

The February 2014 Group of Sessions of the General Synod

Report by the Business Committee

Introduction

1. This group of sessions follows close on the November Group of Sessions which re-started the legislative process in relation to Women in the Episcopate. As the Synod agreed then, the Revision Stage for the draft legislation will be taken in full Synod without a prior Revision Committee Stage together with a number of other related items of business. So a significant amount of time has been allowed for this on the Tuesday of the group of sessions.
2. Group work proceeded very successfully at the July and February groups of sessions. However the Business Committee considered that on this occasion the Synod should focus on debates on legislative and other business. Group work will be introduced again at future groups of sessions, depending on the business being discussed.
3. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave a short update at the November Synod on topical ecumenical issues and developments around the Anglican Communion. This was generally well-received, and the plan is to schedule such updates from time to time.
4. The Business Committee has decided to continue the 'Continuous Praying Presence' in Church House Chapel which was begun at the November group of sessions. Synod members are warmly invited to join this and support those leading the prayer in the Chapel wherever possible.
5. The Committee has discussed the importance of mutual respect between Synod members, especially when debating controversial issues. Synod members are reminded to be respectful at all times of others' differing views whilst sharing their own viewpoints.
6. This report falls into three parts:
 - Part I introduces the Agenda for the February group of sessions and highlights distinctive features;
 - Part II comments on individual items of business;
 - Part III reports on other work and recent decisions of the Business Committee.

I: The February 2014 Group of Sessions

7. The Synod will meet at Church House, Westminster from 2.00 p.m. on Monday 10 February 2014 until 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday 12 February.
8. The group of sessions will begin with an act of worship and there will be a celebration of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall at 9.15 a.m. on the Tuesday morning, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury will preside and the Archbishop of York preach.

As at some previous groups of sessions, on Tuesday evening the blessing will be preceded by a reading from Scripture and prayer.

Shape of the Agenda

9. This is a short group of sessions and priority is being given to the legislative and other business relating to Women in the Episcopate, which will occupy most of the day on Tuesday 11th February. As agreed at the November 2013 group of sessions, the Revision Stage for the draft Measure and Amending Canon will be taken in full Synod.
10. Other legislation will be taken during the rest of the group of sessions. In addition to this, there will be a policy-focused debate on Gender-Based Violence and a presentation on ethical investment by the Ethical Investment Advisory Group.

Diocesan Synod Motions

11. The Diocesan Synod Motions ('DSMs') awaiting debate are listed in Special Agenda IV. They are normally debated in the order in which they were received, but the Business Committee has decided that the Wakefield Diocesan Synod motion on 'The Nature and Structure of the Church of England' should be postponed until a later group of sessions whilst the Dioceses Commission is still carrying out its own evaluation of the West Yorkshire Scheme.
12. The Southwark DSM on Environmental Issues has been scheduled for Wednesday morning and the Guildford DSM on the Magna Carta is scheduled as Contingency Business.

Private Members' Motions

13. The Private Members' Motions ('PMMs') are listed in Special Agenda III. There are now four such motions with over 100 signatures, which is considered by the Business Committee to be a suitable threshold for PMMs to be considered for debate. These are as follows: Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams's PMM on the Public Doctrine of Christian Marriage (135 signatures), Mr John Ward's PMM on the Registration of Civil Partnerships (130 signatures), the Revd Christopher Hobbs' PMM on Canon B8 (118 signatures) and Mrs Alison Ruoff's PMM on the Girl Guides' Promise (131 signatures).
14. The Business Committee has decided to schedule both the Revd Christopher Hobbs's PMM and Mrs Alison Ruoff's PMM for this group of sessions.
15. The PMMs tabled by Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams and Mr John Ward have been postponed for consideration until after the Synod has had the opportunity to hear a presentation on the Pilling report, which it will do during this Group of Sessions. The Business Committee will give further consideration to the question of when to schedule debates on these two PMMs at its meeting in May 2014.

Order of Business

16. 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 will be taken.

II: Individual Items of Business

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

Monday 10 February

Presentation by the Ethical Investment Advisory Group

18. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, Mr James Featherby and the Revd Professor Richard Burrige, will give a presentation under Standing Order 97 on the work of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group and its recent review of ethical investment. The EIAG will give an overview for Synod of the contemporary Church of England approach to ethical investment. It will announce the progress the EIAG is making towards reflecting the Church's position on alcohol more faithfully in the Church's investments and supporting purposeful investment in business. Finally it will introduce the issues the EIAG is currently grappling with, from the use of pooled funds in ethical investment to an ethical investment approach to climate change. The presentation will be followed by a Question and Answer session with Synod members.

