

# **The February 2012 Group of Sessions**

## **Report by the Business Committee**

### **Introduction**

1. The Business Committee has met twice since the July Group of Sessions – in September and December. The Ven. Julian Henderson, Archdeacon of Dorking (Guildford), continues as Acting Chair until a new Chair is appointed or elected. The Committee's membership is set out on page 9 below.
2. This report falls into three parts:
  - Part I introduces the Agenda for this Group of Sessions (**GS 1848**).
  - Part II comments on individual items of business where necessary.
  - Part III reports on other work and decisions of the Business Committee.

### **I: The February 2012 Group of Sessions**

3. The Synod will meet in Church House, Westminster, from 2.15 p.m. on Monday 6 February until 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 9 February 2012.

#### **Shape of the Agenda**

4. The reference to the dioceses of the legislation to enable women to be consecrated to the episcopate is now complete and the matter therefore returns to the General Synod's agenda. The future process for this legislation is described in GS Misc 1012. The Business Committee is conscious that this will be the first opportunity for the present Synod to engage with the draft legislation and the illustrative draft code of practice and has therefore allocated a significant amount of time for this, spreading the relevant items over the three main days. Further details of these items of business are given in Section II below.
5. There are other significant items of legislative and liturgical business, as well as a report from the Standing Orders Committee which will enable the Synod to decide how the Chair of the Business Committee will in future be chosen and to consider other changes to the Standing Orders.
6. It is important that the Synod should engage with the Church's mission in the world as well as with its internal life. In addition to its function of considering matters concerning the Church of England and making provision in respect of them (Constitution, Article 6(a)), the Synod has a second main function 'to consider and express their opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest' (Article 6(b)). We have therefore arranged that on the Monday, Tuesday and Thursday there will be significant items of business in fulfillment of that second function:
  - a debate on the Independent Commission on Assisted Dying,
  - a presentation on the Anglican Alliance for Relief, Development and Advocacy,
  - a debate on the reform of the House of Lords, and
  - a debate on 'Health Care and the Church's Mission'.

## Worship

7. In July the Synod endorsed the following recommendation in the report of conversations with the United Reformed Church

‘That representatives of the two churches should join together in an act of worship in 2012, that would mark both the 350th anniversary of the Great Ejection of nonconforming ministers following the Act of Uniformity 1662 and the 40th anniversary of the inauguration of the United Reformed Church. The service should contain an expression of penitence for our part in perpetuating the divisions of the past, a desire for the healing of memories and an act of commitment to work more closely together in the future.’
8. This service will be held in Westminster Abbey at 6.15 p.m. on Tuesday 7 February, with the Abbey choir. We are grateful to the Dean and Chapter for making this possible. The service is expected to last one hour. The Archbishop of Canterbury will preach and the Archbishop of York, together with the Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, will lead a litany of penitence and act of commitment. The officers of the Synod have been invited to process. The afternoon sitting will conclude at 5.30 p.m. and, although the service will not technically be part of the Synod’s proceedings, it is hoped that members will see this as a corporate act of worship for the Synod.
9. Holy Communion will be celebrated in the Assembly Hall on Wednesday 8 February.  
**Members are asked to note that the service will begin at 9.15 am.**
10. A number of members have asked that the short concluding acts of worship at the end of each day that were introduced in February 2008 in the run-up to that year’s Lambeth Conference should be reinstated, and the Liturgical Chaplain has agreed to this. At this group of sessions such brief acts of worship will follow the close of business on the Monday and Wednesday evenings.

## Private Members’ Motions

11. The Business Committee considers that in order to be listed for debate a Private Member’s Motion (PMM) ought to have attracted 100 signatures (since, under Standing Order 6(c), PMMs which do not achieve that level of support within three groups of sessions are excluded from the agenda). Four PMMs have received over 100 signatures: two of them have been scheduled for debate and a third is listed as contingency business. The PMMs listed in Special Agenda III, together with any new motions that are received by **5.30 p.m. on Monday 6 February**, will be available during the group of sessions for members to sign them (or cancel their signatures) so as to indicate the order in which they wish them to be debated. Notice of new motions will be given in a Notice Paper.

