

# **The July 2014 Group of Sessions of the General Synod**

## **Report by the Business Committee**

### **Introduction**

1. This report outlines the complex agenda for this group of sessions. It includes the differing scenarios for the Sunday afternoon in the event that the Convocations and the House of Laity claim an Article 7 reference under the Constitution of the General Synod on the Women in the Episcopate legislation. On Saturday afternoon Synod members will welcome the Reverend Jim Wallis to give a keynote address which will be closely linked to subsequent group work and a debate on the subject of the Common Good strand of the Quinquennial Goals.
2. The current membership of the Business Committee is listed on page 12.
3. This report falls into three parts:
  - Part I introduces the Agenda for this group of sessions (**GS 1948**) and highlights distinctive features.
  - Part II comments on individual items of business where necessary.
  - Part III reports on the recent work of the Business Committee.

### **I: The July 2014 Group of Sessions**

4. The Synod will meet at the University of York from 3 pm on Friday 11 July until 1 pm on Tuesday 15 July. (On Friday 11 July the Convocations will meet at 1.15 pm).
5. The following Anglican and ecumenical guests will be present as observers on this occasion:
  - The Rt Revd Kevin Pearson, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, Scottish Episcopal Church
  - Dr Irmgard Schwaetzer, Präses of the EKD Synod, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
6. Dr Irmgard Schwaetzer will deliver a brief greeting to the Synod on behalf of the ecumenical guests on Friday afternoon.

### **Shape of the Agenda**

7. The Agenda for this group of sessions has been shaped around the final stages of the legislative process for the legislation on Women in the Episcopate, with the Final approval debate scheduled for Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July. A summary of the process is to be found on page 3.

8. In addition to the Women in the Episcopate legislation, the Agenda also contains a significant amount of legislative business which needs to be completed before the end of the current Quinquennium. This includes the First Consideration of a Measure and Amending Canon giving effect to the package of proposals in relation to safeguarding and clergy discipline approved by the Synod in February. The debate on the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution which was adjourned at the February Group of Sessions will be resumed.
9. The Business Committee is keen to encourage group work as part of the way that Synod members work together in order to build relationships, encourage communications and provide opportunities for prayer, teaching and Bible study together. In this Group of Sessions the Business Committee has scheduled a sequence of activities, involving group work, on the theme of the Common Good to enable discussion on one of the Quinquennial Goals.
10. The Reverend Jim Wallis, author of 'On God's Side' will address Synod on the topic of 'The (Un)Common Good' at the personal invitation of the Archbishop of York. Synod Members will be able to discuss their thoughts on his speech in small groups. The final stage of this sequence will be a presentation by the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council on the same theme followed by a debate.

### **Legislative Business**

11. The legislative business for this group of sessions (set out in Special Agenda I) is unusually substantial and varied. With the exception of that relating to Safeguarding and Women in the Episcopate (as to which see paragraphs 16 to 22) it will be taken on Saturday and Tuesday mornings.
12. Several pieces of draft legislation return to the Synod for revision following the completion of their Revision Committee Stages. They are Amending Canon No 32 and the other instruments making changes to synodical elections and related matters, the draft Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (Amendment) Measure and the draft Church of England (Ecclesiastical Property) Measure.
13. The Revision Stage for the Church of England (Pensions) (Amendment) Measure will be taken (as agreed in February) in Full Synod without a prior Revision Committee Stage. Assuming a satisfactory outcome to the Revision Stage, the Synod will also be asked to give the draft Measure Final Approval at this group of sessions.
14. Several new pieces of primary legislation are being introduced for First Consideration: the draft Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure and Amending Canon No 34 will give effect to the proposals in relation to safeguarding and clergy discipline, arising out of the recommendations of the Chichester Commissaries, which the Synod approved in February; and Amending Canon 35 arises from the Southwell and Nottingham DSM passed by the Synod in November 2012 relating to the administration of the Holy Communion by baptised children.
15. As regards secondary legislation, the Synod will be invited to approve the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution, the debate on which was adjourned at the February group of sessions following the passing of a number of amendments to the

Resolution. It will also be asked to approve the Payments to the Churches Conservation Trust Order 2014 (which will prescribe the Church Commissioners' funding for the Trust in 2015-18), the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations and the Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order.

