

GENERAL SYNOD
February 2008 Group of Sessions
Report by the Business Committee

Introduction and overview of the Agenda

1. The Agenda for the February Synod contains a heavy programme of legislative business, the most substantial item of which is the Revision Stage of the clergy terms of service legislation. The February Group of Sessions includes several major, high-profile debates, and in particular, significant outward-facing debates on detention without charge, mental health and casinos. There is also a focus on Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue, with a debate on the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission Report: *Growing Together in Mission and Unity: Building on Forty Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue*. The Synod will have a further opportunity to debate Crown Appointments (in the light of the recent consultative exercise, following the debate at the July Synod), and to take note of the Church of England's response to the Anglican Communion Covenant, which was submitted by the Archbishops to the Covenant Design Group at the end of last year. There is a significant item of business of liturgical interest, on a Eucharistic prayer for children, which is the subject of a Diocesan Synod Motion from Durham. There will also be a Presidential Address from the Archbishop of Canterbury, during which reference will be made to the situation in Zimbabwe.
2. One Diocesan Synod Motion and two Private Members' Motions will be scheduled for debate at this Group of Sessions. Diocesan Synod Motions are usually debated in the order in which they are received. The Business Committee has decided that consideration of the Southwark Diocesan Synod Motion on the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod should await the outcome of the work of the Legislative Drafting Group on Women in the Episcopate. Consideration of the Derby Diocesan Synod Motion on Health and Safety within the Church has been postponed by the Business Committee from February to July 2008, at the request of the Derby Diocese. The next motion thereafter is from the Durham Diocesan Synod, on a Eucharistic prayer for children. Private Members' Motions are debated according to the number of signatures which they receive, but the Business Committee has taken the view that they should be debated only if they achieve 100 signatures. Only the motions from Mr Tom Benyon (on casinos) and from Mr Tim Cox (on Bible availability) have reached this threshold.
3. A financial comment has been prepared by the Finance Division on items of Synod business which have significant financial implications, and this will be circulated in a Notice Paper.
4. The forecast of business (annexed to this report) provides a forward look to future Groups of Sessions. The inclusion of items within the forecast provides no

guarantee that an item will be scheduled for debate and the forecast is no more than an indication of the future programme of Synod business.

Venue and timing of the February Synod

5. The February Group of Sessions will take place **in Church House, Westminster from 3.15 pm on Monday, 11 February to 5.30 pm on Thursday, 14 February.**
6. There will be meetings of the **House of Laity** (at 1 pm in the Assembly Hall) and the **House of Clergy** (at 1.30 pm in the Harvey Goodwin Suite) on Monday 11 February.

Security

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

Worship

8. A service of Holy Communion will take place in the Assembly Hall at 9.15 am on Wednesday 13 February. A time of prayer and worship will take place at the commencement of the morning sittings at 9.15 am on Tuesday and Thursday. Outline information about services in the Church House Chapel is given in the Agenda.

Order of Business

9. 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.
10. If there is no such outstanding business and an unexpected gap opens in the Synod Agenda, then unless the adjournment is carried, the Chair of the Business Committee will seek a variation in the order of business to advance an item appearing later in the Agenda. The Business Committee considers that no other business is suitable to be listed as contingency business at this Group of Sessions. Members are 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

11. Private Members' Motions are contained in Special Agenda III. Notice of any new Private Members' Motions will be published in a Notice Paper, and the motions will be available at the February Group of Sessions for signature by members (to indicate their support for a debate on them) but only if they are received no later than **5.30 pm on Monday 11 February**.

Requests for debates/amendments to motions

12. The Business Committee has agreed that, in order to allow time for preparation, the deadline for the receipt of requests to debate the Standing Orders Committee report and the **receipt of amendments to the proposed changes to the Standing Orders** should be brought forward to **5.30 pm on Friday 8 February**; the deadline for the **receipt of requests for the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure** to be debated should be brought forward to **5.30 pm on Friday 8 February**; and the deadline for receipt of amendments to the **Clergy Terms of Service legislation** (at Revision Stage) should be brought forward to **5.30 pm on Wednesday 6 February**. All the deadlines are set out together in the **Second Notice Paper**.

