

## The February 2015 Group of Sessions of the General Synod

### Report by the Business Committee

#### Introduction

1. This group of sessions follows close on the November 2014 group of sessions. For this reason, the Business Committee has limited the meeting to 3 days. The centrepiece for this Synod will be **engagement with the wide ranging programme emerging from the Task Groups**. This engagement will be underpinned by related work on Discipleship based on a report from the Ministry Council. The discussions will take up most of Wednesday 11 February and will involve group work and some meetings in larger groups as well as plenary sessions.
2. The Continuous Praying Presence will take place as usual in Church House Chapel. Synod members are welcome to join this where possible.
3. This report falls into three parts:
  - Part I introduces the Agenda for the February group of sessions 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 February 2015 Group of Sessions

4. The Synod will meet at Church House, Westminster from 1.00 p.m. on Tuesday 10 February 2015 until 5 p.m. on Thursday 12 February.
5. 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 Thursday morning, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury will preside and preach. On Wednesday morning, worship will take place in small groups before the group work on discipleship begins. This will then be followed by discussions in larger groups on the Task Group reports.

#### Shape of the Agenda

6. Formal business and some legislative business will be taken on the Tuesday afternoon. There will also be a Presidential Address from the Archbishop of Canterbury. The re-formatted Questions period will be followed by an initial introduction to Wednesday's group work and debates followed by a Q&A by the Task Group Presidents.
7. Wednesday will be focused around group work on Discipleship followed by discussions in larger groups on the Task Groups. This will be followed by a series of substantive debates on Discipleship and the work of the Task Groups.
8. Thursday will revert back to further legislative and liturgical business but will also include a debate on Mission and Growth in Rural Multi-Parish Benefices.

#### Group Work

9. The Business Committee has scheduled two sets of group work, following on from each other thematically and chronologically. Small groups will meet on Wednesday morning primarily to discuss the paper from the Ministry Council on Discipleship. Larger groups of Synod members will then meet to discuss the work of the various Task Groups. The intention of these groups is to enable Synod members to ask questions and understand the work of the Task Groups in order to develop our sense of working in partnership and to help inform the decisions that they

will be making later in the group of sessions. We believe that these groups move us towards a better sense of accountability, consultation and transparency and we propose to call them ACT groups.

10. The Business Committee has agreed that Synod members will be given one week following the receipt of Synod papers to indicate a first and second choice for which of the ACT meetings they would like to attend. The choices will be as follows: Resourcing Ministerial Education, Discerning and Nurturing Senior Leaders, Resourcing the Future and Inter-Generational Equity and Simplification. A survey will be sent out to all Synod members on 16<sup>th</sup> January. The deadline for responses is 23<sup>rd</sup> January. Synod members will be notified by 4<sup>th</sup> February which of the small and large groups they have been allocated to attend. Full details will also be available at the Information Desk at Synod.

### **Diocesan Synod Motions**

11. The Diocesan Synod Motions ('DSMs') are listed in Special Agenda IV. There are currently five DSMs awaiting debate. The three DSMs relating to the Anglican Communion Covenant are 'parked' until the Archbishop of Canterbury has held further discussions with Primate following the completion of his tour of the Anglican Communion. Given the wide-ranging discussions on the Task Groups that the Synod will be engaging in at this Group of Sessions, the Business Committee has scheduled the Wakefield Diocesan Synod motion on 'The Nature and Structure of the Church of England' as Contingency Business. If this is not reached in February, the Business Committee hopes to schedule this item for debate at the July 2015 group of sessions. A new DSM from the Oxford Diocesan Synod on the topic of Fossil Fuels Disinvestment was received after the Committee had settled the agenda for the February group of sessions.