## Diocesan Synod Motions

12. The Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) are listed in Special Agenda IV. They are normally debated in the order in which they are received. However, the Business Committee has decided that the Southwark DSM on the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod and the Rochester DSM on the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate should not be debated whilst the current legislative process in relation to women in the episcopate continues. The Chichester DSM on the Appointment of Archdeacons has been scheduled for debate.

13. The Manchester and Southwark DSMs on the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure are time-critical, in that they relate to the House of Bishops' consideration of that item of draft legislation under Article 7 of the Constitution, which is expected to occur before July. The Business Committee has therefore decided that these two DSMs should also be debated in February. For detailed arrangements, see paras 32-34 below.

### **Order of Business**

14. 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 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**

15. This section of the Report offers comments, where necessary, on individual items of business. They are discussed in chronological order.

### **Monday 6 February**

#### ***Loyal Address***

16. Monday 6 February will be the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen's accession to the throne. The Synod will be invited to congratulate Her Majesty and approve the submission of a Loyal Address.

#### ***Dates of Groups of Sessions in 2014-2015***

17. In July the Synod agreed the following dates for groups of sessions in 2013: 4-8 February, 5-9 July, and 18-20 November (contingency dates). The Business Committee indicated that it would consider in September whether this pattern of dates should continue in 2014 and 2015 and invited members to send comments to the Clerk to the Synod. Only two comments were received. A survey of members of the former Synod conducted in 2010 had not indicated majority support for change.
18. There continues to be concern that the present pattern might discourage laypeople in full-time employment from seeking election, but the balance between groups of sessions held over a weekend and during the week represents a compromise between the likely preferences of potential clergy and lay members. In the absence of any indication of majority support for change among those already elected to serve for the present quinquennium, the Business Committee is proposing dates for 2014 and 2015 in accordance with the existing pattern. The dates represent the maximum length of groups of sessions: the actual length will be determined each time in the light of the business that needs to be transacted.

#### ***Questions***

19. Any member wishing to ask a question of any of the bodies or persons specified in Standing Order 105 must give notice of it to the Clerk to the Synod by **5.30 p.m. on Wednesday 25 January**. Questions sent by email should be addressed to [questions@churchofengland.org](mailto:questions@churchofengland.org)

20. Members are reminded that **all questions submitted will be presumed to be for written answer** unless an oral answer is specifically requested.
21. The Business Committee has noted a degree of frustration that at recent groups of sessions not all of the questions have been answered orally. More time has therefore been allocated to questions on this occasion.

## **Tuesday 7 February**

### ***Legislative Business***

22. The legislative business for this group of sessions is set out in Special Agenda I.
23. The Synod declined to approve the Parochial Fees Order laid before it at the July 2011 group of sessions. The Archbishops' Council therefore seeks approval for a revised form of Order (the draft Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2012). It will remove various services from the list of those services in respect of which fees are to be prescribed and exclude the cost of vergers and heating from the prescribed fees. The rationale for the Archbishops' Council's decision is explained in GS Misc 1015.
24. The Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Measure returns to the Synod for revision, having completed its Revision Committee Stage. The Measure makes a number of technical changes to the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003, but also makes it misconduct for a cleric to join or support an organization whose constitution, policies etc are determined by the House of Bishops to be inconsistent with the Church's teaching on racial equality. Amongst the changes made by the Revision Committee was the addition of a requirement that any determination by the House of Bishops should require approval by the Synod if at least 25 of its members ask that it be debated.
25. The Synod will be asked to give First Consideration to the Diocese in Europe Measure, the principal purpose of which is to allow the Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council to apply funds for the development of the mission of the Diocese in Europe, which currently cannot benefit from Commissioners' funding for mission and ministry.
26. The Synod will also be asked to approve, under the 'deemed procedure', the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Order 2012, which makes various amendments to the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2010 in order to give effect to the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2007.
27. Further legislative business will be taken on Wednesday 8 February and Thursday 9 February (see para 31, paras 32-34 (relevant to legislative business), and para 38).

