

JULY 2018 GROUP OF SESSIONS

Guide to the July 2018 group of sessions: A report from the General Synod Business Committee

Introduction

1. The Business Committee is charged under Standing Order 4 with settling the Agenda for each group of sessions and determining the order in which business is to be taken. Subject to Standing Order 1, it is also responsible for all matters relating to the sessional arrangements of the Synod (Standing Order 125).
2. The business of Synod is generated in various ways, including by the Archbishops' Council, House of Bishops and their boards and committees, by Synodical commissions and committees, by diocesan synods and by individual members of the Synod through Private Members' Motions (PMM's). The Business Committee gives a great deal of thought to how it shapes the agenda of Synod meetings, considering very carefully the bids for space on each agenda. The purpose of this report is to explain the rationale behind the final shape of the Agenda for the forthcoming group of sessions and also to act as a guide to the business scheduled at it.
3. This report falls into four parts:
 - Part I comments on general categories of Synod business;
 - Part II comments on the shape of the Agenda for the July group of sessions;
 - Part III comments on practical arrangements for the July group of sessions; and
 - Part IV reports on other work and recent decisions of the Business Committee.

Part I: General Categories of Synod Business

Categories of Synod business

4. When constructing agendas, the Business Committee seeks to ensure that the agenda for the group of sessions as a whole contains a balanced variety of subjects, which may range from internal Synodical processes and Church business to business which concerns the Church's wider mission or matters of public interest.
5. Synod business tends to fall into four main categories as follows.

Standing items

- An example of this is the debate on the Business Committee Report and Questions.

Legislative business

- This can take a variety of forms. Full details of the legislative business for a group of sessions are always set out in Special Agenda I.

The Church and the World

- Particular items of business which debate current issues and take account of the way in which the Church relates to our public context.

Ordering the life of the Church

- Business which concerns the way we order our own life together.

6. Inevitably, some of the subjects which come under these areas may overlap and any of them might be concerned in different ways with the core mission of the Church.

Legislative Business

7. The legislative function of the General Synod is an important one and is the primary function of the Synod under its Constitution. Church legislation forms part of the law of the land, and has a far-reaching impact on the Church's mission and activities at diocesan and parish level. The Business Committee therefore encourages Synod members to reflect on the effect that proposed legislation will have, not least in their own context, and to engage fully in the legislative process in the various ways open to them – whether by participating in debates on legislative business, by making proposals for amendment or by serving on legislative committees.
8. To assist us with this task, a general note on legislative procedure in the General Synod has been prepared and uploaded to the [Members' Resources](#) page of the General Synod webpage.

Handling of Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) and Private Members' Motions (PMMs)

9. Under the Standing Orders, Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) are normally to be considered by the Synod in the order in which notice is received of them. In determining the order in which Private Members' Motions (PMMs) are scheduled for debate, the Business Committee must have regard to the number of Synod members supporting their being debated. However, when deciding when to schedule items of either type for debate the Committee can, and does, take into consideration other factors, such as the desirability of having related pieces of business considered in association with each other.

Presentations

10. Presentations are an opportunity for Synod to hear from external visitors, experts and representatives from other Churches in a more informal, and sometimes more interactive, way than is possible in a debate. They can also allow Synod to be given a broader context to an issue under discussion. In many cases, presentations are followed by debates, whether on a 'Take Note' or a more substantive motion.

Feedback on Agendas

11. The Business Committee welcomes feedback on agendas and suggestions for improvements to the way that Synod operates. This includes suggestions on ways to make General Synod more user friendly and to improve the ways in which the Synod can respond to current issues. This feedback may be made in a number of ways, including through the debate on the Business Committee Report and through correspondence sent to us via the Clerk following the group of sessions. This year, following the close of the group of sessions, the Committee plans to circulate a

questionnaire via the Synod Office in order to be proactive in seeking feedback on all matters regarding General Synod meetings.

Part II: The Shape of the July Agenda

Standing Items of Business

12. This group of sessions will begin as normal with the debate on the Report from the Business Committee, which offers Synod members the opportunity to comment on the Agenda or on the content and conduct of the Synod's business more generally.
13. As is customary, Questions are scheduled early in the group of sessions to allow Synod members to ask for information which might be of importance in forthcoming business.
14. These standing items of business include, in July, greetings from Ecumenical guests. Following their warm welcome by members in February, the Presidents have also invited representatives of member Churches of the Anglican Communion to attend and address the Synod again.
15. The Archbishop of York will be giving a Presidential address.

