leading the national Church in evangelism, nurture and growth among black, Asian and minority ethnic people. I hope that he or she will provide a role model and a prophetic challenge to our Church, which has too often talked a good talk but failed to act on God’s calling. This is a unique moment of opportunity and I dare to ask for your support. Thank you.

The Chair: Item 10 is now open for debate.

Ven. Dr Tim Stratford (Leicester): Synod, you will have read in the Diocese Commission's statement that this is not the first time a proposal to create a suffragan See in Leicester Diocese has come before you. It did so in 1986. The then archdeacons pulled the rug from under the feet of its proponents. My predecessor was the archdeacon on General Synod at the time, now a retired Roman Catholic Bishop.

Well, times have changed and in these changed times I can reassure you that this Archdeacon of Leicester is fully behind the proposal, although—and, sorry, that was not meant to make the Bishop of Leicester turn white—we had a choice of Leicestershire town names and I am sorry we are not seeking to make a Bishop of Frisby. It seems to me that a frisby would have been a great asset to the Bench of Bishops.

More seriously, let me tell you about the changing times. Leicester is not a diocese in which we are managing a reducing church. At the beginning of this decade our diocese committed itself, as Bishop Martyn said, to growth, including building new ecclesial communities, as many Fresh Expressions of Church as we have inherited expressions of church by 2030. That is about 330. So far 70 have grown. Whilst so far we have managed a gentle reduction in stipendiary clergy to fit the national picture, we have seen a boom in lay ministries and a modest year-on-year growth in the number of worshippers. We have reduced stipendiary clergy by nine since 2010 and halfway through the decade we had licensed or commissioned 140 lay ministers, with 40 lay employees engaged in new ministries. We are also considering now how to reshape the deployment of stipendiary clergy as national plans for clergy numbers change. So far, in our very diverse city and region, however, our growth remains predominantly white and middle-class. This may reflect a limitation in our leadership, outlook, networks and circles of trust. The growth requires leadership capacity and to grow in new ways requires leadership diversity. I do not see bishops and archdeacons, as my predecessor did, standing on each other's feet in a reducing space in Leicester. In fact, if this new See is not created, then it will be very difficult to replace Chris Boyle, our stipendiary Assistant Bishop, when he retires and our leadership capacity will be reduced and we will also lose his African experience. Bishops and archdeacons have complementary ministries. There are things that bishops do that archdeacons do not and there are things that archdeacons do that bishops cannot.

Colleagues on Synod, I ask you to support the vibrant, growing Diocese of Leicester by passing our bishop's motion. By doing so you will enable us to form

a leadership team fit for the task that faces us.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): As one of the very few and maybe the only graduate of Loughborough University, I commend the Bishop of Leicester for choosing Loughborough as the name of his new See. All sorts of excellent reasons are there in his paper which I shall not bore you with by going over. I ask you all to support it. When I see the Vice-Chancellor of the University next month I will commend to him that he establishes early good relations with the new Bishop. Thank you very much.

Canon Shayne Ardron (Leicester): This being my second term on Synod, I was a member of the Vacancy in See Committee when we were putting together the profile for our current Bishop. This involved travelling around various open meetings in the diocese and visiting a group of multi-faith leaders. Throughout those meetings there was a desire to meet the Bishop and have the Bishop visit them. “Bishop” was a title that was known and, you will be pleased to know, respected and valued. Whether we want to accept it or not, people like meeting a bishop. The office brings with it value. People know that the work they are doing has been given a broader stage when the bishop has been to see it. The other faith groups know that the diocese values who they are when the bishop takes time to see them and they value the stand of faith that the bishop takes. A bishop carries a particular weight that others would take far longer to develop. It opens doors that otherwise may stay shut and it opens ears that otherwise may stay shut. It also puts the bishop very much on display. By having a suffragan bishop, it gives a much broader range of people to draw from. We have been very, very fortunate with the assistant bishops that we have had over the years and Bishop Christopher’s faith, loving care and service will be greatly missed. So please enable the Diocese of Leicester to move forward and vote for us to have a suffragan bishop.

As an example of the kind of community that we live among I am in one of the more city churches and I help run a playgroup on a Thursday morning. We have about 24 children and 30 adults, and within just that small number we counted that we had about six different nationalities, and that is a regular occurrence. Leicester is a different place. To enable us to grow mission in God’s Kingdom it will be much harder without a second bishop, so please vote for us to have a suffragan. Thank you.

The Chair: After Professor Clarke, I would like to test the mind of Synod by welcoming a motion for closure.

Canon Professor Michael Clarke (ex officio): I am Chair of the Dioceses Commission (*ex officio*). I am delighted to stand and support the arguments we have heard from Bishop Martyn. The Dioceses Commission is required to comment on the financial implications of such a move and to register that it is sure that this fits well with the diocese's developing strategy. We are certain on both counts and I am delighted this morning to record our support for the proposition.

It is, as Bishop Martyn suggested, the tidying up of an anomaly. The notion of a stipendiary assistant bishop no longer sits easily within our own frameworks and this is the step we took before Christmas in the creation of a See of Berwick and the appointment of a Bishop of Berwick. Because it is the tidying up of an anomaly, not surprisingly, its implications are rather different than they would be were we dealing with a routine suffragan bishop. As Bishop Martyn has made clear, the financial implications of the move we are making this morning are minimal. Secondly, in designing a suffragan See to fit with the strategy of the diocese as it is now emerging, as Bishop Martyn summarised, the experience of the last couple of decades has allowed the diocese to develop its own thinking in the light of real experience on the ground. Bishop Martyn has referred to the BAME deficit in the diocese. As the diocese sets about tackling that, it has considerable experience to draw upon.

The paper from Bishop Martyn shows the extent to which the diocese has thought through the appropriate model for itself, looking at other possibilities than the suffragan See that we are talking of this morning, and exploring how the impact will fit with where the Diocese of Leicester wants to be over this next generation.

Before Christmas I went to the Diocesan Synod that Bishop Martyn has referred to, and I can only say that that was an impressive gathering in terms of the breadth and strength of support and the experience it brought to the deliberation. We treated the proposition for Loughborough as rigorously as we would any proposition for the filling of a suffragan See and are absolutely clear that the case is not just strong but one to be wholeheartedly supported and prayerfully backed.

Chair, I am delighted to record our formal support from the Dioceses Commission and to wish Bishop Martyn and his colleagues in Leicester well as they set about the implementation of this brave move.

Mrs Vivienne Goddard (Blackburn): Point of order. Will you accept a motion for closure?

The Chair. That has my consent. Does it have the consent of Synod?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. May I ask Bishop Martyn to respond to the debate.

The Bishop of Leicester (Rt Revd Martyn Snow): Thank you very much. I will not delay Synod at all given the number of speeches in favour. Thank you all for those. I can assure you that lots of good things have come from Loughborough and I am very hopeful that lots more good things will come from Loughborough as well. I beg to move the motion.

The Chair. I now put Item 10 to the vote.

The motion

‘That this Synod approve the proposal to petition Her Majesty in Council to direct under the Suffragans Nomination Act 1888 that the town of Loughborough be taken and accepted for a see of a suffragan bishop as if it had been included in the Suffragan Bishops Act 1534.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. That item is clearly carried. That ends this item of business.

THE CHAIR Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark) took the Chair at 9.51 am

APPOINTMENT TO THE ARCHBISHOPS’ COUNCIL (GS 2053)

The Chair. Good morning, Synod. We now move to Item 11 on the Order Paper, the appointment of Mr Mark Sheard as a member of the Archbishops’ Council. I invite the Archbishop of York to speak to this item. He may speak for up to ten minutes and I direct you to paper GS 2053. Thank you, Archbishop.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): I beg to move

‘That the appointment of Mr Mark Sheard as a member of the Archbishops’ Council for a term ending on 14 February 2022 be approved.’

Thank you, Chair, members of Synod. For the benefit of new members, the Archbishops' Council was established by the National Institutions Measure 1998. I am sure you all have a well-thumbed copy of it by your bed (and if not, why not?) When the Synod was debating that legislation, it agreed that 10 of the 19 places on the Council should be filled through various synodical elections; 3 - the Archbishops and one of the Estates Commissioners should be *ex officio* members; and 6 should be for the Archbishops to appoint with the approval of the Synod.

Why with the approval of the Synod? Because these 6 appointed members become *ex officio* members of the Synod, so it does not seem unreasonable that the Synod should have the opportunity to approve their appointment. I may be tempting providence, but fortunately for the Archbishop of Canterbury and me, the Synod has never refused to do so.

Eighteen individuals have served in these six appointed roles since 1999, each of them bringing distinctive skills and experience to enrich the diversity of the Council. The five present appointed members are Mary Chapman, Matthew Frost, Rosalyn Murphy, John Spence and Rebecca Slater née Swinson.

The current vacancy arises from the retirement of Philip Fletcher after serving for the maximum ten years as a member of the Council, for the last five years in the extremely busy role of Chair of the Council's Mission and Public Affairs Council

GS 2053 sets out the recruitment process we have followed. It is worth noting that we were not simply recruiting someone to serve on the Archbishops' Council but also to serve as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council. On this occasion, the Archbishop of Canterbury and I decided that we wished to place particular emphasis on the mission aspect of the role, though we were also looking for a clear aptitude for picking up and running with the public affairs aspect of it.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and I, and those who advised us on the appointment, believe that Mark Sheard's varied and interesting career provide what we are looking for and we are fortunate to have secured someone with Mark's skills, experience and deep Christian commitment for membership of the Archbishops' Council.

Mark's commitment to Christian witness in the United Kingdom and beyond through his voluntary work is evidence of his commitment to mission. His professional career has been focused on working with organisations to help them

communicate and engage with the wider world both in terms of public affairs and messaging. We will now benefit from that experience. Mark also has the experience of chairing and governance that is required of that particular role.

As we continue through a period of significant change and development, his knowledge and wisdom will be invaluable resources.

I commend the motion standing in my name.

The Chair. Thank you, Archbishop. This item is now open for debate, if you wish to speak.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells): Thank you, Archbishop. I want to say how pleased I am that Mark Sheard has been proposed. It might be helpful for Synod to realise why we are going through this process.

Back in 1999 during my first sessions on Synod, I was aware of the fact that we were being presented with six names, none of whom we had met (and I had not met Mark Sheard so that is interesting) to be invited to be members of the Archbishops' Council, with precious little paperwork or background information about any of the six candidates, and, as a result of a motion that I put at that time, the Archbishops' Council agreed they would present to us a good process and a good amount of information about each of the candidates that was being proposed. I would like to thank the Archbishops' Council for the fact that they have kept faith with that and hope that you realise that this is an important process that we are going through.

The Chair. I see no one standing. Archbishop, you have the right of reply to that.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): Amen.

The Chair. Always a man of prayer. I put to Synod the motion: "That the appointment of Mr Mark Sheard as a member of the Archbishops' Council for a term ending on 14 February 2022 be approved".

The motion

'That the appointment of Mr Mark Sheard as a member of the Archbishops' Council for a term ending on 14 February 2022 be approved.'

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That is clearly carried. Thank you very much. That ends this item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Newcastle (Rt Revd Christine Hardman)* took the Chair at 9.59 am

FIXED ODDS BETTING TERMINALS: REDUCTION OF MAXIMUM STAKE (GS 2054A AND GS 2054B)

The Chair: We now come to Item 12 on your Agenda, which is a Diocesan Synod Motion from the Diocese of London addressing issues around fixed odds betting terminals and the reduction of the maximum stake. You will need GS 2054A and GS 2054B to assist you in this debate. There are, as you will have seen, three amendments, all from the Bishop of St Albans, to the main motion, so I am going to handle the debate in the sense we are going to have a few speeches on the motion and then we will proceed through the amendments.

I now call upon Mr Clive Scowen to speak to the motion. Mr Scowen, you have up to ten minutes.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): I beg to move

‘That this Synod, mindful of

- (a) the destructive impact which accessible, high-stake machine gambling can have on families and whole communities and
- (b) the widespread public concern about the very large amounts being wagered at fixed odds betting terminals located in high street betting shops,

call on Her Majesty’s Government as a matter of urgency to bring forward proposals for the amendment of existing legislation to reduce very substantially from £100 the maximum amount which may be wagered on a single game at such terminals in order to reduce the risk of harm to large numbers of vulnerable people.’

Anglicans hold a wide variety of views on gambling. There are one or two issues of that type, as you may have noticed. Some would see all forms of gambling and games of chance as morally wrong and so to be avoided by Christians. Others, while recognising that gambling is a problem when done to excess, would see bingo, raffles and lucky dips at the church fête as not only harmless fun but a useful way of raising funds to fix the church roof.

This morning, wherever you fit in the spectrum between those two views, I hope to persuade you that there is a particular form of gambling available on virtually every high street which is causing real problems in our society, making a review of the Regulations which apply to it urgent. Fixed odd betting terminals, or B2 machines, are touchscreen machines found in betting shops all across Britain on which gamblers can bet on almost anything. A lot of the content called B3 is sports based and for that the maximum stake is £2

However, on the same machine you can play roulette and all versions of casino games with a stake of up to £100 every 20 seconds. Thus a player could, in theory, gamble away £18,000 in an hour. I recognise it might be physically difficult to do that, but that is the range we are talking about. There are now nearly 35,000 such machines in betting shops and they are very lucrative. Over half of Ladbroke's profits are derived from them. B2 machines are an anomaly in the regulation of gaming machines. There are four categories—imaginatively called A, B, C and D—with B divided into five sub-categories. A machines, on which there is no maximum stake, and B1 machines, on which you can win up to £10,000, are permitted only in casinos. B3, B3A, B4, C and D machines are permitted in betting shops and a number of other locations but in no case does the maximum stake exceed £2. B2s are the only form of machine permitted outside casinos on which you can wager more than £2 at a time.

Casinos are high-supervision environments where people have to sign in to take part and where problem gamblers are quickly spotted and stopped. In betting shops, by contrast, effective supervision is minimal. It is true that customers on B2 machines can set their own time and spend limits and that the machines have a player-awareness system which tracks account-based gambling and alerts staff to any markers of problem gambling, enabling them to interact with the customer early, but research shows that these are largely ineffective in curbing problem gambling. It is all very well alerting betting shop staff to problem gamblers, but if those staff are preoccupied with customers placing traditional bets or if only one member of staff is on duty, as often is the case, effective intervention is unlikely. Yet in that environment on B2 machines you can bet £100 a spin. This motion calls for that anomaly to be corrected. There is a strong logical case that the

maximum stake for such machines should be the same as that for all other B category machines permitted outside casinos, namely £2.

In 2010, the British Gambling Prevalence Survey showed that while only one person in 25 used fixed odds betting terminals of the whole population, they gave rise to a higher proportion of problem gambling than most other forms of betting. About 125,000 problem gamblers are using these machines.

I have here to acknowledge a couple of errors in my background paper for which I apologise. The proportion of gamblers using B2 machines is 8%, not 80%. That was a typo. And national weekly losses on B2 machines do not total £1 billion. The true figure suggested by the Gambling Commission's figures is nearly £70 million. Some £70 million is lost each week, or £3.6 billion each year, not by the wealthy, who may well be able to afford to take themselves to casinos, but mostly by the poor and the only just managing, to coin a phrase; some funding their habit with payday loans. There are twice as many betting shops and thus fixed odds betting terminals in the poorest 55 local authority areas than in the 115 most affluent. The problem is particularly acute in London which is why London Diocesan Synod is particularly exercised about this. There are 81 betting shops in Tower Hamlets and 87 in neighbouring Newham, which of course is in Chelmsford Diocese, and 95 in Brent.

Dr Philip Rice, a former member of this Synod and a statistician, has shown a correlation between numbers of betting shops, and thus B2 machines, with unemployment rates in London boroughs. Brent and Tower Hamlets have the highest level of both in London Diocese. B2 machines feed off poverty and exacerbate it, often plunging people into unmanageable debt, bringing misery not just to the gamblers but to their families and especially their children.

The borough council in Tower Hamlets has tried using its licensing powers to curb the proliferation of betting shops but to no avail. Ironically, the limit of four machines per premises has resulted in clusters of shops belonging to the same operator in the main shopping streets in Tower Hamlets and elsewhere.

In 2014, Newham Council, supported by 93 other local authorities, launched an initiative under the Sustainable Communities Act requesting the Government to reduce the maximum stake to £2. The Government has twice rejected that request, despite support from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals. However, last year the Government announced a review of gambling machines and called for evidence so there is reason to think that the

Government is at least open to the possibility of change, and this debate is timely. The Gambling Commission says that if staking levels were being set now, it would advise against the £100 maximum stake on the precautionary basis.

Synod, I believe that God calls us as His ambassadors to stand for His justice and to defend the poor and needy. I hope that is not a controversial statement. That includes prophetically speaking to those in power. Since there is evidence that the ability to lose £100 a spin ruins lives and that the presence of fixed odds betting terminals on the high street targeting the most vulnerable is contributing to a spiral of poverty in some of the poorest parts of our country, I suggest that we should call on the Government to act now in the public interest, applying the precautionary principle rather than delaying while further evidence is gathered, to protect the poor and the vulnerable and those who can least afford to lose large sums in these machines.

I suggest the most effective way to do that would be substantially to reduce the maximum stake in line with the most that can be staked on other high street gambling machines. The Government could do that with almost immediate effect by bringing forward appropriate secondary legislation.

I beg to move the motion standing in my name on behalf of the London Diocesan Synod.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Scowen. Item 12 is now open for debate.

Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark): Thank you to the London Diocesan Synod for bringing this motion forward. I would like to offer some support from south of the river. I would also like to thank Clive Scowen for the clarity of his paper.

I am encouraged that this motion is primarily concerned with the financial and societal aspects and ramifications of high-stake betting rather than the general pros and cons of gambling. It seems to me that, notwithstanding the additional paper provided to Synod members by the Association of British Bookmakers, that there is a very strong case for a significant reduction in the current £100 maximum amount that may be wagered on each spin of a game on a B2 machine, perhaps reducing that from £100 to, say, £10 or £20. As the motion states, this is a matter for Parliament rather than for self-regulation by the gaming industry, given that it was primary legislation which enabled the proliferation of B2 machines in licensed betting shops across the country.

As Clive has just outlined, the Government has already acknowledged through various statements that the level of maximum permissible stake is a cause for concern. I thus hope that in passing this motion Synod will be able to provide further impetus for action in Parliament. However, regarding the ABB statement, I do wonder if the UK gaming industry's trade association is protesting too much in its detailed technical arguments. While over time, the return to player (RTP) is set at 97.3%, this in no sense guarantees such a return to an individual player, particularly over a relatively short period of playing time. Similarly, if the average stake on a B2 machine is £19.66, as set out in appendix 1 to the ABB's report, then it should be possible to reduce the maximum B2 stake to, say, £20 without significant detriment to the profits of licensed betting offices. I very much hope that Synod will see the merit in this proposed reduction in the level of the maximum stake for fixed odds betting terminals, not least to afford additional protection for those tempted to gamble at levels which they may be unable to afford in a relatively unsupervised environment. I support the motion.

Revd Canon John Sinclair (Newcastle): I would like to share with Synod, if I may, an incident that happened on the streets of Newcastle in the early hours of the morning a few weeks ago. It was early Sunday morning, 2 am, and the streets were full of people in a party mood, as they often are in Newcastle. I was out with them as part of a group of street pastors. Newcastle Cathedral has been home to a large team of street pastors who are out until 4 am every weekend. We offer practical and personal care to all who need it, some who have over-indulged with alcohol, some who are not able to walk any longer on their six-inch heels, some who just want someone to talk to. We have people who get lost in our city, get separated from their friends, and we are there to offer personal and practical help.

The particular incident involved a young man, who I will call Graham. He approached us, he ran across the road when he saw the street pastors and he came because he knew we were Christians and he assumed that we would listen to him carefully and without being judgemental. He was not drunk and he was not wearing high heels, but he was, in his words, “addicted to gambling”, and he wanted someone who would just listen to him and help. He had spent time with Gamblers Anonymous and thought that that was a great organisation when he was there, but now it is 2 am and he is feeling vulnerable and wanting someone to talk to about his desire to gamble less. He was on his way to the casino. His addiction, he told us, affected his work life, his home life, his relationships. His friends said he did not have a problem; he was just like anyone else. He knew that was not the case. He invited us, after a long conversation, to pray with him, which we did, but we did more than pray with him: we walked with him and we walked towards

and then beyond the casino. We walked to the taxi rank and off he went home very happy, thanking us for the time we had spent listening to him, the time we had spent walking with him.

Six years of my ministerial life were spent as a priest on a very deprived inner-city estate in the east end of Newcastle where daily encounters were had with gamblers and their families suffering as a result of the addiction that they had. People who could least afford it spending day after day, hour after hour in betting shops, gambling more and more. In conversation with them, many of them thought that the answer to their addiction to gambling was to gamble a bit more because they all knew of someone who knew someone else who had once won big and had made a difference to their life. Well, that was not the answer. Some of the families of these people who were in the betting shops would talk to the staff and say, "Please, don't allow this member of our family to bet more than a set amount", and the staff would say, "We do what we can, but we are over-stretched". The answer to their problem is not gambling more and bigger. What they need is someone to be there and to walk with them. We cannot always be on the street. We cannot always listen and pray and walk with those who need help, but this is a practical step. This motion is a practical step to remove some of the allure brought by these highly addictive machines and I urge Synod to give it huge support.

Mr Stephen Boyall (Blackburn): Thank you, Madam Chair, for inviting me for my maiden speech. Although I may not sound like I do, I live in Preston in Lancashire. which recently was surveyed to be one of the most unhealthy high streets in the UK, no doubt a notable part, too, the number of betting shops. I live in an area full of social housing, ex-council housing, with a mix of residents who you might expect: those who have sought asylum, those on social benefits and in low-paid work; people who could be vulnerable to fixed odds betting terminals. No one has enough money to lose £100 every 20 seconds, but that is particularly true for those who live in my community, so this is an excellent motion that we support. It shows love in a very practical way. We can show Jesus's love to people who might not come to our churches, in a way which may not grow our churches, but it might help me to start a conversation as I go to my local social club on why we at Synod have tried to make difference in people's lives for the better. And I may be able in that conversation to point people to the hope that I have for the future; that knowing Jesus, trusting in Him alone, is a much better way to live your life now and into the future than spending your life in the bookies losing your money. I support this motion and urge us all to vote for it.

Revd Dr Jason Roach (London): About four years ago I preached a sermon

explaining that the Gospel is better than winning the National Lottery, expecting some people to come to faith. Instead, it caused people to confess their gambling addiction to me. One of the people who I ministered to had debts of over £60,000 and was working every Saturday unbeknownst to his wife and children to pay this off. He thought it would take him ten years. We began to read the Bible, pray together and he began to make progress in handling his addiction over that time.

About a year ago he came to me and said, "I have fallen. I know you have been trying to help and encourage me but I have fallen, but it's okay because I betted today and I have cleared my debt. Everything's fine. I can give more to the Church. I can support my family. Everything's fine". Well, about six months ago he came to me again. His debts are more than they were previously and his livelihood is at stake. The very reason for this was the size of debt that he could accrue in such a short amount of time.

I just want to encourage us to support this motion wholeheartedly. It might help those who are struggling and trying to make progress not to lose to the extent that is possible at the moment in such a short space of time. I commend this motion to the house.

The Chair: I now call upon the Bishop of St Albans to move the first of his amendments, Item 21, but to speak to all three of the amendments.

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith): I beg to move

'Before "call on Her Majesty's Government *insert* "welcome Her Majesty's Government's review of the maximum stake for such terminals and".'

Anyone who watched the *Panorama* programme last September will have seen the harrowing story of the suicide of Lee Murphy, a programme presented by his partner in her grief. Members of Synod, we are not debating harmless betting or harmless betting machines today, but a particular, very focused form of betting which has caused huge suffering and, since I have become involved in it, I have heard a number of those terrible stories. That is why I am supportive of the main motion.

I want to underline that neither this debate nor the three amendments which I am going to move are about gambling per se—although I have views on that, that is a different issue—but about these particular machines known as fixed odds betting terminals or in the trade FOBTs. They pose a very serious danger to people living at risk of gambling related harm. Not only do they take advantage of those

struggling with gambling addiction but they take huge amounts of money from the pockets of some very vulnerable people.

For these and other reasons a whole range of people, including parliamentarians in both Houses of Parliament, have placed significant pressure on the Government to bring forward their long overdue triennial review of stakes and prizes which was last undertaken in 2013. In response to that, the Government launched in October a consultation as part of that review, not looking just at FOBTs but at the wider licensing arrangements around them and around betting shops. The Mission and Public Affairs Council responded to that consultation, and I would urge you, if you get a moment, to look at the submission. While it is important to push for further action, it is also important that we do not just lambast the Government but note what they have already initiated in this review. Therefore, my first very simple and, I believe, very uncontroversial amendment is to add a phrase acknowledging that the Government is undertaking a review and we are watching it and engaged with it.

My second amendment is to give a little more focus to Clive Scowen's motion on behalf of the Diocese of London by specifying the level of the maximum stake as £2. As he has already said, at the moment it is totally anomalous that most other stakes are at these very modest rates but with these machines it is totally different and virtually unsupervised in effect. To reduce it to a maximum stake of, say, £2 would bring it into line with other forms of betting in betting shops.

Now to my third amendment. Clive Scowen has already referred to the worrying fact that there is a strong link between FOBTs and a significant increase in violent crime associated with betting shops. There has been a 68% increase in London over the last five years. FOBTs are more likely to be found clustered in areas of high deprivation, with 16 betting shops on a single street in the Borough of Newham, and are disproportionately targeted at minority ethnic communities. I was concerned to read that 61% of one national chain of betting shops are located in 40 UK authorities with the highest percentage of minority ethnic populations, such as Luton in my own diocese.

Over the past year I have been engaged with government ministers on FOBTs in my capacity as a Member of the House of Lords. Indeed, I have put in a Private Member's Bill and I have also been involved with a number of proposed legislative amendments often with the co-operation of other colleagues of the Lords Spiritual. My Private Member's Bill is designed to give local authorities additional licensing powers so that they will be able to take more control over the number of FOBTs in

their area. The intention is that local authorities will be able to take action to limit the prevalence of FOBTs in those areas that are deemed to be at high risk of gambling-related harm, for example in areas of significant deprivation or crime or where betting shop clusters already exist. My Private Member's Bill has been drawn way down the ballot, it is not going to get through, so this proposal, which has the support of the Local Government Association, which has done a lot of work on this and believe it would give them additional support in addressing this problem, would simply ask Government to introduce legislation to begin looking at how we can give local authorities additional powers. I hope you will support all three amendments but I think at this stage I am just asked to move the first one, which I so do.

The Chair: I now invite Mr Scowen to respond to all three amendments.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): One of the problems with Diocesan Synod Motions is that they are always passed a considerable time before they get to be debated here and, of course, as the mover on behalf of the Synod I cannot go off and consult and see what they think. I say this though: on the first amendment, had the London Synod been considering this today, I am quite certain we would have included that in our motion. It updates and recognises that the Government is interested in this and that is a very welcome fact, and so I have no difficulty at all in encouraging Synod on behalf of the London Diocesan Synod to support the first amendment.

Regarding the second amendment, you heard what I said in my speech. I think there is a compelling logic to what the Bishop of St Albans is proposing, but because I am standing here on behalf of the Diocesan Synod, and did not get a chance to express a view on this, I leave it to your judgment, Synod, as to whether you want to be that specific, but I certainly would not resist it.

As to the third, it is my belief that if the Government did what we are asking for, particularly if the second amendment were passed, that would actually solve the problem. It is the existence of these machines that is causing the proliferation of betting shops. Nonetheless, it seems to me that, again, what the Bishop of St Albans is suggesting would be helpful and again I would not resist it and I leave it to Synod to judge whether that is something they want to add to this motion.

Can I just say also that I think we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the Bishop of St Albans for taking up this issue and running with it in the House of Lords and making a really good use of his office in that way.

The Chair. The debate is now open on Item 21. I see no one standing so we now come to vote on Item 21.

The motion

‘Before “call on Her Majesty’s Government insert “welcome Her Majesty’s Government’s review of the maximum stake for such terminals and”.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. That is very clearly carried. I now invite the Bishop of St Albans to move Item 22.

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith): I beg to move

‘Leave out “very substantially from £100” and insert “from £100 to £2”.’

I move Item 22 on the Order Paper in my name.

The Chair. The debate is now open on Item 22. Again, I see no one standing so we now come to vote on Item 22.

The motion

‘Leave out “very substantially from £100” and insert “from £100 to £2”.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. That amendment is very clearly carried. I now invite the Bishop of St Albans to move Item 23.

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith): I beg to move

‘After “bring forward proposals” insert (i);

And

After “such terminals” insert “(ii) to grant local authorities the power to make provision about the number and location of such terminals,”.’

I move Item 23 on the Order Paper in my name.

The Chair: The debate is now open on Item 23. Again, I see no one standing so we vote on Item 23.

The motion

‘After “bring forward proposals” insert (i)’;

And

After “such terminals” insert “(ii) to grant local authorities the power to make provision about the number and location of such terminals,”.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: Again, that is very clearly carried. We now continue with the debate on Item 12 as amended. I see no one standing, so I invite Mr Scowen to respond if he wishes to do so.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Thank you, Synod, for what feels like overwhelming support and I am hoping that it will look like that when you come to vote in a few moments. Just to respond very briefly to the speakers.

