

GENERAL SYNOD

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

November 2002 Group of Sessions

Report by the Business Committee

Introduction and Overview of the Agenda

1. The agenda for the November Group of Sessions is varied and full, with many substantial issues. Several of the items take forward work in which the Synod has previously been engaged (for example, the clergy/stipends review, the Crown Appointments Commission Review, and marriage in church after divorce). The following are the main areas for debate:
 - Mission and evangelism (mission theology – see paras 31-33; youth strategy – para 45)
 - The effective use of resources (clergy stipends/pensions review – para 40; guaranteed annuities – paras 41-42; funding of the Churches Conservation Trust – paras 432-44)
 - Marriage issues (marriage in church after divorce – para 37)
 - The international situation (Iraq – para 16)

- Constitutional issues: the second in a series (parliamentary democracy – para 35)
 - Other social policy issues (abortion – para 34; female genital mutilation - para 39)
 - The Church’s internal order (Crown Appointments Commission Review – paras 22-23; vesture – para 29; legislative business – paras 17-18).
2. More time has been allowed at this Group of Sessions for private members’ motions and diocesan synod motions. There will be debates on the two private members’ motions with the highest number of signatures – on female genital mutilation (to be moved by Mr Keith Masters), and on the Abortion Act (to be moved by Mr Barry Barnes). The Business Committee is mindful that a debate on the Abortion Act was scheduled at the previous group of sessions but did not take place due to want of time. There will also be a debate on at least one diocesan synod motion – from Southwell Diocesan Synod, on vesture (which was also previously scheduled for July. If a gap opens in the Synod’s agenda and there is no outstanding business, the next diocesan synod motion will be taken (on the election of churchwardens and parochial church councils), followed by the next private member’s motion (see para 1) and then the next diocesan synod motion.
3. The Business Committee has been looking at particular pressure points on the Synod’s agenda and is concerned about the overall effect of the increasing number of amendments, which are being put down for debate,

upon the planning and handling of business. The Committee has this matter under review and is looking at possible options for dealing with amendments more expeditiously. As a matter of general practice, Synod members are requested to submit amendments at the earliest opportunity, so that they can be notified to Synod members in good time.

4. The Committee has looked carefully at the recommendations in its report on Synod Questions (GS 1456) in the light of the debate at the July Synod. A number of recommendations require changes to Standing Orders and these will be considered by the Standing Orders Committee for inclusion in the Committee's next report to the Synod, due in February 2003. Some of the changes proposed in GS 1456 can be brought into effect administratively (for example, the grouping of questions and the circulation of written answers on a notice paper), and these are being implemented for the November Group of Sessions.
5. The Business Committee is conscious that the enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury will take place on 27 February, and the February Group of Sessions will therefore need to take place within three days (Monday, 24 February to Wednesday 26 February). The November Group of Sessions, therefore, aims to transact a substantial amount of business, in readiness for the more restricted allocation of time in February.
6. If any member of General Synod wishes to be in touch with the Business Committee during meetings of the General Synod, they should contact either the Chairman

(the Dean of Derby) or the Secretary (David Williams) who will ensure that communications are circulated to members of the Business Committee. The Committee is always glad to receive feedback and comments from Synod members on the transaction of the Synod's business and on arrangements for the Synod generally.

February 2005 Group of Sessions

7. Further to the debate on the dates of future Groups of Sessions at the July Synod, the Business Committee has agreed to recommend to the Synod that, for the reasons explained by the Archbishop of York, the dates for the **February 2005 Group of Sessions should be 14 to 18 February**, instead of 31 to 4 February. The proposed dates will be taken as a following motion to the Business Committee's report (see Annex 1).

Venue and timing of November Synod

8. The November meeting of the General Synod will take place at Church House, Westminster from 4 pm on Monday, 11 November to 1 pm on Friday, 15 November.

Security

9. Members are asked to wear their Church House passes at all times and to study the security notice which will be circulated on a Notice Paper.

Synod Worship

10. Outline information about services in the Church House Chapel is given on the inside front cover of the Agenda.

There will be a short act of worship in the Assembly Hall at the beginning of the morning sessions from Tuesday to Friday, and materials for this will be given to members during the sessions.