Gender-based Violence: Report by the Mission and Public Affairs Council

19. The Synod will have the opportunity to debate a report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council on gender-based violence (GS 1933). The debate will be preceded by a short presentation by Mandy Marshall and Peter Grant who are co-directors of Restored Relationships, an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end violence against women. The Motion will be moved by the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council, Mr Philip Fletcher.
20. This motion originated from the work of the World Mission and Anglican Communion Panel and has been considered by the Mission and Public Affairs Council. The motion recognises on-going work on awareness of this issue in Church of England schools, parishes and elsewhere and commends Anglican Consultative Council Resolution 15:7 on preventing and eliminating gender-based violence.
21. The debate will be followed by brief period of worship.

Questions

22. An hour and a half has been allocated for Questions, in the hope that this will make it possible for the majority of the Questions for oral answer to be taken.
23. 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 29 January 2014**. Questions sent by email should be addressed to questions@churchofengland.org
24. Members are reminded that **all questions will be presumed to be for written answer** unless an oral answer is specifically requested.

Tuesday 19 November

Legislation on Women in the Episcopate

25. The main business of Tuesday 19th November will relate to Women in the Episcopate.
26. There will be four separate items of business. First the Synod will consider a motion from the House of Bishops inviting the Synod to welcome the draft House of Bishops' draft Declaration and Disputes Resolution Regulations. The Synod had a first opportunity to consider drafts in November as part of the Steering Committee's report but the House of Bishops had not at that stage discussed them in detail. This is the Synod's opportunity to debate what the House has now agreed.
27. Secondly, the draft measure and amending canon will be considered on the Revision Stage. Because there was no Revision Committee Stage the normal 40 member rule for the consideration of amendments will not apply.
28. Thirdly, the Synod will be invited to consider, under the preliminary motion procedure, a draft Act of Synod to rescind the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993. Since rescinding the Act of Synod constitutes Article 7 business, it will need to be considered by the House of Bishops before it comes for final approval at a subsequent group of sessions. It will also be open to the Convocations and the House of Laity to claim references.
29. Fourthly there will be a motion to suspend Standing Order 90(b)(iii) so that the Article 8 reference of the draft measure and amending canon can be concluded in May, with a view to completing the remaining stages of the legislation at the July group of sessions. To pass, the motion will require a 75% majority. If the motion is not carried, the Business Committee will be required by SO 90 to allow at least **six months** for the reference, which means that the earliest date for its completion will be September.

Other Legislative Business

30. The Legislative Business for this group of sessions is set out in Special Agenda I. It will be taken on Tuesday and Wednesday.
31. Two new draft Measures will be introduced at this group of sessions: the Church of England (Pensions) (Amendment) Measure will extend for a further 7 years (until

2025) the Church Commissioners' power to resort to capital to defray pensions liabilities; and the Church of England (Naming of Dioceses) Measure will give effect to the resolution passed by the Synod in November calling for draft legislation to enable dioceses to be named by reference to a geographical area as well as to a town or city.

32. Synod will also be invited to approve a number of pieces of secondary legislation. The Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution will give effect to the changes to the Church Representation Rules proposed by the Archbishops' Council's Simplification Group (previously reported to the Synod in GS Misc 1048).
33. The Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order will determine the level of parochial fees for the years 2015 to 2019, making a number of changes to the fees for funerals and burials to address anomalies.
34. The Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order will set the fees for diocesan and provincial registrars for 2015, in accordance with a new approach intended by the Fees Advisory Commission to lift the value of diocesan registrars' retainers over a period to a level that reflects more closely the real cost of the work they undertake, whilst also promoting a sharper focus on customer service and value for money.
35. The Legal Officers (Annual Fees) (Amendment) Order (which will be deemed business) will amend the 2013 Fees Order to take account of the Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme 2013.

Wednesday 20 November

36. The day will open with a Presidential Address by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Safeguarding

37. The Synod will be invited to endorse a package of proposals, approved by the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops for legislative changes in relation to safeguarding and related disciplinary matters, which has been developed in response to the reports of the Commissaries who undertook the recent Visitation of the Diocese of Chichester.

Diocesan Synod Motion: Environmental Issues

38. The Synod will have the opportunity to debate a Diocesan Synod Motion from Southwark Diocese on Environmental Issues. This DSM notes the review of ethical investment policy which has been carried out by the Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) and calls upon the national investing bodies to be aware of environmental concerns when making investment choices. The DSM calls for the establishment of a General Synod Working Group on the Environment to look into this further.

Private Member's Motions

39. The Private Members' Motion from Mrs Alison Ruoff (London) on the Girl Guides' Promise has attracted 131 signatures since it was put down at the November 2013 group of sessions. The PMM regrets the recent changes made to the Girl Guides' Promise under which the words '**to be true to myself and develop my beliefs**' will replace '**to love my God**'.
40. This will be followed by a debate on a Private Member's Motion on Canon B 8 to be moved by the Revd Christopher Hobbs. This Canon concerns the vesture of ordained and authorized ministers during the time of divine service. Paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the Canon impose certain requirements as regards the vesture of ordained and authorised ministers. The PMM calls for legislation to amend the Canon so that the wearing of the forms of vesture concerned becomes optional rather than being mandatory.

