

FEBRUARY 2018 GROUP OF SESSIONS

Guide to the February 2018 group of sessions:

A report from the General Synod Business Committee

Introduction

1. The Business Committee is charged under Standing Order 4 with settling the Agenda for each group of sessions and determining the order in which business is to be taken. Subject to Standing Order 1, it is also responsible for all matters relating to the sessional arrangements of the Synod (Standing Order 125).
2. The business of Synod is generated in various ways, including by Boards and Councils, by Dioceses and by individual members of the Synod. The Business Committee gives a great deal of thought to how it shapes the agenda of Synod meetings, considering very carefully the bids for space on each agenda. The purpose of this report is to explain the rationale behind the final shape of the Agenda and also to act as a guide to the business scheduled.
3. This report falls into four parts:
 - Part I comments on general categories of Synod business
 - Part II comments on the shape of the Agenda for the February group of sessions
 - Part III comments on practical arrangements for the February group of sessions
 - Part IV reports on other work and recent decisions of the Business Committee

Part I: General Categories of Synod Business

Categories of Synod business

4. When constructing agendas, the Business Committee seeks to view the agenda as a whole and to ensure that it covers a balance of subjects, ranging from internal Synodical processes, Church business and business which concerns the Church's wider mission.
5. Synod business tends to fall into four main categories as follows.

Standing items

- For example, the debate on the Business Committee Report and Questions.

Legislative business

- This can take a variety of forms. Full details of the legislative business for a group of sessions are always set out in Special Agenda I.

The Church and the World

- Particular business which debates current issues and takes account of the way in which the Church relates to our public context.

Ordering the life of the Church

- Business which concerns the way we order our own life together.

6. Inevitably, some of the subjects which come under these areas may overlap and any of them might be concerned in different ways with the core mission of the Church.

Legislative Business

7. The legislative function of the General Synod is an important one. Church legislation forms part of the law of the land, and has a far-reaching impact on the Church's mission and activities at diocesan and parish level. The Business Committee therefore encourages Synod members to reflect on the effect that proposed legislation will have, not least in their own context, and to engage fully in the legislative process in the various ways open to them – whether by participating in debates on legislative business, by making proposals for amendment or by serving on legislative committees.

To assist us with this task, a general note on legislative procedure in the General Synod has been prepared and uploaded to the Members' Resources page of the General Synod webpage.

Handling of Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) and Private Members' Motions (PMMs)

8. Under the Standing Orders Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) must normally to be considered by the Synod in the order in which notice is received of them. In determining the order in which Private Members' Motions (PMMs) are scheduled for debate, the Business Committee must have regard to the number of Synod members supporting their debate. However, when deciding when to schedule items of either type for debate the Committee can, and does, take into consideration other factors, such as the desirability of having related pieces of business considered in association with each other.

Presentations

9. Presentations are an opportunity for Synod to hear from external visitors, experts and representatives from other churches in a more informal, and sometimes more interactive, way than is possible in a debate. They can also allow Synod to be given a broader picture regarding the context to a debate or issue under discussion. In many cases, presentations are followed by debates, whether on a 'Take Note' or a more substantive motion.

Feedback on Agendas

10. The Business Committee welcomes feedback on agendas and suggestions for improvements to the way that Synod operates. This includes suggestions on ways to make General Synod more user friendly and to improve the ways in which the Synod can respond to current issues. This feedback may be made in a number of ways, including through the debate on the Business Committee Report and through correspondence sent to us via the Clerk following the group of sessions.

Part II: The Shape of the February Agenda

Standing Items of Business

11. This group of sessions will begin as normal with the debate on the Report from the Business Committee, which offers Synod members the opportunity to comment on the Agenda or on the content and conduct of the Synod's business more generally.
12. As is customary, Questions are scheduled early in the group of sessions to allow Synod members to ask for information which might be of importance in forthcoming business.

Legislative Business in February

13. The legislative business will be taken in the course of the afternoon sitting on Friday 9 February. The following items will be taken:
 - The enactment of Amending Canon No. 36 (which amends existing provision relating to vesture) and Amending Canon No. 37 (which amends existing provision relating to the use of the burial service in special cases)
 - The revision stage of the draft Ecumenical Relations Measure (which was originally part of the draft Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure) and draft Amending Canon No. 38 (which is now confined to ecumenical provision). This Measure and Amending Canon implement some of the proposals arising from phase 2 of the work of the Simplification Task Group.
 - The revision stage for the current Miscellaneous Provisions Measure
 - first consideration (under the deemed approval procedure) of two consolidation Measures: the Church Property Measure and the Church of England Pensions Measure
 - a motion for the approval of a Petition from the Bishop of Leeds to the Privy Council to change the name of a Suffragan See

The Church in the World

14. This is business which is concerned with the relationship of the Church of England to our missional context. The following items on the Agenda come under this category:
 - DSM on Food Waste
 - Motion on 'Valuing People with Down's syndrome'
 - DSM on "Long Term Sustainability of the National Health Service" (Contingency Business)
 - Presentation on Digital Evangelism
 - Presidential Address by the Archbishop of Canterbury
 - Debate on a Motion on Companion Links and the Anglican Communion.