Thank you to Carl Hughes for reminding us that the statistical return on gambling overall does not guarantee any particular return to a particular player and that many players lose huge amounts before they win anything at all.

Thank you to John Sinclair, firstly, for that reminder of the fantastic ministry of street pastors in so many of our cities and a reminder of the practical and spiritual support that Christians can give to those who are addicted to gambling and, also, for that insight into the psychology of somebody who suffers from that addiction.

Thank you to Stephen Boyall for his account of the problems arising in Preston and I do hope, indeed, that it will enable us all to speak when we go home from Synod, and people might ask us about other matters, to say: “Well, actually, we did something really good in showing practical love to the people of this country, and particularly to the poor”. Can I say Amen, trusting in Jesus is much better than gambling.

Jason Roach, thank you again for that reminder that people might think they are

over it, might think they have cleared their debts but, actually, this addiction when it gets hold of people goes really deep and can cause lasting long-term damage financially and, obviously, psychologically as well.

Again, thank you to the Bishop of St Albans, for reminding us that sometimes this goes so deep that it leads to suicide and really serious damage can result. Thank you, Synod, for your support and I do hope that the vote will now reflect the way this debate has been heard.

The Chair. Thank you, Mr Scowen. We now come to vote on Item 12. Point of order?

A Speaker. Would the Chair be minded to accept a vote of the entire Synod to show our support for this very important Measure?

The Chair. I would be so minded if I see 25 people standing. I see clearly 25 people standing, so I am very content to order a vote of the whole Synod.

The motion

'That this Synod, mindful of

(a) the destructive impact which accessible, high-stake machine gambling can have on families and whole communities and

(b) the widespread public concern about the very huge amounts being wagered at fixed odds betting terminals located in high street betting shops,

welcome Her Majesty's Government's review of the maximum stake for such terminals and call on Her Majesty's Government as a matter of urgency to bring forward proposals

i. for the amendment of existing legislation to reduce from £100 to £2 the maximum amount which may be wagered on a single game at such terminals and

ii. to grant local authorities the power to make provision about the number and location of such terminals

in order to reduce the risk of harm to large numbers of vulnerable people.'

was put and carried after a counted vote of the whole Synod. The voting was as follows: 310 voting in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions.

The Chair: That concludes this item of business. We move to resume the adjourned debate under the Special Agenda Legislative Business.

THE CHAIR *Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 10.46 am.

DRAFT AMENDING CANON NO. 36 (GS 2029A)

DRAFT AMENDING CANON NO. 37 (GS 2029AA)

The Chair: Good morning, Synod. As you have heard, we are resuming the adjourned debate on draft Amending Canons 36 and 37. Just to remind you, once again, that you will need the GS papers 2029A and 2029AA, as well as the Revision Committee report 2029Y. We have already had a speech from Gavin Kirk and two speeches, so we now resume the debate. The floor is open.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Dr Philip Plyming (Guildford): I want to thank the Revision Committee for their Report and Gavin Kirk for the clear way in which he introduced it to us yesterday. I want to speak in favour of, in particular, the proposed amendment to Canon No. 36. I want to do that in terms of clergy robes.

I want to do that by sharing an example of the church where I serve in Claygate in the Diocese of Guildford. Four O'clock Church is a weekly all-age Fresh Expression of Church. It aims at those who do not currently come to church and have had no contact over the years, but who are in our village where the church has a high profile.

It meets every Sunday afternoon at—you have guessed it—4 o'clock in the church hall, which is also the venue for our monthly Messy Church which attracts many, many families. Over the four years it has been running, 4 O'clock Church has seen many people come and join us. At the moment, we have over 50 families of all ages from our village come for worship who would not otherwise be experiencing Christian faith.

We have Bible engagement, prayer and fellowship, many action songs, and for many people this is their first step in exploring faith. A number have gone on to do

Alpha in time. It matters to us that 4 O'clock Church is a full Expression of Church and not something provisional or temporary. We do not treat it as a place that people kind of move on to from somewhere else. Therefore, the administration of both sacraments is important in that context. For that reason, we have really welcomed Prayer 1 for the new Communion prayer which is to be used when a majority of children are present. We find that really effective and I want to thank the work of the Liturgical Commission in bringing that to bear.

In that context, although we want to use that service, robes would not work in an informal setting or the informal nature of our church, not least because they might make some of the action songs that we do not only difficult but possibly dangerous. "Our God is a great big God" but our robes might not be. Therefore, to wear robes would actually hinder this particular fresh Expression of Church which we are so passionate about. It would create barriers in a context that would not be appropriate.

We always wear clerical collars to show that the person administering the sacrament of Holy Communion is ordained, but we welcome the proposed amendment to Canon No. 36 because it gives us flexibility to ensure that within missionary opportunities robes are worn or not worn in a way that best flourishes the local church. I want to support this and thank the Revision Committee for their work.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): I was one of those who voted for the original Private Member's Motion back in the last quinquennium and so I am delighted that we have reached this stage today. I also submitted a number of comments to the Revision Committee, most of which were rejected. I do not take it personally. I want to put on record with everybody that I am very happy with the revisions that have been made and with the Canon that is presented for Final Approval today.

I particularly want to remind everybody that this is permissive. It is not requiring anyone to change anything that they are currently doing if they do not feel it is necessary in the interests of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ afresh in our generation. It is permissive. I hope that it will be thoroughly and overwhelmingly approved.

Finally, I want to say that I am very grateful for the clarification about the application of these matters to Readers. I speak as a Reader and, although this Canon does not cover Readers, I would say that, in due course, those responsible for the rules and regulations about Readers would bring them into line with this Canon.

Miss Rhian Ainscough (Leicester): Firstly, I am grateful for the split of these two Canons. They are so different, it is logical to split them. Even if you were to agree or disagree with both, why put them in the same category? As a young person, I have noticed such a high prevalence of suicide in recent years, especially in the context of young people. Some of you may have seen recently the news article on a 9 year-old boy who committed suicide, the second youngest in the UK—not the first, the second youngest in the UK. I have found it has all become trivialised. When I moved into university halls I was told that my accommodation was the one which had the most suicides—not the only, the most suicides.

Of course, it is not only young people who are doing this. It is something which is across all cultures, all different ages, genders, et cetera. Of course, I am very glad that this Canon is being considered in debate and I highly support this. I think it is up to the priest to decide what seems fit and, especially seeing as this is going to be something which is more likely to come up for priests, the fact that they may have to take this kind of service as a funeral.

It is so important to care for families, especially if the situation is unexpected, something sudden or it is a young person; if it is their child, for instance. It is difficult enough to conduct a funeral, let alone with a suicide, let alone if the priest is not okay with the service. I thank you for bringing this to Synod. Let us support this and enable the Church to show care in such dire situations.

Revd Canon Patricia Hawkins (Lichfield): Thank you for calling me, Chair, and thank you to the Revision Committee for the decision to separate these two Amending Canons. It is about Amending Canon B 36 that I would like to speak. I remain unconvinced, although I acknowledge that much of what has been said in favour is persuasive.

I also acknowledge that what we have in front of us has been carefully and thoughtfully crafted. What troubles me is less the substance than some of the underlying assumptions. Again and again we have been told that the driver behind this is primarily missional.

By way of thinking about this, I would ask Synod to reflect on the difference between wolves and foxes, although I would have preferred to use this analogy last year. The difference is that Wolves play in black and gold and Foxes play in blue. My point is that the idea of what you wear signifying what you stand for is not a strange idea in our society.

The ability to use the visual to mark out an activity as being special, as being of particular moment, of shortcutting a lot of what is said, is very deeply embedded in our popular culture. I would suggest that people do get it and that young people do get it.

My second point is that clothing is never neutral. Whatever we wear, we make a statement.

Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Deans): I want to thank the Revision Committee for everything that they have done. I had plenty to say about what we were presented with before. Unlike Mr Greenwood, I think most of mine were accepted, so I am very pleased about that. Mr Plyming, I have always found a chasuble allows maximum movement for every situation, and at Southwark we have some spare ones we could give to you.

My main point is that one of the great things for me—and this is not a speech I was going to make in another debate today—out of the Shared Conversations was an invitation to go along to a church in Thamesmead in the Woolwich area of Southwark Diocese and I was going to go along to preach at their Eucharist.

I sent my normal email nearer the time saying, “What you do want me to wear?” The priest emailed back and said, “Oh, we don’t do that thing in this church. Just come as you are.” So, I steeled myself for the experience. It was fantastic and it was appropriate. If I had have gone wearing all the stuff I like to wear, I would have stood out—well, I cannot even begin to describe what I would have looked like. It did feel right.

Coming after the debate we have had before and, given all of my own personal preferences—and, like Pat, I am a member of SCP and every time we get together we like to wear something new—I wanted to stand up for seemly vesture within the life of the Church, but appropriateness is also very important. I give thanks for the permissive nature of this Canon and I look forward to seeing the fruits of it.

The Chair: After the next speaker, Charlie Skrine, and then I would be looking for a motion for closure on this debate.

Revd Alistair McHaffie (Blackburn): I think this Amending Canon simply takes into account the current situation on the ground in the Church of England. Within three miles of my own parish, I can identify two parish churches and two church plants,

neither of which would use traditional clergy vesture. In the past, this has just happened on an ad hoc basis and, largely, I think for missional reasons.

I think the advantage of this Amending Canon is, as well as recognising that is where we are with a fair proportion of our churches, it also puts into place the need for, in the future, proper consultation with PCCs and, in the event of issues and problems, the bishop being able to make a final decision on it. It brings in some structure, advice and help for those who may move to that direction in the future, and I trust you will support this Amending Canon.

Revd Charlie Skrine (London): I was on the Revision Committee and spoke on this last time we looked at it. I said it was not a motion for those who are against robes. I claim to be a scruffy evangelical who loves robes. Sadly, my Bishop, it turns out, was listening and has since chosen to call my bluff and shove me in the direction of a church where robes will be joyfully and entirely appropriate at all times. So, be careful what you say in a speech.

I can now say that it was entirely true. I am excited. I am looking forward to wearing robes where it will be useful and exciting and appropriate. This is a permissive Measure. Thank you, Patricia Hawkins, for what you said. I think though that this is exactly the point to allow parishes to choose what is appropriate. Robes do communicate; they are significant; anything you wear is. Please give us permission, as Andrew Nunn said, to be fantastic and appropriate.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Chairman, motion for closure on Item 511.

The Chair: Thank you. That would have my consent. Does that have the consent of Synod?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I will ask Gavin to come and reply to the debate. He has up to ten minutes.

Ven. Gavin Kirk (Lincoln): Goodness. “Beware”, says Jesus, “when all speak well ...” It is almost unprecedented, save for the last debate. I am very grateful to all those who have spoken positively about the work of the Revision Committee. It is absolutely true, as one or two people have said, that robes are significant. What we wear is significant and, therefore, it is significant when we do not wear them.

People's general acceptance of the appropriateness of the local context is very welcome. Thank you for that. I am indebted to Mr Dudley-Smith that he sees this as a win for everybody. I agree with him that I hope this will bring blessings for everybody. I shall treasure his exposition of the divine kenosis for some time to come—those of you who remember what he said about Jesus dressing down last evening.

To those who have made the point that this is permissive, it is very good to recognise that, but context is everything. I am very pleased that one or two people have noticed the missional aspects of dealing appropriately with suicides. This is so obvious that those people did not need to say it, but our ability to use the right order of service for those who have taken their own lives, for whatever reason, will, I am sure, make a major contribution to our mission work.

As to the Dean of Southwark, I hesitate to add to anything he might say, but, of course, the most freedom of movement is, in fact, available with a fiddleback chasuble not such as are seen, I understand, in the Cathedral Church of Southwark—but scoring points is cheap. Thank you very much for the way that you have responded to this. Thank you to the members of the Revision Committee and I hope very much Synod will take note of this Report.

The Chair. We need to put Item 511 to the vote, “that the Synod do take note of this Report”.

The motion

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

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. That completes the Revision Committee stage. We now come to the revision stage, which is Item 522. We are going to take Amending Canon No. 36 first. Notice has been given of one amendment which you can read on the Order Paper. The 40-member rule applies to this. I am going to invite Nigel Bacon to speak to his amendment and then the Bishop of St Albans will reply on behalf of the Steering Committee.

If the Bishop of St Albans supports the amendment, debate on the amendment will continue and the amendment can be voted on. If the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless there are 40 members standing in their places to

indicate that they wish the debate on the amendment to continue and a vote to be taken on it. Nigel Bacon, you have up to five minutes to speak on 522.

Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln): I beg to move

‘Paragraph 1(6)(a), *leave out* “is not held at public worship” and *insert* “does not take place during another service.”

Thank you, Chair. My amendment is short, but it is actually the result of considerable correspondence between myself and the legal department. I would like to offer them my thanks for their patience and help in the drafting of the amendment, which I hope will be seen as a friendly one as its purpose is to avoid a misinterpretation of the Amending Canon.

I sympathise with the Revision Committee as it has worked through the drafting of this Amending Canon. I can understand why it has seen fit to move away from using the term “occasional offices” in paragraph 1(6). I am though concerned with the use of the phrase “public worship” regarding baptism services. I appreciate that the term is used elsewhere in the Canons, most notably in Canon B 21 of Holy Baptism, and, that, if one was to read those other uses of the term, one may conclude—but not necessarily conclude—what is meant by its use here in Amending Canon No. 36.

However, I have to say that people generally read things as they see them, they take it at face value that the most obvious reading would be used. So, a service of baptism that is not held at public worship on a Sunday is one then that is either held in private, such as in a private chapel where the general public are excluded, or it is held between Monday and Saturday.

This would mean that the Amended Canon B 8 could be read in such a way that the typical standalone baptism service—typically held on a Sunday afternoon, though possibly at other times—is not covered by the Canon. This, in turn, could leave the gate open to ministers interpreting the Amended Canon as indicating they were free to choose, within the bounds of appropriateness, what they wear at such standalone services.

If they were to do so, there would be a risk that parents of young candidates or adult candidates themselves could land up being disappointed if they found that the minister was not formally robed. This may be rare but it could easily happen. If it can easily happen, it will happen, and may prompt Synod to have to return to

this Canon and amend it at some point in the future.

It is to avoid such an eventuality that I am proposing the amendment. The wording has been deliberately constructed to keep it within the spirit of the Amending Canon. Synod may note that a service of baptism conducted within a regular service of the Word would remain unregulated by my amendment, allowing the established patterns of dress for such services to prevail. It would seem to be against the spirit of the Amending Canon to have brought such services into its scope.

Consequently, the amendment has been deliberately constructed in the way that it has so as to ensure it is confined to standalone baptism services and eliminate the possibility of the intent of the Amending Canon being misunderstood. I beg to move the amendment in my name.

The Chair. I call on the Bishop of St Albans to reply to the amendment. He has up to five minutes.

The Chair. I do not think I need five minutes. Nigel, thank you very much for your amendment, which I know you have tabled in order to try to clarify things and to support what we are all trying to achieve. However, having looked at it, we want to resist it for two reasons.

First, it is clear from the context that the phrase “at public worship” means during the course of another Sunday service and the amendment is therefore unnecessary. Secondly, and you have already referred to Canon B 21, that Canon already uses the terminology of baptisms taking place at public worship when it says that baptisms should normally take place on Sundays at public worship. It would be undesirable, we believe, for Canons that are concerned with the same subject matter to use different terminology when referring to the same things and therefore, on balance, we wish to resist what you are proposing.

The Chair. The Bishop has indicated that he does not support the amendment. We need 40 members to stand who wish debate on the amendment to continue and if they do not then the amendment will lapse. Are there 40 members? I am afraid there are not 40 members standing, in which case we will call upon the Bishop of St Albans to move Item 523: “That paragraph 1 stand part of the Amending Canon”.

The Bishop of St Albans (Revd Dr Alan Smith): I beg to move

‘That Paragraph 1 [as amended] stand part of the Amended Canon.’

I move Item 523, that it should start part of the Amending Canon.

The Chair: I see no one standing so we can put Item 523 to the vote.

The motion

‘That Paragraph 1 [as amended] stand part of the Amending Canon.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That is quite clearly carried. That completes the revision stage of draft Amending Canon No. 36 which now stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting.

I am now going ask the Bishop of St Albans to move Amending Canon No. 37 which is under Item 524.

The Bishop of St Albans (Revd Dr Alan Smith): I beg to move

‘That paragraph 1 stand part of the Amending Canon.’

I do so move draft Amending Canon No. 37.

The Chair: I see no one standing, therefore, we will put that to the vote.

The motion

‘That paragraph 1 stand part of the Amending Canon.’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That is also clearly carried. That completes the revision stage of draft Amending Canon No. 37 which also stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting. That also completes Item 511. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 11.03 am.

The Chair: I would like to make an announcement, everyone, that Synod is

adjourned until 11.15.

MARRIAGE AND SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS AFTER THE SHARED CONVERSATIONS: INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE BISHOPS' REFLECTION GROUP ON SEXUALITY

The Chair: So, members of Synod, we come to Item 13 on the Agenda.

A Speaker: Point of order. Chair, would it be in order to thank the staff for having made considerable efforts to improve the audibility of the auditorium. We are very grateful at being able to hear the speech.

The Chair: Thank you. I think everyone has heard that. Let us move on then. As I was just saying, we are going to have a presentation by way of introduction to the House of Bishops' Report on Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations and to this afternoon's group work. I invite the Chair, the Bishop of Norwich, Graham James, and the Vice-Chair, the Bishop of Willesden, Pete Broadbent, of the Bishops' Reflection Group on Human Sexuality, to make their presentation.

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James): Members of Synod, in this presentation, the Bishop of Willesden will follow what I have to say by focusing on the group process this afternoon and what it is hoped may be gained from it. I will formally introduce Report GS 2055 later. What I want to do now is to attempt a wider and longer perspective on why I hope the case studies may prove useful.

For almost the whole of the 41 years now of my ordained ministry we seem to have been discussing same-sex relationships. As a curate in the late 1970s I recall leading a deanery synod discussion on the Gloucester Report on homosexual relationships. No one else was willing to do it. Little did I think that almost 40 years later I would be standing before the General Synod presenting another report on the same subject. It is a very provisional Report, as it says itself. Like others which have gone before it, it has not received a rapturous reception in all quarters, and I regret any pain and anger it may have caused and, if we have got the tone wrong, we are very sorry.

Next week I will have been a Bishop for 24 years and throughout that time I have cherished the friendships of many gay people and sought to support the gay clergy in my diocese and tried to make it a safe and welcoming place for their ministry.

Only they can say whether they feel that is true. I know the Church of England owes them much. Some minister in our most challenging parishes and situations. I am also a Bishop who seeks to be loyal to the Catholic tradition of our Church and the doctrine of the universal Church as we have received it. I do not seek to elevate my opinion and experience above that of Scripture and the received tradition of the Church. I have learned much, too, from evangelical clergy and laity, who frequently challenge me in my understanding of Scripture. The promises made at my episcopal consecration all those years ago remain with me on a daily basis. I do accept the Holy Scriptures as revealing all things necessary for eternal salvation. I do believe the doctrine of the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it and seeks to expound and teach it. I do seek to uphold the truth of the Gospel against error and to promote unity, peace and love among the people I serve. These things weigh heavily with me and my fellow Bishops. Yet they are, of course, a liberation, not a burden, for as Bishops we know how much we have been given, how much we have received and how much we still have to learn through the grace of Christ.

I would be misleading you if I did not confess to being conflicted in presenting this Report, but in that I think I am far from alone among the Bishops and the wider Church of England. At one level nothing much seems to have changed since I made that presentation on the Gloucester Report so many years ago and yet at another level everything seems to have changed, especially in the wider culture. Our own history in dealing with these matters also explains why people on all sides of the debate rarely find themselves satisfied. I want to spend some time examining that history.

Perhaps it is because we are so conflicted that the House of Bishops found case studies so valuable. They based our conversations in the lived experience of the Church for the case studies we used were grounded in real-life events. Of course there is pastoral distance since the events are anonymised and the people are not in the room with us. A pastoral response is invited and our response reveals how our theological formation shapes it. Indeed, we may discover that our pastoral response begins to reshape our theological convictions. There is always a dialogue between doctrine and pastoral practice and sometimes it lies within us.

Among the things the case studies revealed to the Bishops was the breadth of pastoral responses which lay within the present disciplines of the Church. Sometimes it is our own pastoral imagination which is lacking rather than pastoral possibilities and that was what led to the use of the phrase “maximum freedom” in relation to the interpretation of existing law and guidance. We began to believe

there were more possibilities for development within our present disciplines than may have been perceived. I will say more about that when introducing the debate later today.

In this session I want to reflect on why the narrative of our discussions on human sexuality has been so testing over the years and why it remains so.

One of the reasons is that we do not start, and perhaps cannot start, our discussions from scratch, nor even from the Scriptures, but largely from two key statements, both of which have remained in place from the period 1987 to 1991. Those statements did not begin to anticipate the wider situation in society we now experience with the advent of same-sex marriage. The story goes back well before 1987. The Wolfenden Report, chaired by an eminent Anglican layman, was published in 1957. Its key recommendation, of course, was that homosexual acts between consenting adults should cease to be a criminal offence. A whole decade passed before the Sexual Offences Act reached the statute book—50 years ago this year. The campaign for change received strong support from the Archbishop of Canterbury and most of the Bishops at the time. Michael Ramsey was clear that there was a distinction between a crime and a sin. Some of the opponents of decriminalisation said the Bishops were being naive if they thought a change in the law would not lead to the promotion of homosexuality and its eventual acceptance as an alternative lifestyle. As it was, Norman Pittenger's "Time for Consent" was published in 1970 arguing within the Christian community for the moral worth of same-sex relationships. A growing acceptance of homosexual lifestyles was well reflected in the Gloucester Report, simply titled "Homosexual Relationships" published by the Board of Social Responsibility in 1979, and the subject of my Deanery Synod discussion all those years ago. The subtitle was "A contribution to discussion", and it is worth noting there was a general reluctance to opine and define in this area within the Church of England at the time.

The Lambeth Conferences of 1978 and 1988 were the first to have Resolutions directly referring to homosexuality. Those Resolutions are now almost entirely forgotten. The 1988 Lambeth Conference spoke about the need for "a deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research". I am not sure we have yet been attentive enough to scientific and medical research. The possibility, even by then, of a dispassionate study of same-sex relationships was a vain hope.

Within the Church of England things became more complicated in the 1980s. The

Bishops continued to be content with contributions to discussion, but there was a discernible shift of opinion in the public mind. Despite her reputation for moral certainties, Margaret Thatcher was not at all morally censorious in sexual matters, but there was a spirit of reaction around, fed not least by the popular media of the time which was hostile to homosexual relationships. This eventually led to the passage of clause 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 which prohibited the promotion of homosexuality in schools and stopped local councils spending money supporting lesbian and gay projects. It also prevented the support of what it called “pretended family relationships”, namely same-sex partners having a normal family life.

While all this was building up, the House of Bishops looked to the then Board for Social Responsibility for further advice on matters to do with homosexuality. A Working Party was formed in 1986 under the leadership of the present Dean of Salisbury, June Osborne. It reported in 1989 but the Report was never published at the time because things had moved on in ways which I suspect a number of the Bishops then wished they had not. Tony Higton’s Private Member’s Motion in the General Synod in November 1987 caught something of the spirit of the age. For the first time, as far as I can discover, an authoritative body in the Church of England officially pronounced on the moral worth of homosexual relationships. It was argued that it simply restated traditional teaching, although it did so, of course, in the terse terms of a General Synod motion. That motion stated that “sexual intercourse properly belongs within marriage, and that fornication and adultery are sins against this ideal, as are homosexual genital acts which are to be met by a call to repentance and the exercise of compassion”. Finally, it declared that “all Christians are called to be exemplary in all matters of morality, including sexual morality, and that holiness of life is particularly required of Christian leaders”.

Nearly everything that has happened in the Church of England on these issues since then has been in reaction to that motion. The vote in Synod at the time was overwhelming: 403 to 8. What we are liable to forget is the reaction in some of the popular media to the passing of that vote. It was to criticise the Church for being too liberal. Since I was sitting behind the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1987, I remember the vote and its aftermath very well. Some of you may possibly recall the tabloid headlines which used language which would be unthinkable today in any sector of the press.

The House of Bishops had to respond. They did so eventually with the publication of *Issues in Human Sexuality*, a statement by the House of Bishops in 1991. In his foreword the Archbishop of Canterbury, by then George Carey, famously said

that it was “not the last word on the subject”. Indeed not. *Issues* was intended to help, in its own words, “a general process marked by greater trust and openness of Christian reflection on the subject of human sexuality”.

We are now further in time, my friends, from the publication of *Issues in Human Sexuality* than the publication of *Issues* was from the decriminalisation of homosexuality in this land. *Issues* was not to be the last word, but it became policy. This is one of the most surprising developments given what *Issues* says of itself. Fairly quickly in the 1990s candidates for episcopal office had to pledge their loyalty to it. In time, all ordinands had to pledge willingness to live within the disciplines set out in *Issues*, and they still do. *Issues* plainly picked up on the Highton motion’s phrase about exemplary Christian leaders. The Ordinal is clear about the way in which the clergy are called to embody the way of Christ in their lives and to acknowledge the teaching of the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it. Notwithstanding all this, *Issues* has been frequently criticised, if sometimes unfairly, for creating different moral standards for clergy and lay people. What was significant about *Issues* was that it was clear that lay people who conscientiously dissented and lived in same-sex relationships should be incorporated fully within the life of the Church. Sometimes it is assumed that when ordinands are asked if they will live within the disciplines of *Issues* it is simply about whether they will remain celibate if in a same-sex relationship. The disciplines of *Issues*, of course, also include the welcome given to lay people who enter same-sex partnerships to be part of the body of Christ on the same basis as everyone else.

The teaching and guidance in *Issues* formed the framework for the House of Bishops’ Pastoral Statement on Civil Partnerships issued in 2005, a further statement on episcopal ministry in 2013, which said that any gay or lesbian person living within the disciplines outlined in *Issues* and in a partnership could become a bishop. In February 2014, there was a further statement from the House in relation to same-sex marriage. These different statements were attempts to respond to a vastly changed landscape but within the disciplines articulated in 1991. *Issues* did not begin to glimpse civil partnerships let alone same-sex marriage, which is why the House of Bishops believes a new teaching document is necessary addressing both marriage and same-sex relationships in a way which has not been attempted before.

What the case studies seek to do is to present us with the tension which can exist between our determination to uphold firmly the teaching on marriage and sexual relationships as currently expressed in our Canons and the commitment to affirm

the place of LGBTI people within the Church and, as paragraph 34 of the Report says, to enable their voices to be heard. While it is beyond my pay grade to chart the way forward, I have always taken the view that the Reflection Group I chaired was responsible simply for the process in the College and the House at this initial stage. Any group drafting the teaching document would need to draw its membership from well beyond the House, including lesbian and gay people, theologians, parish clergy and others. Equally, a group on the development of pastoral practice would need broad representation.

The case studies in the House and College of Bishops prompted conversations of very different character and quality on this subject than we have had in my very long memory of such meetings. The House believed it would be helpful for members of the General Synod to engage in a similar process.

With the Synod's permission, I will now pass directly to the Bishop of Willesden to describe in more detail what we will do in this afternoon's session. Thank you, members of Synod.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): I confess I do not normally enjoy group work. In many a clergy study day or conference the one thing guaranteed to send half our priests scuttling for cover has been that moment when the facilitator stands up and says, "We are now going to divide you into groups". I am not sure I am the best advocate for persuading you to enjoy the groups this afternoon, but I want to try to do so. It falls to me to try to help Synod with the questions of process that we are now engaged in over these next hours as we move to the group work and then the take note motion.

I think I need to go back a stage. I do not want to attempt an exercise in self-justification. I do not really want to spend time in explanation. I do not want to make excuses for the House of Bishops' document. I do want to apologise to those members of Synod who found our Report difficult, who did not recognise themselves in it, who had expected more from us than we actually delivered, for the tone of the Report. On behalf of the House, and without being trite or trivial, I am sorry.

It might be helpful as we seek to learn from the experience of all this to analyse one or two points that have been the subject of debate in the blogosphere and on social and mainstream media. What actually happened? You cannot know what happened in the House because we were under the Protocols, but the House and the College spent its own time over the autumn period doing its own group work

and Shared Conversations. The role of the Reflections Group, which has been slightly exaggerated by some commentators, was merely to steer the process and help us come to a common mind. We have not suppressed the diversity of understanding and the range of views that exist in the House and the College. What we have tried to do, and what we have tried to do in the document, is to express a common mind, an expression of where the House's thinking has got to. It is a pretty conservative document, but it is owned by the whole House and the vast majority of the College. It would be wrong, I think, to say that this is a constipated exercise in maintaining a false unity among us.

One of the things that was formative for us all in our deliberations was our experience of group work, using case studies which were not dissimilar from those that have been distributed to you for this afternoon. The case studies helped us focus on the pastoral realities which were a part of the life of bishops and parish clergy and all clergy on a well-nigh weekly basis. They were not a way of objectifying the flesh and blood lives of lesbian and gay members of our churches, nor were they a way of ignoring what we had encountered in the Shared Conversations both in the dioceses and the July Synod. In our deliberations we set ourselves a range of possibilities of ways forward for the Church, from one end of the spectrum a retrenchment to a more conservative pastoral approach, through to our existing situation, onwards into the provision of official liturgies, and onwards into the possibility of what it might look like if we went for full acceptance of gay marriage with all that goes with it in the Church.