Details of Agenda

Introductions, welcomes, progress of legislation (Monday, 11 February)

13. There will be the usual introductions of new members and other formal announcements.

Presidential Address

14. The Archbishop of Canterbury will give a Presidential Address.

Report by the Business Committee (GS 1676)

15. This will provide the customary opportunity for members to raise points about content and shape of the Agenda for this Group of Sessions, or about the Synod's business generally. The introductory speech by the Chair of the Business Committee will include a short **demonstration of the new electronic voting system** that will be in use for the first time at this Group of Sessions. A separate note from the Business Committee sets out the Committee's instructions under Standing Order 37(f) for the conduct of divisions conducted by electronic means, and the Committee's instruction under SO 37(g) to ensure that the names of those voting, or recording an abstention, in a division conducted by electronic means are made publicly available.

Dates of November Synod in 2010

16. In February last year, the Synod agreed the following dates for 2009 and 2010:

2009: 9-13 February, 10-14 July and if required 16-18 November
2010: 8-12 February, 9-13 July and 15-17 November (inauguration of the new Synod)

17. At the recommendation of the Elections Review Group, the Business Committee has now agreed that it would be helpful for the inaugural Group of Sessions in 2010 to be held a week later, i.e. on 22-24 November. This will ease the considerable pressure on Diocesan Offices during the early part of the elections process, which dioceses have found particularly compressed. The Synod is accordingly invited to agree the revised dates for the inaugural Group of Sessions in November 2010.

Standing Orders Committee Report (GS 1677)

18. The Standing Orders Committee has considered and accepted a proposal from the Business Committee to permit electronic voting from the Assembly Hall gallery in London and the Central Hall gallery (as a consequence of the introduction of electronic voting). The Standing Orders Committee accordingly brings to the Synod for approval an amendment to the Standing Orders to this effect.

Questions

19. Under SO 105, members may address Questions to the Chairmen of the three Houses of Synod, the Secretary General, the Clerk to the Synod, the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council, the Chairman of any body answerable to the Synod through the Archbishops' Council (including Boards and Councils), the Church Commissioners, and the Chairman of any Church of England body on which the Synod is represented. **Anyone wishing to ask a question must give notice of it to reach the Clerk to the Synod by 5.30 pm on Wednesday, 30 January 2008.** The Questions Notice Paper will be distributed at the beginning of the Group of Sessions.
20. Members are entitled to ask up to two questions. '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.

Legislative Business (Tuesday, 12 February)

21. This Group of Sessions again sees a substantial amount of legislative business.
22. The most significant item is the draft legislation relating to clergy terms of service. Following the introduction of the draft legislation in February 2007, a number of amendments have been made to it in the course of its Revision

Committee Stage, including in relation to property matters (although the draft legislation still provides for the parsonages of incumbents who hold office under common tenure to vest in the diocesan parsonages board). At this Group of Sessions, after debating the Revision Committee's report, the Revision Stage will give the Synod the opportunity to consider the draft legislation clause by clause and make amendments relating to matters contained in the report.

23. Draft Amending Canon No 28, which implements the Synod's decision in February 2005 on the Ely Diocesan Synod Motion about Canon B44, will also return to the Synod for its Revision Stage.
24. As regards new legislation, the Synod will also be asked to give First Consideration to three new draft Measures. The draft Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure will amend the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986 in two ways: it will reconstitute the Fees Advisory Commission (which is responsible for making the orders relating to the fees of legal officers and ecclesiastical judges); and it will give effect to the recommendations of the Review of Parochial Fees conducted on behalf of the Deployment, Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee (DRACSC) by making new provision for parochial fees, both as regards the basis on which they are levied and the arrangements for their payment. The draft Church of England Pensions (Amendment) Measure will extend for a further seven years (to 2018) the power given to the Church Commissioners by the Church of England (Pensions) Measure 2003 to resort to capital to meet their pensions liabilities under the past service scheme. The draft Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure will, like other such Measures, make a number of uncontentious changes to ecclesiastical law.
25. Finally, now that the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 has received Royal Assent, as part of the process of implementation the Synod will be asked to approve the Code of Practice made by the House of Bishops under the Measure in relation to 'mission initiatives', to promulge Amending Canon No 27, and to re-declare the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation (as amended) as an Act of Synod.

