

# GENERAL SYNOD

November 2015

## QUESTIONS

of which notice has been given under Standing Orders 112-116.

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## **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL**

**Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

- Q1** The Church has recently launched new social media materials to explain to a wide audience what the Church offers in its Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. Can the Synod be informed of:
- (i) The latest available figures for uptake in relation to each website; and
  - (ii) How dioceses, deaneries, churches and individuals are being educated and encouraged to understand the missionary strategy underlying such initiatives, to enable them to reach the widest audience?

*Mr Philip Fletcher to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

- A** The latest yearly visitor figures are as follows:
- Baptisms: 36,000
  - Weddings: 797,000
  - Funerals: 19,000

By the end of May 2016 nineteen dioceses will have received a full day presentation on funerals, with some also having an evening presentation for self-supporting and lay ministers. We have held a packed Funerals Conference in 2015. There will also be two further one-day national conferences in 2016.

For baptisms, 9 dioceses will have received presentations by Easter next year, along with a Praxis event a few weeks ago. There will be five one-day conferences running February- April next year. In addition for both projects, a series of shorter presentations will be developed for diocesan use, and a DVD with core missional messages for parish use is planned.

Finally, two new baptism preparation courses have been written, the first of which, Starting Rite, is available now, and the second will be available early next year.

**The Ven Andrew Piggott (Bath & Wells) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q2** In the light of the welcome increased funding provided by the National Church to develop a Talent Pool of Senior Leaders for us and the bespoke programmes which have been running for some time to grow the gifts of our current pool of Bishops, Deans and others:

- how many similar bespoke courses and programmes were provided annually by the National Church in the life of the last Synod focussing on the formation and development of the gifts of archdeacons (as distinct from training provided to equip archdeacons with information and skills needed to deal with legislation);
- how much money was spent; and
- how has this amount changed in real terms since 2005 both in actual and per capita terms?

*The Bishop of Sheffield to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** No such bespoke courses or programmes for Archdeacons were provided in the period 2010 to 2015. Therefore no money was spent on these during the life of the last Synod; nor were any such courses or programmes funded during the previous quinquennium.

**The Revd Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Durham) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q3** What is being done to ensure that the Reform and Renewal programme is furnished with up to date ministry statistics, as the latest published ones are for 2012?

*The Bishop of Sheffield to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** There are some underlying data and system issues preventing the extraction of data from 2013 onwards. Staff in a number of National Church Institution departments are working to resolve these problems and to create long term sustained ability to capture and report accurate data for a wide range of purposes including Reform and Renewal. At present it is not possible to give a projected date by which this will be resolved. In the interim the 2012 statistics provide an adequate basis for work on Reform and Renewal and the lack of data from 2013 onwards is not preventing the programme and its work going forward.

**Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q4** Does the Archbishops' Council hold information as to the number of persons employed not just by it but also by the other national Church institutions on annual salaries of £100,000 or more and, if it does, can it confirm how many such persons there are and what the total annual cost of their salaries is?

*Canon John Spence to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** Information about staff receiving ongoing remuneration or redundancy payments in excess of £60,000 is included in the published annual reports of the Archbishops' Council, Church Commissioners and Pensions Board in accordance with Charity Commissioner policy. The 2014 reports showed that there was one Archbishops' Council member of staff receiving remuneration of more than £100,000, one by the Pensions Board, two employed by Church of England Central Services, and nine by the Church Commissioners of whom eight were involved in asset management.

**Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q5** Further to the answer given to Question 19 in February 2015, that the new themes and guidelines for the Church and Community Fund would be posted on the CCF's website in the second half of 2015, for what reasons was it announced on the CCF website on 10 November that grant-making from the Fund was being suspended with immediate effect whilst the CCF underwent a review of its operations?

*Canon John Spence to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Archbishops' Council will be considering how its Church and Community Restricted Fund should be used in 2016 and beyond. A further statement will be made once a decision has been made.

## **HOUSE OF BISHOPS**

**The Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q6** In the light of the re-introduction of mitres as part of regular episcopal attire in the Church of England from the late 19th century, does the House offer bishops any guidance on the wearing of mitres and the reasons for doing so (whether to comply with legal requirements, meet expectations or otherwise)?