Ordering the Life of the Church

15. The General Synod has a responsibility to take counsel together about issues affecting the life of the Church. This business may take legislative or non-legislative form. The following Church business matters will be taken on the February Synod Agenda

- Take Note Debate on the Review of the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC)
- Safeguarding Presentation
- Debate on a Motion on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant
- Debate on Motion on Religious Communities
- Appointment of the Chair of the Appointments Committee.

16. At the invitation of the Presidents, the following guests from member churches of the Anglican Communion will attend this group of sessions, sitting on the floor of the Synod.

- Archbishop Moon Hing of South East Asia
- Archbishop Humphrey of Pakistan
- Archbishop Thabo of South Africa
- Archbishop Winston Halapua, Bishop of Polynesia and Primate and Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

17. The guests do not have the right to speak or vote. However, at the invitation of the Presidents on the morning of Friday 9 February one of them will briefly address the Synod under Standing Order 120.

Part III: Practical Arrangements for February group of sessions

Sessional Arrangements

18. The General Synod will be meeting at Church House, Westminster from 1.30 pm until 5.30 pm on Thursday 8th February 2018, from 9.30am – 7.00pm on Friday 9th February and from 9.30am until 4.00pm on Saturday 10th February. There is an early finish to the day on Thursday 8th February as members of the House of Bishops have another externally arranged, engagement.

19. With the agreement of the Presidents and of Synod members themselves (in a vote in February 2017), the February 2018 General Synod Agenda has been planned to include meeting for part of the day on a Saturday. This is the first time that a London group of sessions has included a Saturday. The Business Committee has scheduled this on an experimental business to see if it easier for Synod members with substantial week-day commitments to meet at a weekend. The Business Committee welcomes feedback from members after Synod has met so that they can review whether to repeat this practice at future groups of sessions.

Advance notice of Synod dates

Following the request made by a number of Synod members last July, we gave a commitment to publishing the proposed dates for the February 2018 group of sessions as far in advance as possible. It is not always feasible to publish the dates of Synod meetings so far in advance. On this occasion, the Business Committee accordingly took a view at its September 2017 meeting on the length of time likely to be necessary for Synod to meet. We based this view on the Private Members'

Motions and Diocesan Synod Motions received to date, the indications of interest coming from Boards and Councils and the likely volume of legislative business.

20. Whilst the Business Committee makes every attempt to give as much warning as possible of proposed dates for General Synod, we cannot guarantee to be able to publish precise dates this far in advance on every occasion. The date envelope for meetings of the Synod as agreed and published on the website remain the primary resource for members' planning.

Indicative Timings

21. The Synod timetable is published with indicative timings for items of business. This is done in order to help Synod members plan their time. It should be emphasised that – except in the case of items followed by timed business (which is indicated in the timetable by an asterisk) - the length of time taken by any item of business is in the hands of the Synod.
22. 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.

Synod Worship

23. The group of sessions will begin with an act of worship in the Chamber. All services (apart from those taking place in the Chamber) will take place in the Church House Chapel. The full details and timings of worship are listed at the start of the Agenda.
24. The Continuous Praying Presence led by the Community of St Anselm will be based in the Balcony of the Chamber, with individual members praying in the Chapel during the group of sessions. Synod members are welcome to join those praying in the Chapel whenever they wish to do so.

Synod Security

25. Synod members are reminded of their responsibility to be vigilant at all times to ensure the security of Synod members, visitors and staff. As stated in point 5 of the security policy, Synod members are requested not to leave any items unattended around the Assembly Hall or its environs.

IV: Other Work of the Business Committee

Changing the Culture of General Synod

26. The Business Committee continues with its work on 'Changing the Culture of General Synod' to adapt to the changing communications environment and expectations of the wider Church and society. This work takes place within the existing legislative framework for General Synod, in the form of the Constitution and the Standing Orders.
27. The Business Committee has appointed a Working Group to consult on and oversee this work. The membership of the Group is as follows:
- The Reverend Canon Sue Booy (Chair),
 - The Reverend Prebendary Simon Cawdell
 - Canon Robert Hammond

- Mr Clive Scowen.

28. Staffing is supplied by the Synod and Legal Offices.

29. The Business Committee consulted on its work in this area in July and also took note of feedback given at the Business Committee Fringe meeting. The Synod Reform Working Group has discussed this feedback in detail and is looking at any learnings derived from it.