Casinos: Private Member's Motion from Mr Tom Benyon

26. This debate provides the Synod with an opportunity of debating the subject of gambling, with specific reference to the Government's stance in relation to the opening of casinos. The debate will be informed by background papers from Mr Benyon (GS Misc 875A) and from the Mission and Public Affairs Council (GS Misc 875B).

Holy Communion (Wednesday, 13 February)

27. Holy Communion will be celebrated at 9.15 am in the Assembly Hall. The Archbishop of Canterbury will preside.

Durham Diocesan Synod Motion: Eucharistic Prayer for Children

28. The motion requests the House of Bishops to commission the expeditious preparation of a Eucharistic Prayer suitable for use on occasions when a significant number of children are present or when it is otherwise pastorally appropriate to meet the needs of children present. The Durham Diocese has noted that issues relating to suitable Eucharistic worship when the majority of those present are communicant children have become more pressing, both in the diocese and nationally. Locally, Durham Board of Education and Liturgical Committee are working together to resource Eucharistic worship in schools, and to make schools aware of the current permissions that allow flexible use of Common Worship and other liturgy. The growing number of schools admitting children to communion before Confirmation has added to the pressure for child-specific Eucharistic material.
29. The debate will be informed by background papers from the Durham Diocese (GS Misc 876A) and from the Liturgical Commission (GS Misc 876B).

Mental Health Issues: report by the Mission and Public Affairs Council

30. The Synod last held a debate on mental health in February 2003. The motion highlighted the draft Mental Health Bill then under consideration and the problem of meeting the mental health needs of people in the criminal justice system. It also requested parishes and deaneries to develop their pastoral care of people with mental health problems and welcomed the decision to produce a training resource to help them in this task.
31. Five years later, there has been important progress in some areas but the major problems remain depressingly familiar and intractable. The motion deals with the need to improve mental health services both in hospitals and in the community. It notes that the final version of the Mental Health Act 2007 contains a number of positive measures to safeguard the rights and interests of people detained for assessment and treatment, partly as a result of the campaign by the Mental Health Alliance in which the Church of England took part. It follows up the Synod's debate on criminal justice in March 2007, with a call for better treatment of people with mental disorders in the criminal justice system and their diversion from prison wherever possible.
32. Since 2003, the National Forum on Spirituality and Mental Health has enabled creative discussions to take place between members of faith groups, mental health professionals, service users and carers. The resource *Promoting Mental Health* was launched in 2005 and has been used in parishes and deaneries. The debate will enable Synod members to draw on their personal experience to aid understanding of mental health issues, to commend positive achievements in the field, and to challenge both Government and Churches to deepen their engagement with problem areas. The debate will be informed by a report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council (GS 1678).

Anglican Communion Covenant

33. In the light of the Synod debate in July, which invited the Presidents, having consulted the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council, to agree the terms of a considered response to the draft from the Covenant Design Group for submission to the Anglican Communion Office by the end of the year, the House considered a detailed draft response prepared by its Theological Group when it met in October. The Council considered the document in November. The House and the Council broadly welcomed the proposed revisions to the Draft Covenant suggested by the Group, and this document was submitted to the Presidents with a view to it being submitted to the Covenant Design Group by its end of year deadline.
34. The Archbishops have proposed that there should be a take-note debate on a report which contains their response on behalf of the Church of England, with the proposed revisions to the draft Covenant (GS 1679). By the time Synod meets the Covenant Design Group will have met to consider Provincial responses.

Crown Appointments (Thursday, 14 February)

35. In July the Synod reached some decisions in the light of *Talent and Calling* (the 'Pilling report') and of the Government's Green Paper *The Governance of Britain*. In the light of the motion passed by the Synod, the Archbishops issued a consultation document which invited by December views on a number of key points. In the light of those responses, their discussions with the Government and consultation with the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council, the Archbishops will report to the Synod with proposals as to how these appointments should in future be made (GS 1680).