Legislative Business

16. This group of sessions sees a substantial volume of legislative business, which will be taken on the afternoon of Friday 6 July and the morning and afternoon of Monday 9 July.
17. In the course of the afternoon sitting on Friday 9 July, the following items will be taken:
 - Ecumenical Relations Measure – Final Drafting
 - Amending Canon No. 38 – Final Drafting
 - Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure – Final Drafting
 - Amending Canon No. 40 – First Consideration.
18. The remaining business will be taken on Monday 9 July. It will include:
 - Ecumenical Relations Measure - Final Approval
 - Amending Canon No.38 – Final Approval and petition for Royal Assent and Licence
 - Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure – Final Approval
 - Church Property Measure – Final Drafting and Approval
 - Church of England Pensions Measure – Final Drafting and Final Approval
 - Church Representation and Ministers Measure and Amending Canon No. 39 – Revision Stage
 - Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure (No 2) and Amending Canon No. 41 – First Consideration.

The following will be taken as deemed business, unless a debate is required:

- Pensions (Pre-consolidation) Order 2018

- Usual Fees Orders
- Code of Practice in relation to Bishops' Mission Orders.

The Church in the World

19. This is business which is concerned with the relationship of the Church of England to our missional context. The following items on the Agenda come under this category:

- Debate on the Ethics of Nuclear Weapons
- Presentation from the National Investing Bodies on Climate Change and Investment
- Debate on a Motion from the National Investing Bodies
- London and Truro Diocesan Synod Motion on Environmental Programmes
- Debate on a motion from the Archbishops' Evangelism Task Group
- Carlisle Diocesan Synod Motion on the Long-Term Sustainability of the National Health Service.

Ordering the Life of the Church

20. The General Synod has a responsibility to take counsel together about issues affecting the life of the Church. This business may take legislative or non-legislative form. The following Church business matters will be taken on the July Synod Agenda:

- Presentation and Debate on Safeguarding
- Presentation on the House of Bishops' Teaching Document on Human Sexuality
- Presentation from the Church Commissioners
- Presentation on the Archbishops' Council's Annual Report
- Debate on the Archbishops' Council Budget
- Appointment of the Chair of the Pensions Board
- Appointment of the Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee
- Presentation and Debate on the Cathedrals Working Group report.

Anglican Communion Visitors

21. At the invitation of the Presidents, the following guests from member churches of the Anglican Communion will attend this group of sessions, sitting on the floor of the Synod:

- Archbishop Moon Hing of the Church of the Province of South East Asia
- Archbishop Humphrey Peters of the Church of Pakistan
- Archbishop Winston Halapua, of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia
- Archbishop Thabo of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

22. The guests do not have the right to speak or vote. However, at the invitation of the Presidents on the morning of Friday 6 July they will briefly address the Synod under Standing Order 120.

Ecumenical Guests

23. The following Anglican and ecumenical guests will be present as observers on this occasion:

- The Venerable Paul Mackness, Archdeacon of St David's and Domestic Chaplain and Clerical Secretary to the Lord Bishop of St David's
- Landesbischof Ralf Meister, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, and co-chair of the Meissen Commission
- The Reverend Tauno Teder, Adviser for international and ecumenical relations for the Church Council of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

24. Landesbischof Ralf Meister, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, will deliver a brief greeting to the Synod on behalf of the ecumenical guests on Friday afternoon.

Arrangements for the Saturday afternoon

25. The Business Committee has agreed that on Saturday afternoon the Synod will not be in session. Instead, members will be invited to attend a choice of seminars intended to update members on various important areas of work and to encourage our participation in the development of them.

26. The seminars will cover the developing work of the House of Bishops Teaching Document on Human Sexuality, the Pastoral Advisory Group, Digital Evangelism, the Evangelism Task Group and the Environmental Working Group, as well as Children and Young People. Each seminar will be 1 hour long and will take place 3 times on a rotating basis in order to allow those members who wish to attend up to three different seminars. There will also be workshops available on a number of these topics. Full details of these opportunities are set out in GS Misc 1188. This conference style session will be introduced at the end of the Saturday morning session by the Chair of the BC and some of those leading the different workstreams.