*The Bishop of Willesden to reply on behalf of the Chair:*

**A** I am not aware of any guidance from the House on the wearing of mitres.

The Canons do not prescribe the form of vesture to be worn by bishops. There is no canonical requirement for bishops to wear mitres. It is entirely a matter of personal discretion. Each bishop will decide what is appropriate in a given context bearing in mind the nature of the service, the tradition of the parish and the cultural expectations of those attending.

**The Revd Prebendary Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q7** In July 2014 the Synod resolved *‘That this Synod call on the Business Committee to introduce draft legislation to amend the law relating to the vesture of ministers so that, without altering the principles set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Canon B 8, the wearing of the forms of vesture referred to in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of that Canon becomes optional rather than mandatory.’*

What progress has been made in bringing draft legislation to the Synod as requested by that resolution?

*The Bishop of Willesden to reply as Chair of the Simplification Task Group:*

**A** The House of Bishops will be discussing the next steps at its next meeting on 14 – 15 December following a discussion at the Standing Committee of the House last week.

**The Revd Prebendary Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q8** The promulgation of Amending Canon 35 in the dioceses has raised questions about whether those authorised to distribute the sacrament under the Administration of Holy Communion Regulations 2015 require DBS clearance. In some dioceses it is said that if they take the sacrament to someone in their house or a care home, they must have DBS clearance. In others, safeguarding advisers have said it is not necessary if taking ‘home communion’ is the only visit they make. Will clear guidance be provided on this issue to ensure a consistent approach across every diocese?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the Joint Safeguarding Working Group:*

**A** In short, an individual engaged in the act of giving communion will not be eligible for a DBS check even if the ministrant is privately giving communion to someone who is housebound or in a care home. That said, if, for example, the ministrant is visiting the housebound or care home frequently (once a week or more) or intensively (4 times or more in any 30 day period) and whilst he/she is giving communion he/she gives advice or guidance; he/she would be eligible for an enhanced DBS check. Alternatively if, as part of the role, the ministrant helps with shopping or handling money he/she would be in regulated activity and therefore, eligible for an enhanced check (together with a check of the barred list).

**The Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q9** What representations have the Church of England made to the Government in support of proposals for the private sponsorship of refugees, recently outlined by the Home Secretary?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply on behalf of the Chair:*

**A** We have welcomed the decision to establish a private sponsorship scheme, and are working closely with the Government as it develops a system appropriate for the UK context. There have been detailed discussions with Government, with ecumenical partners and others about a private sponsorship scheme, in which churches and other faith groups are likely to play a significant part. We regard this as supplementary to the 20,000 who are to be resettled during the current Parliament under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme.

**The Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q10** In view of the particular dangers faced by Christians and other minorities in Syria and Iraq, what assurances have been sought and received from HM Government that they will receive fair consideration within the Government's foreign aid programme in the Middle East and as part of the numbers of refugees to be invite to settle in the UK?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply on behalf of the Chair:*

**A** In the House of Lords on 7<sup>th</sup> September the Archbishop of Canterbury raised the need for fair consideration of the needs and risks faced by Christians in the Middle East, especially as many Christians are not in the refugee camps. The matter has been raised in subsequent meetings. The Government has affirmed its determination that in receipt of British assistance, none should be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion or ethnicity; and that it will work with UNHCR to ensure that this is the case.

**Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q11** Given the statement on the Church of England's Marriage website [www.YourChurchWedding.org](http://www.YourChurchWedding.org) to couples seeking a same-sex marriage that "although there are no authorised services for blessing a same-sex civil marriage, your local church can still support you with prayer", will the House consider publishing guidance to assist parishes so that all such requests will be met with a welcoming, positive response?

**The Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q12** In discussing 'same-sex' marriages The Weddings Project says on its website: "Church of England ministers cannot carry out or bless same-sex marriages, but your local church is still there for you. At any time you are welcome to come and pray with us, or ask us to pray for you." Can guidance be given as to what form of prayer should be used, and whether it may be public, private or both?

