

The November 2012 Group of Sessions of the General Synod

Report by the Business Committee

Introduction

1. The Business Committee has only met once since the July group of sessions.
2. This report falls into three parts:
 - Part I introduces the Agenda for the November group of sessions (GS 1879) and highlights distinctive features.
 - Part II comments on individual items of business.
 - Part III reports on other work and decisions of the Business Committee at its September meeting.

I: The November 2012 Group of Sessions

3. The Synod will meet at Church House, Westminster from 2.15 p.m. on Monday 19 November 2012 until 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday 21 November.
4. The group of sessions will begin on the Monday afternoon with an act of worship. There will be a celebration of Holy Communion in the Chamber at 9.15 a.m. on the Tuesday morning, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury will preside and preach. On the Wednesday morning business will begin with worship. As in some previous groups of sessions, on the Monday and Tuesday evenings the blessing will be preceded by a reading from Scripture and prayer.

Shape of the Agenda

5. As in July, the most prominent item on the Agenda is the final approval of the Measure and Canon providing for women in the episcopate, to which the Tuesday morning and afternoon sittings have been allocated. On the Monday, in addition to the usual opening business, there will be a presentation on the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, followed by a debate on the report on the Reference to the Dioceses of the Draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant. On the Wednesday, there will be opportunities for the Synod to debate a Diocesan Synod Motion and a Private Member's Motion, the dates on which it will meet in 2013, and a report by the Mission and Public Affairs Council on youth unemployment. The group of sessions will conclude with a farewell to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Private Members' Motions

6. The Private Members' Motions (PMMs) are listed in Special Agenda III. The motion that has received the highest number of signatures (Mr Freeman's PMM on the 'Living Wage') has been scheduled for debate (see paras 30-32 below).

Diocesan Synod Motions

7. The Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) that have been received are listed in Special Agenda IV. They are normally debated in the order in which they were received. However, the Business Committee has decided that the Southwark DSM on the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod (which is first in the list) and the motion from Rochester on the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate (which is second in the list) should not be debated whilst the current legislative process in relation to women in the episcopate continues.
8. As reported in July, the Committee has also decided that the Bradford DSM (also passed by the Ripon and Leeds Diocesan Synod) on the Name of Dioceses should not be debated until either the General Synod has considered the draft Reorganization Scheme for the Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield for approval (which the Dioceses Commission hopes will be in July 2013) or it has become clear that it will not be submitted to the General Synod for approval. In taking that decision, it noted that any legislation arising from the motion could not be passed in time to affect the outcome of the Yorkshire process.
9. At its September meeting the Committee received correspondence asking that it reconsider this decision. However, it received renewed legal advice to the effect that it would be difficult for the Synod to debate the motion without reference to the context that gave rise to it, and that there would therefore be a danger that a debate on this motion would prejudice the formal statutory process in respect of the draft Reorganization Scheme, which requires the Synod to take a decision on the Scheme at the due time and on its own merits.
10. In accordance with the legal advice that it had received, and in order to avoid any possibility of legal challenge, the Committee reaffirmed its decision to ‘park’ the Bradford DSM pending the outcome of the statutory process in respect of the Scheme. The Committee has therefore listed the Southwell and Nottingham DSM on Amendment of Canon B 12 and Regulations for debate at this group of sessions (see paras 27-29 below).
11. After the Southwell and Nottingham DSM, the next Diocesan Synod Motions listed in Special Agenda IV are those concerning the Anglican Communion Covenant (see paras 17-20 below).
12. They are followed by a motion from the Wakefield Diocesan Synod, which calls on the House of Bishops to facilitate a theologically informed national debate about the organizational shape of the Church. As with the Bradford / Ripon and Leeds DSM, it would be difficult for the Synod to debate the motion without reference to the context that gave rise to it. The Committee received legal advice to the effect that there would therefore be a danger that a debate on this motion would prejudice the formal statutory process in respect of the draft Reorganization Scheme.
13. In accordance with that legal advice, and to avoid any possibility of legal challenge, it has decided that the Wakefield DSM should similarly not be debated until either the General Synod has considered the draft Reorganization Scheme for the Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield for approval or it has become clear that it will not be submitted to the General Synod for approval.

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 within the period allotted can be called by the Chair, unless other provision has already been made for it. If there is no such business, the Contingency Business (the Report of the Standing Orders Committee – GS 1884) will be taken.

II: Individual Items of Business

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

Monday 19 November

Anglican Consultative Council: Presentation

16. The Archbishop of Canterbury (President of the Anglican Consultative Council), Mrs Elizabeth Paver (Vice-Chair of the Council) and the Church of England members of the Council (the Bishop of Chelmsford, the Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin and Mrs Margaret Swinson) will make a presentation on the Council's 2012 meeting, which is to be held in Auckland, New Zealand, from 27 October to 7 November. The presentation will cover the work of the Council and developments in the life of the Anglican Communion generally. It will also include reflections on the Covenant process in other churches of the Communion. There will be a brief opportunity for questions.