27. After due consideration, the Business Committee has come to a mind that the various PMMs and DSMs relating to the matters which are intended to be addressed by the proposed House of Bishops Teaching Document on Human Sexuality will not be scheduled for debate until that document has been published. This decision was taken on the understanding that the work on the Teaching Document will be completed by 2020. In addition, there has been an understanding that from the inception of the project there will be regular opportunities for members of the General Synod to engage with that work, as it develops at each group of sessions. This process of engagement begins with the seminars arranged for the Saturday afternoon of the July group of sessions.

The Environment

28. As earlier reports have made clear, following discussions with the Environmental Group and the movers of various motions, we had been planning a significant piece of business on the environment this summer for the past year. In the event it was not possible for all the motions presented to be debated in the form in which we had received them. We are indebted to the Dioceses of London, Truro and Oxford and to the National Investing Bodies (NIBs) for their co-operation in preparing for two

debates – one based on the London and Truro Diocesan Synod Motions and another on Investment and Divestment.

29. These motions will be proposed by London Diocese and by the NIBs respectively. The Business Committee has done everything in its power to ensure that the voices of all the originators are clearly and fairly heard. To this end, we have made noticeable departures from our normal way of doing business. These include the following:

- Permitting a longer background paper from London and Truro
- Involving the Bishop of Oxford in a preparatory presentation to the National Investing Bodies debate
- Permitting a background paper from Oxford to accompany the one prepared by the NIB's for this debate.

30. The Business Committee is pleased that a consensus-style of preparation for this scheduling has resulted in two clear motions for the Synod to debate. The Committee wishes to record its thanks to Joyce Jones and Clive Scowen for enabling these conversations and facilitating this outcome.

Special Agenda III and IV

31. Members will notice that, neither the Oxford Diocesan Synod Motion on the CNC nor Mr Mark Russell's motion on Youth Evangelism will be debated in this group of sessions. In both cases this decision was taken as a result of views expressed by the movers of the motions, who have requested that they be taken at a later date.

Part III: Practical Arrangements for the July group of sessions

Sessional Arrangements

32. Synod will not be in session on the afternoon of Saturday 8 July (as explained at paragraphs 22 – 24.)

33. The Synod timetable is published with indicative timings for items of business. This is done in order to help Synod members plan their time. It should be emphasised that – except in the case of items followed by timed business (which is indicated in the timetable by an asterisk) - the length of time taken by any item of business is in the hands of the Synod.

34. Members are reminded that, if at any time within the group of sessions an unexpected gap opens in the Synod's Agenda, business earlier in the Agenda which has not been reached or completed can be called by the Chair, unless other provision has already been made for it.

Synod Worship

35. The group of sessions will begin with an act of worship in the Chamber. All services (apart from those taking place in the Central Hall) will take place in the Berrick Saul building. The full details and timings of worship are listed at the start of the Agenda.

36. At the request of Synod members, the early morning Holy Communion in the Berrick Saul building has been brought forward to 7.00 am to allow Synod members more time to attend the Eucharist, have breakfast and attend fringe meetings before the start of each day's business.

Synod Security

37. Synod members are reminded of their responsibility to be vigilant at all times to ensure the security of Synod members, visitors and staff. As stated in point 5 of the security policy, Synod members are requested not to leave any items unattended around the Assembly Hall or its environs.

All those entering the balcony of the Central Hall will be required to go through the security arch outside the building prior to gaining access.

IV: Other Work of the Business Committee

Accessibility

38. The Business Committee, Synod staff and the York University Conference Centre continue to take accessibility very seriously. A number of changes were made in February 2018 and following positive feedback these will now be adopted in the long term. Synod members are encouraged to speak to staff members at any point (be that before, during or after a group of sessions) regarding any improvements that might be made.

Online elections to General Synod

39. Four dioceses have been invited to participate in a pilot for the online election process that it is intended to introduce for the elections to the Convocations and the House of Laity due to be held in 2020. The dioceses involved are Liverpool, London, Southwell & Nottingham, and Winchester. The pilot nomination process is being tested currently and it is expected that each diocese will have a pilot electorate of between 50 and 100 who will undertake a mock election over the summer.