Order of Business

11. The business each day will follow the order set out in the daily list given in the Agenda, except where it is necessary to modify this. Every effort will be made to give the Synod the longest possible notice of any variations which it is proposed to make in the timetable and to keep such changes to a minimum. Members are, however, 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 within the period allotted, can be called by the Chairman, unless other provision has already been made for it. If there is no such outstanding business and an unexpected gap opens in the Synod's agenda, then unless the adjournment is carried, the Business Committee has decided that the next item will be the diocesan synod motion standing next in the order in Special Agenda IV – from the Sheffield Diocesan Synod, on the election of churchwardens and parochial church councils (see para 2). The next item thereafter will be the private member's motion (in Special Agenda III), on repairs to church buildings, to be moved by Mr Roy Thompson (York). The following item thereafter will be the Manchester Diocesan Synod motion (Special Agenda IV), on the representation of retired clergy. Members are also reminded that the rubric 'not later than' in the Agenda does not prevent an item coming on

significantly earlier than the time stated, depending on the progress of the preceding business.

Private Members' Motions

12. Notice of private members' motions received is contained in Special Agenda III. Any future notices of private members' motions will be published in notice papers and will be available for signature at the November Group of Sessions only if they are received not later than 5.30 pm on 11 November.

Content of Business

Monday, 11 November

Meetings of the Convocations and the House of Laity

13. The Convocations and of the House of Laity will meet at 2 pm on Monday, 11 November (see para 37):

House of Laity	- Assembly Hall
Convocation of Canterbury	- Harvey Goodwin Suite
Convocation of York	- Convocation Hall

Introductions

14. There will be the usual introduction of new members.

Report by the Business Committee

15. This will provide the customary opportunity for members to raise points about the agenda for this group of sessions or about the Synod's business generally.

Iraq

16. In view of the increasing likelihood of military action being taken against Iraq, either under the auspices of the United Nations or by a number of its members acting on their own, the Business Committee thought it right to provide General Synod members with an opportunity for debate. The debate on Iraq in November 2000 and on Israel/Palestine at the last Group of Sessions suggested that members will be aware of the complexity of the ethical and political judgements that have to be made in international affairs. A number of Church leaders have already commented on the criteria for evaluating the proposed action. As background for this debate the BSR has prepared a revised version of *Evaluating the Threat of Military Action Against Iraq* (GS Misc 692) which was a paper for bishops prepared by the staff in March 2002.

Tuesday, 12 November

Legislative Business

17. The legislative programme for this Group of Sessions contains both old and new items of business. Having completed its Revision Committee stage, the Care of Cathedrals (Amendment) Measure returns to the Synod for its Revision stage. The main piece of new business is the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure. This will make a number of technical and uncontroversial legislative changes, essentially to provisions relating to the Church Commissioners' functions.

18. Of the other two items of legislative business, one (that of the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation) is dealt with elsewhere in this report (see para 17). The other is the Newcastle Central Deanery Scheme. This scheme is laid before the Synod by the Newcastle Diocesan Synod under the Church Representation Rules. Its effect will be to alter the position as regards election to the deanery and diocesan synods in the case of St Thomas's Chapel, Newcastle. The Scheme will not be debated unless a member requests that it should be.

An Anglican/Methodist Covenant: Following Motion

19. Last July a following motion on the Anglican/Methodist Covenant failed to find time for debate. The motion read:

“This Synod, encouraged by the progress represented by the Anglican/Methodist Covenant, notes that there are some outstanding doctrinal and other differences remaining and looks forward to their resolution prior to the introduction of changes in modes of oversight.”

20. While acknowledging and supporting the progress represented by the Covenant, the motion to be moved by the Revd Rod Thomas (Exeter) seeks reassurances that the differences between the two Churches, identified in *An Anglican/Methodist Covenant*, should be adequately addressed prior to any changes in patterns of oversight.

21. The Business Committee has decided that, in all the circumstances, time should be found to debate this motion at the November Group of Sessions. A background paper by the Revd Rod Thomas (GS Misc 695A) and a note from CCU (GS Misc 695B) will be circulated.