*The Bishop of Norwich to reply on behalf of the Chair:*

**A** I shall, with permission, answer questions 11 and 12 together. Paragraphs 19-21 of the House of Bishops' pastoral guidance of 15 February 2014 dealt with this matter. The House has no plans to issue further guidance.

**Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q13** Has consideration been given to whether the current disciplinary provisions contained in the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963 and the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 are sufficient to deal with issues raised by clergy who enter into a same sex marriage?

*The Bishop of Norwich to reply on behalf of the Chair:*

**A** The House of Bishops had the opportunity to consider the implications of these two pieces of legislation when it was considering what pastoral guidance to issue before the coming into force of the same sex marriage legislation. It has no plans to bring draft amending legislation to the Synod.

## SECRETARY GENERAL

### Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter) to ask the Secretary General:

**Q14** What was the 'turn out' in the elections to the 2015 General Synod in, respectively, the House of Clergy in the Province of York; the House of Laity in the Province of York; the House of Clergy in the Province of Canterbury; and the House of Laity in the Province of Canterbury?

### Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford) to ask the Secretary General:

**Q15** Are there any figures for the average overall turnout of voting in the recent General Synod elections, and will there be any analysis of voting turnout in the different dioceses?

*Mr William Fittall to reply*

**A** I shall with permission answer questions 14 and 15 together.

The figures for 2015 were:

	<b>2015</b>		<b>2010</b>	
<b>Canterbury</b>				
Average overall	<b>51.88</b>		51.32	
Average clergy	<b>56.86</b>		55.91	
Average laity	<b>46.91</b>		46.74	
Highest turnout clergy	<b>67.96</b>	(Birmingham)	75.00	(Ely)
Lowest turnout clergy	<b>45.60</b>	(Hereford)	43.20	(Bristol)
Highest turnout laity	<b>72.10</b>	(Guildford)	64.13	(Chelmsford)
Lowest turnout laity	<b>29.82</b>	(Hereford)	37.83	(Lincoln)
<b>York</b>				
Average overall	<b>48.18</b>		50.35	
Average clergy	<b>52.49</b>		57.23	
Average laity	<b>43.87</b>		43.48	
Highest turnout clergy	<b>69.00</b>	(Sodor & Man)	73.90	(Sodor & Man)
Lowest turnout clergy	<b>39.86</b>	(Liverpool)	46.50	(Liverpool)
Highest turnout laity	<b>56.96</b>	(Chester)	54.70	(Sodor & Man)
Lowest turnout laity	<b>34.74</b>	(Liverpool)	36.30	(Liverpool)

A detailed list of percentage turnout by diocese will be posted on the notice board in the Bishop Partridge Hall.

**Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford) to ask the Secretary General:**

**Q16** Can an explanation be given of the criteria used to select Christian blogs and commentators for inclusion within the Church of England Daily Media Digest?

*Mr William Fittall to reply:*

**A** The aim is to send the daily media digest out by around 8 o'clock each morning with comprehensive coverage of what has appeared in the mainstream media and necessarily selective references to what has appeared in blogs. It is not the aim of the digest to provide a signpost to all the commentary being offered by individuals and campaigning groups on their own sites about Church of England matters. Editorial decisions are a matter for the Communications Office team and are often influenced by practical considerations such as time and space. The aim is to be balanced and the team is always open to ideas for doing better.

**Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough) to ask the Secretary General:**

**Q17** In the light of the time and effort needed by church officials to demonstrate to HMRC that individual PCCs are not 'connected charities' for the purpose of the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme, have any conclusions been drawn on the extent to which public servants' understanding of religious organisations needs to be increased, and the way in which the Church of England might usefully be involved in any such process?

*Mr William Fittall to reply:*

**A** It took over two and a half years to sort out this issue given HMRC's fanciful view of the connectedness of parishes in relation to the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme, and the Employment Allowance. The handling was made more complex by policy concerns by officials relating to the amount that might be claimed.

We work hard, in partnership with the Second Estates Commissioner, to build understanding of the Church of England among Ministers and officials within Whitehall and in Parliament. Many well established relationships exist and we continue to achieve many important objectives in relation to funding, legislation and policy across a range of issues. But it will require constant effort. There are no quick fixes.

