

FEBRUARY 2020 GROUP OF SESSIONS
Guide to the February 2020 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 sessions are as follows:
 - 2:30 pm – 7:00 pm on Monday 10 February
 - 10.30 am – 7:00 pm on Tuesday 11 February
 - 10.00 am – 7:00 pm on Wednesday 12 February
 - 9:30 am – 1:00 pm on Thursday 13 February

Synod Worship

5. The group of sessions will begin with an act of worship in the Chamber. All services, apart from those taking place in the Chamber, 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. There will be a Bible Study in the Chamber on the morning of Wednesday, 12 February. Supporting materials will be provided by the Chaplain.

Part II: General Categories of Synod Business

Categories of Synod business

8. When constructing agendas, the Business Committee seeks to view the agenda as a whole and to ensure that it covers a balance of subjects. 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.

9. Inevitably, some of the subjects which come under these areas may overlap.

Legislative Business

10. The General Synod's main role as set out in its constitution is to consider and pass legislation by Measure, Canon and Act of Synod. As the national legislative body of the Church, the Synod's role, powers and constitution are different from that of other Church bodies such as a PCC or a Diocesan Synod. A note on the Synod's legislative process has been uploaded to the Synod App and to the General Synod web pages on the Church of England website.

Handling of Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) and Private Members' Motions (PMMs)

11. Under the General Synod's Standing Orders, Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) must normally to be considered by the Synod in the order in which notice is received of them.

12. Private Members Motions (PMMs) may be scheduled by the Business Committee for debate providing that they have attracted a minimum of 100 signatures during three groups of sessions. Those PMM's which have not attracted a sufficient number of signatures during that time are withdrawn.
13. When deciding when to schedule PMMs and DSMs for debate, the Committee also takes into account other factors, such as the timeliness and appropriateness of the subjects being debated.

Part III: The Shape of the February Agenda

Standing Items of Business

14. The February group of sessions will begin 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.

Handling of Synod Question Time in November 2019 and February 2020

15. Mindful of the exceptionally high number of questions in February and July 2019, the Business Committee decided to use its powers under Standing Order 117(1) to give members the opportunity to submit questions for written answer between groups of sessions. This was done in November 2019.
16. For the current group of sessions, Question time is taking place in the afternoon of the first day of business.

Legislative Business in February

17. There are 11 items of legislative business. The Business Committee has determined that 5 of them are suitable for the deemed approval procedure under SO 71, while a further item is automatically subject to that procedure. Those 6 items will therefore not be debated unless a member gives due notice by 5.30 pm on Monday 10 February that the member wishes any of them to be debated, or wishes – where permissible – to give notice of an amendment. The other 5 items require debate and have been allocated places in the Agenda.
18. The legislation that has been allocated time for debate includes the **Cathedrals Measure** and the **Diocesan Boards of Education Measure**. Both received First Approval in July 2019 and return, having been considered for revision in committee, for the Revision Stage in full Synod. In each case, the revision committee has made substantial amendments in the light of proposals received from members.
19. **The Channel Islands Measure** provides for the transfer of the Channel Islands from the Diocese of Winchester to the Diocese of Salisbury as recommended in the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on the Channel Islands published in October 2019. Because of the particular nature of this Measure and the fact that it is desirable to implement the Commission's recommendation expeditiously, it is proposed that all of the stages for the Measure are taken at this group of sessions.

20. SO 53 (Revision without prior Revision Committee) provides for a Measure to proceed, following First Consideration, to the Revision Stage in full Synod without a prior Revision Committee Stage. The Business Committee considered that the Channel Islands Measure was suitable for this procedure. That was because it considered that–
- a. the policy question involved is basically whether or not the Channel Islands should be transferred to the Diocese of Salisbury; and
 - b. detailed provision dealing with the transfer will not be contained in the Measure (because it will be made by Order in Council).

There would, therefore, be very little (if anything) of substance for a Revision Committee to consider.