### **Private Members' Motions**

12. The Private Members' Motions ('PMMs') are listed in Special Agenda III. There are now three such motions with over 100 signatures, considered by the Business Committee to be a suitable threshold for PMMs to be considered for debate. As stated in its November report, the Business Committee has decided not to schedule the PMMs by Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams and Mr John Ward because the process of Shared Conversations has now been launched in the regions. Canon Michael Parsons' PMM on Canon B 38 listed as Contingency Business in November has been scheduled in this group of sessions.

### **Order of Business**

13. 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**

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

### **Tuesday 10 February**

#### ***Address by the Archbishop of the Chaldean Diocese of Erbil***

15. Archbishop Bashar M Warda, CSSR, is Archbishop of the Chaldean Diocese of Erbil (Eastern rite Catholic) in northern Iraq (Kurdistan). Archbishop Warda has been invited at the request of the Chair of the Business Committee to speak further on the issues raised at the panel session at

the November 2014 group of sessions on ‘Violence against Religious Minorities in Iraq and Syria.’ The Archbishop will speak for 10 minutes. No questions will be taken.

### ***General Synod elections 2015: seat allocation***

16. The Chair of the Business Committee will present recommendations for the allocation of places in the 2015-2020 General Synod. The clergy figures and numbers on electoral rolls (on which the calculations are based) have been provided and confirmed by the dioceses themselves. The Synod is invited to approve the Committee’s recommendations.

### ***Presidential Address***

17. The Archbishop of Canterbury will give a Presidential Address. This will be followed by a report on an Immersion Experience in India by senior Regional Representatives to the House of Bishops.

### ***Legislative Business***

18. The Synod will be invited to enact Amending Canon No. 32, which received Final Approval in July 2014 and will make a number of changes to the arrangements for Synodical elections.
19. It will also be asked to give Final Approval to Amending Canon No.35, relating to the administration of Holy Communion.
20. The Naming of Dioceses Measure will return to the Synod for its Revision Stage, which was not reached at the November group of sessions.

### ***Questions***

21. Based on feedback received from members, the Business Committee has decided to trial a new format for Questions at this Group of Sessions. During the trial period Synod members will receive copies of all the answers to questions, in a booklet which will be emailed to them two working days prior to the start of the group of sessions. Paper copies of the booklet will be available at the Information Desk for collection on arrival by those Synod members who do not have access to email.
22. The oral delivery of pre-prepared official answers will be dispensed with. Instead of this, the person answering the question will begin simply by referring to the written answer published in the booklet. The intention is to focus the main business of Questions on the asking and answering of supplementary questions. Priority will be given to the original questioner in the usual way. It is hoped that this new format will allow greater spontaneity and enable Questions to flow more smoothly.
23. The Business Committee would welcome feedback on the trial format for Questions so that they can consider whether to continue with it in the future and promote Standing Order changes to facilitate it. All comments should be sent to the Chair, via the Clerk whose address is available at the end of this Report.
24. In accordance with the requirements of the Standing Orders, any member wishing to ask a question of any of the bodies or officers specified in Standing Order 105 must deliver notice of it to the Clerk to the Synod by **5.30 p.m. on Thursday 29 January 2014**. Questions sent by email should be addressed to [questions@churchofengland.org](mailto:questions@churchofengland.org)
25. Members are reminded that **all questions will be presumed to be for written answer** unless an oral answer is specifically requested.

### ***Introduction to Wednesday’s Group Work and Debates***

26. The Chairs of the Task Groups will give a presentation on the reports that are to be the subject of discussions on Wednesday. There will be an opportunity for Synod members to ask questions in preparation for discussions the following day.

27. The day will conclude with evening worship.

## **Wednesday 11 February**

### ***Group work***

28. The Business Committee has decided to schedule group work in small and large groups for Wednesday morning, starting with worship in small groups and moving to group work on Discipleship in these small groups. Discipleship is seen as foundational to the work that the Synod will be doing together for the rest of the day. Members will then meet in the larger 'ACT' groups with representatives of the Task Groups to discuss the Task Groups' proposals.