### ***Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure: Illustrative Draft Code of Practice***

28. In 2010 the House of Bishops established a working group to produce an illustrative draft Code of Practice consistent with the present draft Measure. The group's report and illustrative Code was considered by the House in December. The House agreed that they should be circulated together with a Pastoral Statement from the Archbishops reflecting discussion within the House. The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, who chaired the

group, will make a presentation on the material produced by the group and answer questions. It would greatly assist the Chair if members submitted questions in advance.

### ***Anglican Alliance for Relief, Development and Advocacy***

29. The Anglican Alliance for Relief, Development and Advocacy ([www.anglicanalliance.org](http://www.anglicanalliance.org)) has been established by the Archbishop of Canterbury and is funded by the Lambeth Partners. It grew out of the 2008 Lambeth Conference and was launched earlier this year. It aims to co-ordinate the work of the Anglican Communion and the various provincial agencies on relief, development and advocacy. Its Director, Mrs Sally Keeble (a former Minister of State at the Department for International Development), will give a presentation, the aim of which is to raise the Church's awareness and ownership of the Alliance and to provide guidance as to how the Alliance can add value to the work of dioceses in the field of development, relief and advocacy. There will be an opportunity for questions.

### **Wednesday 8 February**

#### ***Diocesan Synod Motion: Appointment of Archdeacons***

30. The Chichester Diocesan Synod Motion calls for amendment of Canon C 22, the effect of which would be to permit 'distinctive deacons' (deacons who are not seeking ordination to the priesthood) to be appointed as archdeacons.

#### ***Legislative Business:***

#### ***Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure Draft Amending Canon No. 30***

31. The debate on the Business Committee's report on the reference of this draft legislation (GS 1847) will give the Synod an opportunity to reflect on the discussion and voting in the dioceses. The following motions debated and passed in diocesan synods are reported in the Committee's report and can therefore be discussed in this 'take note' debate. There will, however, be a separate debate on the Manchester and Southwark Diocesan Synod Motions. The Business Committee's view is that, if there are any other matters on which members wish to test the mind of the Synod, that would best be done, by means of amendments or following motions, during the afternoon debate. The Committee has allocated time accordingly.

#### ***Diocesan Synod Motions:***

#### ***Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure***

32. The Manchester Diocesan Synod Motion (DSM) calls on the House of Bishops to amend the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure in the manner proposed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York at the Revision Stage. (Motions in the same terms or to the same effect were subsequently passed by four other diocesan synods.) The Southwark DSM calls on the House of Bishops to make no amendments to the draft Measure.
33. As the first of these diocesan synod motions to be received, the Manchester DSM has been listed for debate. If the Southwark DSM were listed as a separate item for debate, under Standing Order 24 it could only be moved if the Manchester DSM were not passed. The Business Committee considers it to be important that the Synod should have the opportunity

to hear speeches in favour of both motions and to take a decision on them together. This will be achieved by an amendment to the Manchester DSM being moved on behalf of the Southwark Diocesan Synod, amending the motion so that it takes the form of the Southwark DSM.

34. As both DSMs were submitted as diocesan synod motions, the Committee considers that they should be treated equally as far as possible. The mover of the amendment will therefore also be invited to speak from the platform. It will be suggested to the Chair that the mover should speak to, but not move, the amendment immediately after the Manchester DSM has been moved, with a ten-minute speech-limit, and should be allowed to speak a second time (under Standing Order 20(b), with the general consent of the Synod) immediately before the amendment is put to the vote. The normal arrangements will apply to any other amendments.