The case studies helped us to test the way in which our theological understanding, our instinctive pastoral responses, our calling as Bishops to focus unity in the Church and our calling to be guardians of the faith inform the way in which we come to a proposal. Paragraph 1 of GS 2055 puts it like this: "Addressing them involves fidelity to Scripture, the proper understanding of how the Church's traditions shape its current discipleship and the ways that changing approaches to human knowledge and reason inform or challenge the Christian faith as we have received it".

I guess what we are inviting members of Synod to do is to share that experience. I recognise there are some of you, and you have written to us already, who do not want to take part because they have lost trust in the process. I regret that decision. As I said to others who took a similar position from a different point of view at the July Synod, I do not think it is sensible to absent yourself from what is a very important formative discussion. Being part of the process is always preferable to non-participation and we want every voice to be in the room and to be heard. The

anonymised case studies are all based on real-life situations and they helped us explore what the phrase that we use in the Report might actually mean: “interpreting the existing law and guidance to permit maximum possible freedom within it”. It has become an odd phrase we have debated around. People are slightly fearful of it. That phrase does not resonate with everybody, but it is the area we would like to explore, and the case studies will help us do that.

The Bishops have been tasked with chairing the groups, which at least means that those of us who are allergic to small groups have to turn up. It would be perfectly possible for a group, if they wanted to, to appoint someone else to chair it if that was their decision. Please come to the groups prepared, ready to participate and to contribute to the fullest possible feedback on the questions that are raised. I recognise there are all kinds of vulnerabilities, not just from one subsection of people but from all sorts of people. I need to remind you again that the Protocols remain in place and they should be rigorously adhered to and not ignored.

On to the debate on the Report itself, I need to reiterate the factual position about what it means to take note. You will hear more about this but let us have it in our thinking as we go to our groups. As I said when we launched the Report, such a debate is on a neutral motion. It allows Synod to discuss the content and recommendations contained in the Report but a vote in favour of the motion to take note does not commit the Synod to the acceptance of any matter in the Report. That is the Standing Orders; that is not me. Of course, not taking note has become totemic—there are even badges for it for many members of Synod. If Synod declines to take note, the Report in its present form cannot come back to us, although we still have to find a way for the discussion to move forward. In the debate and in the discussion groups, the House will be listening hard, particularly for answers to the questions we have posed in paragraph 70 of the Report but also to other questions you want to raise.

We are not trying to limit the agenda here. We want members to address what we have put before you in all good faith, whether you like what we have said or not. It would be good if you could agree to take note. We are not claiming our Report is the last word. It is a situation report. It represents where our thinking has got to. You may not like it but that is where we are. Taking note does not commit you to our thinking.

A couple of final process questions. We need to recognise that behind this debate, and perhaps often unacknowledged, lie several major fault lines. There really is no shared theological understanding between those who see themselves as

upholding, from the point of view of Scripture, an orthodox position of no change, and those who see themselves as advocating, from the point of view of Scripture, a position of change. We sometimes forget that until we start talking to each other. I had a very fertile conversation about that in the pub last night.

We also lack a consensus on what we mean by “good disagreement”. Is it about process or is it about outcomes? Good disagreement is something we can have but not change, or change radically, but it can also be a description of living together in the Church as an outcome, and I think again we disagree among ourselves as to what we are looking for out of that phrase “good disagreement”. It is part of the reason it did not appear very much in our Report. I think the many who want change quite sincerely want good disagreement to mean pluriformity of practice in the Church. Others do not believe that is possible because of canonical and legal restraints and constraints on uniformity within our Church. We need seriously to address that. That is why the legal advice is appended to our Report, to show us what the issues are that we have to address whatever we do.

The last thing I want to say is I think this debate is going to be a continuing problem for us in terms of disagreement because we have not coalesced around an endpoint. When we legislated for women to be bishops, even those who were opposed came to the view that the Church of England had to make it possible for women to be bishops in the Church of God according to our Canons and formularies. In this debate we have not even begun to find a place where we can coalesce.

The Bishops’ Report acknowledges a place of starting. More conversation is needed, I hope not interminable. We do not yet know the next stage, but there are no secret plans up the Bishops’ sleeves about what we do next. Nor yet are there plans about when and whether we can bring a further Report to Synod. The amount of work that could be involved, for instance in a teaching document, is fairly substantial and we do not want to rush that. Please make the fullest possible use of the opportunities today in the groups and the debate and you will enable our deliberations. Thank you.

The Chair. Thank you very much to both of you. That concludes this item of business. I would, however, like to draw your attention to two things. First, that copies of the Archbishop of York’s sermon are available at the information desk as well as on the Church of England’s website. Secondly, there will be a service of Holy Communion in the Chapel starting at midday. We will now break for lunch before group work starts at 1.30 pm.

THE CHAIR *Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London)* took the Chair at 4.47 pm

MARRIAGE AND SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS AFTER THE SHARED CONVERSATIONS: A REPORT FROM THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS (GS 2055)

The Chair. We come now to Item 14, a take note debate on a Report from the House of Bishops: Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations. For this item we shall need the Report GS 2055 and Order Paper IV.

It may help members if I outline briefly how we might proceed this afternoon. After the Bishop of Norwich has introduced the debate I plan to move immediately to a three-minute speech limit in order to give as many members as reasonably possible an opportunity to contribute to the debate. If the debate is still continuing at around 6.45, I would welcome a motion for closure to test the mind of Synod on whether we should move to a vote.

Over 160 requests to speak have been submitted for this debate and so I apologise in advance that I shall not be able to call everyone who wishes to speak. May I make a plea to members not to continue standing if your points have already largely been made by another speaker. That would help us to be able to hear the widest range of contributions.

May I remind members that the group work took place under the St Michael's House Protocols. While those protocols do not apply to this debate, if members wish to refer to information disclosed in the group discussions they should do so in a way that avoids attributing it to any participant from the group.

Before we begin I would like to make three observations. First, I am aware that there have been comments on social media over the past week claiming that the conduct of this debate had been predetermined or fixed. You have already discovered how accurate suggestions of a one-minute speech limit from the outset were. As to the identity of those to be called and the order of speakers, I would simply invite those of you who do not know me to ask those who do what chances of success they think anyone would have of telling me what to do. You might recall the dictum, "You can tell a Yorkshireman; but you can't tell him much".

Secondly, it would be abundantly clear to everyone in this chamber that the matters

before us this afternoon touch the conscientious beliefs and personal lives of very many members present. No member should feel unable to express the strength of their convictions, but I hope that every member will do so in a reasonable way and with genuine care and consideration for other members.

Thirdly, it is normally my view that some members may have a rather exaggerated view of how many people outside this chamber are seriously interested in the Synod's business. Today, however, we may be sure that there are many following our proceedings closely. I would like to suggest to the Synod that we have an opportunity today to witness to the world how a group of faithful Christians engages with each other even when there is deep disagreement. I dare to hope that the fresh tone for which the House of Bishops has called will be evident in this debate.

Before I call the Bishop of Norwich to speak, I should like to invite the Synod to commend our debate to God in prayer, so let us pray.

The Chair led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Chair. Thank you for your patience. I now call upon the Bishop of Norwich to move Item 14. He may speak for up to ten minutes.

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James): I beg to move

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

Members of Synod, the Report before us today does not come at the end of a process and nor does it have conventional recommendations. It describes where the Bishops have reached in their reflections on marriage and same-sex relationships. It also provides a framework identifying areas where present advice, policies or practice need further consideration inviting this Synod and the wider Church to contribute. That is the point of a take note debate. It enables other voices to be heard, including those who believe the framework for further consideration is mistaken or wrongly constructed and needs modification. It is not a vote for approval but an invitation to comment and engage, and the House is listening.

I have seen references to this being the Report of the Reflection Group I chaired. It is nothing of the sort. That group was not a new Working Party but had a very limited task. It was established with facilitators and staff to oversee a process whereby the College and the House of Bishops were able to spend a substantial

amount of time in prayer, conversation, study and reflection. The Report itself comes from the whole House of Bishops and is commended by all. That does not mean that there are not significant differences of opinion within the House about same-sex relationships, as paragraph 17 explicitly recognises. What the House has done is to focus its corporate mind first on the doctrine of marriage and then on the pastoral practice of the Church in a culture where civil marriage is now possible for couples of the same gender.

First, the doctrine of marriage. The House of Bishops believes that the Church of England's teaching on marriage, which it holds in common with the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches and the majority of the Churches of the Reformation, should continue to be expressed in the terms found in Canon B 30, namely that "the Church of England affirms, according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage is a union permanent and lifelong of one man with one woman".

There was very little appetite in the House for any alteration to our doctrine of marriage. Previous statements from the House on marriage, the last in 1999, simply took Canon B 30 and what it says for granted. We cannot now separate what we say about marriage as understood in Christian teaching from what we say about same-sex relationships more generally in a society such as ours. *Issues in Human Sexuality* scarcely mentions marriage, hence the need for a new teaching document. GS 2055 is unequivocal in affirming the place of lesbian and gay people within the Church. As long ago as 1991 *Issues in Human Sexuality* said that those in same-sex partnerships should be included in the life and fellowship of the Church. The Report recognises that for Christians our identity in Christ is primary and of greater significance than gender, sexuality, age, nationality or any other characteristic. How can our understanding of marriage and that conviction about the place of all people, whatever their sexuality, within the life of the Church be held together? As we say in paragraph 2, we face a real challenge here since our failure to amend our doctrine of marriage to include same-sex partners can be heard as discriminatory and perceived as undermining our attempt to proclaim the core message of Jesus that we should love our neighbours as ourselves.

As we also say, whether that is the fault of our teaching or the mistaken assumption of our culture is not at the heart of the missiological problem. If we are heard as lacking in love, the Gospel will not get a hearing. If we are unfaithful to the teaching we have received, we are in danger of preaching a false Gospel. There is no simple and easy answer to this issue beyond committing ourselves to engagement with each other when the views on what we should do are profoundly contested.

Doctrine in the Church does not change quickly. It took us a very long time to come to a mind on the nature of our Trinitarian God and even the briefest acquaintance with the councils of the early Church reveals the tradition of doctrinal dispute and consequential division. Each age in the Christian Church seems to have its touchstone issue into which a good many other potential divisions and disagreements are channelled and focused.

I am grateful to a good friend for pointing me to Emil Brunner's book "The Divine Imperative" which I had not read for more than 40 years. Brunner writes in it: "The critical state of the question of marriage is to some extent a permanent phenomenon within history insofar as at every period in history monogamy has had to contend with other forms of union between the sexes, legalised or unlegalised. In particular, it is a phenomenon peculiar to the history of Christianity, insofar as the strict monogomistic demand only gained universal acceptance through Christianity, but if we examine matters thoroughly, we see that at no period in its history did it ever gain a final victory". It was as long ago as 1932 that Brunner thought the Churches should urgently re-examine marriage because of changes in family life due to industrialisation, the surplus of women following the Great War, the advent of contraception and a growing emphasis on individual rights and autonomy. Far more changes have happened since then. While Brunner did not advocate a change in doctrine, he was clear that what we understand as marriage was itself changing without sufficient theological reflection upon it. He believed it to be a creation ordinance and his understanding of marriage challenges a society which increasingly sees it based on two people being in love, for Brunner thought that an inadequate foundation, both sociologically and scripturally. Reading "The Divine Imperative" again made me realise how much we have to do and how rich our theological resources are if we will use them.

The second main proposal in the Report is called in paragraph 26 "a provisional approach" to further work following the Shared Conversations, and this includes much fuller guidance for clergy about appropriate pastoral provision for same-sex couples and new guidance about the nature of questions to be put to ordinands and clergy about their lifestyle. I do wonder whether the compass and extent of these possibilities have been appreciated.

It is explicit that there will be no change to ecclesiastical law or doctrine, but in the House and College of Bishops, as a result of the case studies, Bishops realised that a wide range of appropriate pastoral practice, for example in relation to prayers and ministry with same-sex couples, was possible without any revision of Canon law or doctrine. Hence the reference to maximum freedom, the extent of which

needs yet to be tested, as does our Church's capacity for generous pastoral practice in this area of her life. The appendix to the report from the Legal Office illustrates clearly just how substantial would need to be the agreement across the three Houses of the Synod if there were to be an authorised liturgy for the blessing of same-sex partnerships. While some members of the House would support such a development, few doubt it would be so contested as to fail and deepen division. So what would be appropriate? The lack of guidance at the moment may make clergy much more cautious in their ministries than they need to be and inhibits the development of appropriate pastoral provision. There is a great deal to be done to develop such guidance.

The House is also convinced that the way in which ordinands, and sometimes clergy too, are questioned about their loyalty to the disciplines in *Issues in Human Sexuality* is not working well. Given that *Issues* itself eschews interrogation of such a kind, it is anomalous that there is such a narrow focusing in the questioning, one which leads to the assumption that any heterosexual candidate does not need to be subject to similar enquiries. This is very explicitly not the introduction of a "don't ask, don't tell" policy, but one which suggests much broader understanding of modelling the Christian life.

In recent months, I have had a good many conversations with gay and lesbian clergy and lay people and benefited enormously from their love and care for me, not least their prayers for this week for I have needed them. Those conversations were very telling about the complexity of our situation.

The Chair: If you could bring the introduction to a close, I would be grateful.

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James): I will. I think I do want to say this, if I am permitted. One person was emphatic about the need to uphold the scriptural teaching of the Church. A couple who had entered a same-sex marriage were deeply disappointed they were not offered any form of public prayer. Another couple in a civil partnership, but uncertain about same-sex marriage, said that sharing the Eucharist with their brothers and sisters following the registration of their partnership was the greatest blessing they could receive.

It reminded me of the honoured place already given to lesbian and gay people in our congregations. It reminded me of the range of opinions which exists. I want God's Church to honour them all and I pray that the work which may flow from this Report will be a means of doing so. I beg to move.

The Chair. Item 14 is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Chair. I thought for a moment I was going to see no one standing.

Ven. Nikki Groarke (Worcester): I am grateful to the Bishops for this Report, of which I will take note. Though it is flawed, it captures the complexity of the journey we are still on. I was surprised it stopped short of recommending that we consider a commended form of pastoral service for blessing gay couples in committed relationships.

I was disappointed, not with the Bishops but with myself, for I fear my silence may have contributed to their reticence to test the voice of Synod on this. I am an evangelical, spiritually formed in a tradition which takes the Bible seriously and nurtured in churches which had clear views about sex.

More recently, I have had the privilege of ministering alongside men and women, lay and ordained, in long-term committed gay relationships—gay Christians, serving God faithfully and being used by him powerfully. This challenged me to wrestle with Scripture and my understanding has changed.

The Shared Conversations in July crystallised for me that, while I cannot at this stage support a change to the Canons on marriage, I would support the careful introduction of a pastoral liturgy for the blessing of gay couples in committed partnerships, but I have said nothing and I am sorry.

It felt difficult. I serve people of all traditions in my role as Archdeacon and life is simpler when you remain vague on controversial issues, so I stayed in the silent middle. I am now beginning to understand how much more difficult this issue is for those we spend so much time talking about as a problem to be solved.

By our action or inaction we are continually undermining their identity, questioning their character and Godliness, condemning them as somehow more sinful; limiting and restricting their flourishing, sometimes with tragic consequences. Pastorally and missionally, we are doing untold damage to individuals and to the Church. We all share responsibility for this.

Amidst the many words on social media about this Report, one comment by a gay member of Synod particularly struck me. She said: “A lot of us are happy to meet

in the middle and we're stood here waiting, but many on the other side won't even start walking towards us". I have walked towards those who I used to classify as "the other side", and, as I stand in the silent middle, I see many of my open evangelical friends similarly inhabiting this central space.

The problem is that it has remained the silent middle. I have been publicly silent, which was wrong. I lacked the courage of my convictions, and I apologise. It is time for the silent middle to become vocal and to be clear that many of us who are still evangelicals, still seeking to be biblically orthodox, are now acknowledging our Scripture interpretation was flawed. We must ensure all voices are heard and all people are valued, welcomed and affirmed.

Revd Martyn Taylor (Lincoln): I am a regular visitor to the Karamoja in North East Uganda and have been making trips there for the last 20 years. The Good News of Jesus only arrived in Karamoja 100 years ago. Traditionally, the Karamojong are fierce warriors, nomadic cattle people, feared by their neighbours, naked until the 1970s, despised as backwards by the rest of Uganda and polygamists in terms of marriage.

Archdeacon Sam Ngorok has been at the end of a gun seven times, particularly in his early ministry. He has planted many churches, established an archdeaconry single-handedly and trained up many Church leaders. As part of the disciplining of his own people, he has introduced Christian marriage to his culture, a profound gift that is helping to transform Karamojong culture one family at a time.

The social benefits are starting to be seen for women, for children and in terms of education. The Anglican service of Holy Matrimony based on the BCP, mixed with local custom, leopard skins and fatted calves, far from a hindrance to mission, is helping the Church grow and bringing transformation to society.

The journey is only 100 years old. The impact is generational. Sam had to pay 75 cows for Vicky and he only finished paying last year. His six daughters—he could be a rich man—will be given away without a bride price, just a token cow, in respect of local custom.

Sam's witness to the apostolic faith through his teaching on Christian marriage unites him and the Karamojong Church, not only with the Anglican Communion but also the universal Church going back to the dominical teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, one man, one woman for life, and the apostolic insight of Paul that marriage is a sign of the union between Christ and the Church.

Therefore, I am grateful to the House of Bishops for stating so clearly their support for the traditional teachings of the Church in regard to marriage, because it is going to be a massive encouragement to people like Archdeacon Sam in the Karamoja and many others in the Anglican Communion who desire that the Church of England remains faithful to the apostolic inheritance that we have not only received but also passed on to others. I therefore fully support the Bishops' Report.

Miss Lucy Gorman (York): For me, one of the most powerful statements in this Report was in paragraph 2: "If we are heard as lacking in love, our ability to proclaim the God of love as revealed in Christ Jesus is damaged or negated".

Well, trust me, outside of these walls we are being heard as lacking in love. You will know as well as me there are fewer and fewer young people attending the Church of England today. I am one of a dying breed. We are walking away from a Church that seems to struggle to show this proclaimed God of love to anybody outside of our comfortable boxes.

I am a dying breed because most people these days know someone who is gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex. Most people have a friend or a family member who sits somewhere on the gender sexuality spectrum. Why would they become part of an organisation which is seemingly homophobic, even if we do not intend it?

Within my circle of friends and work colleagues, it does not matter how many Renewal and Reform or Leading your Church Into Growth programmes we plough time, money and effort into, when talking about God I do not even get to the bit about a man being raised from the dead because we are being seen to be lacking in love towards the LGBT community.

I am a dying breed because my friends are dying over this. Some of us yesterday were reminded of the death of Lizzie Lowe, a 14 year-old girl in Manchester who hanged herself due to believing that God could not love her. I will leave you with the words of my friend, Helen, who took her own life in April last year. She said to me: "I love my local church and my faith but I feel conflicted about the Church of England. It makes me sad and angry that it can waste so much energy in being inward looking that it misrepresents God's generous love, Christ's teachings and, as an established Church, can be exempt from equality legislation".

I am not asking for same-sex marriage in churches—a girl but can dream—but I

plead with you not to take note of this Report because we can and need to do better.

Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds): Thank you very much for calling me in this important debate. We have, during the course of this Synod so far, heard much from those who have felt vulnerable and who have felt pain on the subjects that are under discussion and were under discussion in July and have been under discussion before that.

I am not in a situation where I experience those vulnerabilities, but I have experienced and do experience, and I know many other people experience, a great deal of pain, not necessarily about what the Bishops have said but how they have said it. I think that has to be taken note of by the Bishops in future communications with the Church and with the world beyond these walls.

I remind us all that effective communication is not defined by what the originator of that communication thinks they have said, but by what those who receive the communication perceive has been said. If I may say through you, Chair, I think the Bishops did not pay sufficient regard to that in preparing the paper that we have under consideration this afternoon.

I have heard the Bishops attempting to defend the Report on the basis of the positives within it. There are many positives within it, and I hope we build on those positives, but if those positives are not well-represented within the overall context of the paper, if the tone is wrong and if the tone is perceived to be grudging and condescending or patronising—I say “perceived” and I understand perfectly well that the Bishops may say that that was not what they intended but we have to deal with the reality of what people perceive—if that is what people perceive, then we have to be very, very careful indeed as we proceed with this subject that when future documents are prepared much more attention is given to the exercise of the imagination in understanding how those documents may be received. Do not dig a bigger hole.

The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Julian Henderson): As a member of the Bishops’ Reflection Group, the most frequent criticism that I have heard of the Report is that the Bishops have not listened to the voice of LGBTI people and that the Shared Conversations and the vulnerability that they required was, therefore, a waste of time. I want to respond to that criticism at two levels.

First, the Shared Conversations, I believe, were not a waste of time. They played

a vital part in the listening process, as people with different views were given the opportunity to talk and listen in a respectful way to one another. That is never a waste of time.

Secondly—and this is the key issue—we need to understand what “listening” means. It means hearing but not necessarily agreeing with what is heard.

It is a mistake to conflate listening with agreement. A person who receives and understands information and then chooses not to comply with it has listened to the speaker, even though the result is not what the speaker wanted. “Listening” is, therefore, a term in which the listener listens to the one who produced the sound to be listened to. You can change the letters of the word “listen” to be re-formed to spell “silent”.

I contend that the Bishops have listened and listened to a number of voices: the voice of the LGBTI community; the voice of Christians in other cultures; the voice of those from other faiths; the voice of our own tradition; and, supremely, the voice of Scripture. It is through that variety of voices that we have sought to discern the mind of Christ in relation to human relationships.

Another voice we have heard is the cry of many for the Bishops to give a bit of a lead and call the people of Christ to follow. That is what this Report has sought to do. While I know it disappoints some, its purpose was not to please everyone but, rather, to give a steer to the way we order our lives as God’s people. Our aim must be to obey that Word of the Father about his Son, “This is my beloved Son; listen to Him.” Thank you.

Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson (Chelmsford): This past week I have been replying to my correspondence by saying that I intend to take note of this Report because I believe that much of the work outlined in paragraph 23 is potentially very useful. But I hope that the teaching document will begin from the very beginning with an exploration of Christian anthropology, of how we understand human beings as, essentially, sexual beings made in the image of God; how that connects to our understanding of incarnation.

Jesus is our model of fulfilled complete humanity. His pattern of relationships was distinctive in his day. We know that we find our true identity in Christ and we need ways of communicating that which are meaningful and not glib. I hope that future documents will be able to begin with sexuality as a gift and not a difficulty.

We have been recognising the gift and significance of the Reformation at this group of sessions and in our diversity of view we carry the heritage of allowing people to read the Bible in their own language by themselves and for themselves. While our reading might be individual, our understanding and action inspired by the Spirit of God must surely be corporate, not necessarily uniform but always informed by others in the Body of Christ at all times and in all places.

In this painful and contentious area, I also dare to wonder if there are understandings which we could all share which speak to issues in much of our contemporary society. In an era when sexual relationships are often separated from commitment, can we not unite in communicating why we believe they belong together, why faithfulness always makes for human flourishing, and in resisting sex as a commodity or means of exploitation?

Of course, many of us would want to say much more than this, but would any want to say less? The great missional challenge is to have something positive to say about sexuality which gives an alternative to the language and reality of transaction and self-fulfilment. I hope our proper concerns with the immediate matters addressed in GS 2055 will not prevent us from finding something to say about the wider missional issues which are so real to many in our day.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): Mr Chair, on Monday I spoke about the lack of trust that, sadly, pervades our Synod at present. Today, I would wish to speak about what I believe lies at the heart of this. I would suggest that it is because of a lack of another core Christian value: honesty about our current situation.

Here is my attempt at being honest about the problems we face, which I feel were rather swept under the carpet in this Report and which is why I chose to use the phrase “ungodly” in my initial reaction to it.

Let us be honest: we disagree. We fundamentally disagree. We disagree about what is a salvation issue, independent of what Bishop Graham said in his answer to me on Monday. We disagree about the interpretation of Scripture. We disagree about whether God wants to bless or to judge same-sex relationships. We disagree about what “it” is in relation to my question about sex. Until we are able to talk openly and honestly about this disagreement, we cannot move forward.

That is why I felt so let down by this Report. It tried to answer a question no one was actually asking yet. We cannot possibly answer what to do about blessings or marriage or ordinands or married clergy until we have sorted out the

fundamentals of what we can agree or disagree about and what happens when red lines are crossed. Until we have done this, we will continue to produce cleverly worded reports that can be read by either party whichever way they want, which goes right to the heart of the charge of hypocrisy that many lay at the Church's door.

In July 2004, at my last Synod on Archbishops' Council, a man did something that has stayed with me throughout all the intervening years and has shaped much of what I feel about this debate. In the middle of our service at York Minster, a man ran up the aisle, shouting in protest, climbed into the pulpit and stated, "God has judged this Church and found it wanting". Never a truer word spoke.

Bishops, you have let us down. In my mind, many of you have put political expediency ahead of your principles. You have chosen to blame Synod for your decisions using the excuse that you feared you cannot get a two-thirds majority and fearing a split. You chose not to lead but to manage. You did not tell us what you yourselves believe, what you yourselves wished to see, and you abandoned those of us who trusted you to do so.

Please, let us be honest, until we can start being more open about the fact we do not know what to do, that we are divided fundamentally, we will never be able to move forward. The key question then is do we really love each other despite our disagreements and differences, or are we just staying together for the sake of the children? Because, if so, please remember that it is usually the children who get hurt, and in this case it is young LGBTI Christian youth. I ask you not to take note of this Report.

Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Southwark): Everyone knew that the Church was between a rock and a hard place on the issues that we are discussing this afternoon, but so it was on the issue of women in the episcopate and we found a way through.

I do not think anyone expected tectonic plate shifts in the Church's position on marriage but, like many, many others, I do feel that the document we have before us does not reflect the gift of sharing that was made by many who made themselves vulnerable to hopefully take the Church to a different place on the issue of sexuality; a less binary place.

As a black woman in the Church, at many times I have felt excluded and "othered" and my calling questioned by the institutional expression of sexism and racism.

My LGBTI brothers and sisters and all who call for a more inclusive church are feeling a similar pain.

Added to this, I am disappointed that we have not managed to move the message of the Church from that of arguments around sexuality to that of faith in action and the very present and public role of the Church in mission and social justice at a point in time when that voice and the actions taken by many, many Church members is really needed. People in the wider society may feel that seemingly closed minds equate to closed doors.

However, I want to end with a quote used earlier today in another place by an embattled black woman in public life that sends a message both to the Church and to my gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. Toni Morrison said in 2004: “In these difficult times, there is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do”.

Mrs Susannah Leafe (Truro): I have been called many things in my life, but this week for the first time I was compared to a dwarf, a dwarf from CS Lewis’s *Last Battle*, a dwarf that has been lied to so often by so many people that I have become suspicious; so suspicious that I cannot hear the truth; so suspicious that I am unable to see the beauty of my surroundings or the beauty contained in this Report.

I do not want to be a dwarf, so I stand here and ask for the truth, the truth that will allow me to know whether to vote to take note of this debate or not. You see, I am told this Report is beautiful because the doctrine of marriage and relationships is secure, but I am struggling to see that, so I need the answers to two questions.

First, does the doctrine of the Church, which the Bishops have said will not be changed, include the teaching of our Lord expressed and maintained in the Book of Common Prayer Marriage Service, as Canon B 30.2 states, or just the definition found in the footnote that was quoted by the Bishop of Norwich earlier?

Secondly, does the doctrine of the Church, which the Bishops have said will not be changed, include past decisions of General Synod, or are the boundaries to be found only in Canon Law, as paragraph 39 suggests?

I long to be able to positively uphold the beauty of marriage as expressed in the Scriptures; a marriage that is not primarily about us but a marriage between Christ and his Church; a marriage where Christ sacrifices himself for the Church. Jayne Ozanne is right, we do need clarity if we are going to be able to take note of a

report of this kind.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): I want to talk about disagreement and to do so I want to reflect on my relationship with another member of this Synod; in fact, it is the Synod member who sent me the text I referred to on Monday. He was the first person I ever told I was gay 27 years ago. I will always be grateful to him and I want him to know that today. He listened without judgment and promised to accompany me on my journey. He gave me a card of a shadowy road lit by sunlight which remained on my study wall for many years. Our paths separated. His ministry has taken a particular path. He got married and had kids. I met my partner 15 years ago.

Synod has brought us back together and we find ourselves serving the Church in close proximity. I told him something of my life and it has not been hard to see how difficult that is for him. He believes me to be living dishonestly in relation to the doctrine of the Church. A red line has been crossed for him. Of course, that is wounding for me too, working alongside someone who believes that about me. GS 2055, I am afraid, has taken me over a red line. What that means for our future working remains to be seen; it is too early to tell. Despite these red lines being crossed, the Church of England forces us to work together. It may not be good disagreement but it is, I believe, just about workable disagreement.

So here is my problem with GS 2055: I do not believe this Report gives us the evidence that the House of Bishops has yet reached that level of disagreement. Have they reached the moment when in all conscience the whole situation is intolerable and either from a conservative or progressive perspective up with this they will not put? I do not believe they have—yet. They might have come close, they might believe they have, but I do not think they have yet to do what my brother in Christ and I are with enormous difficulty clearly struggling to live with. Only when fracture comes can new possibilities emerge.