International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission Report: *Growing Together in Unity and Mission: Building on Forty Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue*

36. The Council for Christian Unity will bring forward a major recent document in the area of Anglican-Roman Catholic theological dialogue: the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) report, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* (SPCK, 2007). This is circulated to the Synod with a report on it from the Council for Christian Unity (GS 1673).
37. *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* is the first major report of a largely episcopal body set up as a result of the initiative of Archbishop George Carey and Cardinal Cassidy (the then President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) in convening a meeting of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from around the world at Mississauga, Toronto in 2000. Presented as an Agreed Statement, the report harvests the doctrinal work of ARCIC, setting out areas of theological convergence and flagging up currently unresolved issues that require further work between the two communions. The statement then sets out a range of suggestions for practical collaboration between Anglican and Roman Catholic

bishops. It was used as the basis for discussion at the first joint meeting of the House of Bishops and the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales in November 2006. The Agreed Statement is open to development in the light of responses received from the Provinces of the Anglican Communion and from the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conferences around the world, with the intention that a revised text would form the basis for a joint Declaration to be made at the highest level of authority in both communions.

38. The motion invites the Synod to welcome the Agreed Statement and to commend the clear demarcation between areas of agreement and areas that remain unresolved at present. The Synod is invited to note the assessment of the statement, as set out in the CCU/FOAG report to Synod (GS 1673), and to encourage Anglicans, together with Roman Catholics, led by their bishops, to work together on appropriate practical initiatives as suggested in the report. The debate will be introduced by the Bishop of Chichester as the Chairman of the Faith and Order Advisory Group.

Detention without Charge: Report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council

39. The detention of terrorist suspects without charge has re-emerged as a controversial matter during discussion of the Government's latest Counter-Terrorism Bill. The particular issue of extending the 28-day limit on pre-charge detention illustrates a broader set of problems that arise as liberal democracies struggle with new and complex forms of international terrorism. The central dilemma is how to reconcile the demand for security from terrorist attack with the preservation of the rights and liberties of individual citizens.
40. The motion deals with three examples of this dilemma: the question of how long it is permissible to hold terrorist suspects without charge, and how due process may be observed in dealing with such cases; the use of control orders, which were devised as a means of restraining suspected terrorists whom it was impossible either to prosecute or to deport; and the legal and constitutional issues raised by the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, which the United States instituted following its capture of suspected terrorists in Afghanistan.
41. The debate will give Synod members the opportunity to reflect on the bearing of Christian beliefs on the matters of principle raised by these practices, and to consider whether they should express concern about the shifting balance being struck between security and safeguarding fundamental freedoms. It will be resourced by a report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council (GS 1681).

Bible Availability: Private Member's Motion from Mr Tim Cox

42. The motion invites the Synod to ask that anyone entering a church should have ready access to one of the versions of the Bible referred to in the House of Bishops note of 2002. The debate will be informed by a background note by

Mr Cox (GS Misc 878A). The House of Bishops' note to which the motion refers is being re-circulated as GS Misc 878B.

Prorogation

43. After farewells to two retiring diocesan bishops, the Synod will be prorogued by the Archbishop of Canterbury no later than 5.30 pm.

The work of the Business Committee

44. The Committee has considered a range of correspondence received from Synod members. This included comments on the
- various addresses and presentations given at the July Synod,
 - aspects of Synod worship,
 - standard of facilities provided by the University of York,
 - calling of speakers in debates, and
 - handling of amendments.
45. The Committee has agreed to adopt a firmer line in dealing with proposals for presentations to the Synod under Standing Order 95A, and to allow stand-alone presentations only in exceptional circumstances. It took the view that there were other means of disseminating information on work being undertaken in the church structures or by other church bodies, for example by circulating a paper or DVD, or arranging a fringe meeting. As a matter of general policy, presentations by outside speakers which serve as a preface to a debate should be combined with the introduction to the debate, so that a Synod member would then move the motion formally – thus avoiding very lengthy introductions to such debates. However, the Committee is also glad that invitations to distinguished outside speakers are extended from time to time by the Presidents under SO 112, as it takes the view that such contributions can be of significant value to the work of the Synod.
46. The Committee has also given consideration to the form of reports which are circulated to the Synod. The Committee encourages the production of concise and succinct reports, and considers that summaries at the beginning of reports are generally helpful. Detailed information may usefully be presented in annexes to reports, and may be made available electronically. The Committee takes the view that the amount of paper circulated to Synod members should be kept to an effective minimum, and is mindful of environmental considerations in the conservation of resources.
47. The Committee has begun to examine aspects of Synod worship with the new Chaplain to the Synod, Canon Carl Turner. Canon Turner will be in further dialogue with the Presidents (who are ultimately responsible for Synod worship) and the Committee in the months ahead.