30. The Business Committee has also commissioned staff to do more work on improving the accessibility of Synod to those with disabilities. All suggestions and feedback on this work should be sent to the Clerk.

Online elections to General Synod

31. An update on progress made by the Elections Review Group (ERG) on online elections to General Synod in 2020, was brought to the Business Committee at their December meeting. This update can be found as an annex to this report.

Communicating the Work of Synod

32. Communicating the work of Synod is crucial to ensuring that its decisions, both legislative and non-legislative, have an impact on the dioceses and parishes and help to further the Church's mission.

33. At the request of the Business Committee and the Synod Reform Working Group, further work will be carried out by staff in 2018 to look at how Synod proceedings and outcomes can be communicated more effectively.

34. Synod members are also reminded that they have the responsibility themselves to update their dioceses and parishes on the outcomes of business conducted at Synod after each group of sessions.

35. In the meantime, the Business Committee encourages Synod members to think about what 'task' they will take away from this group of sessions, whether it is taking forward one of the calls to action embodied in a motion, helping with the implementation of legislation or improvements to the communication of Synod's activities.

Record of Business Done

36. The Legal Office produces a formal record of business transacted at each group of sessions of the General Synod in the form of 'Business Done', which is published on the Synod page of the Church of England website.

37. In addition, the Business Committee has been publishing on an experimental basis a running record of the business transacted at General Synod during the current Quinquennium, with updates on subsequent developments in relation to individual items. This may be accessed on our [Members' Resources page](#).

38. The Business Committee welcomes feedback from Synod members on whether this record is helpful. The Business Committee will review whether to continue with this practice at a future meeting.

Membership of the House of Laity

39. In July 2017 the Synod held an advisory ballot on the composition of the House of Laity (GSBC(17)44) to assess Synod's appetite for a potential change to the current arrangements. The vote was held by Single Transferable Vote system.

40. The results of the vote of Synod members were as follows:

Count of the whole Synod:

Quota: 141

		Stage	2	Stage	3	
	First	Exclusion of		Exclusion of		
Candidates	Preferences	Diocesan		ER		
Deanery	121	13	134	8	142	chosen
College	69	1	70	9	79	
PCC	44	1	45	15	60	
Diocesan	15	-15	-		-	
ER	33		33	-33	-	
Non-transferable			0	1	1	
Totals	282		282		282	

Count of the House of Laity only:

Quota: 75

	First	
Candidates	Preferences	
Deanery	75	chosen
College	37	
PCC	17	
Diocesan	4	
ER	17	
Non-transferable		
Totals	150	

Count of the House of Clergy (including those Bishops who voted):

Quota: 66

		Stage	2	Stage	3	Stage	4	
	First	Exclusion of		Exclusion of		Exclusion of		
Candidates	Preferences	Diocesan		ER		College		
Deanery	46	9	55	2	57	15	72	chosen
College	32	1	33	3	36	-36	-	
PCC	27	1	28	10	38	19	57	
Diocesan	11	-11	-		-		-	
ER	16		16	-16	-		-	
Non-transferable			0	1	1	2	3	
Totals	132		132		132		132	

41. In general, the preference was for the status quo (ie elections from Deanery Synods) with the strongest preference being expressed in the vote from the House of Laity.

Business Committee Policies

42. The Business Committee has a number of policies covering various aspects of Synod's activities. These and other guidance may be viewed on the Members' Resources web page at:
- <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/synod-members-resources>
43. The **Code of Conduct for Synod members** has been finalised since it was launched in draft form at the July group of sessions. It is now published in a final form at the above page on the website. It is also being circulated as a GS Misc.
44. It is important to emphasise that the Business Committee has no legal power to enforce this code nor any sanction against those who (whether intentionally or unintentionally) infringe it. Neither has the committee any right or responsibility to comment or otherwise hold to account members of the Synod for words or actions in any arena outside the General Synod of the Church of England. However, the Business Committee has determined that where a member has clearly behaved in a manner which contravenes this Code of Conduct they may receive a letter from the Chair of the Business Committee and that the fact that such a letter has been sent may be published.
45. A new **Policy on Fringe Meetings and Displays** was also introduced at the July Synod and is published with the other policies on the website.
46. The Business Committee reviews its policies annually at its March meeting and updates them as necessary. Synod members are invited to send any comments to the Committee via the Clerk for consideration at the its March meeting.