GS 2055 believes clergy are called to higher standards of conduct. I want to suggest to our Bishops that they have yet to reach that painful higher standard before they can discover whether workable disagreement is possible. For that reason I will not be taking note today.

I thought that would be my last word but as we worshipped last evening a text of Scripture came as a bolt from the blue: Genesis 32:6: “I will not let you go until you bless me”. Despite the enormous difficulty it presents, I say to that person who sent me that text and who finds my presence in this place so difficult, “I will not let

you go until you bless me". I say to those faithful godly people like Susie Leafe, "I will not let you go until you bless me". I say to my brothers and sisters in the House of Bishops, even though I cannot vote for your paper today, "I will not let you go until you bless me". I look forward to the day when every one of you feels that you can say the same of me. Thank you.

Ven. David Picken (Southwell & Nottingham): Since 2013 I have had the privilege of being formally involved in various forms of listening process and Shared Conversation initially at local level, then regional, then finally at the July meeting of Synod. This has not always been a comfortable privilege. Too often I have heard of discourtesy and worse in the experience of LGBTI people who seek to follow Christ. I have, however, been moved by the grace I have experienced in disagreement by many of those I have encountered suggesting ways in which good disagreement might exist.

The Report speaks of a changed tone and culture. I trust this will look something like the best of my experience, whereby grace and mercy are seen to outweigh a judgmental outlook. I was part of a small group in July that met well with excellent facilitation. Evidently, this was not true for all. My experience was an openness to listen to one another, be vulnerable about who we are and what makes us who we seek to be before God. I am immensely humbled by the vulnerability particularly of the LGBTI people in that context. Listening was a feature, which is why I was saddened that some absented themselves, and I am told some have done so again today, from the process of listening in group. Only by truly attending to one another and being present to each other can we move forward by God's grace. This Report, should Synod take note of it, is not and cannot be the end of the matter, as some have said. The Report itself acknowledges that. When the Church assembles we often describe it as "gathering". That must mean a true meeting which, unlike some events we all take part in, is truly about coming together to seek God's will and be prepared to be changed by that experience. I am committed to continuing this exploration of where God is calling the Church in this matter. I accept the right of the Bishops to regard themselves as having the primary teaching authority. I do wish to hear more of how a consistently welcoming and affirming culture might be envisaged by those who write the Report. If I welcome someone into my home, it is my home still; and if they reciprocate the same is the case. Let us not pretend that this is not the home for all. Welcome suggests that we are actually receiving people into our space. It is their space too.

In deciding what this might look like in the future, may I also ask how we might draw upon the experience we have listened to in discerning what this culture

change needs to reflect not just to the Church but to our nation.

Revd Andrew Foreshew-Cain (London): I am afraid I listened to rumours and prepared something last minute so forgive me if I stumble slightly as I try to say a few more words. Synod, I want to ask you not to do this: please do not vote in favour of this motion. We deserve better. Your LGBTI sisters and brothers deserve better, both here in the Church and in the country. Our churches and communities deserve better and the country we seek to serve with the love of Christ deserves better.

The Report admits that it addresses only the concerns and divisions of the Bishops on marriage alone. Nowhere does it reflect the work and the struggle and the genuine listening that we have all be involved in for the last three years. It fails to allow for a possibility of what we could achieve as a Church working together. I think the Bishops have begun to realise that it is a document divorced from the living reality of the people of God. We need something better to show that reality.

I suggest we need a commission or something, drawing together voices from across our Church the voices of all of us. Yes, of course the Bishops, but to help them understand where we really are—lay men and women—taking seriously their call to leadership in our Church, and we need openly confident LGBTI people in the room taking part. We need better because we, your LGTBI brothers and sisters, are not beggars looking for a new tone or welcome on the borders of the Church seeking entrance. We are your family in Christ. We are baptized, faithful, prayerful. We read and study our Bibles. I am not a case study. We are flesh and blood.

We need to be able to be honest about the divisions in the Church, as Jayne pointed out. Honesty should not be behind closed doors, fearful of episcopal unity, but be genuine and honest about what divides us and the great hope in Christ that unites us all. We need to trust each other, trust in our maturity in Christ to sit across the table with each other and see in each other the face of Christ, despite our divisions. And we need love. I need love. Oh God, do we all need love, and to hear a little genuine heartfelt love in this debate, because it has not been there much, and perfect love casts out fear; the fear that I think this Report reflects too clearly.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, we need better; we deserve better. Synod, please, I beg you, do not give in to fear; do not be afraid; do not take note.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): This Report is really personal because it is about me. As a gay man with an ordained partner I am disappointed by it. As has been said, it does not show that the voices of the Shared Conversations have been really listened to. For example, it presents a distinction between laity and clergy which is not always there. The whole section on questions to clergy and ordinands seems to imply that clergy only have same-sex relations with other clergy, as it talks about standards of conduct for the clergy. Although I am not ordained, the existing law and guidance for clergy must apply to me because I am in a relationship with a clergyman. We have supported each other for 14 years, lived through the sort of stuff that most couples live through, especially those going through a period of vocational discernment, and subsequent living apart for two years whilst he was at residential college, where I have to say I was made so welcome and I feel it is my college as well. Now we are living in an amazing, supportive and truly welcoming parish both within the church and the town where he serves as a curate. Yet the Report talks of continuing these different standards for laity and clergy. It is not just a laity/clergy split. The same standards as apply to clergy apply to me by definition. Yet for many gay clergy it is their partners and families who provide them with the love, support, encouragement and strength for their ministry, as you will know if you are married or opposite-sex attracted. Let us not forget that there are now families where parents are same-sex clergy and laity. You may not like it, but, as the Bishop of Norwich said this morning, the world is a very different place from 20 years ago. The Report fails to show that the voice of those lay and clergy, lesbian and gay couples has been listened to. It fails to set all God's people free.

Is it not ironic that yesterday Stonewall was running a faith role models programme for LGBTI people of faith? It is ironic because whilst we are here trying to exclude people of faith from the blessings we give to others, a secular organisation is working with faith leaders, including Church of England and Anglican clergy, to equip them to be role models in their religious and wider community. We have the greatest role model of all in Jesus Christ and his unconditional love for us all. Let us not leave it to Stonewall. We should be defining that new tone and culture willingly and graciously, not in the begrudging way this Report seems to.

For these reasons I cannot take note of the Report and I urge you not to either.

Miss Catherine Farmbrough (Deaf Anglicans Together): I am a minority; I am deaf, and there are others like me, those that are disabled, or have autism, or who are LGBTI, BAME, and they are just some examples. I do not know if you have heard of the term "minority stress". I have lived with that 24/7 consistently. People find

it hard to understand me. I find it hard to understand them. And I think people often wish that I would just go away because I am a problem.

Churches say that they welcome everybody, but it does in itself bring stress, a lot of it underlying and a lot of it painful. There are barriers. That makes me think about those that are LGBTI, but what about those that are gay and deaf or gay and black or gay and disabled? Dare you be two? For those that are participants of the Shared Conversations, did they have access to interpreters, were those people implicitly looked for in their feedback?

At my church—it is a deaf church—we accept 100% those that are LGBTI. I am proud of that.

If you choose to take note, please let there be real practical guidelines about what a welcome means in terms of participation of the whole diverse, wonderfully created people of God.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester): I am grateful for being called. It would seem from what we have heard this afternoon that the two positions are irreconcilable. The Report has sought to straddle the two positions but they cannot be straddled, and this is where we, as a group of people and the wider Church, cry out to the Bishops to make a stand and to make the position clear. Jayne Ozanne, Simon Butler, Andrew Foreshew-Cain and Robert Hammond, you have all spoken movingly this afternoon. The Lord Jesus; He loves you; He died for you; He died for each one of us. We are all broken sinners. We all fall short of the glory of God and it is on the Cross that he took away our sin. We are all beggars, as Andrew Foreshew-Cain described us, in need of a Saviour, but that requires repentance from that which He says is sinful.

Clearly, Genesis 2 and Matthew 19 demonstrate that all sexual expression outside the lifelong and permanent union of one man and woman is sinful and is contrary to God's purposes. We have a picture of Christ who will come for his beautiful bride clean; He died for her. We rob society of that picture when we seek to destroy the truth of what marriage is. God's people are called to be set apart. Clergy are to be examples to their people, to model holiness, chastity, purity, to model the way of the Cross. If sexual immorality were simply a secondary issue as opposed to a first-order salvation issue then the Bible would not link it specifically with salvation, and that is why it is so important to speak clearly with regard to sexual sin because, actually, heaven and hell depends upon it; our very eternity depends upon it. That is why it is loving to hold firm to it and it is also beautiful and freeing

for all, but hear this message: when Paul heard a of a specific case of persistent sexual immorality in Corinth involving a person who claimed to be a Christian believer, he acted decisively urging that that person be immediately excommunicated.

We have to make a choice about discipline. Paragraph 64 of the Bishops' Report states that there needs to be a fundamental trust in the clergy to know and be faithful to the teaching of the Church in their own lives and in their ministry to others. We are looking to the Bishops to lead in this. Thank you.

Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich): I would like start by thanking the Bishops on the Reflection Group for all the work that I am sure they must have put into this Report. It cannot have been an easy task. I do plan to take note of this Report. I may not like every single paragraph in it, there may be things I would like to see in it that are not or things that are that I would like to see not, but it was never going to happen, as the Bishop of Blackburn suggested, that we like every single sentence.

When I read it, there were two things that stood out for me. I welcomed the clear restatement of the Church of England doctrine on marriage, but I was also unsure about what was intended by the phrase “maximum freedom” in paragraph 22. I welcomed the opportunity we had earlier today to explore the case studies. I hear people felt uncomfortable and unhappy about them, but for me they were challenging and thought provoking. Even with the anonymisation and changing of details, it was a reminder that this is about individuals in our churches, in our parishes, and that situations can arise which are painful, they cause hurt not just to those particular individuals but to others—friends, family and the wider church community.

What I particularly welcome in the Report is the suggestion of a proposed teaching document in paragraph 23. I hope and trust that that will help to set out where the boundaries are for maximum freedom: what is actually permitted for clergy to do, that they and people in their churches on PCCs will understand what is allowed and what is not, so we know, as someone put it, the field of play; we know where the pitch is marked out. I plan to take note. I look forward to the teaching document and I trust and pray that it will be helpful and, as others have said today, clear. Thank you.

Revd Sam Allberry (Oxford): Thank you to the Bishops for their hard work. I am sure it was painful for them, but I think you do not become a bishop for an easy life.

I am same-sex attracted and have been my entire life. By that, I mean I have sexual, romantic and deep emotional attractions to people of the same sex. I choose to describe myself this way because sexuality is not a matter of identity for me and that has become good news. My primary sense of worth and fulfilment as a human being is not contingent on being romantically or sexually fulfilled, and this is liberating. The most fully human and complete person who ever lived was Jesus Christ. He never married, he was never in a romantic relationship and never had sex. If we say these things are intrinsic to human fulfilment, we are calling our Saviour subhuman.

I have met literally hundreds of Christians in my situation and know of thousands more who are same-sex attracted and who joyfully affirm the traditional understanding of marriage being between a man and a woman and the only godly context for sex. If you do not hear from more of us, it is because it is very hard to stand up and describe ourselves in this way.

As someone who uses the language of same-sex attraction, I have to say that my Church has not become a safe place for me. By "Church" I do not mean my congregation, I mean this Synod, not because of what the Report says but because of what has happened since. I was bullied at school for being gay. I now feel I am being bullied at Synod for being same-sex attracted and faithful to the teaching of Jesus on marriage. I am grateful that the Report reaffirms the traditional doctrine of marriage. I am concerned that we are already preparing to pastorally undermine it.

My question to the Bishops is not, "Will you preserve this doctrine?", it is, "Do you really believe in it? Is it good news for the world?" Many of us have found it to be life-giving as the message and teaching of Jesus always is.

Ven. Dr Jane Steen (Southwark): Thank you for calling me for this, my first Synod speech other than legislative business. I would like to thank the House of Bishops for this thoughtful Report and for its provisional approach to moving forward. In retrospect, the women bishops legislation which fell in November 2012 was a provisional moving forward; it was a start. It is no disrespect to say to the many people who worked hard on that draft legislation that what followed offered better legislative and associated arrangements. Pertinently, subsequently consecrating women did not retrospectively invalidate consecrating and ordaining men. Fidelity to the doctrines we have received is not incompatible with new Christian response. This has been true of marriage as well as of ordination.

The 1937 Matrimonial Causes Act—perhaps it is still legislative business—allowed the divorced to marry in church. Clergy could not be compelled to marry them nor to make their churches available, and this remains the case. Conscience is heard. Some clergy marry divorced persons; some make use of the Service of Prayer and Dedication after a civil marriage; some do neither. The decision is made at parish level. The doctrine of marriage remains. The House of Bishops' Report acknowledges that the Church of England enables a space for legitimate diversity. Within such a space we can—and do—accommodate those who welcome and those who doubt the Church's new insights. When we begin to do what we have previously left undone, we do not undo what we have previously done.

With this in mind, I would repeat my thanks to the House but ask Synod not to take note because I believe that this will better enable the House to establish parameters analogous to those available in relation to divorce, so that, in the first instance, what is disciplinal may be made known, conscience honoured and liturgical and pastoral practice made clear. This I urge them to do while theological and ethical work continues. Thank you

Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark): I have heard a lot during the conversations running up to this debate about the need to take the middle ground with us. Well, I stand before you as a member of the middle ground. I am vicar of a middle-of-the-road parish, St John's Waterloo. Our electoral roll has increased under my tenure from 80 to 127. We have five people thinking about ordination, of whom two are under 20. We have trebled our congregational giving and have doubled our parish share. It feels as though we must be doing something right and, yet, St John's is seen as a dangerous parish, one to be treated with kid gloves. Why? Because the vicar is gay and has a partner, so our story, which should be one of success and delight, is one of mistrust and fear.

I urge you not to take note of this Report because I do not believe it would help St John's to be seen as an integral part of the Church of England.

There are two specific points which I want to raise. First, I think the Report misrepresents the Shared Conversations. In York, I heard very clearly that many of us do not think the time is right at the moment for opening up Church marriage, but to say there is little appetite for change is a mishearing of what the Shared Conversations produced.

Secondly, I have a real problem with this notion of maximum freedom. I am afraid

what it makes me think of is saying to a prisoner in his cell, “You have maximum freedom to walk around the cell but of course we can’t open the door for you”. It will not serve as a good basis for an additional teaching document and I think until we can get the possibility of openness right there is no point in trying to produce a further teaching document.

I am very anxious that if we do take note of this Report it will gain a status which will not be helpful for the Church. That is what happened with *Issues* in 1991. It was not presented as policy but it magically became policy. This Report has already gone to the ACC as a declaration of the Church of England’s position.

We are not ready to make that declaration yet. It is previous, it is premature, and if we do it will not help us. My friends, I know that there is a huge amount of fear around, but the howls of anger and pain which greeted this Report but must be enough for us to say we can do better.

Please, let us try again. Let us use our wisdom, our knowledge and our faith and let us take time to produce something which confidently speaks to the Gospel for the whole of England. Please vote not to take note.

Mr Ed Shaw (Bristol): Since our group work this afternoon, I have been pondering a question. Group work does get you thinking. My question is this: how did the Lord Jesus manage to be both a liberal and a conservative? How on Earth did He pull it off? How did He manage to be inclusive of all, including a gay man like myself, and yet speak challenging words to all, including a same-sex attracted Christian like myself?

I welcome this Report as a chance to ponder together how we can do both. Jesus managed it. With His help, with His Spirit’s power, we can surely speak the truth in love too. I think this Report is a good, if not perfect, first step. Can we please, please take note of it, as we seek to become more and more like Him, the great liberal conservative?

Revd Canon Kate Wharton (Liverpool): I will be voting to take note of this Report. I welcome and agree with the view expressed in point 18 that the current Church of England teaching on marriage should not be changed. I wholeheartedly and unequivocally endorse all that the Report states in point 23 about the need for a fresh tone and culture of welcome and support.

I am appalled by stories that I read and hear of the times that we, as a Church,

have failed at this. I hope and pray that, from this moment on, we will see a genuine change in how LGBTI people are treated in and by all of our churches. I recognise, however, that some of you are simply unable to hear or believe that I wish to see LGBTI people more welcomed and supported because of what I just said a moment ago. I understand why that is but I regret it.

I welcome the suggestion within the Report of a new teaching document on marriage and relationships. I urge that such a document deals properly with the questions of singleness and celibacy and that any questions asked of ordinands and clergy are asked of all people, whatever their orientation or marital status.

A few years ago, I wrote a book on singleness and often I speak and teach on that subject. I have also been living it for 38 years. My understanding of what Scripture says about sex and marriage and the fact that I do not have a husband leads me to believe that I must live a celibate life with all of its struggles and joys. This was not, for much of my life, what I would have hoped for or desired; however, it has come to be a great blessing and freedom for me.

I think we need to rediscover a true understanding of celibacy within this discussion and not to simply dismiss it as unworkable or inhuman. It is vital that we listen to the voices of LGBTI people and seek truly to understand from them their experiences and, also, truly to learn from them and to change how we speak and act where that is required.

However, in doing so, let us not lose the voices of those who would choose to self-identify as same-sex attracted, nor of those who identify as heterosexual, living lives of obedient celibacy. I wish to take note of this Report because of its content and because of where it takes us, but I recognise that its tone has caused pain.

It is vital that we talk and that we listen. That is not rocket science, is it, but so often we have failed? As we discuss these issues, the world watches and, more than anything else, the world needs to know Jesus. It is my sincere prayer that through all of this we will be able to continue to walk together as those united by our love for Him.

Mr Ben Franks (Birmingham): It is because I am a Bible-believing Christian that I believe that we need to urgently embrace and affirm inclusivity and reject this Report which, unfortunately, does an injustice to the Church and to the House of Bishops.

As a reformed Catholic Church, we should be very aware that our unity has always been found in celebrating our diversity, and to move forward in welcoming and loving our LGBT+ sisters and brothers—no ifs, no buts—would be consistent with the greatest commandment of our Lord. Why has the House of Bishops decided to try to impose uniformity? What is wrong with a Church that holds diverse views and pursues diverse expressions of faith?

While the Report has baby steps of showing grace, it seems to be, “Same old, same old, sorry about that”. Another appeasement. What happened to taking risks for the sake of the Gospel? I am blessed to know many for whom this is a key part of their ministry. There seems to be a fixation with one side has to be right, whereas both sides can be right in their intent to love and serve God and, above all, in their commitment to love and follow the greatest commandment.

Such a Report does not deserve to be taken note of. Synod should reject discrimination, especially when it emanates from the House of Bishops. For me, an underpinning of our reformed Catholic faith is to be in communion with my bishops. This Report, with its shortcomings and oversights, seriously impedes this communion. This is not something I have imposed, a sanction as such, but a consequence of the situation that I and my LGBT+ and ally sisters and brothers have been put in by this Report.

It is unacceptable also that, while women were involved in the discernment about the rightful extension of the episcopacy to all regardless of gender, there have been no LGBT+ persons deeply involved in producing this Report, which obviously adds to the upset felt with this lack of listening.

Talking of listening, I do not think the outside world is really anymore. It has often been said that the Church is the biggest membership group that is there for the people that are not members, but outside mostly they hear we discriminate against women, they do not see ethnic minorities in our leadership or those who are disabled, and our current debate, unfortunately, carries on this trend.

We are approaching the LGBT+ community as an ethical issue; why not as people we are sent out to reach as part of the Great Commission? God is trying to use us to bring people to know him and to bring in his Kingdom, but I think we have got a long way to go.

The Bishop of Liverpool (Rt Revd Paul Bayes): It is the honour of my life to have been chosen to serve as a Bishop in this Church. I believe I am called both to

gather all God's people and to make the preferential option for the poor and outcast, both as the Ordinal asks me to do.

I honour the anger and, indeed, the fury of the members of the LGBTI community who see in this Report hard stones where they look for bread. I have written elsewhere of my belief that it is that tempered anger that will change the world, and we have seen something of it in this Synod.

When I go home from here, no matter what the result of this debate, I will seek in Liverpool to ensure maximum freedom under the law for LGBTI people so that their love, as it really exists, can be recognised and honoured within the Church as it really exists. I have sought to do this since I arrived in Liverpool.

To work for maximum freedom under the current law, I do not need the permission of this Report or of this Synod and I commit myself to continue to work with my episcopal colleague, my legal advisers, liturgical, pastoral, theological advisers, the parochial clergy and lay leaders of the diocese to offer maximum freedom within this Church. We will do this in liaison with others. We will not wilfully break the law. We will not flout properly agreed guidance, but our exploration of maximum freedom may carry us to places in relation to law and guidance where we have not previously gone and all this will happen anyway.

In producing this Report, we, as Bishops, tried something new. We tried together—God knows imperfectly—genuinely to seek our common mind and to conform it to the mind of Christ. The whole Church has heard that the weight of opinion of the House is expressed as maximum freedom and I do not want this weight of opinion to be blown away in the storm.

I want here to affirm the common mind that maximum freedom indicates, while restating clearly that this Report cannot, should not and will not mark the end of the road on these matters. With profound respect, therefore, and with thanks again to all my LGBTI colleagues for their witness, I hope that all Houses of Synod take note of this Report, take note of maximum freedom as we continue to move forward.

Miss Michelle Tackie (Chelmsford): I appreciate the deliberation and effort that went into this Report and was also encouraged by some of the elements in it. I, however, do not feel able to take note of the Report due to the omissions of recognising the damage that has already been caused by our Church to many across the whole human sexuality spectrum.

I was encouraged by the desire of the House of Bishops to have further discussions and get input from all on how to proceed with the four areas of work identified. I understand that some did not feel able to participate in the group work today and I hope that we all make everybody feel safe to participate in future work and enable mutual flourishing. If those who belong to the Church feel unable to participate, how can we attract those who are currently outside of our Church?

I would like to remind us all to continue to be mindful that the language we use, in turn, reflects our values and attitudes. There are also differences within our inclusivity issues which we would benefit from remembering when making our points on the similarities. For example, the discrimination a person experiences due to their sexuality or their ethnicity are not always the same. If I walked into a room, it is visible on sight that I am of a BAME background. I do not have a choice to share that information. It is visible from the get-go, no matter whether I would rather not share it due to fear of being discriminated against. When anyone walks into a room, the sexuality of that person is not known unless they have chosen to share it.

That being said, any kind of discrimination is bad and any kind of non-inclusivity in terms of our actions and our attitudes does not enable us to do God's work in its full entirety. I take note of the apologies shared today and the vulnerabilities of everyone being acknowledged. I also take note that the Report is explaining where the collective thinking has got to in the House of Bishops. I cannot, however, take note of this Report.

Mr Stephen Boyall (Blackburn): I want to start by saying that I intend to take note of this Report. It is great that it affirms the Bible, God's good words and the historic teaching of the Church of what marriage is. It is great that I and the majority of Christians around the world are not out of step with this Church's teaching on marriage. It is great that it affirms the rightful and proper rejection of homophobia and asks how we can better welcome LGBT people.

However, I do have concerns about the drawbacks of the Report, which are worth mentioning. The phrase "maximum freedoms" is one. It is hard to know what it means. It sounds to me like my attitude when I was 16 and, to a certain extent, still now of how far can I go. Instead, what I should have asked back then and what I should still ask myself now is: how can I myself be faithful to my King Jesus in His Word to us?

We are free already, so let us be faithful not push boundaries. We need not to see how far we can go before trespassing. Sin is dangerous and we need to be wary of it. So, Synod, let us take note of this Report. It is not perfect, but at least we can affirm what marriage is: a voluntary union between one man and one woman for life, and let us reject homophobia. Let us vote to support this Report.

The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Rachel Treweek): Written statements lack human encounter. Ironically, they lack clear tone and yet relationship is at the heart of what we are talking about. We all have numbers around our neck but we also have names and lives and roles.

I want to acknowledge that for many of my sisters and brothers here this is deeply personal and painful, and that is not intended to sound trite. Because I believe in relationship, I want to stand here and be counted as a member of the House of Bishops. We all agreed this way forward. We all agreed. It was not done lightly and it was not about group-think, but we did reach a place, after all the Shared Conversations, of identifying ground on which everyone could stand. That is very different from saying that this reflects a unanimous view.

It is not the end of the process. In our time together as a House it has been very clear that some of us, including myself, would prefer to venture beyond this common ground. When I was part of the so-called Pilling Group, I changed my views very much along the lines that have been so powerfully stated by the Archdeacon of Dudley.

I am willing to stand here, because unless we describe and articulate where we are now I think we might be at an impasse, unable to even explore new ground. I am challenged by what I have heard today. I am taking note. I want a different tone and we have got a long way to go to establish a culture of welcome. I want to better serve and care for the whole flock of Christ. I really want to explore what maximum freedom might actually look like, both locally and within a Church in which there are different theological convictions.

Standing in this place as a member of the House of Bishops is not about a unanimous view or collusion or group-think, and if it was comfortable I would be worried. This is about bringing the common ground into sharp focus and then inviting people to react and respond and that is what people are doing now. Thank you. I so agree that we need to have integrity regarding what a take note debate actually is, and that includes the House of Bishops.

As has been said, voting to take note is not about agreeing or disagreeing with the content of the Report. It is about saying that we have endeavoured to hear one another, to take note, as we continue to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us. My hope is that all of us, including every member of the House of Bishops, will be taking note of what we are hearing, and then there is so much more work to be done.

Ven. Martin Gorick (Oxford): As Archdeacon of Oxford, I live in an unusual place, in the midst of a university college, the JCR next door. We have around 600 students, but currently only two of them are members of our Christian Union. The perceived lack of welcome for LGBTI people is perhaps the biggest challenge they face.

People get Jesus; they get the Church, especially when it stands against poverty or for refugees, but they just do not get our apparent opposition to gay people. *Issues in Human Sexuality*—26 years old—can hardly be called radical, let alone avant-garde. Ordinands for many years have had to assert their allegiance to its teaching, as have bishops, but listen to section 5.6: “We stand alongside in the fellowship of the Church those who are in loving and faithful homosexual partnership, in intention life-long, where mutual self-giving includes the physical expression of that attachment”. Remember, this is 20 years before civil partnerships. The section concludes: “It is, therefore, important that in every congregation such people should find fellow Christians who will sensitively and naturally provide friendship and understanding. Indeed, if this is not done, any professions on the part of the Church can be no more than empty words”.

The languages or issues may be dated, its separate standards for clergy and laity controversial then and now, but it did set out a mixed economy vision for the Church where a traditional view of marriage was held alongside some very real freedoms. Strangely, when those freedoms were enacted as civil partnerships a prohibition was immediately placed on clergy celebrating them in contravention of this section of *Issues*. We have been on the back foot ever since.

I welcome the descriptions of maximum freedom and look forward to seeing what they can mean for us today and for the teaching document, especially if not too prescribed before it is embarked upon. We meet in London Diocese, brothers and sisters, with its threefold vision for a Church that is confident, compassionate, creative. That is the Church our world needs. That is the Church I would like us to be.

Ms Jay Greene (Winchester): I am a lesbian Christian. I am from a rural benefice where I am churchwarden and a lay worship leader. I am in a civil partnership with a member of the clergy team, but we are not treated as a problem. We are welcomed. Last year, when Marion, my partner, was ill, we were shown much love and given much help by the people of the benefice, for which I am truly grateful.

Last Sunday, in our congregations we discussed the Bishops' Report and what it means for them and for us. Many of the congregation, like Marion and I, are over 60. Sex may be a rare treat for them, or it may be—yes, you get this one—a distant memory, but, actually, they all want it to be a possibility in a committed loving long-term relationship. They were horrified to be reminded that you expect us to be celibate but you do not expect this of James over there, our vicar, and his wife, Sue.

Their question to you is: is this an example of institutionalised homophobia? However, their main disappointment was not about us. It was for themselves and their adult LGBT children, their nieces and nephews, their gay and bi friends, lesbian neighbours and transgender work colleagues. They want them to be able to come to church and have their partnerships celebrated. They are deeply disappointed with this Report, its tone full of fear, and they urged you and me to vote against it.

Today, I have heard the passion of Bishop Paul and the compassion and honesty of Bishop Rachel and, of course, it is very tempting to then think: "We will be all right, they can take us forward" but, paradoxically, I am going to still ask you to vote against because I want to give them that encouragement that the congregation, the people in the shires, want this Church to go further faster forward.

They do not understand why this issue is the rock on which the Anglican Communion will founder. They want you to find an accommodation, as you did over the remarriage of divorcees and over women priests. Like me, they love our Church and they want it to be strong, successful and inclusive. Please help us by voting against this Report and ask our Bishops to think again.

Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Deans): I am wearing a badge which says "I will not be taking note" because I will not be taking note, and I encourage you not to take note. It is nice that the Bishops are now taking note of what is being said in this chamber. It is a shame that they did not really take note of what was said in those Shared Conversations or, at least, it does not feel like that to me.

I have been on three of them: the regional one, we had a diocesan one and then the one we had at General Synod. They were a very, very good experience, even when a priest in our own diocese turned to me and said, "You know, Andrew, you cannot be saved." I said to him, because I did not really know what to say to that, "Thank you, because it must have taken quite a lot of courage to say that to me. All I can do is rest upon the mercy of God as I always do and pray that I can be saved".

You talk of a new tone. Well, if this Report is the first sign of that tone, I do not like the tone. You can do a lot better, Bishops. If the tone is about being nice to LGBTI people, you have already been very nice, but the Christian gospel is not about niceness; it is not about niceness at all. God is not nice. God is love and justice and integrity. God is peace, wholeness and life. That is the divine tone, but it is not the tone of the Church in this Report.