### ***Debates on the Task Group Reports and Discipleship***

29. Following the group work, the Synod will have the opportunity to debate a series of substantive motions on Discipleship and issues arising from the Task Group reports. This item will be followed by evening worship.

## **Thursday 12 February**

30. The day will open with a celebration of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall.

### ***Further Legislative Business***

31. The draft Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure and Amending Canon No. 35 return to the Synod following their consideration in Revision Committee. The draft Measure and draft Amending Canon will make a number of changes in relation to safeguarding and clergy discipline, including by creating a new duty to 'have due regard to' the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding. The Business Committee has agreed that notice of any amendments to the Safeguarding legislation will be given **by 5.30 pm on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015.**

32. Approval will be sought, under the deemed procedure, for a petition from the Bishop of Leeds to the Queen in Privy Council seeking the changing of the name of the sees of Knaresborough (to Ripon) and Pontefract (to Wakefield).

### ***Report of the Standing Orders Committee***

33. The Standing Orders Committee brings its 50<sup>th</sup> Report to the Synod. It proposes a substantial number of amendments to Standing Orders, the great majority of them being of a technical or drafting character and intended to pave the way for the introduction in July of a consolidated text of the Standing Orders, presented in a modern format and expressed in gender neutral language.

### ***Private Member's Motion: Canon B 38***

34. The Private Member's Motion from the Revd Canon Michael Parsons on Canon B 38 has attracted 113 signatures since it was put down at the February 2014 group of sessions. 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.

### ***Liturgical Business: Alternative Baptism Texts***

35. The Alternative Texts for Holy Baptism were prepared in response to the Liverpool Diocesan Synod Motion carried by the General Synod in February 2011. This requested the preparation of material to supplement the Common Worship Initiation provision, including additional forms of the Decision, the Prayer over the Water and the Commission, expressed in accessible language. Following First Consideration in July 2014 they were committed to a Revision Committee and the Synod will be invited to take note of its report. The Standing Orders do not permit the Synod to redraft the texts itself, but Synod can re-commit them to the Revision

Committee for further consideration of specified aspects. If no re-committal motion is passed, the intention is that this business would go to the House of Bishops in May with a view to it coming to Synod for final approval in July.

### ***Mission and Growth in Multi-Parish Benefices***

36. Finally there will be a 'take note' debate on a report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council on Mission and Growth in Rural Multi-Parish Benefices.

### ***Farewells***

37. There will be an opportunity for the Synod to say farewell to the Bishop of Leicester.

## **III: Other Work of the Business Committee**

### **Worship**

38. At the request of the Presidents, the Chaplain to the Synod is continuing to offer paperless worship using the screens provided. For those Synod members who use personal devices, PDF copies of the worship booklet will be emailed to Synod members 2 working days prior to Synod and will also be available to download with the Synod papers on the General Synod pages of the Church of England website. Paper copies of the worship booklet will be available on request from the Information Desk for those Synod members who prefer to use them.

### **Draft Guidelines on Group Work**

39. The Business Committee has agreed some draft Guidelines for Group Work at General Synod. These are intended to help those requesting group work as well as those preparing materials and Synod members participating in such group work. The draft Guidelines are attached in Annex 2. The Business Committee welcomes feedback and suggestions from Synod members on the draft guidelines. These should be sent to the Chair via the Clerk to the Synod at [jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org](mailto:jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org). The Business Committee intends to review the feedback received and finalise the guidelines at its March meeting, prior to publishing them in final form in their report to the July group of sessions.

### **Contingency Business**

40. The Business Committee has scheduled Contingency Business in the form of a Diocesan Synod Motion from the former Wakefield Diocesan Synod on the Nature and Structure of the Church of England and a debate on the World Council of Churches' report entitled 'The Church: Towards a Common Vision'. The expectation would be that both of these items would be taken in July if they were not reached at this group of sessions.

