

The November 2014 Group of Sessions of the General Synod

Report by the Business Committee

Introduction

1. November Synod groups of sessions are only held for the purpose of conducting urgent and time critical business. This is the third sequential year in which the Synod has met in November outside an inaugural year. In the two previous years this was due to the need for the Synod to progress the legislative process relating to Women in the Episcopate.
2. The November 2014 group of sessions has been scheduled for the same reason, but in this case the legislative business on Women in the Episcopate will be very brief, and will be focused around the need to enact Amending Canon No 33, which is the final stage of the process and the point after which it will be possible for women to be consecrated to the episcopate.
3. Because of the decision to meet for a third time in November, the Business Committee will be scheduling a slightly shorter group of sessions in February 2015, which will run from Tuesday 10 until Thursday 12 February 2015.
4. This report falls into three parts:

Part I introduces the Agenda for the November group of sessions (GS 1966) and highlights distinctive features;

Part II comments on individual items of business;

Part III reports on other work and recent decisions of the Business Committee.

I: The November 2014 Group of Sessions

5. The Synod will meet at Church House, Westminster from 1.45 p.m. on Monday 17 November 2014 until 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 18 November.
6. The group of sessions will begin with an act of worship and there will be a celebration of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall at 9.15 a.m. on the morning of Tuesday 18 November, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury will preside and preach.
7. The Archbishop of Canterbury will be making a Presidential Address on the afternoon of Monday 17 November.
8. The Committee has continued its discussions with the Presidents and their Chaplains and the Synod Chaplain on how further to integrate worship and prayer into the life of the General Synod. The Continuous Praying Presence initiative, which was launched in November 2013, has continued to grow and volunteers will be praying in Church House Chapel for the work of Synod during the time that it is meeting. Synod members are encouraged to join these volunteers in the Chapel as and when time permits.

Shape of the Agenda

9. The Committee has given priority to one item of legislative business and one other item of business. These are, respectively, the enactment of Amending Canon No 33 relating to Women in the Episcopate and the debate on the Report from the Joint Implementation Commission for the Anglican-Methodist Covenant. This report was debated by the Methodist Conference at their meeting in July 2014 and its recommendations accepted. It is of great importance for our relations with the Methodist Church that the General Synod also attends to the report and debates its recommendations.
10. The Committee has also provided significant time for the legislative business given the importance of concluding some items in good time before the end of this Parliament and others before the end of this Quinquennium. Other policy items under discussion are the persecution of religious minorities in Iraq and Syria and the Spare Room Subsidy in the UK.

Diocesan Synod Motions

11. The Diocesan Synod Motions ('DSMs') awaiting debate are listed in Special Agenda IV. The DSMs on the Anglican Communion Covenant have been 'parked' pending the completion of the Archbishop of Canterbury's tour of the Anglican Communion, which is due to finish at the end of this year. The very short time allowed for this group of sessions has meant that the Business Committee has been unable to find space for debates on the remaining DSMs.
12. However, the Bradford DSM on the Spare Room Subsidy has been scheduled for the Tuesday afternoon as it was not reached at the previous group of sessions, when it was listed as Contingency Business. The Business Committee will discuss the scheduling of the remaining DSMs when it meets in December.
13. The Southwark Diocesan Synod has withdrawn its DSM on the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod as, due to the Final Approval vote on the Women in the Episcopate legislation in July 2014, it had become redundant.

Private Members' Motions

14. Private Members' Motions ('PMMs') are listed in Special Agenda III. There are three motions with over 100 signatures (which is the threshold for PMMs to be considered for debate): Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams's PMM on the Public Doctrine of Christian Marriage, Mr John Ward's PMM on the Registration of Civil Partnerships and the Revd Canon Dr Michael Parsons' PMM on Canon B 38 relating to the burial of those who have taken their own lives. The Business Committee has scheduled the PMM on Canon B 38 as contingency business at this group of sessions.
15. The Business Committee has decided that it would be unhelpful to schedule the PMMs by Andrea Minichiello Williams and John Ward at this group of sessions. It has taken the view that, following the initiation of shared conversations in the College of Bishops and the imminent introduction of these shared conversations in the dioceses, it was

neither timely nor appropriate for these Private Members' Motions to be debated.

Order of Business

16. Members are reminded that if at any time within the group of sessions an unexpected gap opens in the Synod's Agenda, business earlier in the Agenda which has not been reached or completed within the period allotted can be called by the Chair unless other provision has already been made for it. If there is no such business, the Contingency Business will be taken.