## **NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL**

**Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:**

**Q18** Due to the straitened circumstances in which many Statutory Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs) find themselves, will the Church consider investing small amounts of less than £1000 in them, and working with our ecumenical partners to secure other funding for them?

*The Bishop of Ely to reply as Chair of the National Society:*

**A** Our review, *Making a Difference?* was published in September 2014. It set out some of the challenges facing Religious Education (RE) and the opportunities to ensure greater understanding of the important role of RE within the curriculum in order to promote the place of theological enquiry and religious literacy. The National Society will seek to work with others towards a nationally agreed framework and syllabus for RE which is clear about its role and about the essential content for teaching the subject effectively. Rather than invest limited funds in the agreed syllabus work of approximately 150 individual SACREs we think greater impact will result from engaging with the RE community and any work developed through the RE Council at a national level. We will support such work as it seeks to establish greater consistency for RE in schools across the country.

## **MINISTRY COUNCIL**

**Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q19** How many stipendiary posts are there in the Church of England where the title and/or a substantial part of the role is explicitly about 'evangelism'? If possible, please sub-divide the answer between those who are ordained, Church Army officers and other lay people.

*The Bishop of Sheffield to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** It is not possible to answer this question accurately or in full. The national record of clergy does not allow information to be extracted on the basis of such titles. Nor is there a central record kept of the role description of all clergy posts. The record of lay ministries apart from Readers is kept locally in the dioceses rather than centrally. The latest available ministry statistics indicate that there are 119 Church Army officers serving in the Church of England.

**Mr Simon Baynes (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q20** Can guidance be given on the earliest date on which a parish vacancy may be advertised when an incumbent resigns – whether (i) the date that the incumbent has written to the bishop resigning, (ii) the date of his/her last Sunday in the parish, (iii) the date he/she takes up ministry in a new parish, or (iv) some other date?

*The Bishop to Sheffield to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council*

**A** There is no legal requirement for advertising and other ways of making an appointment than competitive interviewing may be adopted. The earliest point at which advertising can take place is when the patron decides on the manner of selection, in the light of any views expressed by the PCC at the meeting required by s.11 of the Patronage Benefices Measure 1968. That meeting ought normally to take place while the outgoing incumbent is still in office.

**The Revd Charles Read (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q21** What help is the Council and the Ministry Division able to give to Theological Education Institutions following the cancelling of the contract with Uniservity to provide a Virtual Learning Environment for Common Awards?

*The Bishop of Sheffield to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** The contract with Uniservity has been extended to September 2016 to provide continuity of provision for the Virtual Learning Environment or VLE and in order to provide direct tailored support for individual Theological Education Institutions or TEIs. Ministry Division staff have provided additional support and facilitated sharing of skills and knowledge through the TEI network for both the current academic year and in preparation for 2016-17. Access to online journals and library resources is being reviewed in liaison with TEI staff and Durham University. Facilities for online submission of essays and the plagiarism detection system have been provided direct from Ministry Division to those TEIs which require it. Consultation with TEIs on future VLE provision has begun through a VLE Development Group in order to establish the requirements for the next stage of the VLE.

**The Revd Charles Read (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q22** How much money was invested in the contract with Uniservity and is the Council attempting to recover some or all of this?

*The Bishop of Sheffield to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** The financial details of the contract with Uniservity are commercially sensitive, especially in the context of a possible tendering exercise for the next stage of the VLE. Negotiations have taken place with Uniservity and as a result the total contract payment was reviewed and reduced. No payments have been made since March 2015 and the six month extension to the contract to September 2016 was made without additional charge. I do recognise the difficulties for TEIs and their staff over the past year and am grateful for their response. We are focused on improving both value for money and quality of service for the next stage of the VLE.

## **REMUNERATION & CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE**

**The Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:**

**Q23** Since a number of clergy may be badly affected by the loss of income from tax credits in the near future, what plans are there to implement the Synod's resolution of November 2002 to increase the national minimum stipend to a more realistic level over time so that no clergy need to rely on social security payments to supplement their income?