### **Women in the Episcopate Legislation**

16. The Women in the Episcopate legislative process will be taken in several tranches throughout the Group of Sessions. On Friday afternoon there will be a 'take note' debate on the report by the Business Committee on the Article 8 reference to the dioceses.
17. If the Synod approves the 'take note' motion, then the Final Drafting Stage will be taken immediately afterwards on Friday afternoon on the basis of a report from the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee's report, which identifies its proposed amendments, will be the subject of a 'take note' debate.
18. If the 'take note' motion on the Steering Committee's report is carried at the Final Drafting Stage, then the draft Measure and Amending Canon will stand referred to the House of Bishops under Article 7 of the Synod's constitution, together with the draft Act of Synod (which stood referred to the House following its Preliminary Consideration by the Synod in February). It is intended that the House should meet to deal with the reference at a special meeting on the morning of Saturday 12 July. If the House of Bishops approves the draft Measure and Amending Canon and draft Act of Synod, they can return to the Synod for Final Approval Stage.
19. Prior to the Final Approval stage, the Convocations and the House of Laity may claim a reference under Article 7 of the Synod's Constitution. Therefore the Business Committee has made provision on Sunday 13 July from 2.30 until 3.50 pm for the Convocations and the House of Laity debate the draft legislation if they have claimed a reference. Alternative Business is provided in the event that no Article 7 Reference is claimed.
20. In order to allow for these possible stages of the legislative process, the Business Committee has scheduled the Final Approval Stage for the morning of Monday 14 July. As this is Article 7 and Article 8 business, the Chair for the debate will be one of the Presidents. He is required to declare on behalf of the Presidents, the Prolocutors and the Chair and Vice Chair of the House of Laity that the requirements of Articles 7 and 8 of the Constitution have been complied with.
21. Following the declaration by one of the Presidents, the Synod will proceed to the Final Approval Stage, which involves a separate motion for each item of business. A two-thirds majority in each House of the Synod is required for the Final Approval of the draft Measure. The Final Approval of the draft Amending Canon and the draft Act of Synod require no special majority but in practice the motions for their Final Approval would not be moved if the Measure itself had not been approved with the requisite majority.
22. If the Synod gives Final Approval for the draft Amending Canon, the Synod will also be asked to approve a petition for Her Majesty's Royal Assent and Licence to promulge and execute the Amending Canon and formally affirm and proclaim the Act of Synod

(though it will not come into force until, following the receipt of the Royal Assent and Licence, the Canon is promulgated). Only a simple majority is required for its approval.

### **Diocesan Synod Motions**

23. The Southwark Diocesan Synod Motion on rescinding the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 remains “parked” whilst the Synod considers the legislation on Women in the Episcopate. Similarly those relating to the Anglican Communion Covenant are “parked” whilst the Archbishop of Canterbury completes his tour of the Anglican Communion in 2014 and 2015.
24. At the request of the new Diocese of Leeds, and with the agreement of its movers, the DSM from the Wakefield Diocesan Synod has been deferred whilst the new Diocese consolidates its infrastructure.
25. The Diocesan Synod Motion from Guildford Diocese on the Magna Carta, which is time critical given the forthcoming anniversary, is scheduled for the afternoon of Monday 14 July. The Bradford Diocesan Synod Motion on the Spare Room Subsidy has been scheduled as Contingency Business.

### **Private Member’s Motions**

26. The Private Member’s Motion from the Reverend Christopher Hobbs on Canon B 8 is scheduled for the evening of Saturday 12 July.
27. The Business Committee has decided that it would be counter to the aspirations expressed by the House of Bishops for good disagreement through shared conversations to schedule the Private Members’ Motions on ‘The Public Doctrine of Christian Marriage’ and ‘The Registration of Civil Partnerships’ at this Group of Sessions. The Business Committee are concerned that bringing these motions to the floor of Synod at this stage of the process would be premature, but they will keep the question of tabling the PMMs for consideration at a future meeting.

