

FEBRUARY 2019 GROUP OF SESSIONS

Guide to the February 2019 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 Boards and Councils, by Dioceses and by individual members of the Synod. 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 and also to act as a guide to the business scheduled.
3. This report falls into four parts:
 - Part I comments on practical arrangements for the February group of sessions
 - Part II comments on general categories of Synod business
 - Part III comments on the shape of the Agenda for the February group of sessions
 - Part IV reports on other work and recent decisions of the Business Committee.

Part I: Practical Arrangements for February group of sessions

Sessional Arrangements

4. The General Synod will be meeting at Church House, Westminster. The timings of the days are as follows:
 - 2.30 p.m. - 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday 20 February
 - 10.30 a.m./11.30 a.m. – 7.00pm on Thursday 21 February
 - 10.30 a.m. – 7.00 p.m. on Friday 22 February
 - 9.30 a.m. – 3.45 p.m. on Saturday 23 February

Synod Worship

5. The group of sessions will begin with an act of worship in the Assembly Hall. All services (apart from those taking place in the Assembly Hall) will take place in the Church House Chapel. The full details and timings of worship are listed at the start of the Agenda.
6. The Continuous Praying Presence led by the Community of St Anselm will be based in the Balcony of the Chamber, with individual members praying in the Chapel during the group of sessions. Synod members are welcome to join those praying in the Chapel whenever they wish to do so.
7. In addition, at the request of the Archbishops, there will be a short period of Bible Study in the Chamber on the morning of Friday 22 February. Supporting materials will be provided by the Chaplain.

Guests from the Anglican Communion

8. At the invitation of the Presidents, a number of senior guests from member churches of the Anglican Communion will attend this group of sessions, sitting on the floor of the Synod. The names, biographies and details of these guests will be published on a Notice Paper.
9. At present, Communion Guests do not have speaking rights at Synod meetings. The Synod will be asked at this group of sessions to agree to an amendment to the Standing Orders to allow Primates and other representatives of member churches of the Anglican Communion who have been invited by the Presidents to attend a group of sessions to speak (but not vote) at it, in the same way as the Ecumenical Representatives.
10. At this group of sessions, the visiting Primates will each be offering a brief address on the topic of Evangelism and Discipleship under Standing Order 107. They will also be involved in Synod worship and Bible study.
11. Synod members are invited to attend a Fringe Meeting hosted by the Archbishops to welcome the Communion Guests, which will take place during the group of sessions.

Part II: General Categories of Synod Business

Categories of Synod business

12. When constructing agendas, the Business Committee seeks to view the agenda as a whole and to ensure that it covers a balance of subjects, ranging from internal Synodical processes, Church business and business which concerns the Church's wider mission.
13. Synod business tends to fall into four main categories as follows.

Standing items

- This includes items such as the debate on the Business Committee Report and Synod Question Time.

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.

Ordering the life of the Church

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

The Church and the World

- Particular business which debates current issues and takes account of the way in which the Church relates to our public context.

14. 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

15. The legislative function of the General Synod is an important one. 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 legislative aspect of the Synod's work should therefore be seen as a responsibility of all its members, rather than a 'specialist subject' that can be left to those with a particular interest in it. The Business Committee therefore encourages all 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. 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)

16. Under the Standing Orders Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) must normally 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 debate. 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

17. 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 picture regarding the context to a debate or issue under discussion. In many cases, presentations are followed by debates, whether on a 'Take Note' or a more substantive motion. For example, scheduling Item 10 on "Living in Love and Faith" as a presentation both allows Dr Eeva John to speak and enables Synod members to ask questions about the process.

Part III: The Shape of the February Agenda

Standing Items of Business

18. This group of sessions will begin as usual 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.
19. The Synod will also be invited to approve the proposed dates for the 2021 – 2023 groups of sessions.
20. On the first afternoon of Synod there will also be a Presidential Address by the Archbishop of Canterbury. 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.
21. There will be a number of farewells during the group of sessions. These Farewells are to the Bishops of Norwich and Dover, the Chair of the Pensions Board and the Chief Legal Adviser to the General Synod.