II: Individual Items of Business

17. This section of the Report comments on individual items of business. They are discussed in chronological order.

Monday 17 November

Legislative Business

18. The legislative business for this group of sessions is set out in Special Agenda I. The majority of the business will be taken on Monday, with additional time scheduled before lunch on Tuesday for any unfinished items of legislative business.
19. As noted above, the most significant piece of legislative business will be a formal one, i.e. the enactment of Amending Canon No 33.
20. Additionally, two draft Measures will return to the Synod for Final Drafting and Final Approval: the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (Amendment) Measure (which continues the reform of the faculty jurisdiction) and the Church of England (Ecclesiastical Property) Measure (which will amend the arrangements for the holding of property by PCCs and parish officers).
21. Draft Amending Canon No 35 (relating to the administration of Holy Communion) will undergo its Revision and Final Drafting Stages before being formally referred to the House of Bishops under Article 7 of the Synod's Constitution.
22. The Synod will be invited to approve amendments to the Constitution of the Diocese in Europe, consequential on the increase in its representation in the Synod which was agreed in July.
23. The draft Diocesan Stipends Fund (Amendment) Measure will be introduced for First Consideration. The purpose of the Measure is to allow dioceses to adopt a 'total return' approach for the investment of their Diocesan Stipends Fund Capital Accounts.
24. Finally, the draft Naming of Dioceses Measure, which will enable dioceses to be named by reference to a geographical area as well as to a town or city, reaches the Revision Stage.

'Take Note' debate on Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy

25. There are currently Guidelines dating from 2003 which set out standards for the professional conduct of the clergy, prepared by the Convocations. While not a legal document, they set out a benchmark for clergy behaviour and as such they are referred to in bishops' disciplinary tribunals. A working party of the Convocations has been working on a revised text to take account of significant developments over the last 12 years, such as the Clergy Terms of Service legislation and the introduction of more robust procedures in respect of Safeguarding.
26. The revised text was considered by the Convocations of Canterbury and York in July and comes to the Synod for a 'take note' debate, in order to give members the opportunity to comment on the proposed revised text. It is intended that a settled text would in due course be finally approved by the Convocations, possibly in February 2015.

Presidential Address

27. The Archbishop of Canterbury will give a Presidential Address.

Questions

28. An hour and twenty minutes has been allocated for Questions, in the hope that this will make it possible for the majority of the Questions for oral answer to be taken.
29. Any member wishing to ask a question of any of the bodies or persons specified in Standing Order 105 must deliver notice of it to the Clerk to the Synod by **5.30 p.m. on Wednesday 5 November**. Questions sent by email should be addressed to questions@churchofengland.org .
30. Members are reminded that **all questions will be presumed to be for written answer** unless an oral answer is specifically requested.

Tuesday 18 November

31. Holy Communion will be celebrated in the Chamber at 9.15 am.

Presentation on Persecution of Religious Minorities in Iraq and Syria

32. The Business Committee is deeply conscious of the concern in church and nation regarding the imprisonment and persecution of Christians and those of other faiths. The Committee felt that it was important to raise this issue in Synod and consequently considered whether to schedule a debate on the subject. Following consultation, in and around the September Business Committee meeting, with the Archbishops' Council and the Mission and Public Affairs Council it was agreed that Synod should be given the opportunity to hear the contributions of a range of distinguished and knowledgeable speakers who bring an international and interfaith perspective. After further discussion and consultation, the majority of the Committee concluded that the most effective means of doing this was by means of a presentation followed by questions and prayer.

Anglican-Methodist Covenant: Report from the Joint Implementation Commission

33. As already noted the Joint Implementation Commission (JIC) on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant has submitted its Final Report to the Methodist Conference and to the General Synod of the Church of England. The report has three major recommendations for the two Churches (summarised at paragraph 46 of the Report). These are: to set up a Covenant Advocacy Group to continue development of joint and shared oversight and to act as an advocate for the Covenant at national level; to strengthen the role of the Methodist-Anglican Panel on Unity and Mission; and to ask their faith and order bodies to work together on proposals to address key issues for growing in communion, including interchangeability of ministries. The draft resolution prepared by the Council for Christian Unity, designed to mirror the resolution already passed by the Methodist Conference, invites the Synod to approve these recommendations and put in place the necessary means for their implementation.
34. A presentation will be given by Dr Peter Howdle, the Methodist Co-Chair of the Joint Implementation Commission on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant, who will outline progress made during the most recent quinquennium of the Commission and introduce its quinquennial report, *The Challenge of the Covenant: Uniting in Mission and Holiness*. The motion itself will be moved by the Bishop of Coventry as the Anglican Co-Chair of the Joint Implementation Commission and Chair of the Faith and Order Commission.