48. The Committee is conscious that there has been some concern about aspects of York University as the venue for the summer meeting of the General Synod. The Committee has been in correspondence with the University and has been assured that there will be an improvement in the level of facilities and service in July 2008. In the light of that experience, the Committee will decide whether to go out for tender for an alternative venue in July 2010.
49. The Committee has been looking at the arrangements for Synod Questions in the light of its consultation with Synod members. As a first step, it has produced an accessible guide to Questions (*I have a Question: A Guide for Members of General Synod*) which it hopes members will find useful. In particular, members are urged to consider carefully whether the information which they seek could be better served by a written, rather than an oral reply. The Committee will be considering the whole subject of Questions further at its next meeting in May. As regards 'virtual' Question Time, the Committee will be reviewing the three-year experiment after November 2008, and will then take a view as to whether it should continue in the light of experience.
50. The Committee is pleased to receive comments from members on any aspect of the life and work of the Synod, and particularly any suggestions as to how its business management and procedures could be enhanced. Members should write to the Clerk to the Synod who will see that correspondence is circulated to the Committee.

On behalf of the Business Committee

Kay Garlick

January 2008

Membership of the Business Committee

The Revd Prebendary Kay Garlick (Hereford) - *Chair*

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd Trevor Willmott, Bishop of Basingstoke

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Ven Alan Hawker, Archdeacon of Malmesbury (Bristol) - *Vice-Chair*

The Revd Sue Booy (Oxford)

The Ven Alistair Magowan, Archdeacon of Dorset (Salisbury)

Elected by the House of Laity

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich)

Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester)

Mrs Rosalind O'Dowd (London)

Two members of the Archbishops' Council

Professor John Craven (Appointed)

The Revd Canon Glyn Webster (Appointed)

The Secretary to the Committee is David Williams
and the Assistant Secretary is Alastair Callcutt

Forecast of future General Synod business

One or more Private Members' Motions and Diocesan Synod Motions are customarily included in each Group of Sessions.

The forecast of business provides a forward look to the Groups of Sessions in July 2008 and beyond. There are always considerable uncertainties when looking ahead in this way, so this should not be read as more than a broad indication of the business expected to come to the Synod before the end of the present quinquennium.

July 2008

Legislation

Clergy Terms of Service legislation - Final Drafting and Final Approval

Amending Canon No 28 - Final Drafting and Final Approval

Miscellaneous Provisions Measure - Revision Stage

Church of England Pensions (Amendment) Measure - Revision Stage, Final Drafting and Final Approval

Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure - Revision Stage

Usual fees orders

Reports

The Church of the Triune God – a report by the Anglican-Orthodox International Commission

Anglican-Methodist JIC quinquennial report

ARCIC report on *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*

Climate Justice: report by Mission and Public Affairs Council

Church Commissioners' Annual Report: presentation

Elections Review Group report

Reader Ministry

Church Heritage Issues (churches and tourism): report by the Church and Cathedral Buildings Division

Appointment of auditors to the Archbishops' Council

Archbishops' Council Budget

Archbishops' Council Annual Report

Women Bishops: report from the Legislative Drafting Group (subject to House of Bishops decision in May 2008)

February 2009

Legislation

Miscellaneous Provisions Measure – Final Drafting and Final Approval

Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure – Final Drafting and Final Approval

Proposed Changes to Church Representation Rules and Clergy Representation Rules (following from the report from the Elections Review Group)

Reports

Review of Clergy Housing in Retirement

Good Childhood Project: Report by the Children's Society
Children's Strategy and Youth Strategy: progress report
Poverty in England: Report by Mission and Public Affairs Council
The Human Genome
Mission-Shaped Church: follow-up
Lambeth Conference Report
Anglican Communion Covenant: update

July 2009

Reports

Christian Stewardship
Archbishops' Council Budget
Archbishops' Council Annual Report

Liturgical business

Additional Weekday Lectionary and Amendments to Calendar, Lectionaries and Collects