Legislative Business in February

22. The legislative business will be taken on Thursday 21 February. It will include the Final Drafting/Final Approval stages for **the Church Representation and Ministers Measure** (which amongst other things will put in place a much-modernised set of Church Representation Rules) and **Amending Canon No. 39**. Synod will also take the Revision Stages for **Amending Canon No. 40** (which will put in place a new Canon to provide a legal framework for the regulation of Religious Communities) and for the **Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) (No.2) Measure** and **Amending Canon No. 41**.
23. The Synod will also be asked to approve the **Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2019**, which will make provision for parochial fees during the period 2020 to 2025. Finally, the Synod will be asked to enact **Amending Canon No. 38** (which it approved in July and which will replace the two former

Ecumenical Canons with a single new one) and to make a **Code of Practice under the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1986** in the light of the changes introduced by Amending Canon No. 38 and the Ecumenical Relations Measure 2018 (which Synod also approved in July).

Amendments to the Standing Orders

24. On afternoon of Friday 22 February the Synod will be asked to approve a number of proposed amendments to its Standing Orders, all of which are reported on in the 54th Report of the Standing Orders Committee (GS 2119).
25. The proposed amendments that have been initiated by the Committee relate to the procedure for Synod Question Time and the arrangements for filling casual vacancies in positions to which members are elected by the Synod or its Houses. The Synod's approval of these changes is being sought under the Deemed Procedure.
26. In addition to the amendment relating to Anglican Communion representatives referred to above, approval will also be sought for a number of proposed amendments to the Standing Orders that relate to the Crown Nominations Commission and which arise from recommendations in *Discerning in Obedience: a theological review of the Crown Nominations Commission* (GS 2080), which was the subject of a 'take note' debate at the July group of sessions. The rationale for those amendments is set out in *Proposed Changes to the Standing Orders relating to the Crown Nominations Commission* (GS 2120).

Ordering the Life of the Church

27. On the afternoon of Thursday 21 February, there will be presentations from the Bishops of Coventry and Newcastle who chair the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) Coordinating Group and the Pastoral Advisory Group (PAG) respectively. They will also be joined on the Synod platform by some members of some of the sub-groups working on the LLF resources. There will be an opportunity for Synod members to ask questions of the Bishops and panel members. The hope is to create more of a 'discussion' dynamic than a 'question and answer' session than in a normal Question and Answer session.

The Church and the World

28. This is business which is concerned with the relationship of the Church of England to our missional context. In a change to the Timetable published in December, the Presidents have requested the Business Committee to schedule a debate on the State of the Nation on the Saturday afternoon of General Synod. This will be an opportunity for the Synod to debate the Church's role in the current political situation. Since this item was requested after the Business Committee met in December 2018,

the Chair of the Business Committee has approved the insertion of this item on the Agenda using her delegated powers under S.O. 129(3).

29. The insertion of this item has required the timings of some items to be changed from those set out in the Timetable published in December. The Southwark Diocesan Synod Motion on Refugee Professionals is now listed as Contingency Business rather than on the main Agenda. The Leeds Diocesan Synod Motion on Disadvantaged Communities is not now listed as Contingency Business as the Southwark motion is higher up in order of precedence of Diocesan Synod Motions.
30. It was not possible for Synod to debate the report from the Evangelism Task Group in July. This is now being tabled in an updated form, together with a number of other items relating to evangelism. These include a debate on Estates Evangelism, evangelism amongst children and younger people and there will be an evangelistic dimension to the debate on mission and ministry among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities.

Part IV: Other Work of the Business Committee

Synod App and Email

31. The Business Committee has asked staff to explore the option of issuing all Synod members with a new standard General Synod email address. This would be used for all official correspondence by staff with Synod members and will be the only email address permissible for identification and voting purposes. The new Synod email address is being introduced for the following reasons:
32. It is now standard practice for elected members of legislative bodies to have their own dedicated email address in order for them to be more easily contactable by members of the public
33. At the same time, Synod members will no longer be required to share their private or work email addresses with other Synod members or members of the public
34. Synod members will be able to ensure that any mass mailings by campaigners or members of the public are sent to their official Synod email address rather than a private or work account
35. A dedicated Synod email address will make the verification of the identity of Synod members easier for the purposes voting in elections
36. It will no longer be necessary for Synod members to inform staff each time they change their email addresses
37. The new Synod email address will align more closely with the Synod App, enabling Synod members to have a dedicated log-in to private updates and information on the App which will be available to Synod members only
38. New GDPR requirements make the storage of private email addresses more complex
39. Further details on the timing of the introduction of the new Synod email address will be communicated once this scoping work and any pilot exercises are complete.