Working with the Spirit: Crown Appointments
Commission Review

22. In July 2001 the Synod debated *Working with the Spirit* – a review of the operation of the Crown Appointments Commission and related matters – and passed a motion calling for the establishment of a Steering Group to follow up the recommendations. At this Group of Sessions the Steering Group will present its work to the Synod (GS 1465). Most of the new arrangements do not require synodical action. The Synod will therefore simply be invited, after taking note of the Report, to request those responsible to implement the arrangements set out in it. This will be followed immediately by consideration of proposed amendments to Standing Order 122, which governs the Crown Appointments Commission. The amendments are set out in a Notice Paper, and an explanation of each will be found in Section D of the Report.
23. Amendments to the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 1993 are also necessary in order to implement some of the recommendations of *Working with the Spirit*. The Synod will therefore be invited, on the Thursday, to approve an amending Regulation (GS 1466). An explanation of its provisions will be found in Section A of the Report. The procedure set out in

Standing Order 71 will be followed. As the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 1993 is an Act of Synod, it is proposed that if the amending Regulation is approved, the amended Regulation should be re-proclaimed as an Act of Synod.

Questions

24. Under SO 105, members may address Questions to the Secretary General, the Clerk to the Synod, the Chairman of any body answerable to the Synod through the Archbishops' Council (including Boards and Councils), the Chairman of any Church of England body on which the Synod is represented, the Chairman of each of the three Houses of Synod, and the Church Estates Commissioners. Anyone wishing to ask a question must give notice of it to reach the Clerk to the Synod **by 5.30 pm on Thursday 31 October**. The Questions notice paper will be distributed in the Assembly Hall at the beginning of the Group of Sessions.

25. Members are reminded that 'omnibus' questions are not in order. If a member wishes to query several points, each should be the subject of a separate question. Detailed information, tables of figures, etc are better dealt with in a written answer and members are urged to be selective in matters which they raise orally at Question Time, including any supplementaries which must be framed as a question and should be kept brief. Members should indicate clearly when submitting a Question whether it is for oral or written answer.

Wednesday, 13 NovemberLiturgical Business:Extended Authorisation of Series I: Burial and Marriage Services

26. The Liturgical Business for this Group of Sessions (set out in Special Agenda II) consists of two items, namely First Consideration of the proposed extension of authorisation of the Series One Marriage and Burial Services.
27. The procedure for extension of authorisation is set out in Standing Order 80. After the First Consideration stage, the matter stands referred to the House of Bishops, which brings it back to the Synod for Final Approval, at which stage two-thirds majorities are required in all three houses. Separate debates and votes are required in respect of each of the two services. Extension of authorisation “until further resolution of the Synod” would mean that these four debates and two divisions by Houses would not in future be necessary every five years.
28. Standing Orders do not require the text of services proposed for extended periods of authorisation to be placed in the hands of Synod members. They may be found under ‘Texts – Other Authorised Liturgy’ in the *Common Worship* area of the Church of England web site, and copies are also available on request to the Clerk to the Synod.

Vesture of Ministers: Southwell Diocesan Synod Motion

29. This motion seeks to begin a process whereby Canon Law would be amended to allow a discretion to ordained and authorised ministers (in agreement with their parochial church councils) as to wearing of vesture during divine service. A background paper from the Southwell Diocese (GS Misc 679A) was circulated for the July 2002 Group of Sessions, together with a background note from the Central Secretariat (GS Misc 679B).

Appointment of Auditors

30. The annual report of the Council's Audit Committee, debated at the July sessions, notified the Synod of the plans to carry out a joint tender exercise with the Church Commissioners for the appointment of external auditors to both bodies for 2002. Five firms were invited to tender for the appointments and a short list of three was agreed at a joint meeting of the two Audit Committees. Final interviews took place on 10 September and it was the unanimous recommendation of the joint panel that Deloitte & Touche be appointed by both bodies. The Commissioners' appointment is actually made by HM Treasury (and they had a representative on the interviewing panel). At its meeting on 1/2 October the Archbishops' Council endorsed the recommendation which is now put to General Synod for formal approval.