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

35. Following the withdrawal of the Bishop of Dover at the July group of sessions, the Archbishops' Council undertook (as reported in GS Misc 998) to consider how to proceed in relation to the appointment of the Chair of the Business Committee. At its meeting in September the Council decided not to make a further appointment but to invite the Standing Orders Committee to bring forward proposals, at the February group of sessions, for the amendment of the provisions of Standing Order 115 which govern the position in that respect.
36. The Standing Orders Committee accordingly now brings such proposals to the Synod for approval, in its 46th Report (GS 1855). The Committee proposes that the Chair be elected, by and from the Synod as a whole, with no class of member being ineligible for election. The Committee also makes a number of other miscellaneous proposals for amendment of the Standing Orders.

## **Thursday 9 February**

### ***Liturgical Business*** ***Additional Eucharistic Prayers***

37. The Additional Eucharistic Prayers are intended to be 'suitable for use on occasions when a significant number of children are present or when it is otherwise pastorally appropriate to meet the needs of children present'. Following First Consideration in July they have been revised by 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 at this stage, but it can re-commit them to the Revision Committee for (further) revision of specified lines.

### ***Legislative Business*** ***Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure*** ***Draft Amending Canon No. 30***

38. The Article 8 reference to the dioceses having been successfully completed, the next stage in the legislative process is that of 'Final Drafting'. The Steering Committee will only be proposing 'Drafting Amendments' – i.e. amendments which merely alter the wording of the Measure for technical reasons. These do not need to be moved or voted on but will be made automatically if the 'take note' motion on the Committee's report is passed.

## **Higher Education Funding Changes**

39. Following the Synod's endorsement in July of the recommendations of the review of models and funding of pre-ordination training in the light of the proposed changes to Higher Education funding, the Bishop of Sheffield's working party has made a further report. This was approved by the House of Bishops and, in line with the steer given by the General Synod towards developing a common curriculum for ministerial training, the report makes a single recommendation:

*That the Church of England, with our partner churches, establish a single suite of HE awards suitable for IME 1-7, Reader training and independent students, with a single HE set of validation arrangements, as outlined in this report.*

40. The report outlines the forthcoming work of curriculum design and negotiating the partnership with a university or universities. The aim of the presentation is to enable Synod members to hear from the working party, put their questions to it and make their contribution to the further development of the next phase of the work.

## **Health Care and the Church's Mission**

41. The Health and Social Care Bill, currently making its way through the House of Lords, represents the greatest potential reform of the National Health Service since its inception. The Church of England, for reasons explored in GS 1857, has always had a strong commitment to the ideals of the NHS. The debate will give the Synod an opportunity to offer a public expression of the Church's concerns and priorities in the light of the Church's vocation to seek health and healing throughout the nation.

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

### **The Role of the Business Committee**

42. At its September meeting, the Committee considered a number of comments that have been made about its role with regard to the Synod's agenda.
43. Under the Synod's Standing Orders the Business Committee's principal role is to decide, in the light of the Standing Orders, which of the available items of business to include in the Agenda for a group of sessions and how to schedule them. Like the Archbishops' Council, it has the power to introduce draft legislation into the Synod, but with this exception (and a few others – at this group of sessions, concerning the dates of Synod meetings and the report on an Article 8 reference to the dioceses), it has no power to initiate substantive items of business. Nor does it have power to require other bodies to initiate business.
44. This does not mean that its role is purely passive, however. The Business Committee can and does invite the relevant bodies to bring forward items of business when it believes that members might wish to debate them. At its September meeting, for example, it invited the Mission and Public Affairs Division to propose some matters that might appropriately be debated in February, and it agreed that time would be made available for a debate on 'Health and the Church's Mission'.
45. The Committee noted that this was possible because the September meeting was sufficiently in advance of the February group of sessions for the necessary work on a possible motion and synopsis of a report to be done. It decided that it will in future meet additionally in

March each year so that it can engage in similar advance planning for the July groups of sessions.