### **Order of Business**

28. 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.

### **Contingency Business**

29. A Diocesan Synod motion, originating in the Diocese of Bradford prior to the creation of the Diocese of Leeds, has been scheduled as Contingency Business. It reflects concern at the impact of the “Spare Room Subsidy”, also known as the “Bedroom Tax” and thus considers a specific aspect of welfare reform which was debated in more general terms at the July 2013 group of sessions.

## II: Individual Items of Business

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

### Friday 11 July

#### Approval of Appointments

31. The Synod will be invited to approve the appointment to the Archbishops' Council of Mrs Mary Chapman, Mr Philip Fletcher and the Revd Dr Rosalyn Murphy for further terms. The Synod will also be invited to approve the appointment of a new member of the Council (the details of this appointment will be included in a notice or order paper).

#### Questions

32. On this occasion the Business Committee has allocated an hour and a half to Question Time.
33. Any member wishing to ask a question of any of the bodies or persons specified in SO 105 must deliver notice of it to the Clerk to the Synod **by 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday 1 July**. Questions sent by email should be addressed to [questions@churchofengland.org](mailto:questions@churchofengland.org)
34. Members are reminded that **all questions will be presumed to be for written answer** unless an oral answer is specifically requested.

### Saturday 12 July

#### Presidential Address by the Archbishop of York

35. The Archbishop of York will give a Presidential Address.

#### Presentation by Jim Wallis on 'The (Un)Common Good' and Group Work and Debate on the Common Good (GS 1956)

36. The Business Committee has scheduled a themed series of business on the Common Good. This will be opened by a keynote speech from an external speaker, the Revd Jim Wallis of the well-known Sojourners movement in the USA and author of many books including "On God's Side", speaking on 'The (Un)Common Good'. Following the input from Jim Wallis, Synod will be invited to work in groups to reflect on his presentation and to draw connections with activities in the Church of England which support the common good in our parishes, deaneries and dioceses, as well as nationally. This process will draw on Synod members' own experience and will be facilitated by a small team from Mission and Public Affairs.
37. The Business Committee has allowed approximately 20 minutes between the end of Mr Wallis's presentation and the start of the Group Work. Synod members are asked to move promptly to their rooms so that they are ready in time for the beginning of the group work. At the end of the group work, 20 minutes has been allocated for the return

to the Chamber for the start of the debate at 5.05 pm. Again, Synod members are encouraged to be in their places promptly for the start of the debate.

38. The group work will enable Synod members to prepare for the subsequent debate on a motion from the Mission and Public Affairs Council on the same theme. This will take place on the evening of Saturday 14 July.

### **Private Member's Motion on Canon B 8 (GS 1944A and GS 1944B)**

39. The debate on this PMM was previously scheduled for the February Group of Sessions but could not be taken due to time constraints. The Business Committee have therefore scheduled it at this Group of Sessions. Canon B 8 imposes certain requirements as regards the vesture of ordained and authorised ministers during the time of divine service. 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.

## **Sunday 13 July**

### **Liturgical Business – Addition texts for Holy Baptism (GS 1958)**

40. In February 2011 a Synod resolution requested the House of Bishops to ask the Liturgical Commission to prepare material to supplement the Common Worship Initiation provision, including additional forms of the Decision, the Prayer over the Water and the Commission, expressed in accessible language.
41. In response to this request, the Commission made its first proposals to the House in May 2013. Following revision, the texts were issued for experimental use under Canon B 5A. The texts were sent out to a wide cross-section of 510 parishes nominated by diocesan bishops for a trial period lasting until 20 April 2014 (Easter Day).
42. Subsequently, the Commission met to review the responses and prepared revised texts for further consideration by the House of Bishops in May 2014. These texts have been further refined in light of comments made at that meeting and are now being introduced for First Consideration.