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply as Chair of RACSC:*

**A** The definition of a stipend in *Generosity & Sacrifice*, is payment 'for exercise of office' that 'reflects the level of responsibility held'. The National Minimum Stipend cannot obviate the need for a spouse or a partner to work. We expect people to use welfare support where they are entitled.

These changes will affect clergy differently depending on circumstances such as family size, household income and disability status. To make a compensating adjustment to the National Minimum Stipend (NMS) would directly increase the starting level of pensions by the same proportions and would be a further cost to dioceses in future pensions.

Linking the NMS to a level that no clergy need draw on welfare benefits would not be directing dioceses' financial resources to those of greatest needs. Bishops and dioceses already have the opportunity

to pay grants and access funds through a range of clergy charities to deal with hardship.

**Mr Christopher Pye (Liverpool) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:**

**Q24** Following on from the answer given to Question 35 in the July 2015 group of sessions, what progress has been made in examining the mandatory retirement age for clergy; and, further to these considerations, has account been taken in any further consideration of the issue of the answer given to an earlier question regarding either raising the age or removing the need for Readers to apply for permission to officiate at the age of 70, to the effect that Readers and Clergy will be treated the same with regard to retirement age?

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply as Chair of RACSC:*

**A** Since July RACSC has spent some time considering the mandatory retirement age for clergy, and will report on its progress soon. We have been unable to identify the previous question about Readers. There is no canonical requirement for Readers' licences to expire at 70. The Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry require Readers in active ministry who are under the age of 70 to hold a renewable, time-limited licence. Readers who wish to remain in active ministry after that should apply for the Bishop's written permission to officiate, which will be for a limited period, subject to renewal. There are currently no plans to change these arrangements.

## **MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

**Mr Paul Boyd-Lee (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:**

**Q25** Has the Church of England consulted with other religious groups and Civil Society Organisations about the threat to freedom of speech posed by the Extremist Disruption Orders and, if so, what has been the outcome?

*Mr Philip Fletcher to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:*

**A** We maintain contact with a wide range of other groups on issues of freedom of speech and of national security, including our main ecumenical partners. We share with others the view that freedom of speech is a core British value, including the ability to make categorical statements of religious belief provided that such statements do not constitute an abuse of power over vulnerable people. We take some reassurance from the sections of the Government's recently published Counter-Extremism Strategy which assert the importance of free

speech in the context of religious belief, but there are still questions about whether the word 'extremism' can be defined clearly enough in law to forestall any possibility of future misuse of legislation. Draft legislation has not yet been published, and we shall form a view when it is made public.

**Mr Clive Scowen (London) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:**

**Q26** What representation has the Church of England made to the Government about the threat to freedom posed by the proposed Extremist Disruption Orders?

*Mr Philip Fletcher to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:*

**A** We have seen in recent days the tragic impact of terrorism and our hearts go out from London to the people of Paris. Of a previous set of measures the Bishop of Durham said in the House of Lords in January, 'As we consider the latest set of government moves to strengthen the laws which guard our people against terrorist acts, we have to hold our nerve in our convictions about liberty, equality and fraternity, and look steadily at the changes being proposed. These matters are too serious for us to polarise or politicise issues beyond what is justified in legitimate debate.' The proposed Orders do raise questions about freedom of speech. However, we do not yet have full details except that, in its published Strategy, the Government has pledged that freedom to state religious opinions in public will be safeguarded. We wait to see exactly what is proposed.

**Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:**

**Q27** Has consideration been given to whether the House of Bishops' Pastoral Guidance on Same Sex Marriage (15 February 2014) leaves church members vulnerable to investigation and sanction by the State under the Government's new proposals in its newly published counter-terrorism strategy to tackle "violent and non-violent extremism in all its forms"?

*Mr Philip Fletcher to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:*

**A** The Government's recently published counter-extremism strategy asserts the importance of free speech, and says that the measures proposed 'will be designed so that they can only be used where it is necessary to prevent the activities of groups and individuals who pose a clear threat to the safety of individuals or society more generally'. It

would be utterly bizarre to suggest that the Pastoral Guidance poses any such threat. The Extremism Bill has not yet been published. When it is available, we shall give full consideration to its implications for the freedom of Christians and others to express their beliefs, and will continue to engage with the government on any points in the proposals which concern us.