The Anglican Communion Covenant

17. Under Standing Order 91 the Business Committee must report to the Synod on the Reference to the Dioceses of the Draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant not later than the second group of sessions following the date prescribed for submission of reports by diocesan synods. The Committee's report (GS 1878) has accordingly been scheduled for debate at this group of sessions.
18. The debate will give the Synod an opportunity to reflect on the discussion and voting in the dioceses. The following motions debated in diocesan synods are reported in the Committee's report and can therefore be discussed in this 'take note' debate.
19. Nine diocesan synods have passed a Diocesan Synod Motion on the Covenant (two with textual variations). A debate on this motion will enable the Synod to express a view about the Church of England's place in the Anglican Communion in the light of the fact that a majority of the dioceses has not approved the draft Act of Synod. The Business Committee envisages allocating a significant amount of time to this debate at a future group of sessions.
20. There is insufficient time for it at this group of sessions, but in any case it will be more appropriate for the debate to be held after the House of Bishops has had an opportunity to reflect on the position and on the Diocesan Synod Motions, and after the new Archbishop of Canterbury has taken up office and had time to familiarize himself with the situation across the Communion.

Questions

21. As in February, two hours have been allocated for Questions, in the hope that this will make it possible for at least the great majority of the Questions for oral answer to be taken.

22. Any member wishing to ask a question of any of the bodies or persons specified in Standing Order 105 must deliver notice of it to the Clerk to the Synod by **5.30 p.m. on Wednesday 7 November**. Questions sent by email should be addressed to questions@churchofengland.org
23. Members are reminded that **all questions will be presumed to be for written answer** unless an oral answer is specifically requested.
24. As in July, roving microphones will be used for supplementary questions.

Tuesday 20 November

Legislative Business Women in the Episcopate

25. At the July group of sessions the Synod resolved to adjourn the Final Approval debate on the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure to enable the House of Bishops to reconsider the new clause 5(1)(c) which it had inserted in May. At its meeting on 12 September the House deleted that clause and inserted a new clause 5(1)(c) in its place (see the report on the House's reconsideration of clause 5(1)(c), circulated as GS 1708-09ZZZ).
26. The debate on Final Approval of the draft legislation will be resumed on the Tuesday morning. There is no provision in the Synod's Standing Orders for further amendment of the Measure prior to Final Approval. In particular, it will not be possible for a further adjournment motion to be moved under Standing Order 94. A motion for the Adjournment of the Debate could be moved under Standing Order 29, but if that motion were carried the effect would simply be to postpone the Final Approval vote.

Wednesday 21 November

Diocesan Synod Motion: Amendment to Canon B 12 and Regulations

27. The Southwell and Nottingham Diocesan Synod Motion calls for amendment of the Canon and Regulations so as to permit authorization of any regular communicant (including children admitted to the Holy Communion before confirmation) to distribute the Sacrament, and to permit such authorization, if the diocesan bishop agrees, to be given by the incumbent, priest in charge or (during a vacancy) rural dean. At present, only those who have been episcopally confirmed may distribute the Sacrament, and authorization to do so may only be given by the Bishop.
28. The motion therefore raises a number of issues in addition to that of how children can be appropriately included and involved in the worship of the Church, including:
 - whether the ministry of distributing the Sacrament is one which can be exercised without the minister being directly authorized by the Bishop,
 - whether episcopal confirmation is part of the process of initiation into the Church and, if so,
 - whether the ministry of distributing the Sacrament is one that can be exercised by someone whose initiation has not been completed.

29. These issues are explored in a background paper by the Secretary General (GS 1881B), which accompanies the background paper from the Diocese (GS 1881A).

Private Member's Motion: Living Wage

30. Mr Freeman's Private Member's Motion concerns the 'Living Wage' – a figure calculated with reference to what a person is thought to need to live decently in today's society, without luxuries but participating in family and social activities in ways which most people take for granted. It affirms the Christian values inherent in the concept and strongly encourages all Church of England institutions to pay at least the 'Living Wage'.
31. Whereas the National Minimum Wage is set by the Government, the 'Living Wage' is calculated, according to a complex methodology, by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University. There is a separate 'London Living Wage', reflecting the higher cost of living in the capital. This is calculated on a different formula by the Greater London Authority.
32. Though both are promoted by campaigning groups, the calculation of the amounts involved is independent. The current figures for the 'London Living Wage' (£8.30 per hour) and the 'Living Wage' (£7.20 per hour) contrast with the current National Minimum Wage, which, since 1 October, has been £6.21 per hour for those aged 21 and over. The debate will be resourced by a background paper by Mr Freeman (GS 1882A) and a background paper from the Mission and Public Affairs Council (GS 1882B).