I have been wandering around the Anglican Communion a bit while I have been on sabbatical. I went to Canada and outside the Church of the Holy Trinity in Toronto there is a rainbow banner, as there is a rainbow banner, it seems, in every church, and on that banner it said, "Every day is Gay Pride Day at Holy Trinity". Can we not have a bit of pride in our LGBT members? We may not be Canada but this nation, Bishops, demands more love, more joy, more recognition of the blessing that gay people bring to every part of the life of our Church.

Synod members, please ask our Bishops to do better by not taking note. Thank you.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): Like so many of us, I am quite conflicted in this debate because I hear very clear comments with which I fully agree on all sides of the house. It may seem obvious to say that and, of course, in one sense, we are dealing with procedure here whether to take note or not to take note. I go back to some words of a Report from some years ago. It claimed to want to "welcome continuing discussion of issues relating to gay and lesbian people" and urged that this "take place in a spirit of openness and generosity". That was a 1995 debate, my first in this House; something to celebrate. Very sadly, we did not do much with that Report. We said we voted for it but we did not actually vote for its recommendations, of which that was one, and so we are here today.

I am also struck by an analogy with the work towards making women to become part of the episcopate. We knew where we were going on that. We had a clear

guide from the 1975 legislation saying there was no reason why women could not become bishops and priests, so we knew our endpoint, and the work of that particular business was to get to that endpoint and to do it well. I fear today that that endpoint is much less clear and at the moment on the table we have but one roadmap. However contested that roadmap is, it is contained in GS 2055: a new teaching document on marriage and relationships, guidance documents and some more theology.

I suppose I am struggling with the question of process. If I vote to take note then I am also going to have the opportunity to hear and participate in two following motions, and also that roadmap is ahead of us. If I do not take note then the roadmap has been removed and we wait for a new roadmap. I think it is for us to decide quite honourably whether we take note or not take note or abstain—they are all honourable positions—knowing we have one roadmap, or we have an unknown roadmap, and then we are back to the Bishops.

It is also worthy to note that only three Bishops have spoken after quite a lot of conversations. They have been listening and the contributions from each of those Bishops were, in their different ways, helpful and challenging and moving. For us, we need to say how much we trust. We have heard some quite realistic comments about trust. I am not asking for trust; I am a doctor so I would not. It sets before us honourable roads: to take note, not to take note; to abstain, each an honourable road. I think it is for our judgment to say which we think gives us the best future hope, given the complexity, the uncertainty, the wisdom and the honesty of so many speakers for which I am particularly grateful, not least from the Dean. Thank you.

A Speaker: Point of order: would you consider a motion for closure on the item after the next speaker?

The Chair: I would like to try and fit in three more speakers but I would be grateful for a motion after that.

Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury): I have a point of order; a different one. Can we move under Standing Order 34 to adjourn the debate on matters covered by GS 2055 to be resumed at the latest at the November 2017 sitting?

The Chair: Mrs McIsaac has moved a procedural motion that the debate be now adjourned and resumed in November 2017. Under Standing Order 34, Mrs McIsaac has not more than two minutes to give her reasons. I will then ask the

Bishop of Norwich, as the mover of the main motion, to speak for not more than two minutes. When I have heard those two speakers I will decide in my discretion under Standing Order 34 whether to allow any more speakers on the procedural motion.

Mrs Debrah Mclsaac (Salisbury): I think we have reached exactly the situation which this Standing Order was designed to address. There is in the paper a significant difference between marriage and other sexual relationships, but under paragraph 26(a) that distinction is not otherwise made. If the debate continues I think we will find ourselves in a position where we will be less honest, less co-operative and less measured, and we may, indeed, risk returning to the tone of the debates of five years ago in relation to women bishops. We have learned much through the process of the Shared Conversations and we should continue to keep on learning. I think it is important that we honour those Shared Conversations and that we honour the work that the Bishops have done. I do not want this Synod to be heard to say that it is all rubbish. The work that the Bishops has done is not and the paper is not, but it is deeply flawed. We would ask, I think, for them to go away all of us—Bishops, clergy and lay people—who have now heard from one another, including during this debate, and expect to go away and pray and think and reflect and, as we are to do, eagerly anticipate that the Lord will speak to us separately and together. It will not delay the start of a paper, or a series of papers, on the same things that a teaching document would address. It does not prevent steps being taken to change the culture or to address these questions of maximum freedom. We are having the debate, that is the important part of this, not the numbers on a vote which crystallises positions, and I think it will do so unhelpfully. I do not want us to descend again into the intemperate, painful, combative stance and tone that we know too well. Any vote risks doing that.

The Chair: I now call on the Bishop of Norwich to comment.

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James): I am very indebted to Debrah Mclsaac for the way in which she has proposed the adjournment. My concern is that if we do adjourn until November we will be returning with the paper as we have it now. It will not move us on. We have heard powerful speeches. My sense is that, painful though it may be, we should move to a vote so that ,whatever happens in relation to that vote, the Bishops can move on to the next stage of the work. I may be wrong but that is my feeling, so I resist the proposal to adjourn.

The Chair: Synod, I do not propose to allow any more speakers. I will now put to the Synod the motion: “That the debate be now adjourned and resumed in

November 2017". I should explain that if the procedural motion is carried, since the moving of the following motions is dependent upon the take note motion being carried, passing the procedural motion will also mean that they cannot be debated. I put to the Synod the motion: "That the debate be now adjourned and resumed in November 2017".

The motion

'That the debate now be adjourned and resumed at the November group of sessions'

was put and lost on show of hands.

The Chair. That is very clearly lost. The debate on Item 14 continues.

Revd Dr Jason Roach (London): Thank you for calling me, Chair. Understandably, there are many of us today who feel on the margins, who feel misunderstood, who feel nervous about how they are heard. The colour of my skin is one of those reasons, but we have heard from Michelle, Catherine and there are many others. I hope and pray that none of that means that anything that I say is beyond critique, whether I am speaking on fixed odds betting terminals or anything else.

The Archbishop of Canterbury left me chastened in his sermon at the beginning of this Synod because I know in my heart there are those temptations that he spoke of to indulge my sin, to seek influence unduly, to prize impact over faithfulness, even as I stand here now.

I need you, brothers and sisters, both to recognise my context, yes, but to speak the truth in love to me and encourage me to keep walking the way of the Cross. In other words, nothing that I say should be beyond critique. I thank those of you within the Synod who have come to me to chat informally about my personal view on sexuality and marriage, which is the historic teaching. You know who you are. I know that was costly to you, but they are right: my view is not beyond critique.

The Bishops have stated that at present they see the historic teaching of the Church founded in the Scriptures that we celebrated earlier in this Synod as being where we are and not intrinsically a road block to mission or welcome. I believe that is a brave decision in light of all that they have listened to and the social context in which we live. They said that they have heard, but all that they have heard is not beyond critique on both sides; the side that would want to move away from the

historic teaching and the side that would resist exploring maximum freedom so that we can love LGBTI people as much as possible in our churches. I look forward to a fuller teaching document that fleshes out that sentiment.

In the course of my ministry I met a woman who had a sexual history that meant she was hated by her community. In fact, when I came across her, she was about to be assaulted. A man who knew her came from nowhere and managed somehow to get these men to move on. Then something incredible happened. This man who had shown so much welcome, this man who had made a safe space for this woman to inhabit, this man who turned away hostility, turned to this woman and said, “Sin no more”. Her life was not beyond critique. I met that woman in the pages of Scripture; the man was Jesus Christ, our Lord. He loved and yet He was able to challenge as well. I think this is what the Bishops’ reflections have tried to do for people on all sides of this debate and I would urge us to take note.

The Chair. I am afraid the procedural motion did take a little time so after the Archbishop of Canterbury I would welcome a motion for closure.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): No one is a problem. There are no problems in this room that are people. What we are talking about this afternoon and evening is not ethics principally, but for many, possibly for all here, a question of identity; who we each are and who we are together as people, people made in the image of God—all, without exception, loved and called in Christ. There are no problems; there are simply people.

How we deal with the real and profound disagreement put so passionately, so clearly and so eloquently by numerous people today, the reality of disagreement, is the challenge we face as people who belong to Christ. To deal with that disagreement, to find ways forward, we need a radical new Christian inclusion in the Church, with a basis founded in Scripture, in tradition, in reason, in theology, in good healthy flourishing relationships, in a proper 21st Century understanding of being human and of being sexual. That will require a remarkable document put together with the Bishops but put together by the whole Church, by every single part, not excluding anyone.

The current Report is not the end of the story. We know that. Bishop Graham said that clearly. We will, as the Bishops, think again and go on thinking. We would do that anyway. We will do that whether we take note or not. We will seek to do better. We could hardly fail to do so in the light of what has been said this afternoon.

One of the things that strikes me most in this is that it was right, whoever said it, that this needs to be about love, joy, and celebration: of our humanity, of our creation in the image of God, of our belonging to Christ, all of us without exclusion. I believe passionately that the Report worked on, struggled on, not carelessly not thoughtlessly, gives a basis for moving on. A good basis, a roadmap, as the Chair of Laity just said.

We will, I hope, take note of this Report, but, whether we do or not, obviously we will accept the voice from the Synod. But we are going to move on and find, as I say, a radical new inclusion based in love, based in our Christian understanding, neither careless of our theology nor ignorant of the world around us. That is the challenge we face as human beings, not problems, not issues, but human beings made in the image and likeness of God called to salvation in the way of Christ.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Point of order.

A Speaker: Point of order.

The Chair: I think Mr Freeman's dulcet tones were first off the mark.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): A motion for closure on Item 14.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Freeman. That has my consent.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I now invite the Bishop of Norwich to respond to the debate. He has up to about six minutes.

The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James): Thank you, Chair. I am very grateful to all who have spoken with such passion and conviction. Whatever the merits of GS 2055 it has generated articulate response. I can guarantee that the House of Bishops will consider carefully and prayerfully all that has been said today since I am sure my own response within the limits of time cannot begin to do justice to do it. I have lots of notes about many of the speeches and I can hardly mention any of them. In the House of Lords, Ministers are given about 20 minutes to respond after debates that only last about an hour and then they always say, "I am going to write to everyone on the things that I have not covered". I am not going to promise that, but there is a lot that could be written about, and I think one of the

things we will do in the House is certainly read very carefully the transcript of the debate.

I was moved by the Archdeacon of Dudley's plea from the silent middle and the possibility of a commended liturgy. Martyn Taylor reminded us of the way in which marriage and Christianity has been so integral to mission. Then, of course, Lucy Gorman reminded us of how challenging the doctrine of marriage is to mission in our own culture. We heard things from Joyce Hill and the Bishop of Blackburn about communication and learning. I recognise all that Jayne Ozanne said about the need to be clear and honest about our disagreements. The recent FAOC Report of course did reveal our disagreement about the very nature of our disagreement. That is one of our real problems, we do not agree about what we disagree. I think I have got that right. I will read it and see whether I made any sense.

Simon Butler illustrated very movingly not just the personal challenge of disagreement but how, of course, it can be grace filled if we stay with it. Catherine Farmbrough reminded us from her own perspective of the need for a radical welcome to all and of course in succeeding speeches I was struck by Susie Leafe and Andrea Williams and then Andrew Foreshow-Cain and Robert Hammond illustrating just how profound the distance is between us. I thank them all for their candour. I thank too both Sam Allberry and Ed Shaw for their brave and personal and honest speeches. Jane Steen rightly drew an analogy with previous experiences, with difficulties in this Synod, not least over women Bishops. I think our great problem, of course, as Jamie Harrison said, is we are not all agreed on where we should reach, which is what makes it so difficult to think of an alternative way. I am grateful to my episcopal colleagues, not least the Bishop of Liverpool, for stressing what maximum freedom can mean, and of course I recognise that Giles Goddard and Stephen Boyall do not see it as a liberation for quite different reasons.

We are taking note, as the Bishop of Gloucester said, about what has been said here today, although it does seem that this Synod believes taking note means approval, so perhaps we should look afresh at some of our synodical procedures and the way we organise ourselves, because if they are not clear to us, they are certainly not crystal clear to a world beyond this Synod. This take note motion does seem to be presented beyond as a vote about same-sex marriage and whether we accept or reject it.

If members want to give a signal to the Bishops about what direction you believe

developments should take, it would be best to vote in favour of taking note, since this would allow the debates of two very different following motions tomorrow, enabling more time for an articulation of the direction of travel to be urged.

In relation to that all that there is one more thing to be said, and perhaps it is because I have been around so long, but it is very unusual in my experience, perhaps unprecedented, for the House of Bishops actually to consult the Synod during a process related to the production of a teaching document which is entirely within the remit of the House of Bishops itself. It did not happen in 1991 before *Issues* was published. It did not happen before the 1999 marriage document was published. It did not happen on any of our statements in the last ten years. It is important to recognise that this, flawed though I am sure it is, has been an exercise in consultation which has never happened before at such a preliminary stage. I am glad the House of Bishops has done it, painful though this debate has been, and it is important that the House should do so in the future, but I do want you to know just what an unprecedented procedure this has been.

One of Cardinal Newman's most often quoted aphorisms is: "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often". This is sometimes cited in unlikely support of various changes that Newman may never have anticipated and certainly would not have approved. He is, of course, talking about our calling to be changed into the likeness of Christ. An openness to such change is needed by us as individual Christians and Christian communities. To the Philippians St Paul wrote, "Jesus Christ will change our humble bodies so that they may be like His glorious body", and who we truly are will be taken up fully into Christ and all the characteristics of our bodily life—gender, sexuality and all the rest—penultimate to that vocation that claims us all, as the Archbishop of Canterbury said so eloquently in the final speech.

I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): May we please have a count of the whole Synod?

A Speaker: Point of order.

The Chair: I think the Prolocutor of the Southern Province might have been first.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Can you give a ruling about whether an alternative method of voting is possible once that point has been raised?

The Chair: An alternative method is available if it is requested and the requisite number of members stand in their places.

Mr Philip Geldhard (Manchester): Point of order. Would you accept a motion on this item for a vote by Houses?

The Chair: Mr Geldhard has proposed that we have a vote by Houses. Are there 25 members that wish that to take place? There clearly are so we shall have a vote by Houses.

Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker): Point of order.

The Chair: I am afraid we have started the process for the vote, Bishop.

Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker): Will there be another opportunity?

The Chair: After the vote.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): Point of order. Mr Chairman, I am confused. Is it possible to take one point of order after the first one has been raised without responding to it, if you see what I mean? Is it in order to accept a point of order on the vote by Houses after someone has called for a vote by the whole House?

The Chair: Yes, it is possible, Ms Dailey. This is a counted vote by Houses. Can I remind the Synod, especially those in the gallery, that it is the custom of the Synod to receive the result of votes in silence.

The motion

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

was lost after a counted vote by Houses. The voting was as follows In the House of Bishops, those in favour 43, against 1, with no recorded abstentions; in the House of Clergy, 93 in favour, 100 against, with 2 abstentions; in the House of Laity, 106 in favour, 83 against, with 4 recorded abstentions, so the motion was lost. :

Given that the following motions could only be taken if the motion at Item 14 had been carried, they now lapse. Before I adjourn the sitting, may I simply thank you all for your sensitive contributions and careful listening.

Canon Mark Russell (Sheffield): Point of order. I thank you, Sir, for the way in which you have chaired the debate. Sir, may I finish my point of order? You have chaired this debate with grace, with integrity and with courage. There is not one person here who is not delighted that you are in that seat and not us. Sir, we wish you a very pleasant evening and thank you for taking us through the debate.

The Chair: Whilst I appreciate your remarks, Mr Russell, as you will well know, they are out of order. That concludes this item of business. Thank you.

Full Synod: Fourth Day

Thursday 16 February 2017

THE CHAIR *Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London)* took the Chair at 9.16 am

The Chair. Good morning. We begin our day with worship.

Mrs Margaret Swinson (Liverpool) led the Synod in an act of worship.

FAREWELL TO THE BISHOP OF LONDON

The Chair. From our place in the Diocese of London we come now to Item 15, members of Synod—or should I say “beloved”. This is our formal opportunity to give thanks for the Bishop of London’s partnership in the Gospel and to bid him a very fond farewell. Before I call on His Grace, may I welcome to the gallery Mrs Caroline Chartres whose devoted service to the diocese and the Church has been beyond measure.

I now call upon His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to address the Synod and, as some of us think of the Bishop of London, he has no time limit.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): I wish. Thank you, Chair, for that and for taking one of my lines. Saying farewell to someone like the Bishop of London is hazardous in the extreme. Everyone has a story, everyone has an anecdote (some 10% of them are true), everyone wants a particular aspect of this extraordinary and remarkable ministry honoured, and he is listening ready to wince at hints of people being over-emotional, getting facts wrong or descending into cliché.

At one recent meeting someone reacted enthusiastically to a Richard discourse with something of a cliché to which he said, “Well yes, but that phrase is really rather bedridden in the dormitory of the soul”. A classic example of the genre of the elegantly hilarious put-down.

The Chartres family Christmas card was rather fine this year. It showed the whole family—Richard, Caroline, Alexander, Sophie, Louis and Clio—sitting on the steps of the Old Deanery. Well actually, it showed them twice, the first one taken in 1996, the second in 2016.

In some ways it

summed up rather well the more than 20-year episcopate, Richard perhaps showing a little that 20 years had passed (but only a little), Caroline not at all, but the four children as adults entirely different. The impression is of rock-like staying the same and preserving continuity, but actually enabling people to grow and flourish and change. It is that extraordinary combination which makes that photograph such a good metaphor for his ministry.

Richard could be relied on to be a source of tradition and strength for the Church of England, usually because he was the best-informed person in the room about where traditions had come from, and I suspect, on some occasions, because he at least gave the impression he was even if he had only made it up in the moment. You could usually understand from his subtle tone what he thought of some of the traditions.

An enquiry was made of him as to where in Lambeth the portrait of a certain Victorian Archbishop of Canterbury could be found: "Oh, he is the wet-faced one at the end of the corridor wearing red convocation robes, in fact he was responsible for inventing the dreadful so-called tradition of red being the default colour. Complete nonsense!"

This, on that occasion, was no surface understanding. Richard's enquiring mind has led him to know not only the history of his own Church, but also of those with whom he has engaged ecumenically, perhaps above all with the Russian Orthodox Church. Richard will admit to being a Slavophile with a particular admiration for the Emperor Alexander. This has led to him being very trusted by the Orthodox hierarchy and has helped to keep open channels of communication with one of the major churches of the Orthodox tradition.

If you are secure in your historical understanding then some of the complications of establishment hold no fears. In this, Richard's ministry in the Chapels Royal has been hugely appreciated to say the least, but it would be inappropriate here to go further into what he has given in care to the Royal Household, other than to point to the fact that he is a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (something in the personal gift of Her Majesty).

Richard's intellectual capacity need have no other illustration than the fact that he holds five honorary doctorates.

So, in many ways, we have someone who has exhibited all the best features of the firm and established Church.

An article in the *Guardian* last year said that the Bishop of London in his dressing gown (which he is not wearing in that photograph) going to his vegetable rack could give the impression of a major ecclesiastical procession.

His ministry as part of the Established Church is perhaps best-illustrated for me—and forgive me for those of you who have heard me quote this before—in a lengthy quote I shall give you from his speech in the debate in the House of Lords following the atrocious terrorist attack on 9/11. Most here will remember the atmosphere of shock, of fear, of hatred and of desire for revenge. When he spoke, this is what he said: “If Europe is to find the moral courage in a sustained way to defeat terrorism, it has to rekindle conviction about the things that are worth dying and living for. An indiscriminate and indifferent tolerance for all views, which lacks clarity about what is good and true, undermines the will to resist the terrorist. At the same time, it opens up a vacuum which can easily be filled with irrational calls for violence against scapegoats. We shall not make our proper contribution to the struggle that is in progress unless we are robust about our own faith and convictions. We also need to be urgent in the task of finding allies in all faith communities and among all people of good will for a common defence of the values and laws which make civilised life together possible”.

That speech, reassuring to a House of Lords looking for a way forward, magnificent in its structure as prose and rhetoric, yet more magnificent in its challenge to rise above the predictable and to live up to the best heritage of our Christian nation. These words illustrate Richard’s capacity in the public square; his ability to show what a bishop at their best can be in the public realm.

But that is not the whole story. There is another side to Richard which perhaps can be illustrated like this. (Video clip shown) Those shirts were exhibited year-by-year at the HTB focus week, which he attended every year. I have a particular anecdote, and again I have said this before and for those who were at the dinner last week, my apologies, but it seems to illustrate much about Richard’s deep sense of theology and inclusion within the Church of England.

I was with him at one of these weeks. We were standing in the front row. His shirt was as loud as the music. The music was so loud that my shirt was flapping on my back. I shouted discreetly up to him, “This music and the drums are really very loud”. He lent down and said, “Carruthers, it’s when the drums stop that we have to worry”.

Here is a Bishop of London who retires with more people attending the churches of the diocese than when he began, who knew his theology and could expound it in a thoroughly evangelistic and engaging style, who was unafraid to let people experiment and push the boundaries of how people could be attracted to be part of the Body of Christ; who was never self-important, who never drew attention to himself but was confident in his vocation and calling, and so we found the encouragement of churches like HTB and Alpha, the honouring of traditionalists, the willingness to be a Bishop and Father in God to everyone. Out of the diocese, in partnership with Chelmsford, came the extraordinary flourishing of St Mellitus as a theological educational institution which has been transplanted to other places.

Richard's episcopacy has been one of hope and energy and an articulated confidence in the Good News of Jesus Christ.

His habit of signing off his letters with the phrase, "In gratitude for our partnership in the Gospel" was a sign of great encouragement to recipients, though the phrase that usually came earlier of, "I have much more to say to you but you cannot bear it now" slightly less so. It speaks, too, of an understanding of the episcopal role that is confident but not overbearing, authoritative but not authoritarian.

His contributions in General Synod were always powerful, perhaps because he kept his powder dry for when it was needed. Perhaps we will spare the blushes of the General Synod as to quite what he thought of the institution, but he was not afraid to take a lead. Memorably, he led on the whole matter of green issues and our responsibility for the environment. Who, who was there, can forget his exhortation to members of Synod to take home their free device for reducing the flush in their lavatories.

Or even when talking about a trip to a European capital where he remarked in one speech that a particular church was not in the most salubrious surroundings next to a nightclub called "Crazy Love". "Rather fortuitous that," he remarked, "a very good description of the Gospel really".

Questions seemed not to trouble him, memorably the one from Mrs Humphreys. "Ms Jacqueline Humphreys (Bristol) to ask the Chairman of the House of Bishops: Does the House of Bishops join me in congratulating the Church of England on winning the "Beard Friendly Employer of 2003" Award from the Beard Liberation Front (*Church Times* of 27 June, page 4) and, if so, can the House please indicate any plans it has to promote the wearing of facial hair by all clergy? Reply by the Bishop of London: "I am very grateful indeed for this serious question. For far too

long there has been a prejudice against beards but, as Ms Humphreys may be aware, from the time Archbishop Cranmer began to grow his beard, beards became associated with an apostolic style of teaching and preaching throughout Europe.

Beards shrank to the exiguous with the advent of the Age of Reason. Indeed Tsar Peter the Great placed taxes on beards to bring about the rationalisation of Russia but the beard returned with our re-engagement with the supra-rational aspects of human nature and some of the greatest Victorians were beard-wearers.

I am glad the questioner has recognised the profound significance of the revival of this tradition and the House of Bishops is united in being glad that the Church of England has won the title of Beard Friendly Employer 2003”.

It has been an indefatigable, high-profile ministry, where at high occasions of state the Church of England could utterly rely on the Bishop of London to present the Gospel and speak effectively to the nation.

But, of course, the partnership that many have noted, including the Chairman before I spoke, is that with Caroline. She is very much a person with a career in her own right whose diary column in the *Church Times* is still fondly remembered years after she stopped writing it. Caroline underwent serious illness not that long ago. It said so much about them both that things carried on as normal to all appearances despite what must have been a harrowing experience for the family. The Old Deanery, when set out to welcome and entertain, is a marvellous place to be, as I can personally witness on many occasions, and Caroline is at the heart of that hospitality.

Richard, as has been said, has his well thought through theological views, but he has also been able to hold and embrace those who differed from him, so that the Church might thrive.

We will miss the wonderful cadences of Richard’s oratory, the verbal flourishes, the seemingly effortless ability to memorise and quote aptly Scripture and poetry, historical fact and literary gem.

Personally, I cannot adequately thank Richard enough for the support he has given me over these last years. He has been an extraordinarily able, inventive, imaginative, creative and remarkable Chair of the Board of the Church Commissioners and has been unstinting in his support of Renewal and Reform.

He has been a wise adviser and careful in speaking with friendship but also correction.

It is left to wish him and Caroline the most blessed of retirements. May he be set free to delve ever deeper into the esoteric elements of history that so fascinate him. We know and we pray that the preacher will still be heard frequently on all sorts of stages.

So many have found the joy of knowing Jesus Christ through the episcopate of this Bishop of London that, Richard and Caroline, we can only thank you and your whole family deeply and sincerely for your service and ministry.

The Chair. That concludes this item of business. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker)* took the Chair at 9. 57 am

ADDRESS FROM THE MOST REVD DR JOSIAH ATKINS IDOWU- FEARON, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

The Chair. Synod, this now bring us on to Item 16, the address from the Most Revd Dr Josiah Atkins Idowu-Fearon, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. Archbishop Josiah has been Secretary General since July 2015. It is the usual practice for the Anglican Communion Secretary General to address a Synod during the early part of their tenure. The Business Committee has decided that this presentation will not include any opportunity for questions. I now invite Archbishop Josiah to address Synod. He has about 30 minutes but we are not being too strict on the timings this morning.

Most Revd Dr Josiah Atkins Idowu-Fearon: Brothers and sisters, I bring you greetings from the wider Anglican Communion; and they are real greetings in the Spirit—warm and heartfelt. You, the Church of England, can never be just one of the 38 provincial churches of the Anglican Communion. As the very word ‘anglicana’ implies, there is a living tradition of faith in the Gospel as this Church has received it, from the missionary work of St Augustine of Canterbury 1,420 years ago, to the particular experience of renewal in the English Reformation and beyond. The Churches of the Anglican Communion find their common roots in the Church of England, and the tradition of this Church, to the witness and mission of the apostolic church. There are still many Anglicans around the world who look to

you as the “Mother Church” and they do this without sarcasm, cynicism, or misplaced anachronism. They feel they owe so much of their faith, at least in human terms, to the faithful giving of Christians in the Church of England over the centuries.

While the Diocese of Canterbury with its Archbishop, clergy, people and cathedral may rightly be described as the “Mother Church”, the Church of England as a whole is certainly the “elder sister Church” within the Anglican family. It is this image that I will use to talk about your relationship with the Anglican Communion. I want to describe the relationship of the Church of England to the wider Anglican Communion today, and also to prescribe what that relationship might be.

Let me begin by saying that the Communion that you have shaped is vigorous and robust in fulfilling the apostolic mandate given by the Lord Jesus, to make disciples of all the nations. There are, of course, tremendous challenges and problems, and I will note some later. But in so many ways, the wider Communion is filled with God’s life.

In the past year I think of the Spirit-filled decision of the Primates of the Anglican Communion to “walk together”, and to engage in mission together, despite unresolved tensions between them, particularly on issues of human sexuality.

I think of the gathering of the global Anglican Communion at the Anglican Consultative Council last April in Lusaka, Zambia, under the theme of “Intentional Discipleship in a World of Differences”. We encountered the vibrant life and mission of the Church of the Province of Central Africa. We were strengthened by common prayer and common study of the Bible every day. We came together as a Communion of Churches in the extraordinary daily celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, and most memorably, the Sunday celebration with the Archbishop of Canterbury. (The service took only four and a half hours!) The 45 ACC resolutions ranged from mission and discipleship, to the place of women and men in the church, to ecumenical engagement with other Christian World Communions, and engagement with civil society, especially the United Nations’ organisations. The ACC came to a common mind on many issues: inter-faith relationships, the environment, safeguarding and safe church. There was an expression of solidarity with Churches undergoing persecution and suffering. The resolutions reflect a Communion that is robust and vigorous in its discipleship.

Within the Anglican Communion the Gospel is being proclaimed by church after church, in nation after nation and the Gospel is being received in faith. The Body

of Christ is growing, if not everywhere, at least widely. There is much effective evangelism, mission and discipleship. The Scriptures are being translated and read. Schools are being built and children taught to find a path to a steadier life in this topsy-turvy system of not-very-benign economics and politics.

In many places communities are being strengthened in common purpose and action by Christian leaders. The Churches in many divided and conflicted regions are proving to be sources of reconciliation, sometimes the only ones, as we see in such inspiring ways in Burundi and South Sudan. Anglicans work with other Christians in Africa, in Asia and elsewhere with an openness and co-operative spirit; they reach out to people of other religions while rooted in their own Christian tradition.

Finally, we cannot forget that Anglicans, together with sister and brother Christians in many places, are persecuted for their faith to the point of martyrdom. They bear costly witness to Christ in the midst of horrendous violence, and are willing to speak the very name of Jesus in the face of murderous hostility.

