

CHURCH APPOINTMENTS

1. On Tuesday 3 July the Prime Minister made a statement to the House of Commons announcing the publication of a Green Paper, *The Governance of Britain*. In the context of limiting the powers of the executive more generally the Government has proposed changes to the role of Ministers in relation to Church appointments.
2. The relevant section of the Green Paper is attached. I also attach a copy of a statement issued on Tuesday by the Archbishop of York.
3. The last major change to the State's role in Church of England appointments came in 1976 as a result of pressure from within the Church. In 1974 the Synod had voted that "the decisive voice in the appointment of bishops should be that of the Church."
4. The agreement in 1976 to create the Crown Appointments Commission (as it then was) meant that, for the first time, there was a commitment that the Prime Minister would submit for appointment as diocesan bishops only those whose names had been proposed by a Church-based body. It did not, however, guarantee the Church the decisive voice on every occasion. Last Tuesday's Green Paper proposes to give the Church what it asked for in 1974 in relation to the appointment of bishops.
5. The Green Paper also signals the Government's belief in principle that the Prime Minister should not play an active role in the selection of individual candidates for Church appointments. It commits the Government to consultations with the Church over how new arrangements can be put in place consistently with this.
6. The Synod agenda already provides for substantial consideration of appointments issues on Monday afternoon. The report *Talent and Calling* (GS1650) did not, however, consider the appointment arrangements for diocesan bishops and its recommendations in respect of Crown appointments to cathedral posts were made before this week's announcement from the Government. The Presidents have decided, therefore, that some change is needed to Monday's business so that there can be a debate that takes account of the Green Paper.
7. The Presidents have directed that after item 26 (address from Sir Joseph Pilling) there should be a debate on a motion moved by the Bishop of Leicester, a copy of which is on notice paper five. This will be in place of items 27 and 28 in the agenda.
8. The new motion will give Synod the opportunity to consider how it wishes to respond both to the Government's proposals and the recommendations in *Talent and Calling*.

William Fittall
Secretary General
5 July 2007