Dates of Groups of Sessions in 2013

33. The Committee has decided to recommend to the Synod that it should not meet in February 2013 but should instead meet in November 2013 (the Constitution requires the Synod to meet at least twice a year). This will require a resolution of the Synod, and the necessary motion has been scheduled for the Wednesday morning of this group of sessions. A number of reasons have prompted this recommendation.
34. As will be seen from the forward look appended to this report, there is only a small amount of business that could be transacted in February and none of it is time-critical. This raises a question as to whether the cost across the Church of holding even a three-day group of sessions in February (estimated at £190,000) is justified – especially when, exceptionally, there will have been three groups of sessions in 2012.
35. The Committee also noted that while the new Archbishop of Canterbury may just have arrived in office before the February group of sessions, following confirmation of his election, he will not yet have been enthroned. The Committee believes that some of the items of future business (and especially the Diocesan Synod Motion on the Anglican Communion Covenant) would be better debated in July when the Archbishop has fully taken up his new role.
36. Moreover, the November group of sessions (19-21 November) this year is one week later than used to be the case when there were normally three groups of sessions each year, and the dates reserved in 2013 for a February group of sessions (4-8 February) are one week earlier than they were commonly held then. The ten intervening weeks include Christmas and the New Year. The meeting at which the Business Committee would need to finalize the Agenda and its Report is on 12 December, 21 days after the last day of the November group of sessions. The Committee is conscious of the pressure that the tight timetable

would place on all concerned (including staff), the limited time available for reflection and the possible consequences for other work.

37. By contrast with the ‘Forward Look’ for February, it is clear that there will be a full programme of business for the Synod to transact in July. If the Women Bishops legislation receives Final Approval in November, the Synod will need to consider a draft Code of Practice in July and at least one further group of sessions. That process would be speeded up somewhat if the Synod met in November 2013. To hold a November 2013 group of sessions in addition to a February 2013 group of sessions would, however, mean holding six groups of sessions in two years. This would be difficult to justify on cost grounds and would not be consistent with the Synod’s agreed policy of normally meeting only twice a year except in the inaugural year. Though the problem of the short November-February gap would arise again in a year’s time, there would have been over a year by then to plan ahead and adjust work plans and other meeting dates in order to mitigate it.

Youth Unemployment

38. There is much evidence that unemployment among young people has serious knock-on effects in terms of their later employability, life chances and social development. Yet, in a recession, it is particularly hard for younger people to compete against more experienced workers for the jobs that there are. Based on recent research by the Church Urban Fund and the Frontier Youth Trust, and the voices of unemployed young people themselves, this debate, resourced by a report by the Mission and Public Affairs Council (GS 1883), will focus on practical measures that local churches are taking to support young people and enhance their chances in the crucial transition from education into working life.

Farewell to the Archbishop of Canterbury

39. Following past precedent, the Farewell to the Archbishop of Canterbury will take the form of a short debate, introduced by the Archbishop of York, to which the Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, the Chairman of the House of Laity and Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, as the senior Ecumenical Representative, will contribute. The Archbishop of Canterbury will be invited to respond.

III: Other Work of the Business Committee

Elections Review Group

40. The Elections Review Group concluded its work in September, and at its September meeting the Committee was able to give initial consideration to the Group’s report. In the case of most of the Group’s recommendations there is a simple choice between amending the existing provisions of the Canons and Rules or leaving them unamended. The Committee has instructed that the necessary amendments be drafted. They will be put to the Synod in July to enable the Synod to decide whether they should be made.
41. Two linked issues on which the Elections Review Group has reported – the electorate for the House of Laity and the possibility of introducing an online facility for nominations and voting – require fuller discussion by the Committee than was possible in September. Changes to the House of Laity electorate and online nomination and voting would involve a significant amount of work, so it will be important to test first whether, in the light of the

Review Group's analysis, they would enjoy the support of the Synod. The Committee therefore envisages that a report on these issues will be debated by the Synod in July.

42. If the Synod resolves that changes in respect of these two issues should be introduced, the necessary legislative drafting and practical work can then be undertaken to implement policies that will have been agreed by the Synod. The Committee has been advised that, even if there were a February 2013 group of sessions, it would not be feasible to complete the substantial work in time for an online facility to be in place for the 2015 elections.

Displays

43. In response to a Question asked at the July group of sessions by the Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford), the Committee has reviewed the policy with regard to allocating space for displays during Synod meetings. It noted that at some recent groups of sessions a significant number of proposed displays could not be accommodated, making a review of the allocation policy desirable.
44. The Committee reaffirmed the existing policy, that space should be allocated to organizations in the following order of preference:
- (a) the General Synod, the National Church Institutions and their subordinate bodies;
 - (b) recognized home or overseas mission agencies;
 - (c) other bodies on which the Synod or the Church of England is officially represented;
 - (d) other bodies.