### **Churches' Mutual Credit Union (CMCU) – Presentation by the Chair and CEO Designate of the CMCU followed by Question and Answer Session**

43. This will take the form of a presentation under S0 97 by the Revd Canon Antony MacRow Wood and Hilary Sams, the President and CEO Designate respectively of the Churches' Mutual Credit Union ('CMCU'). Their presentation will outline the plans for the launch of this new credit union for clergy. Those eligible to join will be the clergy, trustees and staff of the Anglican churches and charities in Britain and the ministers, trustees and staff of the Church of Scotland and the Methodist church. The aim of the CMCU is to provide a mutual ethical vehicle for tax efficient savings and affordable loans for clergy and staff of churches charities. It will also help to support and strengthen the credit union movement and contribute to the rebuilding of the mutual sector as a viable, ethical alternative to mainstream banking for people irrespective of their financial status.

## **The Archbishops' Council's Budget and Proposals for Apportionment for 2015 (GS 1959)**

44. The Synod will be invited to approve the Archbishops' Council's expenditure budget for 2015 and the Council's proposals for apportionment amongst the dioceses, and the usual pooling adjustment in respect of additional maintenance grants to ordinands. Proposed expenditure in 2015 is £30.7 million, £1.0 million (3.4% above the 2014 budget level). The overall apportionment increase has been limited to 1.3%.
45. The apportionment for the largest Vote – Training for Ministry (Vote 1) – is recommended to increase by 1.0%, whilst the apportionment for the next largest Vote – National Church Responsibilities (Vote 2) – has been maintained at the 2014 level. Increases for the remaining three Votes are: Grants (Vote 3) 2.3%; Mission Agencies' pension contributions (Vote 4) 4.5%; and Clergy Retirement Housing (Vote 5) 5.0%.

## **Church Commissioners' Annual Report**

46. The First Church Estates Commissioner will make his customary presentation under SO 97. This will be followed by a Question and Answer session.

**Monday 14 July**

## **The Armed Forces Covenant and Community Covenants (GS 1960)**

47. The principle of the Armed Forces Covenant is that those of us who rely on the risks and sacrifices of our armed forces ought to ensure that service personnel, veterans and their families are properly supported in the community. With an increasing trend away from permanent bases to forces living in the community and with a new generation of veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, the pastoral care of members of the Armed Forces Community is an issue for everyone and calls for a conscious response from the church at parish level.
48. The Armed Forces Covenant, detailed in GS 1960, is an initiative in which many community bodies, including local authorities, churches and others, are invited to join. The principle of signing up to the covenant has been discussed and agreed by the MPA Council and the Archbishops' Council and is now brought to Synod for debate.
49. The new Bishop to the Armed Forces, the Rt Revd Nigel Stock, will open the debate with a short presentation.

## **Guildford Diocesan Synod Motion: Magna Carta (GS 1945A and GS 1945B)**

50. The Synod will have the opportunity to debate the Guildford Diocesan Synod Motion on Magna Carta, which was scheduled as Contingency Business at the February group of sessions but not debated. The 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta at Runnymede will be celebrated nationally on 15 June 2015.
51. Magna Carta is important historically and symbolically because it declared for the first time that all individuals, including the king, were subject to the law and should have access to justice. The charter is often credited with sowing the seeds of parliamentary

democracy in England by making provision for a committee of barons, elected from amongst them, that could overrule the king if necessary.

52. The motion urges the Church of England to affirm the part played by the Church in formulating and implementing the charter in 1215 and the Church of England's on-going role in transforming communities through its activities and concern for social justice. The motion also encourages dioceses, deaneries and parishes to participate in the Magna Carta celebrations on 15 June 2015, through the organising and participating in street parties, fairs and the ringing of church bells.

