

GENERAL SYNOD

Report on the Archbishops' Council's activities

1. The Archbishops' Council presents this report on its activities since the July 2016 group of sessions in accordance with the requirements of the National Institutions Measure 1998. It has met twice since its last report was prepared – on 27 September and 6-7 December 2016. It also met jointly with the House of Bishops on 22 November.

Renewal and Reform

2. The major focus of Council meetings remains the various elements of Renewal and Reform. A summary of the work being undertaken under the various strands has been circulated to the Synod as GS Misc 1150.
3. *Setting God's People Free*, a significant report commissioned by the Council into various aspects of discipleship and leadership will come before the Synod in February (GS 2056). The cross-cutting culture shifts identified in the report as prerequisites for the successful realisation of the report's vision have been recognised by both the Council and the House of Bishops. An outline implementation plan is appended to the report. The Council looks forward to a lively debate.
4. Phase 2 Simplification work is making its way through the synodical system in the form of the draft Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure (GS 2046), which will be before the Synod for First Consideration. The Synod will also have the opportunity to revise the draft Legislative Reform Measure (GS 2027A) and the draft Statute Law (Repeals) Measure (GS 2030), both of which received First Consideration in July last year.
5. The Council has also agreed with the Church Commissioners the arrangements for the new Strategic Development Funding, which aims to bring funding for growth initiatives to areas of the country where growth and funding are most needed. Funding totalling £9.1m has recently been announced for projects in the dioceses of Birmingham, Bristol, Chelmsford, Chichester, Leicester, Liverpool and Worcester.
6. While the Council has had to focus on individual elements of Renewal and Reform as they reach critical points in their development, it has also received regular updates on the totality of the work that is being undertaken and is keen to ensure that it doesn't lose sight of the vision behind Renewal and Reform – to enable dioceses and parishes to plan for a hopeful future for the work of the Church of England.
7. GS Misc 1150 has been circulated to update Synod on the various strands of work. More information about Renewal and Reform can be found at <https://churchofengland.org/renewal-reform.aspx>

Safeguarding

8. The Council has agreed in outline the future shape of safeguarding audit and support to help underpin the dioceses' efforts to make a safer Church environment for all.

Other matters

9. In light of recent media stories, the Council and the Church Commissioners have been working with dioceses and cathedral councils to ensure that they are aware of

the advice available to them from the Council and the Commissioners in respect of governance and financial management.

10. The Council reviewed its risk register to ensure that the risks to which it was exposed had been properly identified and that mitigating measures were in place to manage them. It discussed its business plan for 2017 and agreed the main elements of it, taking account both of the priorities and opportunities that lie ahead and of the major risks it has identified.
11. The Council agreed a 1.5% increase in the National Minimum Stipend from 1 April 2017.

Joint meeting with the House of Bishops

12. In November last year, the Council and the House of Bishops met jointly. The meeting was very helpful in addressing common concerns and considering how to develop their working partnership over the coming period. The Council hopes that future patterns of working will help to strengthen the work of both bodies for the national Church.

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