Bradford Diocesan Synod Motion on the Spare Room Subsidy

35. A Diocesan Synod motion, originating in the Diocese of Bradford prior to the creation of the Diocese of Leeds, has been scheduled for debate on Tuesday afternoon. It reflects concern at the impact of the Spare Room Subsidy, also known as the “Bedroom Tax” and thus considers a specific aspect of welfare reform which was debated in more general terms at the July 2013 group of sessions.

Contingency Business

36. The Revd Canon Mike Parsons’ Private Member’s Motion on Canon B 38 has been scheduled as contingency business. This PMM asks the Business Committee to introduce legislation to amend Canon B 38 in order to allow those who have taken their own lives, in whatever circumstances, to be buried in accordance with the rites of the Church of England.

III: Other Work of the Business Committee

37. The Business Committee has met once since the July group of sessions, on 23 September. At this meeting, it took the opportunity to review the responses received to Annex I of the July 2014 BC report (GS 1949) on ‘Changing the Culture of General Synod.’ Further thoughts and suggestions based on responses received are attached in the short Annex to this Report.

38. The current membership of the Business Committee is set out on page 8.

Communications of General Synod Proceedings

39. As is now customary, Synod proceedings will be webcast. There will also be an audio feed of Synod proceedings. Members may also choose to follow the General Synod Twitter feed at #generalsynod. At the end of each day there will be a daily interview on the Church of England website on 'Today at General Synod' which will feature an interview with some of the Synod members who are opening debates that day.

Costs of printing and postage of Synod papers

40. The average cost of printing and postage of papers over the last year for Synod are as follows:

- a. November 2013 group of sessions - £12,000
- b. February 2014 group of sessions - £8,700
- c. July 2014 group of sessions - £19,900

41. In order to save these costs, which are charged back to the dioceses, the Business Committee would encourage members – if they have not done so already - to sign up to receive copies of papers electronically wherever possible. Currently 106 members have signed up to doing so.

Forecast of Future Business

42. The forecast of future business annexed to this report provides a forward look to the groups of sessions in 2015. This should not be read as more than a broad indication of the business expected to come to the Synod next year.

On behalf of the Business Committee

Sue Booy
Chair

October 2014

Membership of the Business Committee

Chair

The Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford)

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)

The Revd Charles Razzall (Chester)

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (West Yorkshire and the Dales)

Elected by the House of Laity

Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich)

Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester)

Appointed by the Archbishops' Council

The Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield)

Mrs Christina Rees (St Albans)

The Secretary to the Committee is the Clerk to the Synod (Dr Jacqui Philips)

and the Assistant Secretary is Dr Emma Arbuthnot.

Forecast of future General Synod business

This forecast should not be read as more than a broad indication of business that may come to the Synod in 2015. Timings are therefore approximate and not a guarantee that they will be dealt with at the Synod session indicated.

One or more reports are usually taken at each group of sessions.

One or more Diocesan Synod Motions and one or more Private Members' Motions are customarily included in the Agenda for each group of sessions (see Special Agendas III and IV).

February 2015

- Enactment of Amending Canon No 32 relating to GS elections etc
- Naming of Dioceses Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- Amending Canon No 35 – Final Approval
- Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure and Amending Canon No 34 – Revision Stage
- Archbishops' Council: quinquennial review of constitutions
- Wakefield Diocesan Synod Motion
- ? Report from the Standing Orders Committee
- ? Possible FAOC report on Senior Church Leadership

July 2015

- Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure and Amending Canon No 34 – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure – Revision Stage [and Final Drafting / Final Approval?]
- ? Enactment of Amending Canon No 35
- ? Amending Regulations under Canon B 12 as amended by Amending Canon No 35
- ? Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules
- Usual fees orders relating to legal fees (deemed)
- ? Standing Orders Committee report (consolidated text?)
- Follow up report to GS GS 1844 – Unfinished Business by the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC).
- ? Possible report on Chaplaincy by the Mission and Public Affairs Council
- ? Possible report on Rural Multi-Parish Mission by the Mission and Public Affairs Council

November 2015 (inaugural group of sessions)

- Enactment of Amending Canon No 34
- [Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval (if not taken in July)]
- ? Amending Canon re Canon B 8 (vesture) – First Consideration
- ? Possible follow-up report to the Mission and Public Affairs report on 'Turning Up the Volume'

**GENERAL SYNOD
BUSINESS COMMITTEE ANNEX**

**“CHANGING THE CULTURE OF GENERAL SYNOD”
FOLLOW UP TO ANNEX 2 OF GS 1949**

Summary

This discussion paper summarises the main points of the responses received from Synod members to the Annex to the Business Committee Report (GS 1949) which set out some suggestions from the Committee’s on-going work on ‘New Ways of Doing Synod.’ It also takes into the account the feedback given by Synod members at the Business Committee Reception in July. The paper sets out the general direction of travel of the Business Committee’s work on this initiative for the remainder of this Quinquennium.

