

GENERAL SYNOD

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

1. The Archbishops' Council presents this report on its activities since the July 2012 Group of Sessions in accordance with the requirements of the National Institutions Measure 1998.
2. The Council is chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury or, in his absence, the Archbishop of York and has met once since its last report was prepared – on 25 September at Lambeth Palace.

STRATEGY

Challenges for the new Quinquennium

3. Much of the Council's work in its divisions and focus at meetings is now on the themes identified for the new quinquennium: Going for Growth, the Common Good and Re-Imagining Ministry.
4. The Archbishops' Council is undertaking a review of the statistics it gathers and the uses to which parishes, dioceses and other users wish to put them. Parallel to that exercise, the Council established a small sub-committee to identify indicators of growth to support the mission of the Church and which might usefully be collected by the Council's Research and Statistics department. The sub-committee has recommended gathering figures for children's and youth participation outside Sunday services and on joiners and leavers and these are being collected for the first time this year. The Council is also considering the options for gathering data on commitment of churchgoers and the impact the Church is having on local communities and nationally.
5. GS Misc 995 identified releasing energy by simplifying the Church's internal structures and processes as a way of achieving numerical and spiritual growth. The Council welcomed a report from a small sub-committee proposing a number of ways in which this might be achieved. The proposals cover the Church Representation Rules, pastoral reorganisation and the development of the Parish Resources website to provide an online bank of resources for parishes. The Council will be considering proposals concerning the operation of the faculty system at its November meeting. The Council will bring to the Synod in due course those of its conclusions that will require Synodical endorsement.

Fresh expressions

6. The Council reviewed the development of the fresh expressions movement. It assessed what has been achieved with the £100k per year of funds from the Commissioners that it has distributed to Fresh Expressions. It also considered the future of national support for the movement after the end of the present phase of work in April 2014. It authorised further discussions with the Fresh Expressions trustees.

Spending plans for the period 2014-2016

7. A joint Task Group from the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners has begun work to consider how the funds made available to the Council by the Church Commissioners should be applied in the period 2014-2016 in order to help achieve the Council's objectives to support mission and growth in the local church.

Clergy pensions

8. The Council considered a report from the Archbishops' Pensions Task Group and asked for an update to be circulated to the Synod (see GS Misc 1035).

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

9. The Council received an update on the position around the dioceses in the light of the difficult economic context.

GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT

10. The Council discussed a number of current legislative and other public affairs issues of particular relevance to the Church.

GOVERNANCE

Archbishops' Council

11. The Council has now moved to a pattern of two 1-day and two 24-hour residential meetings annually, retaining an additional date for a fifth meeting on a contingency basis. The Council has also sponsored amendments to the National Institutions Measure in the draft Miscellaneous Provisions Measure to give it the power to conduct business by correspondence between meetings and to remove the requirement for one-third of the membership of the Appointments Committee to be appointed by and from the membership of the Archbishops' Council (the legislation is now in the revision stage).
12. At its meeting in September, the Council reviewed its own size and composition and decided to propose no changes given the range of the Council's work.

Church House
Westminster SW1P 3AZ

William Fittall
Secretary General

17 October 2012

**Published by the General Synod of the Church of England
and on sale at the Church House Bookshop**

31 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN

Copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2012

£1