In the midst of all of this, churches around the Anglican Communion are working together. In The Gambia, a mostly Muslim country, Canadian Anglicans from Wycliffe College, Toronto—working with Americans, Koreans and local people—have founded the first Christian studies programme at a Gambian university. In East Asia, Anglicans from Singapore are giving a lead in primary evangelism, teaching, and community-building in Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand. They are being joined in this mission work by Chinese and Indian Christians.

There are two broader expressions of mission together across our Communion. The first is the Anglican Alliance, which brings together Anglican expertise and capacity from around the world to engage in relief, development and advocacy, often with global ecumenical partners and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The second area is the many companion diocesan relationships that criss-cross the Anglican Communion. Many English dioceses have long-standing links around the world, and have learned that blessing and enrichment flow in both directions where true companionship is developed. These partnerships give tangible expression to what it means to be a Communion of Churches. It is a great joy and surprise to see the extent of such diocesan co-operation, which flourishes even when the provinces to which the two dioceses belong may be divided by serious disagreement on issues of human sexuality.

Many of the seeds of missionary vigour were first planted by the Church of England over the past 300 years. I think of the English missionaries and mission societies, the laity, priests and bishops, who worked for the building up of Anglican churches around the world. Their prayers, their formation, and their sacrificial offering of material resources were vital. This is a wonderful, if complex, story that I hope will never be forgotten. But it is also a story that continues within new contours today.

I hope you realise this, brothers and sisters, because it is a fact that the Church of England today is giving necessary, effective and beautiful gifts to the wider Communion. You have taken the lead in some innovative evangelism such as Fresh Expressions, cathedral-related outreach, and your current focus on Reform and Renewal. You maintain a substantive focus in theological education that leads the Communion. English members serve on our ecumenical bilateral dialogues, and on the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order, giving significant leadership. The Council for Christian Unity, and the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England engage with the Unity, Faith and Order work of the Anglican Communion more than any other province. The English members of the ACC provide important leadership; the Vice-Chair of the ACC Standing Committee is Margaret Swinson from the Church of England.

You provide extensive material and personnel resources for churches and larger societies engaged in meeting ecclesial and human needs through the mission societies such as the CMS, USPG, but also through larger English ecumenical organisations such as Christian Aid. Closer to home, I must note the Anglican Communion Office here in London. Our work is upheld by its staff, many of whom are your members. That office could not function without the financial support of the Church of England.

Finally, I remember with thanks before God the sacrificial and costly ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In his own personal ministry Archbishop Justin is a focus of unity and common concern for the Anglican Communion. He has visited every single province of the Communion, and has formed personal and collegial relationships with each Primate. The Anglican Communion remained intact during the Meeting and Gathering of Primates a year ago in Canterbury. I believe that next to the Holy Spirit, this is due to Archbishop Justin. As an Instrument of Communion, the Archbishop of Canterbury is rooted within the Church of England. His ministry, with you, in service of the Anglican Communion expresses most powerfully what it means to be the “elder sister Church”.

I said that the Anglican Communion is vigorous; but it also faces challenges. Some are faced by all Churches: economic displacement and political uncertainty; family dissolution; refugees and migration; grinding poverty, persecution. Political turmoil and inter-faith tension are growing problems. Some places are acutely unstable, and in too many places terrible violence is at work. All of these challenge the faith of the Church deeply, and call us to mission in new ways in uncertain contexts.

And let me say this: there is also the dispiriting and destructive dynamic of Anglican conflict over human sexuality that is so divisive between the provinces of the Anglican Communion, as well as within them. Our differences on this question can lead us to question the faith of one another, and can impede our common mission with one another to the world.

At this session of the General Synod, you have been reflecting on the pastoral issues of the place of gay and lesbian Christians and their relationships from your unique English context. You have engaged and you continue to engage with the House of Bishops' Reflection Group on Sexuality, which has entailed revisiting the pastoral provision for same-sex couples and repenting of homophobia, which is simply the position of the 1998 Lambeth Conference. I know that the issue of same-sex marriage is highly emotive within the Church. I understand the depth of passion on all sides of the debate, and I understand that any decision will leave some feeling disappointed and wounded by the outcome.

In my own African context, and more specifically my Nigerian context, the single most pressing issue around human sexuality is the criminalisation of homosexuality. While Lambeth 1.10 condemns homophobia, successive Primates' Meetings have gone further and have vigorously condemned not just homophobia but governments which have advocated the criminalisation of homosexuality, which includes imprisonment and even the death penalty in some places.

The struggle for the legal, social, spiritual and physical safety of our gay and lesbian members is our issue in Nigeria and other places in Africa. The prophetic task for African Anglicans is to denounce violence and civil disabilities(*sic*) that are supported by members of our own communities and leadership. This is about changing attitudes, and we need the space to do this work on our own. We need to receive and re-receive the courageous stance of the Church of England against criminalisation of homosexuality in the 1960s.

However you have been led, brothers and sisters, by the Spirit in your reflection

on the place of gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in England, I pray that your decision may be received in such a way by the provinces of the Anglican Communion that will help our equally vital agenda to change attitudes that will make people safe.

In the midst of our internal differences and disagreements on the question, let me tell you one thing I think is true about the Church in general: our internal life as the Body of Christ continues to be animated by the Spirit of God, as we expend ourselves outward on behalf of the lives of others. That is part of what it means to be a 'missional church'. And its truth is borne out by the very history of the Church of England over the past 300 years at least: vigour was kindled and then took form in looking outward. The theological and social debates in the Church of England in the 19th and early 20th centuries were given their creative life through the engagement of missionary bishops and leaders in their midst. This fertile energy of outward mission kept the Church of England focused on the power of Christ's call and equipping for some years to come. I now ask: has this now faded? I cannot help but thinking that the route to the Church of England's internal health is, as with any church, through her self-expenditure for the sake of the world, and hence the Communion's life in a particular way an "elder sister" for her siblings.

So, I believe the Church of England has a prescriptive vocation that I want to suggest to you today. It is to take your gifts, and make them the centre of your local energies: evangelism, pastoral care, growing congregations, theological education, ecumenical passion and acuity, resources, and diocesan labour. Nurture all these gifts; share them amongst yourselves; share them around the world; share them with your entire younger sister churches of the Anglican Communion, not as a favour, but as the very source of your own life, which it is.

The 1920 Lambeth Conference met with the horrors of the First World War still fresh in the collective memory. A great sorrow had set in within the Church. The Bishops at the Conference, however, were called to a new hope—sober, realistic, but also vital. It was hope aimed at the Church's outward movement. In their Conference's Encyclical Letter, the Bishops offered a vision of our mission, which is still true today, a vision that derives from God's own life and purpose. Here is what they said. It is rather long and I want to quote it but I have modernised the gender-specific language:

"[God] made [human beings] for love, that they might love Him and love one another. They rejected His purpose, but He did not abandon it. [God] chose a nation, and made it in a special sense His own, that within it the love of God and

[human beings] might be cultivated, and that thus it might enlighten the world. Into that nation [God] sent forth His Son, both to reconcile the world to Himself and to reconcile men [and women] one to another. And [God's] Son formed a new and greater Israel, which we call the Church, to carry on His own mission of reconciling [human beings] to God and [to one another]. The foundation and ground of all fellowship is the undeflected will of God, renewing again and again its patient effort to possess, without destroying, the wills of [people]. And so [God] has called into being a fellowship of men [and women], His Church, and sent His Holy Spirit to abide therein, that by the prevailing attraction of that one Spirit, [God himself], the one God and Father of all, may win over the whole human family to that fellowship in Himself, by which alone it can attain to the fullness of life. This then is the object of the Church'."

This, brothers and sisters, is the 'history of the world' in which our Church has its place: To 'win over the whole human family' into the communion of God in Christ. This history is about moving outwards in the name of Jesus; moving outwards in fellowship or communion, as it grows larger and larger. Everything we do is to be measured by this calling. Everything this session of the General Synod will do is to be measured by this calling.

The disagreements and struggles that the Church of England is facing in this era are not unique. But they are also not easily resolved in some institutional or structural fashion. Let me tell you, brothers and sisters, I have been around the Communion, around the world and there is no one way to thread this needle at the moment. That does not mean that the issues are not important; it means we are not up to the task of resolving them faithfully right now. So what do we do? We do what we have been gifted to do, what we do best: give ourselves to our sisters and brothers in the Communion and beyond, in the name of Jesus Christ. We give of ourselves, so that we are in an outward posture to be led by the one who bears that name, the Lord himself, who leads by serving, and whose followers discover in their own service that they are taken somewhere they had never expected. This is not evasion, brothers and sisters; this is faith.

Because churches, like Christians, do not exist on their own, but are granted grace to be a community, a communion, for the sake of the great ministry of Jesus Christ who gathers all peoples to himself. We will be better prepared to engage the shape of this ministry of gathering its institutional demands, which are real, as we first give ourselves over to it as a priority. This may mean setting aside certain difficult matters for now; it may mean self-restraint of a sacrificial kind for now; it may mean patience of a painful kind for now. But if the "now" for which this is done is the

“now” of outward-orientated service, God promises us, not only clarity for the future, but ‘joy’ in the present of the deepest kind.

In summary, brothers and sisters, the apostolic faith in this land was lived, expressed and proclaimed in an English, or anglicana voice. From this place, this expression of Christianity was planted outwards around the world, and became a great family of churches in the Anglican Communion. While the Diocese of Canterbury may be “Mother Church”, the Church of England is the “elder sister Church” within this family. You have nurtured, and you continue to nurture and support us all.

What you do matters; what you do in this session of General Synod matters, not just in England but around the Anglican Communion; not just for the Anglican Communion but for the whole ecumenical family, our sisters and brothers in Christ, wherever and whoever they may be, and for the mission of God in the world. Brothers and sisters, your struggles are our struggles; your achievements are our achievements. Know that the churches of the Anglican Communion continue to keep you in their prayers. Thank you.

The Chair. Archbishop, thank you very much for those words that have both a firmness and challenge us in our role as the Church of England. Being the elder sister, from King Lear to Cinderella, is not always the most comfortable role to play, but we know you mean it with great affection for us. We thank you for all that you are bringing to the office of the Anglican Communion. Thank you once again for your kind and challenging words to us this morning.

Synod, just for your information, you will see we have Item 17 coming up shortly on our Agenda. After that we have some contingency business that has been planned which will be a Private Member’s Motion from Mr Gavin Oldham. I can see Gavin sitting there looking very excited about it. It may be possible to fit that in before lunch, which may mean we can prorogue this group of sessions at lunchtime. That is, of course, in your hands. It will be up to you to decide how long you wish to debate Item 17 and then the contingency business this morning. I hold that out to tantalise you as we consider our deliberations. Thank you for Item 16, which I now bring to a close.

THE CHAIR *Canon Linda Ali (York)* took the Chair at 10.30 am

SETTING GOD'S PEOPLE FREE: REPORT FROM THE ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL (GS 2056)

The Chair. Good morning, Synod. We now come to Item 17 on the Agenda *Setting God's People Free*: Report from the Archbishops' Council. You will need your copy of the Report GS 2056. The motion is set out in the Agenda and on the Fifth Order Paper. However, before I invite Canon Russell to move the motion at Item 17, can I also draw your attention to the Financial Statement on this item at paragraphs 17 to 21 of the Sixth Notice Paper? I now invite Canon Mark Russell to move Item 17. Canon Russell, you have up to ten minutes. And we did not arrange colour-coding this morning.

Canon Mark Russell (Sheffield): I beg to move

'That this Synod:

- (a) welcome the report from the Archbishops' Council, *Setting God's People Free* (GS 2056); and
- (b) call on the Archbishops' Council to develop the implementation plan referred to in section 5 of the report and to work closely with the House of Bishops and the dioceses in taking it forward.'

I am delighted to be introducing this Report this morning on behalf of the Archbishops' Council. I pay tribute to the Lay Leadership Task Group and thank them for their hard work, in particular to my friend Matthew Frost for bringing his characteristic talent and flare as Chair of this group. At the heart of this Report this morning is a critical question: how do we do even more to help the 98% of the Church of England who are not ordained live even more fruitful and faithful lives as Christians Monday to Saturday as well as on Sunday? Synod will know that alongside this Working Party there is another Working Party for Lay Ecclesial Ministry looking particularly at licensed ministry within the Church. I am a Reader and I celebrate Reader ministry and we want the Church to celebrate licensed lay ministry, but the Report before us today is about empowering lay people to be better disciples in the outside world. The Report from the Lay Ministry Group will come to you in a later group of sessions.

Again and again in surveys people tell us they lack confidence in applying their faith in their everyday lives. This chimes entirely with the work of the Evangelism Task Group on which I have the privilege of serving. How can we help lay people

even more be confident in their lives, whether they are nurses or teachers or plumbers or electricians or chefs or working in a supermarket or a factory? I hear you say, “Hasn’t the Church of England been talking about this before?” Only for about 175 years. Empowering lay people has been the subject of numerous reports, not least the 1946 Report *Towards the Conversion of England*. Every one of these reports underscores the same issue: that the Church must urgently find ways to help lay people be even more confident disciples in their whole lives. All these years later we are still here talking about this question. That is not the fault of these Reports, each of them well written, each with sound analysis, each with good theology, each with good proposals; but each had failed one thing: they did not have an implementation plan to make the Report come alive. I suggest that these former Reports did not fail the Church; I suggest we, the Church, failed these Reports. These Reports did not include questions of funding or resourcing or how they would be championed or sustained or how they would be owned in dioceses. There were no goals or outcomes or mechanisms to review. The difference with the Report you have before you today is there is a clear strategy and an implementation plan to make this Report come alive.

At the heart of this Report is a call for two shifts in culture that we think are critical to helping empower our lay people even more to play their part in God’s mission in the world.

First, that until together, ordained and lay, we form and equip lay people to follow Jesus confidently in every sphere of life in ways that demonstrate the Gospel we will never set God’s people free to evangelize the nation. Secondly, until laity and clergy are convinced, based upon their baptismal mutuality that they are equal in worth and status, complementary in gifting and vocation, mutually accountable in discipleship and equal partners in mission, we will never form Christian communities that can evangelize the nation.

My friends, I have spoken at a lot of clergy conferences—I think 13. I am not quite sure what I have done wrong to deserve that. I think I am probably the only person in the Church of England who has talked to more clergy apart from Paula Gooder. Our clergy are brilliant, hard-working, talented and dedicated. Maybe it takes a lay person to say that and to thank them for what they do for the Church, but I am yet to meet a cleric who could not have done something else with their lives, earned more money, worked fewer hours and had less guff to deal with. This Report is not about clergy bashing. I will never do that and I will never allow anyone else to. Clergy tell me time and time again that they feel they were trained for a different paradigm. This Report proposes working with the Ministry Division to help

resource our clergy to be even better at resourcing lay people to be confident in their faith and to live out the fruit of ministry in Word and Sacrament in the wider world. Of course, tell a bunch of clergy that they are very powerful in the Church of England and they will fall on the floor laughing, but the difference is lay people think you are powerful, and that is the culture we have to change. This Report is about asking the question how can we build better partnerships between clergy and laity, to help the whole people of God walk together and live the Gospel in the world, to spot where Church structure or existing practice damages healthy clergy/lay relationships and make them better?

So, what does this Report mean by leadership of lay people? There have been some rumbles about this on social media and, of course, as Christian Tweeter of the Year you would expect me to spot that, but this Report makes the difference between functional leadership, where people have a job, such as a manager or a supervisor, and influencing leadership, which is something we all do, through our lives, our values, our behaviour and how we treat people. That itself is a form of leadership. This Report is about how we encourage more influencing leadership in all of our people.

The Report outlines eight levers of change which I do not have time to go into but you can read them in the Report. The Report also includes an implementation plan which is high level and not complete because we wanted to wait to hear what you said at Synod before we wrote the rest of that plan, to hear your views and the steer you give us as we implement this work.

If you approve this Report today, which I hope you will, we will get to work immediately, appointing champions, developing a national portal for discipleship, building a learning community of pilot dioceses, working with the Ministry Division to have better-resourced clergy and trying to make this Report come alive.

Friends, this is not about reinventing the wheel. It is not about putting some sort of top-down management structure on the Church. It is trying to help collect, collate and empower the stories of what lay people are doing in churches around this country, to empower our churches around this country, to empower our dioceses and parishes to do even more to equip lay people in their everyday lives, and it will be those stories on the ground that give life and energy and momentum to this Report. These real stories, including those from dioceses which pilot this, will help us shape and form where this initiative goes next.

Of course, in my day job I head a mission agency and we stand ready to help

resource that, too.

You know something, friends, we continually face a barrage of headlines about a shrinking Church. Synod, we need to be more confident as a Church. We are making a massive difference. There are one million people out there in every village, every town, every street and every city, working in every profession, young and old, rural and urban, giving over 23 million hours of voluntary service serving people up and down the land. Contrast that with the National Secular Society, who has 7,000 members, which is pretty much the same as the British Sausage Appreciation Society.

Friends, I believe this Report is historic and this is an historic moment, but if we can learn from history and back this Report and make the implementation plan come alive, I believe we can do even more to empower our lay people to do even more and make an even bigger impact in our nation, to serve more people, to change more communities and to point more people to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

As I finish, I dare to dream. I dare to dream that I will come back to this Synod in ten years' time and hopefully I have not gone grey. I wonder who will still be here. Will I still be one of the youngest members? I dare to dream that if I come back to this chamber in ten years' time with a ten-year review of *Setting God's People Free* we will have stories of parishes and dioceses, of nurses and postmen, paramedics and sales assistants, chefs and farmers, electricians and plumbers, florists and accountants, caretakers and politicians, of lay people, regardless of their age or race or disability or sexuality, making better connections between theology and their lives, more confident in their faith, more confident in prayer, more confident in Christ, more confident in their gifting and more confident in their unique vocation as lay people to join God in his mission to transform our nation and our world. I believe this is a Report whose time has come. I look forward to a great debate. I commend it to you with my characteristic enthusiasm and I move the motion standing in my name.

The Chair: Thank you, Canon Russell. It may help you to know, Synod, that there has been a large number of requests to speak in this debate. I do not intend to reduce the speech limit at this point, but we will see how we go along today. I might well be calling for a motion for closure around midday. I will now call Miss Jane Patterson, followed by Mrs Alison Coulter.

Miss Jane Patterson (Sheffield): Since 2012, I have served as one of the elected

member of the Crown Nominations Commission, or, to be more accurate, on 16 CNCs. That does not include two attempts at Oxford. Thankfully, the second was successful. It has been an education.

In recent years this Synod has questioned the working of the CNC. I am not about to break confidentiality, but I would like to share some of the insights gained from our deliberations. At each meeting we agree the challenges for the new bishop. These form the basis for the Archbishop's charge. Time and time again we hear from dioceses the need to address a culture of over clericalism, a lack of confidence felt by the laity in sharing their faith and a reluctance in stepping up to leadership. There does seem to be a pattern. As this Report notes, the Diocese of Sheffield (led by the now Bishop of Oxford) has a strategy that includes lay discipleship. I would be interested to hear Bishop Steven's assessment on the degree of buy-in.

In my ongoing plan to sort out my study I discovered this booklet "The Christian Militant: Lent with Mark's Gospel" written by the then Archbishop of York, Stuart Blanch, incidentally commissioned by Blackburn Diocese for its 50th anniversary in 1978. That year, as a new Christian, I was part of a Bible study group that studied that book. I was disciplined.

Scrolling forwards, I have been a member of a fairly untypical local parish church in south-west Sheffield for many years. Why untypical? It is very large. It is growing. The majority of its members are part of one or other small study group that meets weekly to read the Bible, think through how to apply it in our lives and to pray. We are being disciplined. Most of those groups are led by lay leaders trained in the local church. We are intentional about training our leaders to support our vision for growing the Church and planting churches.

Today, if I was at work in the NHS as a consultant surgeon, for which I received extraordinary little leadership training, I would have learned through the soft study of role models at work and in the Church. I find the body illustration in 1 Corinthians 12 really significant. It appeals to me as a doctor. For a body to be healthy it needs to be functioning, so, in other words, the 98% of us who are the laity need to be part of it. The Church and our nation needs to hear the Gospel. Both are in desperate need of a fully functioning body. We need to welcome this Report and to take urgent action, not only in the House of Bishops but in dioceses, in theological colleges and in local churches. At the last CNC the Archbishop of York asked me to give thanks before lunch. He may not recall, but I think that is a first, for a lay person to give thanks before lunch during CNC. Perhaps it was a sign. I

urge you to welcome this Report.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): I have had the enormous privilege to be a member of the Lay Leadership Task Group and I want to share with you some of my personal learnings and reflections from the work that we did together last year. I think my biggest insight from the work that we did was that my understanding of the Church was too small. We have a tendency to think and talk mostly about the gathered church meeting on Sundays, but we are still all the Church Monday to Saturday. As a Church we gather together and then we send each other out to be witnesses and to bring God's Kingdom to our world, a model we see in the New Testament. We have a God who does not have a sacred secular divide and who is just as present with us during the week as on Sundays, but I find it very easy to think of God as more present and more interested in our Sunday services than in our day-to-day work, whatever and wherever that may be. Archbishop Justin challenged us to re-imagine and I think that this Report is about re-imagining our Church and the impact we can have every day of the week, moving outwards in the name of Jesus, as Archbishop Josiah just said.

To illustrate the shift in thinking that this requires, let me tell you about a realisation I had just this last week. I was very kindly invited to speak to some lay leaders at Southwark Diocese about this Report and I asked my church friends to pray for me as I did that. The same week I was working with some consultant surgeons, helping them think about how to redesign the service they provide for patients. I did not ask anyone to pray for me as I did that work. When did you last pray for people in their workplaces?

I also came to better understand that I am called; we are all called. Some of you are called to be ordained priests and I thank God for all of you. I am called to work in business, to serve my clients and to offer my time to the Church in different ways. This is not a lesser or greater calling; it is an equal calling, and it is a vocation. We need to think very carefully about how we use that word "vocation" because it can be exclusive and yet we all have a calling.

I like the story of David and Goliath and I think it says a lot about lay leadership. David, who had been practising throwing that stone out of a sling to keep his sheep safe for many, many hours, realised that he had a moment where he could use his skill and he offered it to God's people. He said, "I will fight Goliath", and they said to him, "You had better have Saul's armour then and you had better do it in the way we all expect you to do it. You had better go out to fight with all this stuff on". Thank goodness he said, "I can't do it with that on". I think this Report is talking

about setting God's people free from Saul's armour, whatever that might be for you in your situation today, recognising the unique skill that you have that you can use for God's kingdom and putting off the stuff that might hinder you. We need to be set free.

As the Task Group we came to the conclusion that some gentle recommendations would not bring the scale of change that is needed. We need to change our culture so that everyone in the Church understands that we are all called to follow Jesus in every aspect of our lives and to be a witness for him every day of the week. As clergy and laity together we have a joint responsibility before God to lead his Church into this freedom. Culture change means change; doing things differently. It is very easy to say, "The Bishops ought to..." and as lay chair of a diocese I hear a lot of, "The diocese should..." But this is not the language of change. The language of change is, "I will. I will fight Goliath".

In my work with leaders, over the last ten years particularly, working with a number of organisations on cultural change, I have seen that the leadership of an organisation shapes its culture. It will need all of us as leaders of the Church to examine our thinking, to recognise our blind spots and to be committed to changing our behaviour. We need to say, "I will" to bring culture change, otherwise even the very best action plan will change nothing, so please welcome this Report and the call for the development of an implementation plan but please think, too, what can you do to change our culture.

Revd Canon Professor Paul Fiddes (Ecumenical Representative). So, Chair and friends, I am representing a Christian community which has had experience over some 400 hundreds years of giving a central place to the ministry of all members of a congregation, sometimes called lay ministry, but there is still a huge amount for us all to learn from this Report, which I urge you to welcome and act upon.

The Report makes a convincing case for the need to recognise two shifts of culture: first, enabling whole-life discipleship for every Christian and, secondly, making a new relationship between laity and clergy in order to set the whole people of God free to serve. The Report has deeply important things to say about recognising and supporting missionary disciples in their daily work. But I hope you will forgive me if I suggest there is actually a third cultural shift that needs to take place. I mean recognising that there are signs of the Kingdom of God outside the Church altogether, signs that we are being called to discover, and so places where the people of God are summoned to work together with God. These Kingdom signs appear in groups other than the Church, in other faith communities—yes—and also

in the religiously neutral or political or even humanist groups which make up our civil society. On the very first page, the Report rightly declares that “baptism is a commissioning to participate in God’s mission in the world” though by the end of the report the language has become “the mission of the Church”.

A key phrase appears on page 14 with the call for “a theological perspective on mission”. We need, it says, “an ecclesiology that sharply clarifies the identity and scope of the Church as a sign and expression of the kingdom, rooted in the world”. My question is: does the Report really mean a sign or the sign; the only sign? Surely, we need a comprehensive theology. The Church is certainly an indispensable sign of the kingdom, shaped as it is by Word and Sacrament and holding a unique commission to tell the story of Jesus, but our theology should be wide enough to recognise that God gives other signs too and has relations with other people. Biblical scholars are increasingly making clear that the God of Israel also makes a covenant with a whole range of people and nations, not the same covenant as with the Church, to be sure, but covenants to which God is faithful and through which God works. So there is a theological reason for making what the Archbishop identified in his opening address as partnerships, in which he told us that the Church can take a part, but not the whole, of re-imagining of the future.

There is a new situation in which the Church is in a minority in our country, perhaps 10% of people, and this makes the strategy of partnership compelling, but God is also calling us to work with those who show Kingdom values.

In practice, this might then mean adding another sphere of lay involvement to the four laid out on page 10. There is one area there which is named “involvement and leadership in church-led community social action”. What about involvement of lay people in non-church led social action groups? Does the Church always have to lead in the mission of God? Of course, this partnership is implied in the phrase “wider community” in the fourth sphere on page 10, but it surely needs spelling out and made a matter of strategy. Our lay people are involved in a host of voluntary organisations, from local hospital boards to mental health or homelessness groups and political protest movements. This is the ministry of the laity that also needs to be encouraged, prayed for and celebrated and so we shall set God’s people free to serve God’s world in God’s own way.

Sarah Maxfield-Phillips (Church of England Youth Council): While wholeheartedly welcoming the findings and recommendation of *Setting God’s People Free*, as a young person within the Church of England I am disappointed at the lack of reference to strategies to help young people become disciples, particularly as in

the introduction school is one of the places specified where they wish for laity to help with ministry and mission, leadership, and, most importantly, living out their lives with Jesus.

Also, 3.2 acknowledges that young people are under-represented in the elected roles of lay leadership in the Church. This, I believe, is going to be a wasted opportunity for the Church of England if they do not look at how to help.

In recent years, the number of young people attending Church of England churches has fallen. I feel that those who do stay really want to have an impact and would respond really well to the appropriate discipleship training. Often people are heard to say, "If only I had learnt to do that when I was young". Training at this point would help with the ministry of other young people but would also equip young people with discipleship skills for the rest of their lives. By definition, most lay leadership in the Church of England by young people (those under 25) has to be lay leadership as there are very few people that are ordained at this age. I have found that young leaders in many and varying roles kept the Church alive and relevant for me as I grew up through my teenage years in the Church. The Report states that it should be read in the context of the RME initiative. Surely, young people who have had positive lay disciples are more likely to consider a calling to ordination. It is vital that this is a centrally co-ordinated strategy for the support and discipleship of young adults as lay leaders.

Whilst asking you to strongly think about the role young people have to play in discipleship, I also want to acknowledge how important strong lay leadership for people of all ages is to keep young people active and worshipping members of the Church of England, who are growing in their faith and living out the Gospel in their day-to-day lives.

The Chair: After the Bishop of Dover, I would like to call Dr Nick Land for a maiden speech.

The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Trevor Willmott): Mark, thank you. Have you done enough? Have we done enough? No, I do not think we have. We discussed this Report in our Area Deans and Lay Chairs' meeting recently. If I can use that one experience to point out what I am trying to say. In Canterbury, it is many years since we have met separately as clergy and lay in any of our work. We have not changed it just because we wondered if we should do something different. We changed in all of our work together simply because we believe this is the only way in which the people of God can and should work together; clergy and laity bringing

their different gifts to the common task. You reflect in your Report that there have been many reports before this day, some of them—most of them perhaps—predictable, worthy, well meaning, full of rhetoric, and yet here we are again with yet another Report. I wonder whether, as you say, in ten years' time you will come back here to report on what has happened in between, or, dare I say, we will be back here in another 20 years with another worthy rhetoric-filled Report and we will be asking the same question.

If I can make my point by picking up one story from Scripture from Acts 6. The story is of the widows of Hellenes who were being neglected in the daily distribution. All the data was showing a Church that was thriving, numbers were growing, people were looking outwards; everything seemed fine. The answer from the Twelve Apostles might have been what I would describe as an instructive answer: "Find a smarter way of divvying up what you have got and all will be well". But they do not do this. They say, "Choose amongst yourself the people of God seven whom you consider to have the wisdom and the ability and the God-filled Spirit to work out how we are to live together better". We do not know what happens to that money from then on. I suspect it continued to be problematic and messy and awkward, but it is interesting that in the Scriptures the problem never arises again. Why? I would like to suggest because The Twelve recognised where authority in particular aspects of the Church's life should lie. They say to the people of God, "Choose your seven and they will find the way forward". It is not instructive but what I describe as "adaptive" change. For only adaptive change in the life of our Church will bring about that sustainable future we all long for.