Feedback on General Synod groups of sessions

40. July 2018 was the first time that the Business Committee offered the opportunity for all Synod members to give feedback via a questionnaire which was circulated to all members shortly after the end of the group of sessions. The questionnaire covered practical matters as well as comments on the shape and content of the Agenda. It also sought comments on the seminar sessions which took place on the Saturday afternoon.

41. A full break-down of the responses received is circulated as a GS Misc paper. Some points to note, in no particular order, are as follows:

- Some concern about the length and complexity of Synod papers and the amount of time required to prepare for Synod by reading them
- Complaints about the amount of legislative business that Synod is required to handle
- Differing views on whether the Agenda should have included a debate on matters pertaining to human sexuality
- Concerns about the framework under the Standing Orders for the conduct of Synod Question time
- Generally positive views on the Safeguarding presentation in July
- Concern that the more outward-facing items on Evangelism and the NHS were shortened or dropped after other more inward-facing items (legislation) took up more time than expected on the Agenda
- Calls for more laity to be invited to address the Synod
- Generally positive feedback on the seminars, although there were some recommendations for improvements to the content and logistical arrangements
- A number of comments regarding accessibility for people with disabilities at the York group of sessions

42. In response to these points, the Business Committee has requested staff to make the following changes to the practical organisation of Synod:

Synod Papers

- A new General Synod Papers App which will be launched in February 2019. It is hoped that the functionality of this app will increase over time and that it will become a useful resource for Synod members
- All GS papers that currently exist in electronic form from 2011 onwards can now be found in the Agenda and Papers section of the Church of England website.

Inclusiveness of Synod Meetings for those with disabilities

- A number of changes have been introduced to improve the inclusivity of General Synod meetings for members and visitors:

- In preparation for July 2019, the GS Members' Booking Form has been revised to improve the section seeking accessibility requirements for those with disabilities.
- The Business Committee has published an Accessibility Statement (GS Misc 1201) setting out their own commitment to making Synod more inclusive. A document that will be shared widely to ensure that venue providers, fringe organisers, exhibitors, visiting speakers and all others who engage with the life of General Synod meet the same standards.
- The Business Committee has commissioned an independent consultant to carry out an accessibility audit at the February group of sessions, reporting back on suggested improvements for consideration at the Committee's March meeting.

Other matters

- The Business Committee has sought to ensure that the February Synod agenda has an even balance of outward-facing and Church-facing items
- As a legislative body, the General Synod's primary role is to debate legislation, and legislation will always form a significant part of the Synod Agenda.
- The Committee has endeavoured to avoid grouping too many items with similar themes together on the Agenda, although this is not always avoidable and may sometimes be desirable.
- The Business Committee has also passed some feedback onto the Panel of Chairs regarding the comments received.
- At the request of the Business Committee, the Standing Orders Committee is bringing to the Synod for approval at this group of sessions proposed amendments to the framework under the Standing Orders for Synod Question Time which are intended to address some of the issues that arose in July.
- Comments on accommodation and food at York sessions have been fed back to the University of York Conference Centre. In particular they have committed to making improvements to the WiFi service in York by the time that the Synod meets in July 2019.

43. Synod members are encouraged to complete the Feedback Questionnaire following each group of sessions so that improvements can continue to be introduced.

Speakers at July Group of Sessions

44. The Business Committee has also analysed the list of those who spoke during the formal business at the July Group of sessions. A full breakdown of numbers is circulated as a separate GS Misc document.
45. The General Synod is a public legislative body of the Established Church and the second legislative body in England. It passes legislation which becomes the law of the land. As is necessary for such a body, the General Synod has always published a full transcript of speakers in debates on its website and also in hard copy. In addition, staff have always kept a running tally of those who have spoken in debates during a group of sessions. These are shared with the Panel of Chairs during a group of sessions.
46. Since the General Synod enjoys the privilege of being a national legislative body (something which no other Church in England enjoys) the Business Committee believes that there is a duty of public accountability for all business which is transacted there. Given that the names of those who have spoken in debates are already in the public domain in the Record of Synod Business, the Business Committee has taken a decision for reasons of full transparency to publish the lists of those who have spoken in debates at the last group of sessions as a GS Misc document.
47. The Committee welcomes feedback from members on whether this information is helpful.
48. Key points to note are as follows:
 - The tally is calculated by hand during the group of sessions and therefore may be subject to some minor errors which can be checked against the Report of Proceedings published on the Synod web page.
 - The number of times members have spoken includes those that have spoken in debates; asked a supplementary during Questions; asked a question in a presentation and those who raised points of order. It does not include those who spoke whilst acting as Chair, or those who are introducing a motion or amendment.
 - The analysis shows that the Panel of Chairs called a representative number of speakers from each House, with a slight over representation of the House of Laity.
 - Two thirds of General Synod (67%) did not speak in a debate, presentation or Questions.
 - One member of General Synod spoke nine times, two spoke seven times, one spoke six times, four spoke five times, eight spoke four times, ten spoke three times, thirty-two spoke twice each. 100 members spoke once each during the group of sessions.