## **Tuesday 15 July**

### **Presentation on the CHARM Rental Scheme for Retired Clergy**

53. The Chair of the Pensions Board, Dr Jonathan Spencer, and the Chair of the Pensions Board's Housing Committee, Mr Alan Fletcher, will give a presentation under Standing Order 97 on the recent review of the CHARM rental scheme for housing retired clergy.
54. Following a public consultation on the future of the scheme, the presentation will explain how the Pensions Board has taken into account the responses to the consultation, and give an overview of how the scheme will be changed to make it sustainable and affordable for future generations.
55. The presentation will be followed by a Question and Answer session with Synod members.

### **Farewells**

56. There will be farewells to the **Bishop of Oxford and the Bishop of Burnley** who will be attending the Synod for the last time.

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

57. The Business Committee has met twice since the February 2014 group of sessions – in March and May. At its extended residential meeting in March, the Committee held a detailed series of discussions on how to progress its work on 'new ways of doing Synod'. This work is taking place with the encouragement of the Presidents, and also picks up some of the comments on Synodical process and workings made at recent Synod debates on the London Diocesan Synod Motion on the workings of the General Synod and the Synod's debate on the report of the Elections Review Group.
58. Following these discussions, the Business Committee is looking at how Synod works together using four broad themes:
  - Integrating worship and prayer in the life of the Synod
  - Working together for the common good
  - A missional Synod communicating with the wider Church and the world
  - Supporting the Synod's leadership and governance status as a legislature of the Established Church and its duty to perform this role for the good of the nation and the wider Anglican Communion.



59. Some of the initiatives emerging from these themes can be established by the time of the dissolution of the current Synod in July 2015, others can be further developed in time for the new Quinquennium, and others can be rolled out during the next Quinquennial term.
60. The Chair of the Business Committee has produced a more detailed paper on ‘Changing the Culture of General Synod’ which is included as Annex 2 to this report. The Committee welcomes comments and suggestions from members on this paper. These should be sent to the Chair of the Business Committee via the Clerk to the Synod at [jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org](mailto:jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org) Synod members are also encouraged to attend the Business Committee’s Fringe meeting at 6.30 pm on Saturday 12 July to meet the Chair of the Committee and other Committee members who will be seeking an open discussion on how to take this work forward.

## **Worship**

61. An additional room, located in Derwent College, has been set aside for worship for the July 2014 group of sessions. This room will be used for Holy Communion each morning during General Synod and a new service of Night Prayer will also take place there each evening. The room will also be used as the base for the Continuous Praying Presence throughout this group of sessions. General Synod members are encouraged to drop in and participate in the Continuous Praying Presence.

## **Voting at General Synod**

62. Members are reminded that when a vote by show of hands is taken account is only taken of the votes of members seated in the Chamber. For this reason, whilst the technology allows an electronic vote to be registered from the Gallery, the Business Committee strongly requests all members wishing to vote, by whatever means, to do so from the Chamber rather than the Gallery.

## **Fringe meetings and displays**

63. A page has been created on the Church of England website, setting out the categories and procedures for applying for fringe meetings and displays: <http://churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/fringe-meetings-and-displays-at-general-synod.aspx> The page also provides an enquiry form for organisations to register their interest.

## **Synod circulations**

64. On 14 May the Chair of the Business Committee wrote to all Synod members inviting them to notify the Clerk by 30 May if they wished to receive papers electronically if they so wish. Papers relating to diocesan reorganisation schemes and publications which cannot for copyright reasons be supplied in a form suitable for electronic readers will continue to be sent in hard copy. Members who chose not to take advantage of this will **continue to receive** hard copies of all papers or **revert back to receiving** hard copies if they had previously opted for electronic copies of papers.