Introduction

1. In the Annex to the Business Committee report of July 2014 (GS 1949) the Business Committee set out its progress to date on its initiative on ‘new ways of doing Synod’ and asked Synod members for comment and feedback. The report summarised four main themes of this work under the heading of ‘Changing the Culture of General Synod’. These are as follows:
 - Integrating worship and prayer in the life of the synod (Acts 2.42)
 - Working together for good (Romans 8.28)
 - Communicating well with the church and the world (Ephesians 4.25-29)
 - Taking seriously Synod’s role in leadership and governance
2. The document explained the Committee’s thinking on each of these themes and asked Synod members to comment. The Committee also held a fringe meeting in the margins of the July Synod to enable Synod members to speak to representatives of the Committee and to develop the main themes. These were recorded on flip charts and the findings discussed at the Business Committee’s meeting on 23rd September, together with further submissions which were made to the Committee following the July Synod.
3. The feedback under the main themes are summarised in the following sections.

Integrating Prayer and Worship into the life of General Synod (Acts 2.42)

4. Synod members were supportive of combining formal worship at Synod with more informal initiatives such as the Continuous Praying Presence. There continues to be general support for integrating prayer more directly into the business of Synod through use of collects or prayer at other times such as praying for external visitors at Synod.
5. The Continuous Praying Presence initiative is building momentum and seems to be generally well-received by Synod members. The Synod Prayer card was popular and Synod members welcomed being able to use it in their dioceses. Although Synod members felt that the worship

styles were becoming more varied, there were further requests for more informal styles of worship at future Groups of Sessions.

Working together for Good

6. Synod members took differing views of the concept of 'learning to disagree well' in paragraph 5 of Annex 2 to GS 1949. Some felt that this was a key priority for Synod, others felt that 'agreeing to disagree' involved doctrinal compromise and was therefore theologically unacceptable.
7. Synod members were generally supportive of the practice of working together in small groups, but felt that the success of this varied depending on the topic under discussion and the preparation and material provided, as well as attendance levels and commitment by Synod members themselves. Synod members asked for group work discussions to have clear goals and outcomes and appropriate material. Some suggested that it should be focused on discussions on current or forthcoming legislation, to enable members to prepare for future debates.

Communicating well with the Church and the World

8. The question of how far the Synod should debate topical issues also divides Synod members. Some feel that the Synod should be more flexible in allowing slots for Synod to debate current or topical matters which are chosen nearer the time. Others feel that this wastes time, making the Synod a 'talking shop' for general matters where it has very little influence, and that it would be more appropriate for Anglicans to campaign on these matters on the ground in dioceses and parishes. Other members queried whether choosing topics relatively late would detract from the amount of time that Synod members have to prepare for a debate and thus impact adversely on the quality of discussion.
9. Synod members noted the increasing commentary on Synod in social media and a number stressed the importance of referencing this in debates so that the 'outside world' is brought into the work of Synod. Synod members emphasised the importance of effective training for new and existing members of Synod to ensure that they were suitably equipped to understand Synodical process and perform their roles effectively.

Supporting the Synod's status as the legislature of the Established Church and its role in leadership and Governance

10. Synod members who responded were generally positive about the Chair of the Steering Committee taking a more proactive role, in suitable cases, in organising and driving the progress of items of legislation through Synod so as to ensure a more efficient process. Some asked the Committee to explore further opportunities for refining the legislative process in future.

Conclusions

11. The Business Committee is taking time to consider this feedback and will consider it in more detail at its March 2015 meeting. At that point, the Committee will seek to produce a more detailed suggested 'blueprint' for how this initiative should go forward into the next Quinquennium. The Committee will bring this document to the July 2015 Group of Sessions and seek Synod's agreement for its suggestions in readiness for the next Synodical term.

On behalf of the Business Committee

The Revd Canon Sue Booy (Chair)

November 2014