Pattern of meetings of February Synods in London

49. In Item 3, the Synod will be invited to vote to approve the dates for future Synod meetings for the period 2021 – 2023.
50. In February 2018 the Business Committee agreed with the Presidents to experiment with meeting on a Saturday in London. The purpose of this experiment was to test whether meeting partly over a week-end was more convenient for current Synod members (or those individuals who may wish to stand for Synod at a future date) who have work or other commitments during the week. This is the second time that the General Synod will have met on a Saturday in London.
51. The Business Committee carried out a survey of existing Synod members to ascertain their views on this experiment. The full results of the survey are set out in GS 2113. The Business Committee considered these survey results very carefully. As a result, they have decided to offer a mix of dates which include meeting over a week-end and meeting during the week to ensure that no particular group of Synod members is inconvenienced on a consistent basis.
52. The new Synod will be able to vote in 2021 on the pattern of dates for the second half of the new Quinquennium and will at that point be able to take a view on the longer term pattern of London Synod meetings based on up to five years' experience of experimenting with different meeting timings.

Accessibility Arrangements at General Synod

53. The Business Committee has now published their statement on Accessibility (GS Misc 1201).
54. In recognising that there is still work to be done to ensure all members feel included in the life of the General Synod, the Business Committee has arranged for an accessibility audit this February. The auditor will be observing sessions, fringe meetings and will be available for conversations in the Hoare Memorial Hall during breaks. There will also be set drop-in sessions if members wish to discuss any matters of accessibility at General Synod. The times and location of these drop-in sessions will be available on a Notice Paper and will also be posted on the Notice Board by the Information Desk.

Work of the Elections Review Group

55. An update on progress made by the Elections Review Group (ERG) on online elections to General Synod in 2020, was brought to the Business Committee at their December meeting. This update can be found in GS Misc 1214.

Record of Business Done

56. 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.

57. In addition, the Business Committee publishes a running record of the business transacted at General Synod during the current Quinquennium, with updates on subsequent developments in relation to individual items. For the most recent update, please refer to GS Misc 1207.

Business Committee Policies

58. The Business Committee has a number of policies covering various aspects of Synod's activities. 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>

59. The Business Committee reviews its policies annually at its March meeting and updates them as necessary. Synod members may wish to offer feedback on any of the policies to the Business Committee in the relevant section of the Feedback Form.

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

Chair of the Business Committee

January 2019

**Membership of the Business Committee
February 2019**

Chair

The Revd Canon Sue Booyes

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

VACANCY

The Secretary to the Committee is the Clerk to the Synod Dr Jacqui Philips and the Assistant Secretary is Ms Claudette Brown.

**Forecast of future General Synod business
July 2019 and beyond**

July 2019

Legislative Business

- C of E (Miscellaneous Provisions) (No 2) Measure – Final Drafting and Final Approval
- Cathedrals Measure – First Consideration
- Amending Canon No 39 – Enactment
- Amending Canon No. 40 – Final Drafting/Final Approval
- Amending Canon No. 41 – Final Drafting/Final Approval
- Order under the Legislative Reform Measure
- Usual Fees Orders (deemed)

Other Items

- “Setting God’s People Free: Reports from the Learning Communities”
- Presentation on “*Mission-Shaped Church and Fresh Expressions 15 years on*”
- Oxford DSM on “Review of the Role of the Crown Nominations Commission”
- Presentation followed by a Debate on a Motion from the Ministry and Public Affairs Council on Artificial Intelligence
- Presentation followed by a Debate on a Motion from the Ministry and Public Affairs Council on Armed Forces Chaplaincy
- *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* (Anglican-Methodist Covenant): Debate on a motion to commence legislative work
- Southwark DSM on “Refugee Professionals”
- Clergy Wellbeing – proposed Covenant and Act of Synod

Dr Jacqui Philips
Clerk to the Synod
January 2019