**The Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:**

**Q28** What support is the Church of England planning to give to the relaunch of the EcoChurch initiative in January 2015, and how will the work of the Shrinking the Footprint team engage with the new initiative?

*Mr Philip Fletcher to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:*

**A** The Church of England, through the Environment Working Group, has made a donation toward the launch of EcoChurch in January. We have also helped to promote the initiative in publications and included an A Rocha presentation on EcoChurch in the programme for the recent conference for Diocesan Environment Officers. We expect to continue to promote EcoChurch throughout 2016.

**Mrs Sarah Finch (London) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:**

**Q29** Does the Church of England have any connection with Operation Noah?

*Mr Philip Fletcher to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:*

**A** Operation Noah is one of a number of faith-based organisations with which Shrinking the Footprint and the Environment Working Group stay in touch. As far as possible, we promote their initiatives through our wider networks. Several members of the Board of Operation Noah are members of the Church of England, including The Revd Canon Giles Goddard of this Synod, who is also a member of the Environment Working Group, and The Revd Chris Halliwell who is the Diocesan Environment Officer for Blackburn. The Bishop of Kingston attended a board meeting earlier in the year, and joined Operation Noah members at the climate coalition march this summer. Operation Noah has been involved in a number of initiatives in which we are also engaged, such as the Pilgrimage to Paris.

**Canon Janet Perrett (Ely) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:**

**Q30** Noting that the Archbishops' Council wrote to the Secretary of State for Defence in March 2007, and that the UK Parliament is due to debate the Main Gate decision on Trident renewal at some point in 2016, can the attention of HMG again be drawn to the General Synod resolution of February 2007 and in particular to the amendment that was passed to 'suggest to Her Majesty's Government that the proposed upgrading of Trident is contrary to the spirit of the United Kingdom's obligations in international law and to the ethical principles underpinning them'?

*Mr Philip Fletcher to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:*

**A** The House of Bishops' Pastoral Letter of April 2015 argued that serious questions still remain about the proposed renewal of the UK's minimum deterrent, and that these need to be pressed in conversation with HMG. Whilst opinion within the church, and in the country, is not unanimous, the absence of informed debate about the relevance of Trident in relation to the post-Cold War global threats to the nation's security is a serious concern. These questions will become more pressing next year when the Main Gate decision is due. The MPA Division will continue to resource and equip Lords Spiritual to contribute to parliamentary debates on Trident, ahead of any decision, and will seek to ensure that ethical considerations are not lost in the wider political and strategic debate.

**Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:**

**Q31** Has the Mission and Public Affairs Council given any consideration to the huge expansion and transformation of Halloween in popular culture in England over the last 10-15 years (including on the BBC) and what this signifies for the Church's mission in society? If so, what was the outcome? If not, would it consider undertaking such a review and sharing its findings?

*Mr Philip Fletcher to reply as Chair of the MPA Council:*

**A** Issues concerning Halloween are part of MPA's work on 'new religious movements and alternative spiritualities'.

Dr Anne Richards logs and analyses enquiries about Halloween, which are growing in number. She offers advice to anyone expressing concerns, wondering what to say to children, or looking for alternatives

to Halloween parties and so on. Basic advice is offered in a leaflet that has been tested with diocesan advisers on new religious movements, who will also have their own material for use at Halloween.

The mission theology page on the Church's website contains resources from the Mission Theology Advisory Group, including reflective prayer for All Hallows' Eve/All Saints/All Souls and resources for groups. These are intended to set this time of year in a firmly mission-orientated context and equip Christians to engage effectively with neighbours and friends.

MPA focuses on responding to concerned enquiries and resourcing local churches to approach Halloween as an opportunity for witness and mission.

## **BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**Ms Christina Baron (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q32** Will the Business Committee organise consultations both within and beyond Synod about possible dates and patterns of meetings, before setting dates beyond 2018?