The Pilling Report: Presentation and Next Steps

41. The Report of the House of Bishops' Working Group on Human Sexuality ('the Pilling Report') was published on 28 November. The process for considering its findings and recommendations was considered by the House of Bishops at its December meeting and is due to be discussed at a meeting of the College of Bishops at the end of January. Sir Joseph Pilling will give the Synod a presentation on the report from his group and there will be an opportunity for questions. The exchanges will also provide the opportunity for clarifying the process in the light of the discussions at the House and the College of Bishops.
42. After the presentation there will be a brief Question and Answer session.

Farewell

There will be an opportunity for the Synod to say farewell to the Bishop of Wakefield.

III: Other Work of the Business Committee

New Ways of Doing Synod

43. Following the presentation by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Business Committee on 23rd September, the Business Committee is continuing with its work on 'New Ways of Doing Synod'. This work includes the following:
 - Work on empowering Chairs and Synod members to help ensure more respectful exchange of views and greater genuine interaction on difficult issues in Synod debates.
 - Moves to make Synod proceedings more accessible and relevant to people in the dioceses and to those watching on the web-stream. This includes taking steps to improving the visual appearance of Synod in order to provide a clear message on the Church's mission and role in the modern world.

- Enabling good stewardship of the Church's resources by ensuring that Synod sessions use the time allocated in the most effective way possible.
 - Greater embedding of prayer, worship and teaching in the Synod agenda.
44. Some of this work can be rolled-out by producing clearer guidance or different arrangements for planning groups of sessions. Other elements will require additional funding or changes to Standing Orders. The Business Committee is continuing its dialogue with the Presidents and others to seek their views on the best way to move forward.
45. The Committee welcomes comments and suggestions from members about the way in which the Synod works and these should be sent to the Clerk at:
jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org

Deaf Anglicans Together

46. Deaf Anglicans Together (DAT) have raised several practical issues relating to the working of General Synod and these are being addressed. The DAT reps would welcome feedback about the experience of having Deaf reps on General Synod. There are opportunities to engage with the DAT reps informally during break times since they are usually to be found, along with the Synod Interpreters, in the coffee areas at lunch time and at various other times. Please take the opportunity to speak with them.

Contingency Business

47. The Business Committee has scheduled Contingency Business in the form of a Diocesan Synod Motion from the Guildford Diocesan Synod which notes the 800th Anniversary on 15th June 2014 of the sealing of the Magna Carta at Runnymede.

Forecast of Future Business

48. The forecast of future business annexed to this report provides a forward look to the groups of sessions in 2014 and beyond. 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

Sue Booyes
Chair

January 2014

Membership of the Business Committee

Chair

The Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford)

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)

The Revd Charles Razzall (Chester)

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Wakefield)

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 Jacqui Philips)
and the Assistant Secretary is Dr Emma Arbuthnot

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 2014 and 2015. Timings are therefore approximate and not a guarantee that they will be dealt with at the Synod session indicated.

One or more reports are usually taken at each group of sessions.

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).

Legislative business

July 2014

- [?Women in the Episcopate legislation – (depending on timing and outcome of Article 8 reference to dioceses)]
- Amending Canon No. 32 and Amending Resolutions relating to GS elections etc – Revision Stage
- Measure and Amending Canon in relation to the Chichester Visitation recommendations – First Consideration
- Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (Amendment) Measure – Revision Stage
- Church of England (Ecclesiastical Property) Measure – Revision Stage
- Church of England (Pensions) (Amendment) Measure – Revision and Final Drafting/Final Approval
- ? Amending Canon to give effect to the Southwell and Nottingham DSM – First Consideration
- Payments to the Churches Conservation Trust Order
- Usual fees orders

Liturgical business

- Additional Texts for Holy Baptism – First Consideration

Reports

- Debate on *the Common Good (Mission and Public Affairs Council)*
To include follow-up debates on the Economy and Welfare Reform
- Chaplaincy – report on research (Mission and Public Affairs Council)
- Re-imagining Ministry (Ministry Division)
- Anglican-Methodist Covenant: Report from the Joint Implementation Commission
- Mission in Rural Multi-Parish benefices (Mission and Public Affairs Council)
- The Armed Forces Covenant and Community Covenants: debate sponsored by the Mission and Public Affairs Council in consultation with Chaplains General to the Armed Forces and the Royal British Legion
- Churches' Mutual Credit Union (CMCU): presentation

- Follow-up to CMEAC report *Unfinished Business: A pastoral and missional approach for the next debate* (GS 1844) (Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns)

Other Business

- Revised Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy (proposed Take Note debate)