## **Register of Synod members**

65. The list of Synod members by House and by Diocese with contact details is available on the Church of England website: <http://churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/about-general-synod/list-of-membs.aspx>

## **Communications of General Synod Proceedings**

66. As is now customary, Synod proceedings will be webcast. There will also be an audio feed of Synod proceedings. Members may also choose to follow the General Synod Twitter feed at #generalsynod. At the end of each day there will be a daily interview on the Church of England website on 'Today at General Synod' which will feature an interview with some of the Synod members who are opening debates that day.
67. The Committee has reviewed the current policy with regard to the use of electronic equipment in the Public Gallery during Synod meetings in Church House, Westminster. It has taken the view that the ban has become unsustainable and has decided to lift it. After discussion with the University of York, the ban on the use of electronic equipment in the Public Gallery in the Central Hall has also been lifted.
68. The introduction at recent Groups of Sessions of screens broadcasting the images of speakers from the floor of Synod, the platform party and the Chamber has been very well received by Synod members as a means of following proceedings better. Given this feedback, the Business Committee has decided to continue with the screens at the York Group of Sessions.
69. As part of our ongoing conversations about 'Changing the Culture of Synod' and following extensive discussions about the look of the platform at York Business Committee has commissioned a new backdrop for the York group of sessions to give a fresh and forward-looking style in keeping with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## **Forecast of Future Business**

70. The forecast of future business annexed to this report provides a forward look to the November 2014 and February and July 2015 groups of sessions. This should not be read as more than a broad indication of the business expected to come to the Synod in the future. The main business of a November Synod would be to make the Canon allowing the consecration of Women to the Episcopate, if Final Approval is given this July. If this final stage is not ready to be taken, the Presidents will probably choose not to schedule a group of sessions for November 2014. However, if it is, then the Synod will meet in November as currently scheduled. Synod members are therefore asked to retain the dates in their diaries for the time being.

On behalf of the Business Committee

The Revd Canon Sue Booy (Chair)

June 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*

#### *– Vice-Chair*

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)

The Revd Charles Razzall (Chester)

The Reverend Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds)

### *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

### November 2014 (if the Synod meets)

- ? Enactment of Amending Canon No 33 (relating to Women in the Episcopate)
- Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (Amendment) Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- C of E (Ecclesiastical Property) Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- C of E (Naming of Dioceses) Measure – Revision Stage
- Amending Canon No 35 (relating to Canon B 12) – Revision Stage and Final Drafting / Final Approval
- ? ‘Take note’ debate on *the Professional Guidelines for the Clergy*
- Possible report on Chaplaincy (Ministry Council)
- Debate and possible group work on Lay Ministry and Lay Discipleship
- Anglican-Methodist Covenant: Report from the Joint Implementation Commission

### February 2015 (if the Synod has met in November 2014, otherwise the business for November 2014 would be taken in February 2015).

- Enactment of Amending Canon No 32 relating to GS elections etc
- C of E (Naming of Dioceses) Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure and Amending Canon No 34 – Revision Stage
- Wakefield Diocesan Synod Motion
- ? Possible FAOC report on Senior Church Leadership

### July 2015

- Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure and Amending Canon No 34 – Final Drafting / Final Approval
- ? Enactment of Amending Canon No 35
- ? Amending Regulations under Canon B 12 as amended by Amending Canon No 35
- Usual fees orders relating to legal fees (deemed)
- ? Possible report on Chaplaincy by the Mission and Public Affairs Council
- ? Possible report on Rural Multi-Parish Mission by the Mission and Public Affairs Council
- ? Debate on the Resourcing Ministerial Education review from the Ministry Council

## **November 2015**

- ? Enactment of Amending Canon No 34
- ? Possible follow-up report to the Mission and Public Affairs report on ‘Turning Up the Volume’

*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).*

June 2014



## **CHANGING THE CULTURE OF GENERAL SYNOD: PROPOSALS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

### **Summary**

This discussion paper from the Chair of the Business Committee presents a brief summary of the outcomes and ideas from the work and conversations on new ways of doing Synod undertaken by the Business Committee with the encouragement of the Presidents. It also picks up on some of the ideas and suggestions made by Synod members in recent debates such as the debate on the London Diocesan Synod Motion on ‘The Workings of the General Synod’ in November 2013 as well as separate conversations with Synod members, most recently at the Business Committee’s residential meeting in March 2014.<sup>1</sup>

The aim of the paper is to show, under four broad headings, how the Committee is seeking to change the way we work together. Suggestions arising from our meetings and conversations are grouped under these headings with a broad sense of the time frame in which they might be considered and introduced. Some initiatives outlined here (for example the continuous praying presence in Synod) are well under way whilst others are ideas requiring significant further consideration.