Records of business transacted by the Synod

40. The Legal Office produces a formal record of business transacted at each group of sessions of the General Synod in the form of 'Business Done', which is published on the Synod page of the Church of England website.

41. In addition, the Business Committee has been publishing on an experimental basis a running record of the business transacted at General Synod during the current Quinquennium, with updates on subsequent developments in relation to individual items. This may be accessed on our [Members' Resources page](#) and, following requests in February 2018, has now been published as a GS Misc.

42. The Business Committee welcomes feedback from Synod members on whether this record is helpful. The Business Committee will review whether to continue with this practice at a future meeting. Mindful that the General Synod exists to serve the wider Church and not just its membership, members are invited actively to encourage non-members within their parish, diocese or otherwise to send their comments on these records to the Chair of the Business Committee via the Clerk to the Synod.

General Data Protection Regulation

43. At the May meeting of the Business Committee, the impact of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) on how members' personal data is processed was discussed. GS Misc 1187 outlines the work undertaken by the Synod Office and the NCIs more widely to comply with the GDPR. The Business Committee would like to

assure members that they take the matter of data protection very seriously and that staff have put in place the necessary protocols to ensure compliance with the GDPR. If members have any questions about their data, they may send their enquiry to synod@churchofengland.org.

GS Misc Papers

44. With so much material to read for Synod, we are aware that it may be tempting to neglect the reading of GS Misc papers to the bottom. We would urge Synod members to read these papers closely. This is because GS Misc papers are an important way of recording and reporting work that members need to know about, but which does not require space on the agenda at this point in time. A very good example of this is the progress report on the work arising out of the review of the CNC which you will find amongst your Synod papers for July.

Feedback Survey

45. The Committee plans to invite you to complete a post-Synod survey to capture views about the group of sessions after it ends. This will include a range of questions that will help to measure our work. The Business Committee continues to work on easily communicable Purpose and Values statements based on the National Institutions Measure and Standing Orders to help us and the Synod to do this.

February meetings in 2019 and beyond

46. Following the experience of meeting on Saturday in February 2018 the Business Committee received a range of feedback from members on their views on this experiment. There was no definitive view emerging, however the feedback raised some specific issues that the Business Committee will address when planning the February 2019 Group of Sessions. The Committee considered at some length a suggestion that a second full weekend meeting (timed in a manner similar to the York group of sessions) might, in reality, be a better option. This is not possible within the date envelopes published before 2020 and we would welcome your comments – preferably by email sent to the Clerk (Jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org) and copied to the Chair.

Business Committee Policies

47. The Business Committee has a number of policies covering various aspects of Synod's activities including its Code of Conduct and how to make declarations of interest. These and other guidance may be viewed on the Members' Resources web page at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/synod-members-resources>

48. The Business Committee undertakes a formal review of all its policies annually at its March meeting and updates them as necessary. Synod members are invited to send any comments to the Committee via the Clerk for consideration at this meeting.

On behalf of the Business Committee, The Revd Canon Sue Booy
Chair of the Business Committee

June 2018

Membership of the Business Committee

Chair

The Revd Canon Sue Booy

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd Pete Broadbent, Bishop of Willesden

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Revd Canon Graeme Buttery

The Revd Prebendary Simon Cawdell

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones

Elected by the House of Laity

Mrs Anne Foreman

Canon Robert Hammond

Mr Clive Scowen

Appointed by the Archbishops' Council

Mr Adrian Greenwood

Canon Mark Russell

The Secretary to the Committee is the Clerk to the Synod (Dr Jacqui Philips) and the Assistant Secretary is Miss Polly Dunn

Forecast of future General Synod business

February 2019

Debate on a motion from the Mission and Public Affairs Council on Chaplaincy and Mission

Debate on a Motion from the Ministry and Public Affairs Council on Artificial Intelligence

Private Members' Motion on Youth Evangelism

Oxford DSM on the Review of the Crown Nominations Commission

Legislative Business

Church Representation and Ministers Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval

Miscellaneous Provisions Measure (No 2) – Revision Stage

Diocesan Boards of Education Measure – First Consideration

? Cathedrals Measure – First Consideration

Amending Canon No. 38 – enactment

Amending Canon No. 40 – Revision Stage

Amending Canon No. 41 – Revision Stage

? Order under the Legislative Reform Measure

Report from the Standing Orders Committee