Presence and Prophecy: Mission Theology

31. This report is the fruit of four years work by the Mission Theology Advisory Group (MTAG), an ecumenical group formed by and responsible to the Board of Mission and the Churches' Commission on Mission (CCOM). It has been chaired by the Bishop of Rochester who will present the motion on behalf of the Board. The publication will also be commended and studied within other Churches in Britain and Ireland.
32. The report examines the ways in which a commitment to mission can infuse and inform the different disciplines within theological education of all kinds. It also identifies ways in which mission is challenged by those disciplines. Given the commitment to develop an outward looking and missionary church this is a major attempt to bring a mission perspective to theological education and training. Hence the importance of bringing it to Synod for national consideration and outworking through dioceses, and colleges and courses, as part of an ecumenical thrust.
33. There will be a covering note from the Board of Mission (GS 1471). The report, *Presence and Prophecy* (GS 1442) will be accompanied by a *Study Guide* (GS Misc 689), and a small booklet of practical examples of bringing a mission perspective to theological reflection (GS Misc 690).

Abortion Act

34. This motion, to be moved by Mr Barry Barnes, seeks to review the operation of the Abortion Act and to restrict

the circumstances in which abortion should take place. Mr Barnes' background paper (GS Misc 670) and the briefing material prepared by BSR were circulated for the July 2002 Group of Sessions.

Parliamentary Democracy

35. Following the debate on Regionalisation at the July Group of Sessions, the Committee has made provision for another debate in the series planned on constitutional issues. The debate on Parliamentary Democracy will provide an opportunity for reflection on the concerns expressed in recent years about the apparent alienation of large numbers of people, particularly young people, from the political process. The short paper prepared by staff of the Board for Social Responsibility (GS 1470) includes a summary of the Hansard Society's report *The Challenge for Parliament*, which offers some proposals for enhancing Parliament's standing and effectiveness, and the speech by the Leader of the House of Commons, given as the Society's Annual Lecture in May, in which he considers the state of our democracy, identifies some of the problems and offers some suggestions for addressing them.

Thursday, 14 November

Vacancy in See Committee Regulations

36. Please see paragraphs 22-23, relating to the Crown Appointments Commission Review.

Marriage in Church after Divorce

37. In July the Synod voted for two motions on this matter. The first recognised, inter alia, that there are exceptional circumstances in which a divorced person may marry in church during the lifetime of a former spouse, and invited the House of Bishops to issue parish clergy with advice setting out the criteria for such marriages. The second gave general approval to rescinding the marriage resolutions of the Canterbury and York Convocations, which currently exhort clergy not to conduct such marriages. This second motion – touching as it does on the use of the marriage service – comes under Article 7 of the Synod's Constitution which requires the matter to be referred formally to the House of Bishops following which the Convocations and House of Laity can claim a reference. The indications are that all three bodies will claim such a reference. Provision has therefore been made for them to meet for this purpose on the afternoon of Monday 11 November. If they approve the revocation of the Resolutions, space has been provided in the General Synod agenda for it to be asked to give Final Approval this session. This would then enable the House of Bishops to issue its advice to clergy (in accordance with the first Synod Motion). In the absence of such approval, the matter cannot, of course, be brought forward for Final Approval in this Group of Sessions.

Archbishops' Council: Appointed Members

38. Three seats are available on the Council from January 2003 with the end of Mrs Elizabeth Paver's and Mr Stephen Bampfyldes' terms and Mr David Lammy's

resignation. The places had been advertised and the interviews of shortlisted candidates were held at the beginning of October. After consultation with the Appointments Committee at its meeting on 16 October, the names of the preferred candidates will be presented to Synod by the Archbishop of York, for its approval.

Female Genital Mutilation: Private Member's Motion

39. The intention of the motion to be moved by Mr Keith Masters (Lichfield) is to highlight and condemn the violent practice of female genital mutilation, and to help stimulate Christians worldwide to consider this issue in their local environment. A background paper by Mr Masters (GS Misc 693) has been circulated.

Clergy Stipends, Pensions Review and other Financial Issues

40. The report on stipends, pensions and other financial issues from the Archbishops Council follows the preliminary debate on these issues at the November 2001 sessions and the publication of the consultation paper GS Misc 663. The report (GS 1467) contains an evaluation of diocesan responses to the twenty six questions contained in GS Misc 663 and the degree of consensus emerging on the issues concerned. The report goes on to make a series of recommendations as part of an integrated financial strategy.

Guaranteed Annuities

41. The report by the Church Commissioners (GS 1468) invites Synod to agree that guaranteed annuities and

similar payments, being the element of clergy stipends directly payable by the Church Commissioners and amounting to almost £5 million, should end and that legislation (where needed) to effect this change should be put in hand. As the report sets out, the proposals will neither increase nor reduce the total paid by the Commissioners to support the Church's work and ministry, and will not affect the amount of stipend paid to individual clergy. The aim in ending these payments, whose benefit to dioceses follows historical patterns of ministry but often does not match the Church's current needs or opportunities, is to create an equivalent increase in the Commissioners' capacity to support the Church's ministry in areas of need.

