

GENERAL SYNOD**The Appointment of Synod Senior Staff:
Proposed Changes to the Synod's Standing Orders**

1. In the section dealing with "Officers and Staff" (SOs 123, 123A and 124) the Standing Orders of the Synod specify the responsibilities of three people – the Secretary General, the Clerk to the Synod and the Registrar. In the case of the Secretary General and the Clerk to the Synod the power to appoint rests with the Archbishops' Council and the Business Committee respectively, subject to confirmation by resolution of the Synod (see SOs 123(a) and 123A(a) respectively).
2. When Dr Jacqui Philips's appointment as Clerk to the Synod was put before it for confirmation in July 2013 a member of the Synod rose and said: "*We trust the skills of those who make these appointments. We are delighted to read about the background of the person appointed. However I suspect that I am not alone in Synod in being very willing to give up this rather strange approval process – to the relief, I am sure, of any future appointees.*"
3. The Archbishops' Council has now reviewed Standing Orders 123 and 123A and agrees that the present arrangements are unsatisfactory. The Business Committee and Standing Orders Committee also share this view.
4. The main practical difficulty with the present arrangement arises from the fact that in many years there are only two groups of sessions, in February and July. Depending on when an appointment process has to take place, there could, therefore, be a delay of several months between the completion of the process – which always now involves advertisement and competition – and Synodical confirmation.
5. In addition, it is now not uncommon for organisations to require senior staff to give six months' notice. An appointed candidate who had an open ended contract in another organisation might well be unwilling to give notice until their appointment to the Church of England role had been confirmed. This means that even where an outgoing Synodical officer had been able to give ample notice there could be a gap of some months between their departure and the arrival of a successor.
6. The Archbishops' Council has considered possible solutions in discussion with the Business Committee and the Standing Orders Committee. One option would have been to remove the need for Synodical confirmation altogether since it could be argued that the safeguards needed for certain member level appointments – for example as Chair of the Appointments Committee or as a member of the Archbishops' Council – were not required in relation to those who, following open competition, are given employment contracts by one of the National Church Institutions (the majority of whose members are elected by the Synod)
7. Nevertheless, the Archbishops' Council believes that the Synod would wish to retain some role in the process given the responsibilities that these officers have to the Synod. It explored whether Synod members could be invited to give their consent electronically. Under its Constitution, however, the Synod only has power to take decisions by passing resolutions at a group of sessions. This is not, therefore, an option.
8. The solution proposed by the Council, therefore, with the agreement of the Business Committee, is to amend the two existing Standing Orders to provide that an appointment shall

be deemed to have been approved by the Synod, without the need for debate at the next group of sessions unless, within 14 days of its notification to members of Synod, at least 40 members have given notice that they do wish the Synod to debate it. In the latter case the appointment would be confirmed only upon the Synod passing a resolution to that effect.

9. The Standing Orders Committee has included proposed amendments to the Standing Orders to give effect to the Council's proposals in the First Notice Paper for the July group of sessions.

William Fittall
Secretary General

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