The purpose of the Paper is to stimulate discussion with members of Synod in the margins at York and particularly at our Fringe Reception on Saturday evening.

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### **Introduction**

1. Following the discussions at its residential meeting in March 2014 and other discussions held over the previous year, the Business Committee has identified four main areas of work to help move forward the work on new ways of doing Synod and help change the culture of General Synod. These are as follows:
  - Integrating worship and prayer in the life of the synod (Acts 2.42)
  - Working together for good (Romans 8.28)
  - Communicating well with the church and the world (Ephesians 4.25-29)
  - Taking seriously Synod’s role in leadership and governance
2. All these will involve a wide range of Synod members and others to implement, but key partners for each area of work can be identified amongst the staff at Lambeth, Bishopsthorpe and Church House:
  - The Chaplain to Synod, the Chaplains to the Presidents and the chaplaincy team invited to assist during groups of sessions
  - The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Director of Reconciliation and the Mission and Public Affairs Committee
  - The Church of England Communications team

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<sup>1</sup> A list of the meetings and consultations may be found at Annex 3.

- The Clerk to the Synod, Chief Legal Adviser and their teams
3. Over the past nine months we have identified a number of aspirations under each heading. In order to help focus our work the Business Committee has placed desirable timescales for each one. These are as follows:

Short term (S)            Plan is to have established this by the end of the July 2015 Synod

Medium Term (M)        Plan is to initiate at the beginning of the new Quinquennium

Long Term (L)            Plan that this is something for this Business Committee to seek views about and pass on to the next Business Committee for continued or further work in the next Quinquennium.

### **Integrating Prayer and Worship into the life of General Synod**

4. The Business Committee's thinking on this topic may be summarised as follows:
- Establish the Continuing Praying Presence in as public a manner as possible including in the gallery at York (S)
  - Continue the practice of sending e-prayer cards based on Synod business (S)
    - Well received in November and February we regard this as established and continuing
  - Extend prayer for Synod to key Churches and Cathedrals across the Church of England in a public and well communicated way (S)
    - Will happen in York Minster in July and in a limited number of other Cathedrals willing to participate.
  - Introduce worship into the Synod agenda according to the subject and at the time of a debate. (S/M)
    - Established in February 2014 following the debate on Gender-based violence
    - BC to work with Chaplain and seek further opportunities for this work
  - Begin each afternoon session of Synod with a Collect style prayer – based on the agenda (S)
    - Aim to have attempted this on at least some afternoon / evening in July 2014
  - Provide resources for 'impromptu / spontaneous' worship in response to the way Synod 'moves' and resource Chairs for appropriate response (M / further discussion)
  - Given the increased work this involves for the Synod Chaplain, review with him and the key partners the expectations of the role, appropriate level of 'staffing' and offer clarity of role description. (S)
    - Chaplain recruited volunteer help with the continuous praying presence initiative February and July 2014.
  - Establish an effective means of communication between the Chaplain, the Presidents/their staff and the Business Committee)
    - The establishment of a small informal group is being explored (S).



## **Working together for Good**

5. The Business Committee's thinking on this topic may be summarised as follows:
  - To grow the skills of Synod and its members in working together to lead the church by vision and example not only seeking agreement but learning to disagree well
  - To continue to learn to work in small groups to share experience of mission and theology. (ongoing / M)
    - Group work on Common Good in July 2014
  - To explore ways of integrating theological teaching and learning within Synod to enable sound debate and mutual understanding (S / ongoing)
    - Jim Wallis in July 2014
  - To seek the support of the House of Bishops to participate where possible in group work (S)
  - To seek opportunities to set aside regular time for small group prayer, worship and Bible study as a beginning to the Synod day (M/L)

