

GENERAL SYNOD
THE CHURCH REPRESENTATION RULES (AMENDMENT) RESOLUTION 2019

Explanatory notes

The Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2019 amends the Church Representation Rules. The amendments ensure that the number of lay persons who form part of the worshipping community involved in a mission initiative in a diocese (under Part 7 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011) is included in the calculation of the number of seats to be allocated to that diocese in the House of Laity of the General Synod.

The amendments provide for the establishment, revision and renewal of rolls for certain mission initiatives in each diocese. The numbers on each roll are to be notified to the diocesan secretary who in turn certifies the numbers to the Clerk to the General Synod.

Background

1. The Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 contained provision enabling the bishop of a diocese to make an order, known as a bishop's mission order (BMO), endorsing and making provision for a mission initiative. The purpose of a mission initiative is "through fostering or developing a form of Christian community, to promote or further the mission of the Church or any aspect of it". The relevant provisions are now consolidated in Part 7 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.
2. Initially, mission initiatives were seen as essentially temporary or transitional arrangements. The legislation originally provided for a BMO to operate only for a limited period which could not initially exceed five years. Before the end of that period, the initiative had to be reviewed and a decision taken by the bishop whether to make a further BMO continuing the mission initiative. Any continuation was for a further limited period of not more than five years. Following a further review, the bishop could make a further order continuing the mission initiative without limitation of time; but only if the bishop considered that there were no other suitable means by which the mission initiative or its objectives could be achieved.
3. The Mission and Pastoral etc. (Amendment) Measure 2018 amended the provisions relating to mission initiatives. It is now possible for a BMO to be of unlimited duration from the outset, or following its first review. And in the case of a BMO of limited duration, there is no longer any need for the bishop to be of the view that there are no other suitable means by which the mission initiative or its objectives can be achieved before deciding to continue it indefinitely.

4. The result is that mission initiatives are now an established and permanent feature of the way in which the Church of England carries out its mission. Many mission initiatives are now well established and, in practice, function as non-parochial local churches. Some have worshipping communities as large as, or larger, than many parish churches. The Annex contains details of a sample of some larger mission initiatives by way of illustration.
5. The new Church Representation Rules contained in Schedule 1 to the Church Representation and Ministers Measure (expected to come into operation on 1st January 2020) now make mandatory provision for the representation of mission initiatives on deanery synods if the bishop so directs. They also make those who are declared by the leader of a mission initiative to be part of the worshipping community involved in the initiative to be eligible for election to diocesan synods and to the House of Laity. (This provision, involving declarations by leaders of mission initiatives, was based on equivalent existing provisions for those who worship in cathedrals and Royal Peculiars.)
6. The new Church Representation Rules, however, do not provide for the numbers of laity worshipping in mission initiatives to be taken into account when apportioning seats in the House of Laity of the General Synod. The issue was not considered by the Revision Committee for the Church Representation and Ministers Measure (because no proposals were made to the Committee on this point).
7. In the light of the way in which mission initiatives have developed, it seems anomalous that those who habitually worship in them are not taken into account in calculating how seats in the House of Laity are apportioned to dioceses.
8. A further anomaly is that as matters stand, the clergy who are licensed to exercise ministry in mission initiatives are taken into account in apportioning seats in the lower houses of the Convocations among the dioceses. There is no obvious reason why the numbers of clergy involved in initiatives should be taken into account when apportioning seats, but not the numbers of laity who worship in them.

The Amendment Resolution

9. In the light of the considerations set out above the Business Committee has brought forward the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2019. The purpose of the Resolution is to amend the Church Representation Rules so that the number of laity who worship in mission initiatives, as well as those on parish electoral rolls, are taken into account when calculating the number of seats in the House of Laity that are to be apportioned to a diocese.
10. The policy to which the Amendment resolution gives effect is built around two principal criteria:
 - a. the means of establishing numbers for mission initiatives should, as nearly as possible, result in parity with the existing provisions relating to

parishes – which means establishing a formal roll with equivalent eligibility criteria to those for parish rolls;

- b. a roll should be established for a mission initiative only if the bishop directs that that should happen. This is to ensure that light-touch mission initiatives which do not have a formal ‘membership’ and would not welcome this sort of bureaucracy would not need to be included; but mission initiatives that were in effect local churches could be.

