

Online Elections Pilot

Introduction

1. In November 2013, Synod agreed in principle the adoption of online voting for elections to General Synod. Since then, the secretariat has been working with Joe Wadsworth of Electoral Reform Services (ERS) to take this process forward.
2. Since the previous Electoral Reform Group meeting, the outline for the pilot has been confirmed. There have been four dioceses selected to take part in the pilot and these are Liverpool, London, Southwell & Nottingham and Winchester. They have been selected as they cover a broad range of different conditions; rural, urban, large, small, deprived and affluent which provides a good cross section of the electorate.
3. The initial meeting for the pilot was held in London in April. The pilot will review all aspects and consider broader questions relating to the process.
4. It is expected that the system testing will take place over the summer of 2018 and it is hoped that the learning from this pilot will be able to feed into any discussion needed to support the legislative changes to enable future online elections.
5. The timing of the pilot should enable us to be able to meet the timeframe for online elections to be used for General Synod in July 2020.

Pilot Outline

6. ERS has built a website platform to hold the nominations and elections process. This is currently being tested by the lead contacts within the four dioceses.
7. After the initial testing of the system, the four dioceses will be invited to trial each stage of the online process with their electors. Each pilot diocese will be able to check and validate nominations; and view turnout statistics through their own dashboard, much as they would currently.
8. The pilot will invite dummy nominations, which will go through the process as it will be in future. The pilots, acting as Presiding Officers, will be able to validate the nominations, ensuring there is the appropriate proposers and seconders. Once this has been done, the elections process will be able to take place.
9. We are aiming to have between 50 and 100 electors per diocese to ensure that there is sufficient testing of the system. The pilots and ERS will work closely to ensure that the emails for each elector is uploaded to the system. Once this is completed the pilot electorate will be sent a link to be able to cast their vote.
10. It is expected that the pilot will run for no more than six weeks.
11. Once the pilot has been completed, an evaluation will take place and a plan to roll out the system to all dioceses will be drafted.

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