## **Communicating well with the Church and the World**

6. The Business Committee's thinking on this topic may be summarised as follows:
  - To ensure that the Church and its Synod demonstrates its commitment to mission and to communicating well with grass roots members and the world outside.
  - To focus communication about Synod business in the context of God's mission in the world (S /ongoing)
  - To work with the Communications department in the use of media and new technology to promote effective mission by providing good quality and well reported information about Synod's decisions. This includes:
    - Engaging fully with new media and encouraging Synod members to be proactive in their use of it. (S/ongoing)
    - Continued use of 'Twitter' (S/ongoing)
    - Encouraging Synod members to be proactive in blogging for their dioceses and parishes. (S/M)
    - Web streaming debates – sound and vision – improving quality (ongoing – web stream improvements made since Feb 2014)
  - Ensure that the Synod communicates a sense of being thoughtful, modern and well – organised.
    - Upgrade the backdrop and seating arrangements at York (July 2014)
    - Review / tidy platform seating arrangements at Westminster (November 2014)
    - Keep these arrangements under review (S/M)
    - Encourage the circulation / promotion of In Review and In Focus to a wide audience especially within the Dioceses. (S/ongoing)
  - Find ways of having informed and topical debates at Synod

- Continue with Question time and encourage questions on topical issues for example by allowing additional supplementary questions (S)
- Explore the concept of pre-arranged same day / next day business slots (M)
- Make full use of Standing Orders to invite speakers from outside Synod to bring their expertise to inform debates (S)
- Encourage a culture of spontaneity
  - Ensuring practical training to build confidence for new Chairs and the staff assisting them, and enabling on-going development and training for Chairs and staff assisting them (S)

## **Supporting the Synod's status as the legislature of the Established Church and its role in leadership and Governance**

7. The Business Committee's thinking on this topic may be summarised as follows:

- Review the pattern and frequency of meetings
  - Give consideration to meeting less often and with less impact on the working week – consideration (S/M)
  - In the light of this formulate proposal for an alternative pattern of meetings (L)
- Investigate the possibility of making greater use of deeming procedures (M)
- Encourage a more proactive role for the chair of a Steering Committee
  - Review appropriate standing orders, offer training, develop a group of members who might do this similar to the Panel of Chairs? (L)
- Seek 'light touch' joined up working by encouraging opportunity for the Business Committee, Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops' Standing Committee to meet annually to scope main objectives for forthcoming year on a rolling basis (M)
- Seek ways of working with Chairs of Diocesan Houses of Clergy and Laity and Diocesan Secretaries to ensure better understanding between Dioceses and General Synod particularly in regard to forthcoming legislation.

## **Conclusions - Taking this Forward**

8. Most of the short and many of the medium term aspirations outlined in this paper fall within the general powers of the Business Committee in Standing Order 115. Following consultation with the Presidents the Business Committee proposes to take this agenda forward by working with them and the Panel of Chairs, continuing a process of reporting to Synod through the BC report, through consultations with groups such as those listed in Annex 3 and by working with the key staff partners identified at the beginning of this paper.
9. The Fringe Reception at York will be a good place to engage with members of Synod whom we hope will encourage this process begun by the Presidents and the Diocesan Synod Motion brought by the Diocese of London in 2013.

10. Further comments and suggestions may be sent to the Business Committee via the Clerk to the Synod at [jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org](mailto:jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org)

Church House  
Westminster SW1P 3AZ  
June 2014

On behalf of the Business Committee  
The Reverend Canon Sue Booy (Oxford)  
Chair

**List of Discussions Held on New Ways of Doing Synod**

Presentation by the Archbishop of Archbishop of Canterbury at the September 2013 Business Committee – BC(13)12

Discussion with members of the Business Committee and current and former members of the Panel of Chairs

Discussion with the Prolocutors of the Convocations and the Chair and Vice Chair of the House of Laity

Discussion with members of the Business Committee and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Director for Reconciliation

Discussion with the Synod Chaplain

Discussions with members of the General Synod

Discussions held with Synod members and the Presidents' representatives at the Business Committee Residential meeting in March 2014.