*The Revd Canon Sue Booy to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:*

**A** Standing Orders 1 and 2 set make clear that the setting of the dates, length and timings of General Synod meetings is the responsibility of the Presidents, in consultation with the Business Committee. Under S.O. 2 (2) the Synod must approve a motion from the Business Committee setting out the dates of future meetings, which should be set at least 6 months in advance. In practice, dates for the General Synod are usually announced and agreed at least two years in advance. The last such motion setting dates from 2016 - 2018 was proposed by myself and passed by Synod in July 2014. The Business Committee will probably be discussing this again at its March 2016 meeting. Synod members are welcome to write to the Clerk to the Synod prior to this meeting with any views on the potential dates, length and timings of groups of sessions in 2019 and beyond.

**Mrs Debra Mclsaac (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q33** Will the Business Committee consider producing a report after each Group of Sessions of the Synod of 1) the number of times a member was called to speak during that Group of Sessions; and 2) a cumulative record of which members have been called by which chair since the beginning of Quinquennium?

*The Revd Canon Sue Booy to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:*

**A** The administrative staff of the General Synod retain a record for the Panel of Chairs of those who have spoken at each Group of Sessions, as well as the number of times they have spoken. If the Business Committee so decides, this list for each group of sessions can be reproduced on the website or as an Appendix to the Business Committee Report. No statistics are held for the number of times an individual Chair calls a particular speaker and there are no plans to monitor this.

**Mrs Debra Mclsaac (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q34** What steps will be taken to encourage chairs of debates to call new or less prominent members of Synod to speak?

*The Revd Canon Sue Booy to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:*

**A** The choice of those who are called to speak in Synod debates is entirely a matter for the Panel of Chairs under S.O. 15(2) and is not a matter for the Business Committee.

**Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q35** During the debate in February 2015 on the motion to approve the seat allocations for the recent election of members to the House of Laity (as set out in GS 1975), Mr Gerald O'Brien drew attention to the injustice and unfairness of an allocation that provides four seats for the diocese of Carlisle (with 17,674 electoral roll members) but only three seats for St Edmundsbury and Ipswich (with 20,053 electoral roll members). In reply, the Chairman of the Business Committee expressed her confidence that the issue would be raised again with the Elections Review Group at the beginning of this quinquennium. Will she confirm that the Elections Review Group will indeed reconsider the allocation of seats in the House of Laity with a view to bringing forward proposals to Synod that would correct the current imbalance in favour of dioceses in the Province of York?

**Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q36** Despite the fact that electors had nearly three weeks to return their voting papers in the recent General Synod election, the turnout in most dioceses was depressingly low—under 50% for the House of Laity election in 22 of the 33 dioceses that have posted the figures on their websites, and under 40% in four dioceses (Manchester 35.39%, Oxford 38.28%, Peterborough 30.79% and Salisbury 35.44%). Will the Chair of the Business Committee confirm that the Elections Review Group will look into the reasons for the low turnout and also bring forward legislative proposals to make provision for online voting in 2020 as agreed by Synod at the November 2013 Group of Sessions?

**Mr Clive Scowen (London) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q37** Has the Business Committee considered bringing to the new Synod early in this quinquennium options as to how the electorate for the House of Laity might be formed for future elections, in time for any change which the Synod might consider appropriate to be implemented in time for the 2020 elections, and, if not, will it now do so?

*The Revd Canon Sue Booy to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:*

**A** With permission, I will take these questions together. All these issues are important potential areas for consideration by the Elections Review Group, a sub-committee of the Business Committee, which will be established early in this new Quinquennium. Synod members wishing to request further work on these and other matters should write to the Clerk to the Synod, requesting that they be tabled for consideration when the Elections Review Group is re-formed, which is likely to be early in 2016.

## **CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION**

**The Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

**Q38** The recently published “Archbishops’ Guidelines on the Implementation of *Choosing Bishops – the Equality Act 2010 (Revised)*” were dated March 2015. What guidelines were followed previous to that date in the appointment of Diocesan Bishops, and how were they agreed?

