

HOUSE OF BISHOPS

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

A meeting of the House of Bishops was held at Bishopthorpe Palace on 20-21 May 2013. Those matters reported at paragraphs 2-9 below were taken in Committee of the whole House, under SO 14.

Women in the Episcopate

1. The House considered a report from the Working Group on women in the episcopate and received an update on the group's progress. The House decided that the report should be published with a separate report from the Archbishops setting out the House's recommendations (the report has now been published as GS1886).

Safeguarding

2. The House received a report from the Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham regarding recent developments in this area, following the Chichester Visitation. The Archbishop's Commissaries for Chichester diocese, Chancellor Rupert Bursell QC and Bishop John Gladwin, were also present and spoke to the House about their experiences in conducting the Visitation.
3. The House acknowledged past failures in this area and re-stated its commitment to best practice. It noted that the needs of those who had suffered abuse should come first.
4. The House approved a number of actions proposed by the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, noted that the Archbishops' Council would, the following week, be considering in further detail proposals for legislative change and welcomed the proposal for a debate at the Synod in July.

Update on the Quinquennial Goals

5. The House considered a proposed progress report on the Quinquennial Goals of facilitating growth, contributing to the common good and re-imagining ministry. It made various suggestions for improving the report.
6. The House supported a proposed take-note debate on the subject at the July Group of Sessions. Subject to the views of the Council, an overview report along the lines of that provided would be prepared and presented to Synod by the Bishop of Sheffield. The House agreed that a separate and deeper engagement with the Synod was needed on evangelism and growth, perhaps in November, building on the work done by the Bishop of St Alban's Group.

Forward Look to the July Group of Sessions

7. The Clerk-Designate to the General Synod briefed the House on likely business at the General Synod's July Group of Sessions.

Update on the Anglican Communion

8. The Archbishop of Canterbury briefed the House on his visit the previous week to the three Anglican provinces in East Africa. The visit had been well-received. He planned to visit all the primates of the Anglican Communion within the next 18 months.

Parliamentary Matters

9. The Bishop of Leicester, as convenor of the Lords Spiritual, briefed the House on forthcoming Parliamentary matters.

Liturgical Business

10. The House received a presentation on a proposed alternative Baptismal liturgy, which had been prepared pursuant to a Synod motion passed in February 2011 calling for a liturgy in more accessible language. The Bishops welcomed a number of elements in the new material, especially the new prayer over the water, but concluded that others- in particular the wording of the decision and of the profession of faith needed more work and invited the Liturgical Commission to reflect further on the points raised during the discussion. The House was not willing to authorise experimental use until it had had the opportunity in December to consider revised texts.

Changes to the House's Standing Orders

11. The House approved changes to its Standing Orders to allow eight senior women clergy to attend its meetings, to be known as Regional Representatives. The House also approved Rules governing the eligibility and election of Regional Representatives.

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24 May 2012

Ross Gillson
Administrative Secretary