On behalf of the Business Committee, The Revd Canon Sue Booy
Chair of the Business Committee
February 2018

Membership of the Business Committee

Chair

The Revd Canon Sue Booy

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd Pete Broadbent, Bishop of Willesden

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Revd Canon Graeme Buttery

The Revd Prebendary Simon Cawdell

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones

Elected by the House of Laity

Mrs Anne Foreman

Canon Robert Hammond

Mr Clive Scowen

Appointed by the Archbishops' Council

Mr Adrian Greenwood

Canon Mark Russell

The Secretary to the Committee is the Clerk to the Synod (Dr Jacqui Philips) and the Assistant Secretary is Miss Polly Dunn

**Forecast of future General Synod business
July 2018 and beyond**

Legislation

- Ecumenical Relations Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- Miscellaneous Provisions Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- Church of England Pensions Measure – Final Drafting and Final Approval
- Church Property Measure – Final Drafting and Final Approval
- Church Representation Measure – Revision Stage
- Diocesan Boards of Education Measure – First Consideration
- Miscellaneous Provisions Measure – First Consideration
- Amending Canon No. 38 – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- Amending Canon No. 39 – Revision Stage
- Amending Canon concerning religious communities – First Consideration
- Usual Fees Orders

Other Business

- Report from the Working Group on Lay Ministries
- Debate on a motion from the Ministry and Public Affairs Council on Affordable Housing
- Debate on a motion on Chaplaincy to Uniformed Organisations
- Disinvestment Report from the National Investment Bodies (NIBs)
- Diocesan Synod Motions on the Environment from the Dioceses of Oxford, London and Truro
- Oxford and Canterbury Diocesan Synod Motion on “The Review of the Crown Nominations Commission”
- Possible Debate on Safeguarding
- Report from the Methodist Church
- Report from the Standing Orders Committee

Appointments

- Appointment of Chair of the Pensions Board
- Archbishops’ Council Appointments

GENERAL SYNOD BUSINESS COMMITTEE

ONLINE ELECTIONS TO GENERAL SYNOD: UPDATE

1. The Committee may recall that in March it considered a Report from the Elections Review Group [GSBC(17)11] which took forward the adoption of on line voting for the elections to General Synod (which Synod had agreed to in principle in November 2013). It also agreed that the Group should oversee the detailed work involved with Electoral Reform Services (see GSBC(17)M1, item 9). The General Synod subsequently received the Business Committee's Report - which included this recommendation - in July [GS 2075].
2. I can now report that the Elections Review Group met on 27 November with Mr Joe Wadsworth of Electoral Reform Services to consider the practical aspects of on line voting. It recognises that this will be one of the most significant changes to the electoral system for many years and is conscious that it needs to be well prepared, and undertaken with the necessary communication and training.
3. The key dates are:
 - **February 2019** group of sessions (at the very latest) – Church Representation Rules rule changes need to be in place to provide for the collection of email addresses (a prerequisite for being able to participate in online elections)
 - **Spring 2019** – revision of electoral rolls
 - **February 2020** group of sessions – the final legislative/rule changes need to be in place
 - **Spring 2020** – elections to deanery synods
 - **July 2020** – elections to the General Synod begin

Between these dates, it will be necessary to factor in clear communication with dioceses and electors, training events and trial elections, testing the system, snagging for problems and confidence building.

4. The Group discussed a number of detailed aspects of the proposed arrangements in the light of some flow charts prepared by Joe Wadsworth (who was in attendance). It wanted to smooth the way to widespread adoption of on-line voting but recognised the need to run a parallel postal system for the time being. The Group agreed in principle that the proposed system should be trialled in four dioceses – Canterbury*, Liverpool*, London and Winchester* – covering a range of contexts in the hope that this would help iron out any problems that might arise. [*As at 11/01/18 these dioceses have agreed to take part].
5. The oversight of the new process forms part of the job description of Jennifer Jacob who joins us at the end of January. She will need to work in liaison with Electoral Reform Services to co-ordinate the necessary training that will be critical to the successful launch of the new system.
6. The Group has been advised that the cost for design to the Archbishops' Council is likely to be around £1,000 per election (plus around £500 for each election run from

Church House, Westminster – the special constituencies) - i.e. c.£50k - and to the dioceses around £500 for each election (with some formula whereby large dioceses pay more than smaller ones) – ie a further £21k. This estimate makes various assumptions:

- That there are significant economies of scale from running basically the same process/system 40+ times.
- That election addresses are published as in a standard PDF format
- that a level of support and training to the dioceses can be provided by Church House rather than by ERS.

7. As noted by the Committee in March, the new arrangements presuppose that the necessary legal work to resolve data protection issues that might arise from the widespread use of personal email addresses can be undertaken prior to the launch of the new arrangements.
8. The Committee noted the above.

Church House,

London SW1P 3AZ

6 December 2017 [revd 4.1.18]

(signed)

Dr Jacqui Philips

Clerk to the Synod