21. SO 64 (Final Approval) allows the Final Approval Stage to be taken at the same group of sessions as the Revision Stage unless 40 or more members object.
22. The position therefore is that it is in order for all stages of a Measure to be taken at a single group of sessions. Whether to allow that to happen is in the hands of the members of the Synod. The Business Committee has accordingly allowed time for all stages for the Measure to be taken at this group of sessions.
23. **The Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing Act of Synod 2020** will result in the Covenant for Clergy Wellbeing, adopted by the Synod at the July 2019 group of sessions, being “published formally as the embodiment of the will or opinion of the Church of England as expressed by the whole body of the Synod” under SO 41.
24. **The Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2020** makes changes to the Church Representation Rules to facilitate online voting at the elections later this year and to make better provision for election appeals. In order to pass, it must secure a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in each House.
25. The Amendment Resolution is related to four other items of business: The House of Laity Election Rules 2020; The Clergy Election Rules 2020; The Convocations (Election to Upper House) Rules 2020; and The Single Transferable Vote Rules 2020. These four sets of Rules are also concerned with making provision for online voting and election appeals. The Business Committee has determined that these four items should be subject to the procedure for deemed approval under SO 71.
26. **The Care of Cathedrals (Amendment) Rules 2020** are also for deemed approval. They replace existing provision in the Care of Cathedrals Rules 2006 that is concerned with compiling and maintaining inventories of objects belonging to cathedrals that are of special architectural, archaeological, historic or artistic interest.
27. **The Draft Scheme Amending the Diocese in Europe Constitution** is automatically subject to the deemed approval procedure. The amendments it makes to the Diocese’s Constitution relate to the licensing of clergy, and bring the arrangements in the Diocese in Europe more closely (though not entirely) in line with the other dioceses of the Church of England.

Ordering the Life of the Church

28. On the afternoon of Tuesday, 11 February, there will be a presentation by the Bishop of Coventry, who chairs the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) project, and the Bishop of Newcastle, who chairs the Pastoral Advisory Group. They will be joined by some members of the LLF group. There will be an opportunity for Synod members to engage in discussion with the Bishops and panel members. The hope is to promote the use of the Pastoral Principles, clarify plans for LLF launch and beyond, and share the value of deep engagement with the subject and with one another.
29. On the morning of Wednesday, 12 February, 'Safeguarding: response to recommendations in IICSA May 2019 investigation report' will be on the floor for debate. This motion presents an important set of recommendations not previously considered by Synod and seeks Synod's endorsement of the Archbishops' Council's response. There is likely to be more Synod engagement on this matter in the future when the second-stage report of the IICSA investigation is published.
30. On the afternoon of Wednesday, 12 February, Synod will also be debating a motion on 'Children and Youth Ministry'. It presents the factors that are common to growth in churchgoers under 16 and urges immediate investment in work in this area. While key findings can be found in the cover sheet, a detailed set of data is available in the paper for Synod members' closer engagement with this significant matter.
31. The Implementation and Dialogue Group of the House of Bishops would like to engage further with General Synod on what has been done to educate and inform the clergy and laity on the House of Bishops Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles before finalising their report. The Group will be hosting a fringe meeting and will look to present their final report at a future Group of Sessions.

The Church and the World

32. Synod will be debating a motion from the Ministry and Public Affairs Council on 'Climate Emergency and Carbon Reduction Targets'. Recognising the theological underpinning of environmental work and the practical impact of climate change to the world, the motion proposes a process for all parts of the Church of England to regularly review its environmental work and achieve zero emissions by 2050 the latest.
33. Synod will be debating an important Diocesan motion from Leeds on 'Disadvantaged Communities'.
34. There will be debates on three Private Members' Motions: 'End to Paupers' Funerals', 'Windrush Commitment and Legacy', and 'Legal Aid Reform'.

Part IV: Other Work of the Business Committee

Synod App and Email address

35. The introduction of a permanent Synod App in 2019 was welcomed by Synod members. Additional functions of the App are being introduced on a gradual basis

with each group of sessions. This February, updates to the App include an automatic confirmation message after a Request to Speak is received and an updated list of ‘Dioceses and Constituencies’ on the form.

36. The App also contains the Synod Survival Guide and other introductory material prepared for new members at the start of each quinquennium.

Environmental Update

37. The Business Committee considered the Environmental Working Group (EWG)’s suggestions, which seek not only to reduce carbon footprint and to demonstrate good environmental practice, but also to make care for creation an integral part of Synod’s spiritual life. While some of the EWG’s suggestions are already in place, the Business Committee is committed to consider other suggestions and plan their effective implementation whenever possible.

38. Synod members are reminded that the default method to receive papers is electronic – printed copies of Synod papers are provided upon request. Currently, 217 Synod members receive papers electronically; 238 members receive printed papers.

39. The post-Synod survey will include a section on the environment. Synod members are strongly encouraged to suggest ways for the Synod to improve in this aspect.