42. As set out in the report of the Financial Issues Working Group (GS 1469), it is proposed that the monies freed up should initially be available as stipend support for the neediest dioceses. In the longer term the use of the money will be subject to the normal review process involving the Council, the Commissioners and other interested parties. It is also proposed that legislation should provide that those clergy who may wish to continue to receive guaranteed annuity payments should be able to do so.

Friday 15 November

Funding of the Churches Conservation Trust

43. This report (GS 1472) contains the proposals for financing the Church's share of the funding of the Churches Conservation Trust in the 2003-2006

triennium. The Synod is invited to note the report and to approve the recommendations.

44. The Churches Conservation Trust is responsible for the preservation "in the interests of the nation and the Church of England" of redundant churches of historic and archaeological interest or architectural quality for which no suitable alternative use can be found. The CCT is funded by both Church and State, since 1989 on a 30:70 basis. The Church's 30% share is met through a combination of sale proceeds of redundant churches and grant from the Church Commissioners. It is intended to bring the actual funding order to the February 2003 Synod.

Youth Strategy

45. In promoting two of its four themes (*Equipping to evangelise* and *Children and Young People*), the Archbishops' Council, in close collaboration with the House of Bishops, has developed a strategy for the Church's work with and outreach to young people. General Synod will have an opportunity to debate and consider endorsing the strategy (set out in GS 1481), which marks a significant new stage in the Church's commitment to young people. The strategy is wide-ranging (covering four areas: young people and worship; young people as leaders; resourcing youth workers; and young people and mission) and incorporates proposals for raising a Youth Evangelism Fund.

Concluding Business

46. Following the customary farewells, the Synod will be prorogued, no later than 1 pm. The closing ceremonies will be conducted by the Archbishop of York.

On behalf of the Committee

Michael Perham
October 2002

Annex 1**GENERAL SYNOD:
DATES OF GROUPS OF SESSIONS**

1. In the debate on the Committee's report on the dates of future groups of sessions at the July meeting of the Synod, the Archbishop of York made the following intervention:

"The Archbishop of York (Dr David Hope): I had not intended to speak on this item, but I refer to Annex A, paragraph 4 and the proposal for 2005 that the Synod meets from 31 January to 4 February. This is in relation to the January residential meeting of the House of Bishops. I am advised that in 2005 it is likely that the House will meet from 10 to 14 January, which leaves only 17 days before the meeting of the Synod. Not only will this tie up members of the House out of their dioceses for nearly a fortnight within a four-week period; it will also make it difficult for any business which may require amendment - for example, a working party report coming before the House ahead of its appearance at the Synod - to be processed in the interval between the House's meeting and the Synod's. We also need to bear in mind that the February sessions would be the main winter sessions, the previous November sessions being held only if required, and also that, with 2005 being the end of a quinquennium, there is almost bound to be particular pressure to get business to the Synod. I wonder if, therefore, in these circumstances, there is not a case for the first 2005 date to be reviewed. While I quite accept

that the Synod has agreed that it would normally be the rule that it would meet before Lent, I wonder whether, in 2005, 14-18 February, for example, might not be preferable.”

2. The Business Committee has considered these points and is content to recommend to the Synod that the dates for the February 2005 group of sessions should be **14 to 18 February**. A motion to that effect will therefore be moved at the forthcoming group of sessions.

Annex 2**Members of the Business Committee**

The Very Revd Michael Perham (Dean of Derby) - Chairman

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd George Cassidy, Bishop of Southwell

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Ven Alan Hawker, Archdeacon of Malmesbury

The Revd Prebendary Sam Philpott (Exeter)

The Revd Simon Pothen (London)

Elected by the House of Laity

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich)

Mr Frank Knaggs (Newcastle)

Mrs Maryon Jagers (Europe)

Two members of the Archbishops' Council

Mr Brian McHenry (Southwark)

Mrs Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield)

(The Secretary to the Committee is David Williams and the Assistant Secretary is Malcolm Taylor)