46. The Committee will keep its role under review.

### **Synod Papers**

47. At its September meeting, the Committee reviewed the experiment whereby certain papers were made available to members electronically, with only a short paper circulated in print.
48. The Committee came to a number of conclusions. It is essential that all members should be sent a copy of any background document referred to in a motion for debate. There should not be two versions of the same document, one shorter and one longer, as this is apt to cause confusion as to which document is being debated.
49. The number of members using electronic readers is increasing but they are still in the minority: the majority still find it more convenient to work with papers in hard copy. The cost of printing should not be transferred to members, and it is cheaper overall, and more environmentally friendly, for papers to be printed centrally. At the same time, the length of papers needs to be kept under control and reduced as far as possible. The length needs to be appropriate to the nature of the motion, to the significance of the issue and to whether the document is simply intended to resource a Synod debate or is likely to receive wider attention and be of lasting significance.
50. In the light of these considerations the Committee has established a number of principles regarding the length of papers:
- Papers for Diocesan Synod Motions and Private Members' Motions will continue to be limited to four pages each.
  - Papers which essentially report developments to the Synod or serve as a background to an official motion should normally be limited to six pages, with the possibility of additional appendix-style or reference material (rather than a longer version of the same document) being published electronically.
  - Where a significant policy decision is involved, the Clerk to the Synod will discuss with the relevant staff the extent of paperwork reasonably necessary in order for the Synod to reach an informed decision.
  - In the case of important reports on major doctrinal, ethical and social issues, which are intended to be of lasting significance and enjoy a wide readership, the full report will be circulated.
  - Bilateral ecumenical reports will be circulated in the form in which they are circulated to the other church. (But the Clerk to the Synod will seek to ensure that they are kept to an appropriate length and circulated in a form that is appropriate to their significance.)
  - No artificial limit will be placed on papers for business in which the Synod is exercising statutory responsibilities.
51. The Clerk to the Synod will exercise closer oversight of the process leading to the production and circulation of papers, with a view to ensuring that papers are both economical and sufficient for the purpose. The Committee will continue to monitor the length of papers and offer further guidance to the Clerk as necessary.



## **Use of Social Media in the Synod Chamber**

52. The Committee's code of practice for use of electronic equipment in the Chamber permits the use of laptop computers, mobile phones, BlackBerries and similar equipment as long as this is done discreetly and unobtrusively and does not distract other Synod members.
53. This policy enables members to use social media while in the Synod Chamber. The Committee recognizes that this is in step with modern culture and can contribute to fostering interest in the Synod's work. The Committee hopes that members will ensure that the tone and content of any comments that they make while using social media in the Chamber bear good witness to the wider Church and society of the way in which Christians should relate to each other when debating controversial issues.

## **Forecast of Future Business**

54. The forecast of future business annexed to this report provides a forward look to the July 2012 group of sessions. This should not be read as more than a broad indication of the business expected to come to the Synod in July.

On behalf of the Committee

JULIAN HENDERSON  
Acting Chair

20 December 2011

## **Membership of the Business Committee**

*Chair*

Vacancy

*Elected by the House of Bishops*

The Rt Revd James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester

*Elected by the House of Clergy*

The Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford)

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)

The Ven Julian Henderson, Archdeacon of Dorking (Guildford) – *Acting Chair*

*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 Colin Podmore) and the Assistant Secretary is Eva Sadowski.

## Forecast of future Synod business

### July 2012

#### *Legislative Business*

- Women in the Episcopate legislation: Final Approval  
(subject to the outcome of the Article 7 references)
- Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- Diocese in Europe Measure – Revision Stage (and possibly Final Approval)
- Miscellaneous Provisions Measure – First Consideration
- Anglican Covenant Act of Synod: report on reference to the dioceses
- Funded Pension Scheme Rules: changes re s.75 debt
- Fees Orders

#### *Liturgical Business*

- Additional Eucharistic Prayers: [Further Revision Stage or] Final Approval

#### *Reports*

- Fresh Expressions: A report on Fresh Expressions, supported by a report on the ecclesiology of Fresh Expressions commissioned by the Faith and Order Commission
- MPA report on World Mission (relations between mission agencies and diocesan companion links)

#### *DSMs and PMMs*

- One or more diocesan synod motions and private members' motions are customarily included in the agenda for each group of sessions.

#### *Financial Business*