In our discussion of your Report, we said, "Yes", but we also want to say to you, "But not enough", because, in our judgment, the Report has too much of what I describe as technical solution, which I am afraid to say in our gut we do not believe will work any more than any of the recommendations of the Reports since 1940 onwards. They obtain a shibboleth status. We find the river but we find it is not the Jordan and we find we are not in the Promised Land. I want to suggest that we look at adaptive change, for this says, "Let's look in the mass and complex situation before us". I want to suggest as a Bishop that lay people, the people of God, will have better answers to the questions of lay ministry than we dare to believe.

I give you one example. Over the past five years in Canterbury I have asked every single person when they have come to confirmation why they have come there. I have over the past five years read thousands and thousands of paragraphs. Not one has ceased to humble me. Why are people coming to confirmation? Primarily

because of relationships: people who cared for them, listened to them and actually encouraged them to grow in the faith of Jesus Christ.

We have now begun a much more difficult piece of work and this is to ask the Christian communities from which they come what are they doing to prepare themselves for the gifts that they have brought to them through confirmation? I am saddened to say we do not yet know how to do it. What I look for in the Report, Mark, is some help to us in the local church to prepare communities for this change—this adaptive change.

I think there is much to be encouraged in your Report and I welcome it hugely, but please, please, Mark, do not leave us now as if somehow instructive changes will be sufficient just to make us smarter. We need to adapt to become the people of God together which he calls us to be in the name of Jesus Christ.

Dr Nick Land (York): I spent last weekend teaching at a Christian medical fellowship conference for nursing and medical students. As an NHS medical director it was an absolute joy to spend time with almost 500 enthusiastic students who love Jesus and who want to work in the NHS.

From my experience of helping doctors and students think about what it means to be a Christian working in healthcare, I would like to underline two priorities for this Report. First, we do not just need to develop a holistic theology of lay work and leadership; we need to ensure it is taught in all of our churches. For too many people there is still too big a gap between their faith on Sunday and their work during the week.

Jesus said, “My Father is always at his work, to this very day, and I too am working”. We all need to understand that we are created in the image of a worker God and work is not just an arena for ministry; it is ministry, a means of partnership with our creator God in the meeting of human needs. Of course, in our fallen world our work sometimes seems painful or insignificant, but as George Herbert’s great hymn encourages us: “A servant with this clause Makes drudgery divine; Who sweeps a room, as for thy Laws Makes that and th’ action fine”.

Secondly, we need to work out how we keep giving encouragement to one another to be disciples of Jesus and leaders in our work situations—paid, voluntary and domestic. Some of us are positional leaders and we certainly need help and support and prayer. But Jesus was not a positional leader and I believe that every Christian is called to be a relational leader.

My own NHS trust runs an awards scheme and so often the people who make a real difference are cleaners showing cheerful love to patients and secretaries who bring order out of chaos.

Let me give just one practical example of discipleship that is currently challenging me. Ephesians 4 says: “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building others up ... that it may benefit those who listen”.

Currently the NHS is suffering from bad stories, so what stories do I choose to tell when people ask me how things are going? Do I concentrate on the negatives or do I talk about the services that are improving or that brilliant member of staff? Do not mishear me. Where there is injustice or wrongdoing, we will fearlessly tell those who have the power to rectify it, but as Christians we should also be people of good news and I need others to remind me about that. I need that reminder almost every day.

Let us approve this Report. Let us think how we get it into practical action which reminds disciples every day of what they need to do to represent Jesus in the workplace, for as the 500th anniversary of the Reformation reminds us, we are not saved through work but we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good work which God has prepared in advance for us to do.

Ven. Dr John Perumbaleth (Chelmsford): I welcome this opportunity given to the General Synod to remind ourselves that the mission of God belongs to the whole Church and every member has a vocation, yet I feel there is a bit of patronising when the Report begins with talk of setting 98% of the Church of England free. It is not just the 98% that need liberation, unless they are kept in chains by the rest of them, the 2%, the clergy, including bishops. This 2% is very crucial in initiating and enabling the culture of change that the Report is talking about. Maybe we all need change and we all need to be liberated.

But then, liberated from what? For a start, we need to be liberated from the in-house jargon and the management speak that has become part of Church culture. The document talks about the national Church taking a lead, which I assume would involve a few more new appointments, research, surveys and communication. I hope and pray that this would not be seen as a top-down exercise. We need to find a way of learning from each other on the ground, based on the good work that is already happening in many parts of the Church as well as learning lessons from our failures and our inadequacies.

We also need to pay attention to the diversity and, to some extent, the complexity of the Church community that we are talking about. How do we enable the whole body of Christ to flourish while a good number of people feel left behind? I see in normal working-class areas that working-class people are left behind because the congregation continues to be a middle-class club. I see people of certain cultures or cultural, linguistic or racial backgrounds treated as second-class citizens in certain areas. I see young people and differently abled ones and many other groups left behind. So when we target this 98%, are we going to target this 98% accurately or a part of them who feel they are the actual Church, comfortably leaving behind those who should be travelling with them? How do we enable everyone to flourish? It needs a little more than discussion, jargon, management talk, research and surveys, and I hope our discussions today here in the General Synod will help us to move forward going beyond this Report.

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs): I really was not intending to speak because I have already had a chance to contribute somewhat to the follow-up to this Report because I was asked to write a theological reflection for the House of Bishops' meeting as we considered and discussed this Report. I am slightly motivated to speak partly because there were at the time no other Bishops standing and partly in response to the Bishop of Dover because I think I want to strike a slightly more positive note than the Bishop of Dover did in his contribution, much as I value the particular steer he is seeking to give. That is to say, the Bishops are sitting here but they are not sitting silently. We have already had a look at this Report and there was a very fruitful discussion of that, and I want to say that, arising out of that discussion, there is a great deal of energy and interest in taking this forward and in working with the group, yes, on refining some of the theology that lies behind it; yes, in working this out in terms of the ministry of our dioceses and the churches within those dioceses. I start from the point of view that 30 years ago I wrote my PhD on the theology of work, which was precisely on the theology of Christian vocation outside the Church. A big part of the function of the Church is to prepare and equip all the people of God to play their full part within the life of the Kingdom of God which is so much more than the gathered church. I just want to say we are sitting here and we are very much supportive of this. It is not that we do not want to contribute to the discussion today. The fact is the Bishops have already had a really good opportunity to discuss this and I think we are all looking forward very much to working with the group to see forward the implementation of the Report. Thank you very much for the work that has gone into it.

The Bishop of Newcastle (Rt Revd Christine Hardman): It is sometimes noted that there are only two women diocesan bishops. It is less often noted that I have a more unique distinction in that I believe I am the only diocesan bishop to have trained on a course and not at college. It was not any old course. It is, of course, now sadly defunct but it was the St Albans Ministerial Training Scheme which, uniquely, admitted its participants before they had discerned their vocation and to which particular ministry God was calling them, so together all lay people, but all exploring whether we would be called to ordained or lay ministry to serve God's mission.

I went to what was then my ACCM selection conference in the second term of my third year. It took that long for me to figure out what God was calling me to. When I met with the then Bishop of St Albans, the late John Taylor, he said, somewhat bemused, that the selectors had decided that I would never have a cosy relationship with the institutional Church and they saw this as a strength.

I had not had, I suppose, a very normal formation and, if just a bit of that means that I could be more alert to clericalism when I see it, I thank God for my rather unconventional beginning in ministry. One of the most important things that we can do in this wonderful Church of England of ours is to free ourselves from clericalism where it exists.

The power of the dynamic is absolutely exemplified by the number of reports we have had—some of them absolutely outstanding—and we come back year after year discussing the report and bemoaning the fact that the gifts of our lay people are not sufficiently valued. Our energies should not be into going for a perfect report. Our energies should be about a deep commitment to culture change.

That will mean valuing every single member of the Body of Christ. Our clergy need valuing and loving. Confident holy clergy who know themselves to be appreciated do have the confidence to enable others in ministry. Clergy have a tough time and we need to value them, equip them and appreciate them. When we do that, they will be enabled out of that confidence to properly value, love and appreciate the Body of Christ; our lay people. We are, together, all disciples in the Body of Christ.

I am delighted to be the Bishop of Newcastle for all kinds of reasons, but not least because this Diocese has a history and tradition of working towards this kind of vision for the Church. I want to honour the work of many people but, in particular, our lay chair who is here today, Carol Wolstenholme. Having led in Lay Voices, an exciting initiative, I pledge myself in all that we are doing now in terms of our

new vision for growing the Church and bringing hope that what we will do, I hope, is live this vision of lay and clergy working together for God's mission.

I have empowered Carol, because I will slip back into old ways—I know I will—that when she catches me doing that, she is to hold me to account and say: “Bishop, this is what you say you want to do; actually, you are slipping back”. Together, I hope, we will have the utter commitment to move into this exciting new future. That is what we should be so delighted about today. Thank you for this Report. It will have its flaws, it will have its good points, but let us commend it and, more importantly, let us go on and live the dream.

Ven. Jonathan Chaffey (Armed Forces): I think one of the few professions perhaps not mentioned by Mark in his list was that of military service. I was recently on board *HMS Victory*, Nelson's flagship of 200 years ago. It is about 150 metres long and 30 metres wide, about four or five decks in which lived and worked for months on end 800 sailors. To say that the execution of their mission was dependent on everyone knowing their place and fully utilising their gifts would be an understatement. It was essential that they were all of one company if they were to succeed in their great cause and, more importantly, fulfil their commander's intent.

To be of one company is understood in all three Services. How much more important is it in the Church in order to succeed in our very great cause in Christ and to fulfil our commander's intent? I consider this Report to be prophetic in chastening and inspiring: chastening in its call to change culture, because that takes time and includes the hard winning of hearts, minds; and inspiring in its seeing mission holistically as the property and activity of God at work in the world as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

It is my privilege to minister among servicemen and women who operate in environments that are demanding physically, morally and spiritually, to say nothing of the impact on domestic life. It is humbling to support Christians working out the integrity of their faith in this context, aiming to be intentional disciples, knowing that the way they conduct themselves will reveal and promote the source of their motivations and values.

This Report calls us to recognise the 24/7 life of the Christian and to more fully support and liberate the gifts and vocations of all the baptized, wherever they live and work. I look forward to its recommendations, but they will need to be undergirded by prayer, cultural change and, perhaps especially, modelling by us

all.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): Many of you will know that for most of the last quinquennium I asked the same question every time, which came out of a phrase which was in GS 1815, which used the language of turning the rhetoric of lay involvement into reality. I see Bishop Steven nodding because it was he who got the butt of the questions, and it seemed that nothing was happening. It is salutary that that Report was published in 2011 and here we are six years later debating the outcome. That is a measure of the cultural obstacles that we are facing.

Nevertheless, I want to thank Mark for his absolutely fantastic and upbeat introduction to this Report, remembering, colleagues, that he did not actually serve on the group that produced the Report but he is clearly a convert. The motion asks us to do two things. The first is to welcome the Report, and I wholeheartedly do. Why should we welcome it? We should welcome it because it calls for culture change for the 98% of those who are not ordained. That is almost one million people. A number of people have spoken eloquently already about the difference that can be made if one million people are unleashed in the power of the Spirit. The Report uses language like “seismic revolution”. I hope you are aware of that and you will be welcoming that. We heard from Archbishop Justin yesterday a different phrase “a radical culture of inclusion”. These are all going in the same direction, so let us welcome the Report.

The second part talks about implementation and, as several speakers have said, this is where previous Reports going back to 1945 have fallen down. It is absolutely right that it is not about the person over there, or the structure over there, or the Bishops over here who are going to implement it, it is about you and me. What are we going to do to implement this and to live confidently? “Confidently” means with faith.

What are we going to do to implement this change of culture? I have been in a number of situations where I have been involved in seeking new vicars. A phrase that has come to me several times is a challenge which the archdeacon, the area dean or the bishop presents to us that we should not be looking for a chaplain for the congregation; we should be looking for a priest for the parish. That is a good challenge because it is so easy for those responsible for searching for a new vicar to just look for the same, or possibly the exact opposite, but someone who is for them. The challenge is of course that you need a priest for the parish as well.

I think there is a fundamental mistake there. I think the unique role of the clergy is

in pastoring and teaching. It is building up the gathered community so that they can be sent out, we can be sent out, and we can be the priesthood for the parish. It is all of us together, the local body, who are witnessing to serving the parish in which we are situated. This concept of whole-life discipleship is so central to this Report and it is something that we can all take responsibility for. What I like about it is whole-life discipleship is a call to all of us, lay and ordained alike. We all take responsibility for that.

There is a great emphasis on the common baptism being the basis of the call that we have. I am happy about that, but given that we are a Church that practises infant baptism it opens up the huge necessity of teaching and nurturing in the faith so that those people can go from infants into maturity in Christ to witness and to worship. I commend the Report and I hope that we will all take responsibility for its implementation.

Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield): Madam Chair, we have had many, many contributions from across the House in this debate. We all welcome it. It is going to make a difference, we know it is, but actions always speak louder than words. It is all about lay leadership so, with the greatest of respect, Madam, can we for the rest of our time hear lots more lay stories because the lay stories are going to be the embodiment of this going forward. There was the great campaign in the First World War, "Your country needs you." Well, what I say to us here in Synod is we are the front-line troops now. We have the benefit of studying this. We now have the tools. The implementation is important, but do not wait. Please, do not wait. We have already been given a huge tool to go out, wherever we are, that is in church, Monday to Sunday, and also where we are. Whether that is in a workplace or in a retired place, we all have an opportunity to tell our fellow Christians that we are going to make a difference. They are already making a difference.

Please, do not let us wait. It has been said by many people across the Synod: we do have wonderful reports and then what do we do? This time we are going to really make a difference. As someone said, I think it was Archbishop Josiah in his wonderful presentation about the Communion, "Have courage". Many of our brothers and sisters across the Communion face persecution, death, destruction of their churches, but they stand firm. They are Christians and they speak the name of Jesus.

I remember the Archbishop of Canterbury saying, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if in every conversation we had we spoke the name of Jesus and said that is the driving

force in our lives”, that is what makes us want to be the best people we can be. So, please, let us go out, challenge ourselves, repeat the name of Jesus and have courage. From this Report we have the tools.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu): I am sorry you are not going to hear from a lay person. Michael Ramsey was once challenged by a church where he had put in one vicar after another and they were completely ineffective. The churchwarden said to him, “Archbishop, when will you give us better clergy?” He said, “The trouble is the clergy come from among the laity, from among the laity.” In other words, the choice is from within the body. When you complain about clergy not being good, remember they also did come out of the laity, okay, they were once the people of God.

You all know the story of John F Kennedy visiting NASA headquarters, talking to engineers, astronauts, wanting to know, and he said, “What are you up to?” “We are working hard so that a man can get on the Moon”. On his way out, he comes across a cleaner, and he said, “And what do you do here?” He said, “Mr President, I’m trying to get the man on the Moon”. That cleaner saw his job not simply as mopping and cleaning but was quite instrumental in getting a man on the Moon.

All our people are serving Christ, wherever they are. He wants them to be good witnesses. He wants them to be good worshippers. He wants them to be good servants. He wants them to be His presence in the world, in every part, because God in Jesus wants the world to be converted to his way of living and the Kingdom to come.

There is another phrase that I love, that the Church in the end is a colony of Heaven or an embassy of Heaven. For the embassy to do its job, it needs to be good at whatever it is doing, whatever it is representing. Our people of God, they are there to be His presence everywhere.

When I encountered Jesus at the age of ten, I was helped by somebody who disciplined me, helped me to read the Bible, helped me to pray. I was prepared for confirmation by lay people because that is the nature of the Church in Uganda. The responsibility for training and nurturing is mostly done by lay people. It is not done by clergy because the clergy are not many and there are a lot of lay people. And I was nurtured.

I remember one vivid thing when I was 17, doing drama for Festo Kivengere who was preaching in a big mission in the western part of Uganda. I was constantly

interpreting the Gospel in terms of drama. On the final day of the mission, Festo said to me, “Sentamu, you are now going to preach the evangelistic sermon”. I nearly collapsed. “Me? Festo, you are the greatest preacher. Me?” Anyway, he said, “Yes, you are”.

I simply got up and said, “I became a Christian at the age of ten, Jesus loves me, Jesus loves you, and he is inviting you to come and be His friends”. That is what I said and quite a lot of people started coming forward. Now, Festo saw in me the potential for being an evangelist and, therefore, was willing—the big man—to give way to the little lad.

Our churches have got to begin to support the giftings of everybody, because we read in Ephesians 4, when Christ ascended he gave gifts: some to be apostles, pastors, teachers, evangelists, workers of miracles, healers. This Report is about rediscovering the giftings of the Spirit in the people of God and for them being confident about the Gospel and sharing it.

I think the Vice-Chair of the House of Laity has probably heard me say this. In Yorkshire we get a lot of rain and people talk a lot about weather. If only they talked about Jesus the way they talk about weather, Yorkshire may be converted. Friends, you know, there is somebody bigger than weather. His name is Jesus. I come from Uganda. We do not have weather; we have climate. I never talk a lot about weather, but I talk about Him who calls me.

Andreas Whittam Smith actually showed us the way of being a lay leader. We want more of those in every part. Dr Land, talking about the NHS, again there is a lay leader—exercising training, teaching and supporting. Could we please become a Church where the people of God—all of them—are disciples, worshipping, praying, witnessing and talk about Jesus. God bless you.

Ms Sarah Tupling (Deaf Anglicans Together): I am a lay person and I help to lead my local deaf church and various other churches in the vicinity. In previous sessions of Synod I have had the opportunity to meet with some of the members of the Lay Task Group and I have said to them, “Don’t forget about the deaf perspective. Remember the deaf perspective in your work”, and now, today, we have this Report before us. I very much welcome this Report. However, I have a couple of issues that I would like to raise.

First, to give a bit of background, there are a number of deaf churches at the moment that are closing or in decline. That is sometimes because the clergy

members who are tasked to help lead those churches are leaving and are not being replaced. That may be because they are moving to a new area of ministry or are retiring. It may be that in one diocese and also in the neighbouring diocese there are no clergy who are responsible for ministry with deaf people, so there is no leadership in terms of the clergy. This Report talks about lay leadership. It is not the training of lay people to replace the clergy.

What does that mean for deaf people, for the community of those who are deaf, for those of us who have few clergy in post to support us anyway? The role of the clergy may be to spot those in their congregations who are lay members who have potential to develop as leaders. Of course, without those clergy supporting deaf congregations that opportunity for identifying the development of lay leaders is not there.

The Report also talks about resources that are accessible by all. That is material and training. I am sure that most of those of you who are not deaf, who are hearing, will go to plenty of courses and there are opportunities out there to have those discussions. For those of us who are deaf, it is more difficult to access those courses or that training. It might be because there is not the funding available for interpreters or that may not be there. This is a big issue.

I am very pleased to see these recommendations. They are amazing. In terms of 5.2, I think this is the one I want to focus on. It really excites me. To have the technology available so that we have these resources in place is great, but what does it mean for these resources to be fully accessible by all people in the Church of England? Not everybody in the Church of England is hearing. Some of us are deaf. That 98% includes other people who may be deaf, who may want to be part of these lay roles or may want to be working within or outside the Church. The materials are really important.

My plea is, please, can we have some parity in terms of accessibility? For example, maybe the plan could be everything is in English, but for some of us English is not our first language. Some other members of Synod may understand this. We work with lay people for whom English may not be their first language and for those of us who are deaf British Sign Language may be our first language.

Accessibility is an issue we need to think about carefully. These recommendations may lead to some resources that are video based, so we can go to the website and we can watch some videos. Again, they may focus on being able to hear, which some of us cannot do. This may mean that we need to think about things

such as having interpreters within those videos. I think we need to think about what we mean by having something that is fully accessible, to encourage deaf people to become leaders, to get involved in this lay leadership and how we encourage all.

Mrs Vivienne Goddard (Blackburn): I had decided not to speak until the Vice-Chair asked for some stories and the Archbishop of York asked about lay leaders. I first came on this Synod, would you believe, in 1980. I was young then. When I saw this Report I was really excited, but I really worry about its future because I think I have been harping on about this ever since 1980.

It seems to me there are some major problems with the way we treat our laity in this Church. A lot of it is finance. We do not ever put any money into lay leadership or lay training or lay anything really.

Let me just give you an example. For 14 years, I ran a lay training course in Middlesbrough when I was in the Diocese of York. It was successful, but could we get any money? No. We supported it by the Bray Library, which we mentioned yesterday—I was interested to hear about Thomas Bray yesterday—and we charged everybody that came a pound, which was quite a lot of money in those days. When we moved to Scotland and I had to give it up, the Church appointed a paid clergyman to take it on.

Jump a few years and my Bishop asked me whether I would be interested in being the local ministry officer. After due thought and prayer—although not very much because I jumped at it really—I said “Yes”. I am a Catholic Anglican who does not believe in the ordination of women. Bishop Alan’s next comment was, “Well, how are we going to pay you because I can’t ordain you?” Being as I do have a degree in theology, and I have probably spent more time in a theological college than most of the clergy—thanks to fathers and husbands—he decided to make me a licensed lay worker. For ten happy years, I worked in the field of local ministry.

Now that was an exciting development in this Church. It was all about the ministry of the baptized. Then, we had a new Bishop and it was all stopped. I do not want to knock that at all, but I want to say I think there is another cultural change that we need and that is, the Church of England is so peculiar in that a new priest is not allowed to talk to his predecessor; a new bishop does not consult his or her predecessor. It is time we changed that culture and had a good look at what was going on before in either parish or diocese before making major changes.

I am on the Ministry Group, as you know—or maybe you do not. They were setting up the other Report which was referred to at the beginning by Mark. I had to say, “Why does this have to be chaired by a bishop?”

My one worry about this document that Mark has called is when we come to page 25 “Recommended Next Steps & Priorities”, what is the very first thing that we do? We look for a friendly bishop. Now I am not anti-bishop. As some of you will know, I am married to one. Bishops are vital, but there is a great danger in our Church that we cannot move without them. Surely, there are laity who could take this on?

Like some of the other groups who complain they do not have access to the House of Bishops, why can it not be organised by laity who could then be given an opportunity at an appropriate time to attend the House of Bishops and inform them or help them and talk to them about what has been going on. Our bishops are busy people and their job is as the guardian of the faith. Perhaps if we let the laity do a bit more, then they could have a bit more time to spend on their doctrines of theology.

Ms Carol Wolstenholme (Newcastle): I welcome very much the Report *Setting God’s People Free*. I am fully supportive particularly of the emphasis on the change in culture that is required to equip everyone as disciples and for that wonderful sentence about clergy and lay believing they are equal in worth and status and partners in mission.

I am the lay chair of Newcastle Diocesan Synod and, for the past three years, have led a piece of work we call in the North “Lay Voices”. The initiative grew out of the realisation that in diocesan deanery meetings the voices of lay people were not often heard.

Our research highlighted that those elected to diocesan and deanery synods did not feel confident to contribute—something other speakers have commented on too. We found out the reason why was that they did not fully understand Church language or the procedures. They did not feel that they had sufficient knowledge and understanding about the issues that they were debating. They were intimidated by the confidence and knowledge of their clergy colleagues—the impact being their voices were not heard. We have adopted a number of interventions which have ranged from learning events at our lay conference and policy changes. They seem to be working.

The results are manifesting themselves in things such as the number of people

who have stepped up and developed into leadership roles. In particular, I would mention our deanery lay chairs, who have been energised and motivated by this initiative. A change in climate and contributions at Synod and at Bishop's Council is evident, complementing Lay Voices, and I really plea for us all to work in harmony together.

I pay tribute in Newcastle Diocese to the engagement with local ministry groups and education for discipleship, which, together, have encouraged Lay Voices to act. For me, our experience in Newcastle has confirmed three important pieces of evidence which do not actually seem to have a great urgency or emphasis in the Report.

The first is the importance of lay leadership within the Church, within the Church structures as well as in our communities. We do, indeed, have talented people within our churches who we need to nurture, affirm and utilise so that they share leadership with their clergy and then lead others to be confident disciples in the world.

Secondly, before we can mobilise people to understand and commit to discipleship, we need to hear their voices. They need to be listened to. I asked our deanery lay chairs and area deans for feedback on the Report. One of the messages that was loud and clear from them was that need for engagement with the laity to encourage them to be confident enough to realise their work in the world.

The third is that changes in diocesan structures and policies can change culture fast. My own Bishop has told you about one of the things we have done. Another is just that of agreeing policies that lay people should be included on every strategy and priority piece of work. I do, indeed—it is a mutual admiration society—pay tribute to my own Bishop Christine.

I want to finish with some Northern words. In the North we have a saying that says, "Shy bairns get nowt", which translates, for me anyway, as "One needs to be assertive to get what one wants". This voice, from the land of the Northern Saints, wants to say to Archbishops' Council, "We like your Report. We, like Aidan and Cuthbert before us, are on the road to making new disciples. We want to accelerate our work on discipleship and we want to increase lay leadership in our Church, but we want you to help us". Please, we want to be part of the learning community. In fact, we want to be one of the pilot dioceses.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): After the next speaker, can I tempt you with a motion for closure on this item?

The Chair: Mr Freeman, I would like to hear a couple more people and then we will be looking for a motion for closure.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells): I would like to thank Mark for his enthusiastic introduction to this Report. He needs to understand though that being grey is not necessarily a stigma. I am also really pleased to see the blossoming of this initiative from the seeds that Adrian Greenwood, Philip Giddings and I helped to plant during the last quinquennium.

I am also very pleased that, as a role model, the Task Group is predominantly lay compared to the highly clerical composition of the folk who came to our original House of Laity meeting. I am not clerical bashing. I will illustrate what I mean. We had a reorganisation at work and lots of new people were elevated very quickly to the executive—a position which they got to without necessarily understanding how to be one.

Most of us have children and many of us have grandchildren and we will have spent some time on the touchline watching an under-seven's football match. If you can take yourself to that pitch, you will realise that the children see where the ball is and they rush over to get to it. The ball moves over to another part of the pitch and they all rush over to get to that part of the pitch. This is exactly how our executives were operating at the time. It was a disaster. So what do I glean from that? What it means is we all need to know our position in order to be an effective team together. We all have our different gifts and we need to exercise those separately and uniquely.

So what is a disciple? One of my dear friends was the late Martin Cavender, and he and I used to spend a long time talking about this particular aspect of Christian life. One of the things that he tried to encapsulate for me was that being a disciple is not about being a passive receiver but rather about actively pursuing the vision our God has for us. Let us help to be able to celebrate that vocation by acknowledging the small acts that 98% of us do and recognising them as our Christian service.

Doing the acts is one thing; having the tools to do the acts is something completely different, and so when we develop the tools that we need to equip us to do those jobs we need to have good mentors that can help us to develop and understand

how we can progress, how we can see the future that can emerge from the use of those tools. Our diocesan objective is putting mission and evangelism at the heart of everything we do. We were very grateful to Bishop Justin for coming to visit our diocese a little while ago. In the cathedral he had a question and answer session. He had one last question to answer from me, which was: "Is it better to ask for permission or forgiveness?" He said, "Archdeacons, cover your ears, the answer is 'Yes, sometimes'."

Mrs Anne Martin (Guildford): I wholeheartedly welcome this Report. It is long overdue. Many middle-of-the-road ordinary members of the Church of England have felt for the last few years that they are seen as irrelevant, their voices not heard and their contribution not valued, and they have not known what to do about it. We have a big task in front of us, including rebuilding respect for the Church of England, and, unless the two cultural shifts highlighted on page 2 of the Report are implemented, that task will be almost impossible unless laity and clergy are convinced that they are equal in worth and status. As a lay person, I would like to have assurance and believe that all clergy will read and take this Report seriously, that it will be discussed at chapters, at senior staff meetings and with the laity, and that all clergy will encourage its implementation.

Secondly, I would like to see the role of the deanery taken more seriously such that clergy feel it is important to attend and help to resource the lay and the clergy so that they can learn together, realising the real possibilities that there could be in Renewal and Reform.

We need a change of culture. I know this is not true in every diocese and every parish, but I know within my own deanery that attending deanery synod is seen as a dead-end boring commitment. I hope that we can change that.

Thirdly, following on from my colleague from Newcastle, I would like to encourage greater visibility for lay chairs, both at diocesan and deanery level; that they are encouraged to meet regularly and discuss relevant matters so that they are fully aware of all that is going on and take a full role in the life of their deaneries and dioceses; that they can play an active role in helping to implement the Report and other ways of revitalising the Church and helping to bring the lay together; to articulate the contribution they can make and to gain confidence in their role as disciples of Christ. We should celebrate this Report and rejoice that we have a future working together. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr Freeman, after Dr Warner I might be looking for a motion of closure.

Dr Meg Warner (London): Chair, thank you very much for calling me. As a lay person I am delighted to see anything coming before this Synod which seeks to promote the place and the role of lay people within our Church. I particularly welcome those things which seek to build the confidence of lay people amongst us.

I have one or two concerns about this Report that I would like to address. One is the model of gathering and being sent. I would like to suggest that perhaps there might be a slightly different shape that we can understand because lay people do not only gather and find themselves sent; they are also called in. They are called in from the world. Lay people are not simply people who are unfortunate enough not to have been ordained. They actually have something that most clergy do not have; they live and work in the real world. They come from there and then are sent back out into it. In my own particular work I teach theology and, in particular, the Bible and one of the things which I try to tell my students over and over again is the importance of context. It is important to know the context in which our Scriptures were written. It is important also to know the context in which we read our Scriptures and in which we share them and speak them to people.