11. The effect of the provisions of the Amendment Resolution are as follows.

Paragraph 1 Citation and commencement

12. Paragraph 1 provides for the citation of the Amendment Resolution (the name by which it is formally to be known) and for its commencement. Paragraphs 1 and 2 come into force on 1st September 2019. Paragraph 3 comes into force immediately after the commencement of the new Church Representation Rules contained in the Church Representation and Ministers Measure.

Paragraph 2 Mission initiative rolls: provision for 2019

13. Paragraph 2 amends the old Church Representation Rules, i.e. the Rules in the form they will take until the new Rules contained in the Church Representation and Ministers Measure come into force in 2020. These amendments ensure that the numbers of lay persons forming part of the worshipping community of a mission initiative can be collected, notified and certified in the period from September to November 2019, in time for the calculation of the number of seats there are to be in the elections to the House of Laity in 2020.

14. Where a bishop’s mission order is in force, the leader of the mission initiative must, at the direction of the bishop, establish and maintain a roll called a “mission initiative roll”. If a mission initiative is represented on a deanery synod the bishop must give a direction. In any other case, the bishop has a discretion whether to do so.

15. If a direction is to be given by the bishop, it must be given on or before 15th September 2019; and the leader of the mission initiative must, no later than 30th October 2019, give the secretary of the diocesan synod written notification of the number of names there are on the mission initiative roll as at the date on which the establishment of the roll was completed. The diocesan secretary is required to certify the number of names on mission initiative rolls in the dioceses to the Clerk to the Synod by 30th November 2019.

16. A person is eligible to have his or her name on a mission initiative roll if he or she—

- a. is baptised,
- b. is aged 16 or over, and
- c. has made a written application to have his or her name on the roll.

17. An application to be included on a mission initiative roll must include a declaration that the applicant–
 - a. either is a member of the Church of England or a Church in communion with it or is a member in good standing of a Church which is not in communion with the Church of England but which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and
 - b. has habitually attended public worship as part of the worshipping community involved in a mission initiative during the preceding six months.

Paragraph 3 Mission initiative rolls: provision for 2020 onwards

18. Paragraph 3 amends the new Church Representation Rules, i.e. the Rules in the form they will take when Schedule 1 to the Church Representation and Ministers Measure comes into force at the beginning of 2020. These amendments ensure that the numbers on the rolls for mission initiatives will be included in the calculation to be made before the resolution allocating seats is passed by the General Synod at its group of sessions in February 2020.
19. The amendments also require rolls for mission initiatives to continue to be established and maintained and for the numbers on the rolls to continue to be notified and certified.

Legislative process

20. A two-thirds majority in each House is required for the Amendment Resolution to pass.
21. If passed, it will be laid before both Houses of Parliament and could be annulled by either House within 40 days.

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A sample of large BMOs

The table below was produced by the Research and Statistics Unit in response to a request for "... a few examples (preferably from several different dioceses, at least one in northern province) of large BMOs, with information about their size / attendance"

The table shows figures as submitted by the BMO (possibly augmented by conversations with diocesan colleagues) as part of Statistics for Mission 2017. This shows a selection of the larger BMOs that submitted figures in 2017, aiming to include a broad range of dioceses from across the country. In some cases the reported figures are likely to be approximations or best estimates. Full figures are available if required.

All figures are rounded to the nearest 10 people.

Name	Code	Diocese	Worshipping community, 2017	Average weekly attendance, October 2017	Usual Sunday attendance, 2017	Notes
Buckshaw Village Church	703010	Blackburn	190	140	130	Figures first reported in 2017.
Immanuel BMO	710011	Chichester	120	90	100	Figures first reported in 2016. Reported an Electoral Roll of 100 people in 2017.
Exeter Network Church	715010	Exeter	370	220	220	Figures first reported in 2015.
KXC (King's Cross)	723015	London	690	510	550	Figures first reported in 2015. Reported an Electoral Roll of 580 people in 2017.
Euston Church	723023	London	300	310	300	Figures first reported in 2015. Reported an Electoral Roll of 170 people in 2017.
Harbour Church, Portsmouth	729011	Portsmouth	400	300	300	Figures first reported in 2016.
Christ Church Endcliffe	735013	Sheffield	200	170	150	Figures first reported in 2017.
Trinity Church Nottingham	738010	Southwell & Nottingham	200	180	210	Figures first reported in 2017.
The Eldwick Church	746014	Leeds	110	80	70	Figures first reported in 2016. Reported an Electoral Roll of 100 people in 2017.