*The Archbishop of York to reply:*

**A** In June 2011 the Secretary General issued for Synod members GS Misc 992, to which was attached a note from the Legal Office explaining the relevance of the Equality Act to the appointment of

diocesan and suffragan bishops. An updated version of the note was issued in June 2013 as GS Misc 1044. A note on implementation was issued subsequently on the authority of the Archbishops to diocesan bishops and to the Crown Nominations Commission. The note has been updated, most recently in March. A Synod member who was aware of the note asked at the Synod in July whether it could be published and it was placed on the website earlier this month.

**Canon Malcolm Halliday (Leeds) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

- Q39** In relation to the Archbishops' Guidelines on the implementation of "Choosing Bishops - the Equality Act 2010 (Revised)" published on the Church of England website in November, can the Commission:
- (a) clarify the intended application of the guidelines to clergy who act in accordance with the statement in the House of Bishops' Pastoral Statement on same Sex Marriage of 15 February 2014 that "The Church of England will continue to place a high value on theological exploration and debate that is conducted with integrity. That is why Church of England clergy are able to argue for a change in its teaching on marriage and human sexuality ..."; and
  - (b) confirm that the guidelines will be applied equally to candidates who have spoken out against, as well as those who have spoken out in favour of, a change in the Church's teaching on marriage and human sexuality?

*The Archbishop of York to reply:*

- A** The guidelines and the words quoted from paragraph 25 of the House of Bishops' pastoral guidance are entirely consistent. Indeed paragraph 18 of the recently published guidelines specifically says that 'the mere fact that a candidate had questioned the Church of England's teaching on human sexuality... would not be sufficient to raise any issue from this point of view: that is something that clergy are free to do. An issue could only arise as a result of the way in which that disagreement had been expressed.'

It would be misleading to regard those who have spoken out in favour of the Church's teaching as simply the mirror image of those who have opposed it. But bishops do need to be a focus of unity and so the manner and content of any candidate's public statements are something that those making an appointment can properly weigh.

**Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

**Q40** What plans currently exist for the Crown Nominations Commission to report to Synod, as envisaged by SO 136(4)?

*The Archbishop of York to reply:*

**A** We have already committed to a report back to Synod in 2016 on the matter of interviews and we will look at the possibility of widening this report in the light of our ongoing reviews of the operation of the Commission. We will obviously need to respect the necessary confidentiality of our consideration of individuals.

## **CHURCH COMMISSIONERS**

**Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q41** Are the Commissioners able to make an assessment, expressed in today's money, of how much the historic assets of the Church of England (through its various institutions) profited from its support for slavery and its ownership of slaves, and of any reparations made to the victims of slavery?

*Mr Andrew Mackie to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** No, we have no way of making such an assessment.

The Ethical Investment Advisory Group has been asked by the National Investing Bodies to develop a guidance note on Modern Day Slavery and it intends to advise them on the measures they should ask companies to follow to address the risk of slavery within their supply chains. The guidance is expected to build upon existing initiatives supporting audits of supply chains.

Earlier this year the Commissioners worked with other investors to support the Transparency in Supply Chain reporting requirement. The Commissioners will continue to engage with companies on this as part of their broader engagement framework for 2016.

**Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q42** The Church Commissioners are significant investors in retail companies whose poorer employees might have their family life adversely impacted by changes in Sunday trading laws, especially when coupled with Welfare Benefits reforms. In a reply to a question I asked in the course of the presentation on the Commissioners' Annual report at the July 2015 group of sessions, a willingness was expressed on behalf of the Commissioners to raise this concern during ongoing discussions with the companies in which they invest. Has an opportunity to raise those concerns arisen and if so, what was the outcome?

*Mr Andrew Mackie to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** Proposed changes to Sunday trading hours have not yet come before Parliament and the law continues to restrict opening hours of large stores to 6 hours on Sundays. The retail industry is divided about further deregulation and, if and when new legislation is passed, some may open and others may not. The proposal is to devolve the decision to local areas, so the likely take up of longer trading hours is even more uncertain.

Given the nature of competition in retailing, some firms will be under pressure to open even when they perceive no commercial benefit. Any conversations with companies, should the law change, would need to reflect this moral complexity.

The Mission and Public Affairs Council is leading the Church's response and has said that extending Sunday trading hours would erode common leisure time essential for family life and shared social activities.