

## GENERAL SYNOD

## SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

A meeting of the House of Bishops was held at Bishopthorpe Palace on 19-20 May 2014. Those matters reported below were taken in Committee of the whole House, under SO 14.

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1. The House discussed the upcoming legislation with regard to **Women in the Episcopate**, to be debated by General Synod in July 2014. The House:
  - a. approved the *House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (GS Misc 1076)*.
  - b. amended its own **Standing Orders** with the effect that the Declaration cannot now be amended without a two-thirds majority in each House of Synod.
  - c. approved **Guidance (GS Misc 1077)** as promised in paragraph 22 of the Declaration.
  - d. discussed issues surrounding **consecration arrangements** and the absence in the College of a bishop who takes the conservative evangelical view on **headship (GS Misc 1079)**.
  - e. agreed that the Bishop of Leicester should discuss with political parties the possibility of Parliamentary legislation to accelerate the admission of women as Lords Spiritual.
2. The House received a report on other **likely upcoming business** at the July 2014 Group of Sessions.
3. The House made **declarations of incompatibility** under s.8 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 as amended in relation to the British National Party and the National Front. This is subject to approval by Synod (which shall be deemed unless 25 members request a debate). The effect of the declaration, once in force, is to make it a disciplinary offence for a member of the clergy to be a member of these organisations, to promote them, and to express or solicit support for them.
4. The House of Bishops discussed considered **draft additional baptismal texts in accessible language**. The House noted amendments which had been made to the texts in response to its consideration of them in December 2013, and following a trial period in 2014. The House agreed further minor amendments to the texts and agreed that they were sufficiently mature to be placed before the General Synod for First Consideration.
5. The House approved an **ecumenical liturgy for use in Local Ecumenical Partnerships** for potential use under Canon B44.

6. The House discussed a paper from the Council for Christian Unity on **the Joint Implementation on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant**, which made proposals in relation to closer relations with the Methodist Church. The House agreed that the report, which was due to be presented to the 2014 Methodist Conference, should be debated by General Synod at its next meeting after July .
7. The House considered **the shape of upcoming shared discussions in relation to human sexuality**. The House noted that the process would not be intended to work towards a particular end but to establish ‘good disagreement’ between parties with differing views. The House, approved a proposed shape and timescale for these discussions, and authorised the Standing Committee to consider and sign-off final materials and arrangements.
8. With inputs from parliamentarians and others, the House engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of **the place of the Church of England and its episcopate in public life**.

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