These are objective criteria and staff are therefore not required to take subjective decisions as to how an organization is to be categorized.

45. The Committee decided that within category (d) preference should in future be given to
- 1. displays relevant to items on the Synod's Agenda;
 - 2. displays that could not be accommodated at the previous group of sessions;
 - 3. bodies that have not exhibited before;
 - 4. bodies that have not exhibited during the three previous groups of sessions;
- in that order.

46. Applications for displays at a particular group of sessions will not be entertained before the previous group of sessions has concluded or after the Business Committee has finalized the Agenda.

Sale of Labels

47. In response to a Question asked at the July group of sessions by Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark), the Committee reviewed the current policy in relation to making labels available for private circulations.
48. At present, labels with Synod members' names and addresses are sold to members of the Synod and members of the public for £25 a set. Members are given an opportunity to opt out of receiving non-official mailings; labels for those who opt out are not included in the sets of labels that are sold. No distinction is made between mailings from other members of the Synod and mailings from members of the public.

49. The Committee

- reaffirmed the existing policy that only official material should be circulated by the staff;
- accepted legal advice that in future, for data protection reasons, only labels for members who had specifically opted in to receiving non-official mailings should be made available, and decided that it should be made clear to anyone purchasing labels that these would only be labels for a proportion of members of the Synod;
- decided that the existing fee of £25 should remain unaltered;
- decided that Synod members and members of the public should be charged the same fee for labels (noting that it would not be difficult for outside organizations to find a member willing to purchase labels on their behalf).

50. The Committee was advised that it would not be possible for the existing Church of England web site to be used for making postal addresses, labels or email addresses of Synod members available to Synod members (only) electronically.

Circulation of Synod Papers

51. In response to a Question asked at the July group of sessions by the Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford) and a supplementary Question from Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford), the Committee considered further the question of electronic circulation of papers. It was satisfied that a number of practical considerations make it inadvisable for the Synod to supply electronic hardware to its members. However, it was informed that there had already been a number of requests, from Synod members and other recipients of papers, to receive either no printed papers or only the Agenda in print, and was advised that staff would be able to accommodate this request.

52. The Committee decided that all members and recipients of papers will be invited to opt in to receiving either (a) all papers that can be supplied electronically only in electronic form or (b) all papers that can be supplied electronically, other than the Agenda and published books, only in electronic form. Those who do not opt in will continue to receive papers in print. This approach will result in a financial saving and will allow the balance between printed and electronic dissemination of papers to change gradually over time in response to the development of technology and changes in members' habits and preferences.

Forecast of Future Business

53. The forecast of future business annexed to this report provides a forward look to the groups of sessions in 2013. This should not be read as more than a broad indication of the business expected to come to the Synod next year.

On behalf of the Business Committee

Julian Henderson
Chair

October 2012

Membership of the Business Committee

Chair

The Ven Julian Henderson, Archdeacon of Dorking (Guildford)

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) – *Vice-Chair*

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)

The Revd Charles Razzall (Chester)

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 General Synod business

This forecast should not be read as more than a broad indication of business that may come to the Synod in 2013.

Legislative business

- Amending Code of Practice under the Clergy Discipline Measure (to reflect changes made by the Amending Measure)
- Amending Rules under the Clergy Discipline Measure (to reflect changes made by the Amending Measure)
- Vacancy in See Committees: Amending Regulation (re Bradford DSM)
- Amending scheme in relation to the Diocese in Europe Constitution (deemed business)
- Amending Canon and Amending Rules (to implement recommendations of the Elections Review Group) (*July*)
- Amendments to the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules (*July*)
- Miscellaneous Provisions Measure – Revision Stage (*July*) [and Final Approval (*November*)]
- Fees Orders (*July*)
- ? Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure: Code of Practice (*July* [and *November*])
- ? Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme, with related Vacancy in See Committees Regulation and provision for synodical representation (*July*)

Liturgical business

- Additional Texts for Holy Baptism (*July*)

Reports

- Report of the Standing Orders Committee (contingency business in November 2012)
- Developing a Strategy for the Growth of the Church of England (Mission and Public Affairs Council)
- Report on the work of the Elections Review Group (*July*)
- Report of the Simplification Group (*July*)
- Fresh Directions in Local Unity in Mission (Council for Christian Unity) (*July*)
- The Church School of the Future: implementation (Education Division) (*July*)
- ? Re-imagining Ministry (Ministry Division)
- ? Debate on the Economy (Mission and Public Affairs Council)

One or more Diocesan Synod Motions and one or more Private Members' Motions are customarily included in the Agenda for each group of sessions (see Special Agendas III and IV).