

GENERAL SYNOD

Summary of Decisions by the House of Bishops and Delegated Committees

This Summary of Decisions includes a summary of decisions made by the House of Bishops and by all Committees of the House.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS (HOB)

House of Bishops, 15 - 17 May 2019, Bishopthorpe Palace.

The matters reported below were taken in Committee of the whole House under SO 14.

1. The House endorsed the work of the Brexit Group in drafting resources, engaging with the laity.
2. The House agreed that there should be an action plan to take forward changes to the Clergy Discipline Measure and agreed that minor legislative changes be considered under the Legislative Reform Measure.
3. The House agreed that the report on interchangeability of Ministries with the Methodist Church should be brought to Synod in July and requested that the Synod debate be framed to enable the divergence of views in House to be reflected.
4. The House approved the outline of the training material for the Ministry of Reconciliation and the role description for the diocesan adviser, or teams of advisers. The House delegated approval of any detailed changes to these materials to the National Safeguarding Steering Group.
5. The House agreed that the Living in Love and Faith work to date should be presented to the College of Bishops, and that there be further work on it at the December meeting.
6. The House agreed that the published print version of "Christian Initiation" in Common Worship should not include the pastoral guidance published in December 2018 on the use of the Affirmation of Baptismal Faith; but the volume should include a cross-reference to the guidance on the Church of England website.
7. The House agreed that the current guidance for same-sex civil partnerships should be reviewed to take account of the introduction of opposite-sex civil partnerships and agreed that there should be a small episcopal working group to consider this, including members from PAG and the LLF Coordinating Group.
8. The House endorsed the proposals of the Triennium Funding Working Group.
9. The House agreed there should be an independent review into the circumstances following the Church Buildings Review and lessons to be learned. The House agreed to ask the Archbishops to approve the terms of reference and appointment of the reviewer, and suggested that the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners do likewise. The House urged the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners to implement in full all the recommendations

of the review. It urged the Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop of York to conduct a review of national governance structures in the Church.

10. The House took note of the update from the Implementation and Dialogue Group.
11. The House approved the draft Ministerial Discernment Framework and agreed to pilot both residential and non-residential assessment panels.
12. The House approved the Terms of Reference and Instrument of Delegation for the House of Bishops Standing Committee.
13. The House approved the Draft Clergy Discipline Commission Report.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS STANDING COMMITTEE (HBSC)

House of Bishops Standing Committee, 13 March 2019, Church House, Westminster, London

The following decisions were taken:

14. The Archbishop of York's office agreed to convene a meeting of the convenors of the regional Bishops' meetings for the Northern Province.
15. The Standing Committee agreed the role description for the Adviser on Reconciliation with one amendment.
16. The Standing Committee requested that the 2014 House of Bishops Pastoral Guidance on Same Sex Marriage together with a paper on the topic from the Readers Council be re-issued to the House for consideration at the December meeting.
17. The Standing Committee requested that the paper on Bishops' See Houses, with some drafting amendments, be circulated to Bishops' offices to share with their staff and families and to return comments to the Church Commissioners. The Standing Committee requested that the paper as revised following the consultation with a report of the consultation exercise, be tabled for the December House Agenda.
18. The Standing Committee considered the operation and oversight of the House, the College and Bishops' regional groups and delegated Committees of the House and requested the Secretary to the House of Bishops, the Bishop at Lambeth and the Archbishops' Chiefs of Staff to undertake further discussion on the operation and working relationships of these various bodies.
19. The Standing Committee requested the Secretary to the House of Bishops to look into arrangements for improving the joint working between the Archbishops' Council, Church Commissioners and the House of Bishops Standing Committee.
20. The Standing Committee agreed the new Guidelines for classification of House of Bishops papers and those of its Delegated Committees.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS DELEGATION COMMITTEE (HBDC)

House of Bishops Delegation Committee, 27 March 2019 at Church House, London

The following decisions were taken:

21. The Committee noted that the Bishop of Horsham's impending Witness Statement to IICSA in early April required the disclosure of documents relating to

the Church of England's consideration of the Seal of the Confessional (including the Working Party's Report) allowing for the fact that some of these were still in draft form.

22. The Committee agreed that the training materials for the Seal of the Confessional should form part of IME Phase 2 but recommended that rather than it applying to all clergy, the House should consider a system akin to the Faculties in the Roman Catholic Church whereby only clergy authorised by the Bishop should hear confessions; and that this authorisation would be dependent on those clergy having undertaken this training. If agreed, this module would be applicable retrospectively to those clergy.
23. The Committee noted the proposals from the Legislative Reform Scoping Group as work in progress.
24. The Committee discussed the proposed changes to the Clergy Capability Procedure and it was agreed that it was not helpful to have a separate appraisal process. The Committee noted that appraisal against a role description needed to be part of MDR and role descriptions should be provided but it was important to avoid unintentionally moving in the direction of employment.

NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING STEERING GROUP (NSSG)

National Safeguarding Steering Group, 11 April 2019, Lambeth Palace, London

The following decisions were made:

25. The NSSG requested staff to map changes to the National Safeguarding Team Business Plan to the Risk Register.
26. The NSSG noted the proposed work plan for revising the Clergy Discipline Measure and requested a further update for the NSSG meeting in July.
27. The NSSG requested that the NST undertake further work and consideration of the proposals for an Ombudsperson.
28. The NSSG received the draft training and development framework for the Ministry of Reconciliation, and commended the practice guidance for publication and implementation.
29. The NSSG approved the second Past Cases Review Guidance note, agreeing that the Chair of the Past Cases Review Project Management Board, Bishop Mark Sowerby, may authorise adjusting amendments following survivor reference group contributions.
30. The NSSG reviewed the Terms of Reference for the National Safeguarding Panel and agreed to approve this by correspondence.

DEVELOPMENT AND APPOINTMENTS GROUP (DAG), 22-23 May 2019

The following decisions were made:

31. DAG agreed to explore the possibilities of Senior Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) participants taking part in missions in Cathedral contexts.
32. DAG agreed to remind diocesan bishops of the importance of supporting the SLDP participants from their dioceses.

33. DAG agreed to pilot a revised MDR process for Diocesan Bishops in 2020.
34. DAG agreed to deliver a new Suffragan Bishop Induction programme at the end of 2019/early 2020.
35. DAG endorsed the paper outlining the process for managing safeguarding concerns which emerge during a senior appointments process.

William Nye LVO
Secretary to the House of Bishops
June 2019