When we speak of Jesus, we speak of Jesus into a context. Our lay people know that context and it is vital that we appreciate that gift and those skills that our lay people have and bring when they are called into our Church. That is also part of what they take out with them into the world.

Secondly, I would like to support the comments of the Bishop of Dover and to say how valuable it can be for lay people and ordained people to undertake their theological education together. As an educator, to educate both groups together is a challenge, but it absolutely can be done.

I have not been in this country all that long and one of the interesting things about coming here from Australia has been noticing some of the particular things about the Church of England. One of the things I have noted is that you are blessed with synods—many of them. Synods are an extraordinary gathering of lay and ordained people to do a job together. One of the best experiences I have had since I have been here is to be part of some of the synods of the Diocese in Europe. Because Europe is so far flung, when they gather as synod they also gather as conference, not clergy conference but a conference of all those who are called. They study and learn together and the beginning part of the day is a Bible study. I know that the Diocese in Europe is not unique in doing this, but the experience is

that what the people do together as part of their Bible study at the beginning of the day feeds into everything else that happens as part of the synod. This was also my experience as part of General Synod in Australia and we found it enormously valuable.

There are opportunities for lay people and clergy to do their study together in ways which can both be challenging for clergy and also accessible and challenging for those without formal theological education.

As a final thought, I want to note some slight concern about the fact that this Report comes to us separately from a report which will deal with the ministry of that we not compartmentalise what we think of as education of our lay people into formal and informal theological education. My experience is that lay people are hungry and thirsty for theology that has depth and rigour and which they can take and apply in their context.

I commend these provisions for working with lay people, with those slight reservations. Thank you.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Point of order: motion for closure.

The Chair: That has my permission. Can I test the mind of Synod?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That is clearly carried. Now we move to the main motion. I should like to ask Canon Russell to come and give his reply. Canon Russell, you have up to six minutes.

Canon Mark Russell (Sheffield): Synod, thank you so much for a very exciting, imaginative and rich debate, and I thank you for engaging with this Report so well.

There are so many speeches I cannot possibly begin to highlight all of them. Obviously with Jane Patterson and Liz Paver I am delighted to see the Diocese of Sheffield is leading from the front on this. Alison Coulter, thank you for your service on the group and reminding us of the crucial importance of culture change. Paul Fiddes, you are absolutely right, there is loads of theology out there on this, but we want to get the culture shift in our Church that serving God as a school governor or as a member of a political party is just as important as being an acolyte, a server or a church warden. Sarah Maxfield-Phillips, I do not think many people in this

Synod will need to be persuaded of my commitment to young people or mission to and with young people and, you are absolutely right, we have to reach more young people before we can disciple them and release them into ministry.

Bishop Trevor, as always, thank you for your helpful and constructive remarks. I like that phrase “adaptive change” and I would like to invite you to think about whether you would like to be a pilot diocese so we can try—hands up—to see whether we can follow through the suggestions that you have made. Nick Land is right; we want disciples who are relational leaders in the workplace. John Perumbalath, thank you for that moving and important speech to liberate lay people from in-house jargon, to liberate from top-down management and to liberate for discipleship, learning, growth and mission. The Bishop of Huddersfield, thank you for your hard work on the theological background paper for the Bishops and for your enthusiasm for this work. Bishop Christine from Newcastle, if you spot clericalism and are going to attack it, I cannot think of anybody I would rather attack something than you. You are brilliant and I love the fact you are living this vision in Newcastle and, as for living the dream, all I can say is, “Preach it, sister”. Jonathan Chaffey, you are right, I did not mention the Armed Services in my huge long list, for which I apologise. It gives me a chance to remind him and to remind those he serves of the Synod’s admiration for the thousands of people who serve in our Armed Services around the world and thank them for their commitment to the service of this nation and for their 24/7 modelling of that.

Adrian Greenwood, you are right, discipleship and this Report is urgent. You have been a champion of this for as long as I can remember and we hear everything that you have said to us today. The Archbishop of York, I am an adopted Yorkshireman as well, Sir, and we do indeed talk about the weather far too much, and I will do my level best to lead from the front in talking about Jesus even more. But you are quite right, we have to be better at spotting gifts in people and the giftings of the Holy Spirit. Sarah Tupling, thank you: we receive the challenge you have given us that we will work hard to ensure the resources that we create are absolutely accessible and we will also do better at listening to the voices of disabled people and the contributions of disabled people in our Church on this matter. Thank you for that important contribution.

Vivienne Goddard, you have also been a champion for lay people for as long as I can remember. You asked the question about an episcopal chair, and I understand entirely what you mean, but the reality is if we want anything done in this Church or any leadership on the matter, we need a bishop onside who can talk about it in the House of Bishops. If you look at the Lay Ecclesial Report, you will

see that it is a bishop and a lay person jointly chairing that group. My deputy chief executive, Des Scott, is chairing that along with Bishop Robert, and I think that is a good model.

Carol Wolstenholme, I think the rest of us in this Synod think, “What a team there must be in Newcastle”, and we note entirely the challenge you make and that question around lay leadership in the church. We have some further work to be done.

Tim Hind, I would quite like to go grey because it will at least stop the rumours that I dye my hair. I think you are right, disciples are formed and not made. You mentioned one of my heroes, Martin Cavender, who I think would cheer from another shore and shout, “Amen” to everything in this Report.

Anne Martin, thank you for your support for the two cultural shifts. Meg, thank you for the language of “called in”—I like that hugely.

Synod, thank you for a great debate, for engaging so positively on the morning after the night before and thank you for taking the themes of this Report and owning them. As one of our speakers reminded us, the challenge is now to take those themes out of this chamber and into the dioceses, parishes and deaneries across our land.

Friends, I believe strongly that we can make this Report come alive, that we can make it more than just well-intentioned words on a nice page. This Report is historic and it will help us as a Church impact our nation even more, to empower our lay people, nourished by Word and Sacrament to serve the nation, all one million of us, the million people serving in every area of life, a movement and momentum for change, greater than any other on the face of this country; a movement of people who are characterised by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. As we are gathered and returned to our diocese as friends, all I want to finish by saying is, “Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord”.

I urge you to support the motion standing in my name.

The Chair: Thank you, Canon Russell.

The motion

‘That this Synod:

(a) welcome the report from the Archbishops' Council, Setting God's People Free (GS 2056); and

(b) call on the Archbishops' Council to develop the implementation plan referred to in section 5 of the report and to work closely with the House of Bishops and the dioceses taking it forward.'

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That is clearly carried.

Dr Chris Angus (Carlisle): There are quite a lot of people left stand who probably have got substantive points to make. It would be good if we could have somewhere to send our further points?

Canon Mark Russell (Sheffield): Madam Chairman, if I can respond to that. If you send them to Mike Eastwood at Church House those will be noted and taken back to develop this work further.

The Chair: Synod, I am aware there are a lot of people wishing to speak on this and I do apologise for not being able to call all of you. Thank you. This now ends this item on the Agenda.

THE CHAIR *Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 12.15 pm.

The Chair: Members of Synod, before we go to Item 27 I would just make an announcement that there will be a House of Laity Standing Committee at 2.30 p.m. You should know who you are if that applies to you.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION

MISSION AND ADMINISTRATION (GS 2057A AND GS2057B)

The Chair: Synod, I would urge you to contain your excitement as we rush headlong to the end of our Synod business. We have time for contingency business and that gives us an opportunity to debate the Private Member's Motion from Gavin Oldham on mission and administration. For this item you will need GS 2057A and the companion note from the Secretary General GS 2057B. There is also a financial comment on the Sixth Notice Paper at paragraphs 23 and 24. You may also like to know that there was an amendment from Mary Chapman on the

Fourth Notice Paper. You may not have that with you but hopefully we will have it projected on the screen for you and I intend to take that quite early in the debate. For the moment I call upon Gavin Oldham to move Item 27 and he has up to ten minutes.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): I beg to move

‘That this Synod, considering the ratio of time and money spent in administration to that spent in mission to be too high throughout the Church of England, and noting the very effective facilities provided for parish statistics collection and clergy payroll:

- (a) confirm that the principle of subsidiarity should not be applied to purely administrative functions; and
- (b) request the Archbishops’ Council to consult with the Church Commissioners and dioceses, with the objective of establishing centralised administrative facilities so that other functions which can be handled more efficiently thereby are transferred accordingly.’

First, my thanks to all those who have supported me in bringing this motion to Synod, those who have signed it and those who have corresponded and discussed it with me, in some cases in considerable detail, being as concerned as I am to stop the Church wasting time and money, and with many proposals and suggestions for moving it forward.

Secondly, I should explain what this motion is not about. It is not about removing proper conversation on everyday issues between parishes, deaneries and dioceses. It is not about removing decisions, whether about property, legal matters or anything else, from local resolution when they properly belong there, nor challenging the autonomy and independence of a local church. In the final resort, it will always be up to dioceses and parishes to decide if they want to use a facility provided for them. There will be no central diktat. And it is not about locating still more administrative services in London. Far from it; when we set up support operations we should look to the most cost-effective and suitable place, not pay London premiums.

Those who have read my background paper GS 2057 may wonder why I have taken the unusual step of including a well-known children’s story therein. It is true

I am a great follower of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, but the story shows very clearly how our attachment to matters of consequence can blind our eyes to the things that really matter. We are all aware of how children can often state the mind-blowingly obvious truth when we are wholly oblivious to it.

Clearly, I am no child but I see the Church of England smothered in a comfort blanket of duplicated administration, where a huge proportion of our time is spent maintaining its organisational status quo while our congregations fall and a majority of the population sees us as not relevant to their lives. It is the modern equivalent of the Emperor fiddling while Rome burns.

Decentralised organisations up and down the land have overhauled their administrative systems to become efficient, not just commercial businesses but public sector and voluntary organisations. But, with the exception of a number of bilateral diocesan arrangements to share resources, and a small number of Church House initiatives, as listed in GS 2057B, we have taken little advantage of the opportunities offered by co-ordinated process flows and automation.

Take, for example, our accounting systems. There is no consistency in our ledger structures or use of accounting software; each diocese makes its own decisions. It is not at all easy to construct an integrated financial analysis of the Church activities and separate accounting expertise is required in each diocese. We may be separately incorporated but that does not mean that we cannot work on a coherent basis.

Likewise insurance: can we not do better to negotiate a competitive, standard package designed to cover very similar requirements across the country? That is, after all, what an insurance broker serving a large group of companies would do, and we can do so too. Non-clergy payroll is another weight on Church administration. We run an excellent clergy payroll system, so why should dioceses have to employ people to do non-clergy payroll? This is surely one of simplest areas to save time and money. A centralised bank of information for frequently asked questions would save a huge amount of time and money for diocesan support, including registrars, whether for legal matters, boards of education, safeguarding or employment issues. The list goes on. There should be a prerequisite before contacting a local registrar to confirm that you have sought the answer from this web-based FAQs to avoid clocking up legal time and cost, whether your question is about the timing of your annual parochial church meeting or whether you are not sure if you need a faculty for removing pews. These are not questions that should incur cost.

This motion is not about making prescriptive proposals. These are only examples and I am sure everyone could contribute more from their own experience.

What lies at the heart of the motion is the principle of subsidiarity and the fact that we apply it to everything except liturgy, law and doctrine. That is not what subsidiarity means. Let me read out the definition from my background paper: “Subsidiarity is the principle that a central governing body will permit its member states, branches, local government, et cetera to have control over those issues that are deemed more appropriate to be decided at local level”. The problem is that by applying subsidiarity to matters which are purely administrative, you take away from senior Church leaders the incentive to find more efficient ways of working. And it reaches right into this General Synod. When we review finances each summer, we do not see an overview of how financially inefficient the whole Church is, we see the Archbishops’ Council’s budget and we want to minimise its costs. Then each diocese sees and approves its own budget, but no one oversees Church finances as a whole, no one scrutinises to see if the overall cost of administration is falling year on year. In fact, there is an incentive for national Church institutions to pass out jobs that need doing to the dioceses so that they can keep the NCI’s central costs to a minimum, so jobs that could be done once are duplicated potentially 42 times over.

Take, for example, the move to improve charity regulation some years ago. The Charity Commission offered the Church the opportunity to provide a single point of co-ordinated registration, but the Church turned the offer down, adopting instead separate parochial registration for every parish with a turnover of more than £100,000. I recall shortly thereafter a conversation with a somewhat incredulous regulator. If we decide to remove subsidiarity from matters which are purely administrative, we will change the mind-set to become more efficient. That is what I would particularly ask you to do.

The second part of the motion invites the Archbishops’ Council to consult and draw up a plan of some proper analysis. It calls for a step-change in progress, not a continuation of the current slow drip-feed of initiatives. Those administrative improvements which can release the greatest benefit will be prioritised and, when ready, will be offered to dioceses and parishes for take-up. We will gradually move the Church of England into the 21st Century and, as we do so, time and money will be released.

What will then be our key challenge? It will be to break the mould of cyclical

administration and to work progressively to do Christ's work on earth, to help people understand the great message of unconditional love that we carry in our jars of clay. So much of this is already addressed in Renewal and Reform, but it needs a more progressive approach so that we lift our eyes above the horizon. We are supposed to bring the Good News of the Gospel to people, not to spend our time chiselling away at administrative problems in front of screens, papers and in committees. It is time to release that comfort blanket and face the world around us. Thank you.

The Chair. The matter is now open for debate.

Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans): Is the House of Bishops quorate?

The Chair. Would the House of Bishops please stand? I think we just are. I am delighted to tell you that we are, Mr Archer. The matter is now open for debate. I would like to call upon Mary Chapman to speak to and move her amendment at Item 28. Hopefully, Item 28 will come on the screen and you have up to five minutes.

Mrs Mary Chapman (Archbishops' Council): I beg to move

'Leave out everything after "request the Archbishops' Council to" and insert "develop its current work with dioceses to identify opportunities for nationally provided administrative services which would both release a larger proportion of resources for local growth and mission initiatives and generate economies for the whole Church."

This amendment is intended to be a friendly one and its purpose is to reposition the call to action in clause B to align it more closely with the structures of the Church of England. I think every one of us would share the desire behind Gavin's motion that we should be seeking to be more effective and efficient in administration, so as to release the maximum resources to mission. Sharing common services across dioceses ought to lead to cost savings if managed properly. It is not a new notion and we have a number of examples where the Church already works collectively to reduce the overall administrative burden and save costs.

Paper GS 2057B from the Secretary General summarises the current position and gives an indication of what more is being planned, and I commend it to you as a reference document of what is available. For instance, we have central

arrangements for collective purchasing of commodities and energy through parish buying, so parishes, cathedrals, dioceses and church schools can draw on the purchasing power of the whole Church. Another example is the successful Parish Giving Scheme where the Archbishops' Council provided seed corn funding for the expansion of an initiative started by Gloucester Diocese and which is currently processing around £20 million of Gift Aid claims a year on behalf of 16 dioceses, with a further 14 dioceses expressing interest in joining. The costs of these and many other arrangements are borne by the users of the services, but they are popular because they are demonstrably more cost-efficient than going it alone, so of course it makes sense to encourage the development of more such examples.

My concern though is about the way in which Gavin's motion is worded. In particular, there is a presumption of centralisation, which I do not believe recognises the institutional structure of the Church, in which there is, as he has said, a separate legal entity for each parish and each diocese. Dioceses and parishes are not branches of Church of England Inc or Church of England plc, as is implied by the use of the term "subsidiarity", so they have not been given the burden of this responsibility for administration; it is legally theirs.

Synod can urge and encourage greater encouragement in shared enterprise but I do not believe it can command it. That does not mean, however, that we should do nothing. The same objectives of lightning the load for people in parishes and dioceses that underpin the Simplification programme should drive us to seek administrative efficiencies. There has been an increasingly lively interchange between dioceses and the national Church institutions in recent years and my amendment proposes that we should further develop that work to identify other areas with potential for a more consistent service offering. And offer is what it would be. At the end of the day, individual dioceses would still have to decide to opt in to any common arrangements that might be developed. It always surprises me that we do not have wider usage of all the services which already exist, but dioceses understand the local contexts in which their parishes operate in a way that could not be replicated by a central administrative body.

Gavin contends that while the current approach has proved to be fruitful in targeted areas, the pace of change is insufficient, and he might well be right. He sets out at clause B an objective of establishing centralised administrative facilities. This pre-judges an outcome before an analysis has been done. Whilst welcoming the principle of promoting efficiency and more cost-effective processes, I suggest that the objective should be for the Archbishops' Council to work with dioceses to analyse the real demand and opportunities.

We should test each potential service against the two criteria: does it release resources for local mission, and does it generate economies for the whole Church? My amendment seeks to further develop the current approach which recognises that dioceses and parishes are, at the end of the day, responsible for their own financial and administrative destiny and can decide to participate or not, depending on their assessment as to the effectiveness of the proposed solutions. I beg to move the amendment in my name

The Chair: The amendment has been moved, so I invite Gavin Oldham to respond. He has up to five minutes.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): I am grateful to Mary Chapman for her amendment to the second part of the motion, as it aligns the call to action more closely with the Archbishops' Council's work with the dioceses to help the Church throughout the country to become more efficient.

The removal of the reference to Church Commissioners is not a concern, as it is the Archbishops' Council's role to lead on this matter and they will no doubt ask the Commissioners for assistance where they see fit. It also removes that potentially difficult word, "centralised" from the motion. That is helpful because, as I have already said, this is not about removing local dialogue and involvement, nor challenging the autonomy and independence of the local church and diocese.

It does recognise the need for action and the purpose of releasing time, energy and financial resources for local growth and mission. In doing so, it supports the step-change for which I am looking - a change of mind-set which encourages us all to seek out actively areas where we can relieve the administrative burden.

For example, following our debate on the preliminaries to marriage, there is huge scope to reduce clergy workload by providing an electronic verification of people coming forward for marriage. In my business we do tens of thousands of such verifications each year. I would ask you to support Mary's amendment and I look forward to the Archbishops' Council taking ownership of this matter as we go forward from this debate.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): As the mover has accepted the amendment, will you accept a motion for closure on the amendment?

The Chair: I think I would just like to see whether perhaps someone might want to speak against, but if no one does then I will accept your motion. If you would like

to speak against, please stand. Well, in which case, I will accept. That has my consent. Does that have your consent, Synod?

The motion

‘Leave out everything after “request the Archbishops’ Council to” and insert “develop its current work with dioceses to identify opportunities for nationally provided administrative services which would both release a larger proportion of resources for local growth and mission initiatives and generate economies for the whole Church.”’

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: In which case, we will vote on that amendment.

This amendment was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: Now we continue the debate on Item 27, as amended by Item 28.

Revd Dr Sean Doherty (London): Most of the same administrative tasks have to be undertaken in church, no matter whether it is large or small. In my experience, wealthier and/or larger churches are more likely to have professionals in their congregation who generously volunteer their time.

Many churches now employ a parish administrator or church manager, and one or two even something glamorously entitled a director of operations. Not so in my church. Being in a UPA context, that sort of luxury is much more unusual. There are, of course, churches in many other types of contexts too in which that would be a wonderful dream.

At the moment, I am an assistant minister in such a UPA (Urban Priority Area) church where there is no minister. You can do the math in terms of what that means for my role. This means that the burden of administration—which everyone here will know can be very, very considerable—often falls on the ministers as being one of the few perhaps professional people in the congregation or even in the community.

Ministers, whether lay or ordained, are not recruited on the basis of being suited for such tasks and they may not be temperamentally suited for them, nor are they necessarily trained for such tasks. Very often, people will say to me as a tutor in

a theological college, “Well, you didn’t teach me that”. This can be the source of very considerable stress for ministers and, as Gavin has so well pointed out in his paper, inhibits mission.

Furthermore, mission can only be done locally, although it can, of course, be supported and helped in other ways. I therefore welcome any possible way in which administrative functions can be performed by those who are qualified and gifted to do them, releasing ministers to do what they are called to do and what can only be done locally. I support and ask you all to support this motion.

Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark): I would like to begin by thanking Gavin Oldham for his perseverance in bringing this motion to Synod and I would very much like to encourage Synod to support this motion as amended. Indeed, why would one not support this motion, which is simply a request to the Archbishops’ Council to give further specific consideration to processes which could reduce the overall back office costs of the Church across the country?

We need to recognise that, as a body which comprises a multitude of stakeholders and entities across parishes, deaneries, cathedrals, dioceses, mission agencies, the NCIs, the Church of England is not best known for its ability to consider, embrace and implement change with haste. Indeed, perhaps the debate earlier today in terms of *Setting God’s People Free* indicates the time that it takes to get to a particular point.

There is also an enormous and, in my view, generally unmerited suspicion of any organisational change across the Church, particularly if that change could, in any sense, be characterised as centralisation. This having been said, I would not wish to belittle in any sense the considerable and valuable progress which Mary Chapman has just referred to, which has been taken in simplifying and streamlining a number of activities across the Church. Clearly, those items are listed in the Secretary General’s paper, GS 2057B.

In addition, there are also in several dioceses excellent initiatives that have been done to work collaboratively to share resources in the provision of services. However, there must be a point for each of us when we reflect on the fact that we have 20,000 ordained clergy across 16,000 churches, 12,500 parishes in 42 dioceses with 42 cathedrals, that there must be myriads of ways in which we could be more effective and efficient in managing and delivering the boring but critical back office support services which we require, particularly in the areas of HR, legal, finance, audit, insurance, property and investment management, and IT.

I appreciate that I run the risk of being labelled as another corporate management-type who is challenging how the Church has thought and operated for several centuries. However, I am proud to admit that that is my challenge to this Synod. On the basis of my professional business experience, I can confidently state that it is inconceivable that the Church's operations cannot become more efficient and cost-effective given the current construct.

I would also remind Synod that, as Christians, we have a duty of stewardship to ensure that all the resources provided for the mission and working of the Church are used to optimal effect. There are many large multi-faceted organisations in the UK which have reinvented themselves and the nature of their operations to become more efficient in the use of technology in a digital age and more effective by using common services to reduce cost and improve service delivery.

Is it, thus, really beyond the pale to ask whether a national shared service centre for the Church, located outside London, could deal with all HR queries from parishes or dioceses or manage a national payroll system? Let us remember that by bringing services together we have the opportunity to ensure that the best of current practices are identified and then delivered for the benefit of all.

As I speak, I can already hear the naysayers whispering in my ear that none of this is possible because of the separate legal status of parishes and dioceses, or because it will be impossible to get enough people on board. My challenge to such views, to the dioceses, and particularly to the Archbishops' Council, is this. Be willing to think broadly, radically and—as Sir Andreas encouraged us earlier this week—innovatively. Secondly, be willing to consider removing barriers to change rather than acquiescing to the status quo. Thirdly, be willing to embrace the words of our Lord in St Matthew's Gospel: "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible". I support the motion.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mrs Julie Dziel (Oxford): As a parish and deanery treasurer, I do a lot of administration. I also have wonderful people who do further admin to help me. I believe that the work in the middle of our spreadsheets and our figures and our paper is my ministry. It is what I am called to do.

Had the motion remained unamended, I would, in fact, have been opposing it. I did not think that centralising almost for the sake of centralising was the right thing

to do. However, this amended motion really ticks my boxes. What we need to do is continue what we are doing at the moment. We are getting things to the right level.

The administration needs to be done at the right level of Church, not at the top or at the bottom if that is not where it is supposed to be. My present feeling is that things are not actually that far wrong. I am delighted, however, by things like the Parish Buying Initiative, which gives access to people in my parish and my deanery and the parishes in my deanery the power of the large organisation of which we are part. It is used and recommended and used again over and over in my area.

Dioceses do need to deal with the local. They need to be there as the local point of contact. We need local knowledge and local relationships. However, it is really good to identify opportunities to offer centralised functions. I hope, as this motion states, there will be work done with the dioceses; questions asked to find out what they would like help with; and, also, possibly, that could be extended—I am not going to add another amendment—to asking the parishes what work they might like help with.

It would be unwise to centralise a function that nobody actually wants centralised. I think those questions need asking. I think this motion will result in more of the same good stuff that we are seeing already, so that we who delight in our administration, and probably those who do not enjoy it so much, can take joy in using it.

Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield): I speak as a parish priest with five churches in a rural context. I was not intending to speak, so I have not prepared anything. Looking at this motion, it actually does not prepare or propose anything that is going to make my life any easier; we are talking about national and diocesan level.

This motion is not going to fill in anything to do with banns. This is not going to fill in the baptism certificates for me on Sunday. This motion is not going to do anything to make me released for mission in the Church any more. In our diocese, our central services were reviewed and a number of people's jobs were put under threat. It was a really unpleasant time in our diocese and not something that I would like to see repeated.

What I see in this motion is a danger of things happening more nationally and local people in diocesan offices being made redundant. Fair enough if it is natural wastage, but if it is not then that is something as Christians I do not think we should

be putting people under pressure for.

The Chair: I call upon Stephen Lynas and after him I would welcome a motion for the closure.

Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells): No pressure then. I want to speak against this motion, partly because of the very vagueness of what is intended, even though it is greatly improved by the amendment. I also want us to think a bit more carefully about the nature of dioceses and the nature of the national Church and, indeed, as we have just heard, the nature of parish life.

Geography is a rather exciting subject to some of us, because what works in some places as inter-diocesan co-operation will not work in others. As I understand it, for example, Leicester and Coventry have a history of co-operation in all sorts of ways. The Diocese of Bath and Wells some ten years ago investigated quite heavily in sharing our education department with that of Bristol, but that proposal fell partly because different education authorities with which we were involved made it very difficult to see how it could work. My word, things have changed a bit since then, of course.

Then, there is Yorkshire. The West Yorkshire Diocese is maybe a warning from history. Not that what has happened there has not worked now but, as I understand it—and I heard a wonderful presentation about the processes that went through to form the present Diocese—it was bloomin' difficult and took a lot of work to do.

What this motion does not notice is that a lot of what we do as dioceses is about relationships. Clergy and churchwardens get to know the key staff in a diocesan office and they trust them and are happy to ring them up with those odd queries. It is not the same as a FAQ on a website. It is not the same as ringing up somebody in a national office with an HR question.

For many people in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, Wells is far enough away for them to think, "Them at Wells don't understand me when I ring them up with a question". I hesitate to think what it would be like if we had some anonymous Church finance back office, property, HR office, 200 miles away, with whom we had no relationship.

I shudder slightly at the talk of value for money and stakeholders if it means that we set up an office which might be perhaps not in London but in Middlesbrough or

Falmouth where offices might be cheap. That is a long way away from most of us and there would be no relationship.

Finally, if we struggle to get people sometimes to pay the parish share—and I speak from a diocese which gets something like 98% collection rate—how much more difficult will it be to collect parish share if people think—I know it is not quite like that—that even more of our money is going to the national Church than happens at the moment. I am having a house clearance at the moment, and one of the things I have found is a USB fridge that somebody bought as a present and they thought it was a great idea.

The Chair: Could you come to a close, please?

Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells): I am going to chuck the fridge out and I think we should chuck this motion out.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Point of order: motion for closure on this Item.

The Chair: That has my consent. Does that have the consent of Synod?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I now call on Gavin Oldham to respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): Thank you for all your contributions to the debate, and particular thanks to Mary Chapman, not only for her amendment but also for the time and energy she has taken to find a way in which the Archbishops' Council can take ownership of the motion going forward. I am conscious that I am the only thing standing in the way of drawing a line under this Synod and going home, so I will be quick.

Sean Doherty, Carl Hughes and Julie Dziel, thank you very much for your remarks on that. Sean was talking about the burden of administration on ministers' shoulders. Actually, that is, in a way, partly what the speaker who spoke from Sheffield asked about, how is it going to help at the parish level? I very much hope this will work right through, as I indicated with the preliminaries to marriage comment that I made earlier. Carl Hughes referred to the way that the Church of England is not known for embracing change and encouraging us to remove barriers to change. I think that is absolutely so true. We do actually have to move

forward now.

We have had a couple of points against here. Stephen Lynas spoke against the motion. I really would like to assure him that it will always be a diocese's choice, it will always be the parish's choice as to whether they want to use facilities which are put forward for them. As I said right at the beginning, there is no central diktat envisaged here, so you can keep all those relationships in place if you want them at that level. Indeed, there will be a need to maintain those relationships going on with all the support services which are provided.

Finally, thanks to William Nye for his thoughtful paper, GS 2057B, in response to my motion setting out the various initiatives which have been taken to date. For me, this journey to help the Church to become more efficient and become more focused on mission started 15 years ago.

When I first joined the General Synod in 1995—yes, it was that long ago—one of the key issues was a report called *Working as One Body*, which resulted in the formation of the Archbishops' Council and the reorganisation of the national Church institutions. Now we have the opportunity to help the Church throughout the country refocus on mission by removing the comfort blanket of administration. In that same spirit of working as one body, I urge you to take that opportunity.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Gavin. Now I put Item 27, as amended by Item 28, to the vote.

The motion

'That this Synod, considering the ratio of time and money spent in administration to that spend in mission to be too high throughout the Church of England, and noting the very effective facilities provided for parish statistics collection and clergy payroll:

- (a) confirm that the principle of subsidiarity should not be applied to purely administrative functions; and*
- (b) request the Archbishops' Council to develop its current work with dioceses to identify opportunities for nationally provided administrative services which would both release a larger proportion of resources for local growth and mission initiatives and generate economies for the whole Church.'*

was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair. That concludes this item of business. I now call on the Archbishop of Canterbury to prorogue the Synod.

PROROGATION

The Archbishop of Canterbury prorogued the Synod

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