

GENERAL SYNOD**Discerning in Obedience: A theological review of the Crown Nominations Commission - Update**

1. Synod will recall that in February they “took note” of the report “Discerning in Obedience: A theological review of the Crown Nominations Commission” (GS2080).
2. Members will recall that one of the recommendations was the establishment of a group is to report back to General Synod on the progress of the actions set out in GS 2080 Annex 1 and actions subsequently identified by the Archbishops following points raised in the Synod debate. As this group is still in the process of being established and has not yet been able to meet we have prepared this update.

Establishment of Groups

3. Currently two groups are being established
 - i. group was formed by the Archbishops following consultation with the Appointments Committee.
 - ii. A working group to a) review the process for the election of Central Members to the Crown Nominations Commission(CNC) and b) to consider whether the system for the election of diocesan representatives from the Vacancy in See Committee (ViSC) needs to be reviewed and to report to General Synod in 2019. The Appointments Committee was charged with the responsibility of forming this group.

Oversight Group

4. The following have agreed to serve on this group.

The Bishop of Lichfield (Chair)
The Very Revd Peter Bradley
The Ven Nikki Groarke
Canon Dr Addy Lazz-Onyenobi
Dr Lindsay Newcombe

Review of the process for the election to the CNC and the ViSC

5. The report “Discerning in Obedience: a theological review of the Crown Nominations Commission” devoted much time to the exploration of “representation”. It concludes (paragraph 5.10) that Synod needs to consider “how it could adapt its electoral procedures to allow for CNC members to command a broad range of necessary competences and interests and so to represent the Church more adequately”. The report is clear that this a theological as well as a process exercise. It is also possible that this work might open up possibilities for other elections.
6. In addition to the recommendations of the report “Discerning in Obedience” the recommendations of two other reports will need to be considered by this group.

7. Sir Philip Mawer suggested in his "Review of the Nomination to the See of Sheffield and related concerns" that the Church may wish to consider whether the system for the election of diocesan representatives from the ViSC needs to be reviewed. It was suggested in GS 2080 that this work be combined with the exploration set out in paragraph 5 above.
8. Following the judgement of the appeal panel convened to hear the appeal by Mrs April Alexander in respect of the election of Miss Jane Patterson to the CNC a further question has been raised in connection with CNC elections.
9. Members will be aware that the argument in that appeal related to the extent to which candidates in Synodical elections are required to provide information about themselves which the electors might consider relevant. Miss Patterson's election was held to be valid within the framework laid down by the Standing Orders of the Synod as they stand. Whilst rejecting the appeal, the panel (Geoffrey Tattershall QC, Julie Dziegel and Martin Kingston QC) did state as follows:

"It is not the function of the appeal panel to determine whether such a position as to disclosure is satisfactory. We have no doubt that it is theoretically possible for the General Synod to amend its Standing Orders and impose a more onerous Code of Conduct than that which currently exists, for example by requiring candidates to make express disclosure of all organisations of which they are directors or trustees, but in our judgment it is a matter for General Synod, and not this appeal panel, to determine whether such is appropriate. However, as matters currently stand, in our judgment Miss Patterson and all other candidates were entitled to proceed on the basis that there was no requirement on them to make any declaration of interest."

10. This group will therefore also be exploring these issues as well, in association with the Standing Orders Committee, which will also be considering the matter in the context of elections from the General Synod more generally.

The following have agreed to serve on this group.

Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (Chair)
The Bishop of Huddersfield
Revd Peter Breckwoldt
Revd Dr James Walters
[one further priest to be appointed]
Canon Linda Ali
Anne Foreman

11. This group has yet to meet.

Central Members of the CNC

12. The Central Members of the CNC met in March 2018 and their discussion focussed on issues requiring Standing Order changes. It was decided to refer the following proposals from the report to the Legal Office so that they might progress drafting of possible changes for further discussion by the Central Members in October and for referral to General Synod in 2019.

- i. To amend Standing Orders such that the Chair of the CNC when it considers a vacancy in the See of York should be from the Northern province and should be appointed by the Prime Minister following consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Appointments Committee (SO 138(7)).
- ii. To amend Standing Orders such that the person in episcopal orders elected by the House of Bishops to the CNC when it considers a vacancy in the See of York should be from the Northern Province, and such that any additional person in episcopal orders elected because the Archbishop of Canterbury chooses not to attend the CNC's meetings should be from the Southern Province (SO 139(1)).
- iii. To amend Standing Orders such that the requirement for voting by secret ballot is removed (SO 141(6) and 141 (7)).
- iv. To amend Standing Orders such that the 2/3 majority should be from amongst those present and voting (rather than from the total number of the voting members of the Commission) (SO 141 (7)).

13. Issues associated with the See of Canterbury and the See of Dover were not discussed at this meeting. The Central Members did not support the recommendation that the Chair of the CNC should be given the authority to settle procedural matters not determined by Standing Orders but preferred to retain the existing arrangements whereby these can be settled in many cases by the whole Commission.

14. The following proposals will be referred to the Group undertaking work on the electoral processes

- i. To introduce a provision to enable the ViSC to designate one reserved place to ensure balanced representation (5(b)).
- ii. To amend the ViSC Regulation such that neither suffragan nor area bishops may serve on the CNC for their diocese and also such that only one member of the Bishop's Staff team (clerical or lay) may serve on it.
- iii. To amend the ViSC Regulation such that there is an equal balance of clerical and lay representation amongst the diocesan six elected to the CNC.

Development and Appointments Group

15. At its meeting in May, the Development and Appointments Group (DAG) decided to progress the following issues

- i. In the light of the profound reflections on the nature of discernment set out in the report, to explore the possibility of continuing this exploration in partnership with work being undertaken by Ministry Division on selection and to see if there might be benefits in a more holistic approach
- ii. To develop guidelines for the management of Episcopal Lists which will provide clarity of process
- iii. To be open to options for the oversight of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) in dialogue with the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Chair of Ministry Division.

The Secretary General

16. The Secretary General has issued his report “Nomination to the See of Sheffield: Lessons Learned for the NCIs in supporting nominees to diocesan sees”. Amongst other issues this has provided a framework for the handling of confidentiality post announcement.

17. Members of General Synod are asked to note progress.

+ Justin Cantuar
+ Sentamu Ebor