### **Distribution of Papers**

41. The cost of printing and postage for the November 2014 group of sessions was £7,000. The cost for July 2014 group of sessions was £19,900. During the course of 2014 an increasing number of Synod members have signed up to receive papers electronically. To reduce costs for the National Church and the dioceses, Synod members are requested where possible to agree to receive Synod papers electronically if they have not already done so. The Business Committee plans to keep the costs of printing and postage for each group of sessions under review.
42. The Business Committee agreed at its December meeting that external organisations should be charged a nominal fee for display spaces in both London and York. This charge will be implemented from July 2015 and will bring us in line with other church organisations such as the Methodist Conference. The monies received from this will eventually enable investment in tailored booking software for organisers of fringe meetings to ensure a more efficient and user friendly process than is currently on offer. Once this software has been purchased, the monies

received could go a small way to reducing the administration fee charged to dioceses each year for the cost of General Synod.

### **Forecast of Future Business**

43. The forecast of future business annexed to this report provides a forward look to the remaining 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 this year.

On behalf of the Business Committee

Sue Booy

Chair of the Business Committee

January 2015

### **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 (Wakefield)

#### ***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 2014 and 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).

#### July 2015

- Naming of Dioceses Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- 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
- Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 201-
- Faculty Jurisdiction Rules
- Usual fees orders relating to legal fees (deemed)
- ? Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Directions 201-
- ? Order under s.6(3)(b) Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure
- Standing Orders Committee report (consolidated text?)
- Baptism Texts – Final Approval?
- Follow up report to GS GS 1844 – Unfinished Business by the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC).

#### 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)]
- ? Possible follow-up report to the Mission and Public Affairs report on 'Turning Up the Volume'
- ? Possible report on Chaplaincy by the Mission and Public Affairs Council

## Draft Guidance for Those Preparing Group Work at General Synod

The Business Committee appreciates the valuable role that group work can play within the life of Synod and is willing to schedule time where it deems it appropriate for group work within a group of sessions, subject to the following guidelines:

### Purpose

Good group work

- is clearly related to a major item of business on the Synod agenda
- enables members to listen to and understand each other's deeply held convictions
- enables members to reflect together on what God might be saying to his church, through prayer, silence and engagement with Scripture
- prepares the ground sensitively for when the subject is handled within the more formal rules of debate and procedure.

### Content

Good group work

- is prepared by those handling the item of business, or with recognised expertise in, and experience of, the subject under discussion
- is prepared with reference to previous group work exercises, to ensure a variety of approaches is employed over time, catering for different personalities/learning styles
- includes a means of biblical reflection (such as bible study questions, *lectio divina*, Ignatian spiritual journey etc.) prepared in consultation with biblical scholars (members such as Dr Paula Gooder and Prof Richard Burridge have indicated they are keen and ready to help in this area).

### Process

Good group work

- includes members drawn from across other groups and dioceses, which remain fairly static across a quinquennium to allow relationships to deepen (except where a group is clearly dysfunctional, and may need to be reconfigured before the next group of sessions)
- uses chairs drawn from all three houses, with specific skills and/or training in leading groups
- involves the bishops, but not always as chair – one role for a bishop who is not chairing is to act as chaplain, leading worship/prayer and offering pastoral support for any member for whom the discussion appears to have been emotionally difficult
- utilises a reporter for each group, separate from the chair, identified and invited in advance
- is cautious about the use of experiential material (photos, food, role play) unless the group leader clearly understands and is convinced of its essential value and purpose.

To ensure that proposed group work falls within these guidelines, those preparing business are invited to consult the Business Committee at an early stage via the Chair or the Clerk to the Synod. Boards and Councils who are preparing reports for discussion are also invited to consider whether there is some good and helpful group work that might fit with their subject, and to bring any such suggestions to the Business Committee at an early stage.

*Comments on the proposed Guidelines for Group Work should be sent to the Chair of the Business Committee via the Clerk to the Synod at: [Jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org](mailto:Jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org)*