40. While the Business Committee encourages Synod members to calculate and offset their carbon footprints, we welcome and look forward to the work of the Church House Research and Statistics Team and their partners in piloting the new Energy Footprint Tool.

Feedback on General Synod Groups of Sessions

41. The Business Committee has now put in place a regular process of requesting Synod members to fill in a post Synod questionnaire to give their feedback on the most recent group of sessions. Some key findings from July 2019 and the Business Committee’s response are set out below.

COMMENT	BUSINESS COMMITTEE RESPONSE
Debates on amendments take over time from debate of the main motion	In the March 2020 Business Committee meeting, the Business Committee will review the current practice of placing amendments before the main motion. It will also review the power of the chair in moderating debates
Insufficient time for legislative agenda	The Chief Legal Officer and the Business Committee are aware of the issue. It is in part due to the Business Committee’s decision not to hold evening sessions in York, for the wellbeing of the Synod members as well as staff members. The Business Committee will study this issue in depth at its March 2020 meeting.

A more visible continuous praying presence in York	While the presence of those supporting continuous prayer during Synod session, mostly from the Community of St Anselm, can be very visible in London, this is not the case in York in the same way. The numbers are fewer and some involved prefer to pray in the Berrick Saul Lecture Hall and the local churches, although some were visible at the non-voting area. Details of the continuous praying presence are laid out in a Notice Paper.
More clarity on the use of photography at Synod	Guidance on the use of photography during Synod will be issued as a Notice Paper at the February group of sessions.
Very positive reception of the Synod App	Further improvements to the App have now been agreed.

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

Accessibility of Synod Meetings

43. Members are referred to the Business Committee's statement on Accessibility (GS Misc 1201) which may be viewed in the Members' Resources section of the Synod web page at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/GS%20Misc%201201%20.pdf>.

List of Speakers at General Synod meetings

44. In recent groups of sessions, the Business Committee has introduced the practice of publishing the list gathered by the Legal Office of all those who spoke in debates and other items on the floor of Synod. This information is already public in the form of the Report of Proceedings and it is also used by the Panel of Chairs. The Business Committee took the view that it would be helpful for Synod members to have this information available to them in a user-friendly form.

45. The List of Speakers is circulated as a GS Misc 1236 for information.

Work of the Elections Review Group

46. The Elections Review Group met in September 2019 to discuss the results from the consultation on the proposal to introduce term limits for lay members of deanery synods. There were 928 respondents to the consultation and it is proposed that a proposal be presented to the July 2020 Group of Sessions. General Synod will be invited to consider this issue on Tuesday morning, in advance of any legislation being presented to the July 2020 Group of Sessions.

47. The ERG has also considered the draft election rules for the new quinquennium and these will be presented at the February Group of Sessions.

Record of Business Done

48. 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.
49. 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 1237.

Business Committee Policies

50. 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>
51. 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 2020

Membership of the Business Committee

February 2020

Chair

The Revd Canon Sue Booy

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

Mr Joseph Diwakar

The Secretary to the Committee is the Acting Clerk to the Synod, the Revd Canon Dr Jeremy Worthen and the Assistant Secretary is Dr Alvin Siu Hei Lee.

Forecast of future General Synod business

July 2020

Legislative Business

- Cathedrals Measure – Final Drafting and Final Approval
- Diocesan Boards of Education Measure – Final Drafting and Final Approval
- Church Representation and Amendment Resolution following the consultation on terms of office for Deanery Synod members
- Regulations under section 2, Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 20[20] (national ministry register)
- Church Commissioners' Funding Order for the Churches Conservation Trust 2021-24 (deemed)
- Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2020 (Deemed Business)
- Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2020 (Deemed business)

Other Items

- Crown Nominations Commission Elections Review Group Report
- Living in Love and Faith
- Motion on Religious Liberty (TBC)
- Implementation and Dialogue Group Report
- Consideration of the latest Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) statement titled 'Walking Together on the Way,' which considers structures of decision making and the matters that hold us together in communion (TBC)
- 1 Private Members' Motion Review of the Five Guiding Principles
- 2021 Budget and Apportionment
- Renewal of mandate of the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group for the next Quinquennium

November 2020

Legislative Business

- Amending Canon No. 40 – for Enactment (5 mins)
- Legislative Reform Orders relating to Church Commissioners and Church of England Pensions Board governance

The Revd Canon Dr Jeremy Worthen
Acting Clerk to the Synod
January 2020

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