

GENERAL SYNOD

Deanery Synods Term Limits

Introduction

1. This paper provides an update on the outcome of the consultation process which the Elections Review Group was asked to undertake relating to the inclusion in the new Church Representation Rules of a provision which would limit parochial lay representatives on deanery synods to two consecutive terms of three years, although the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) would be able to disapply that limit.
2. It also provides the recommendation of the Elections Review Group which it invites Synod to consider.

Background

3. The consultation was circulated to members of the General Synod, area and rural deans, chairs of the houses of laity of diocesan and deanery synods, diocesan secretaries, PCC secretaries and the National Deaneries Network on 2nd May 2019. The deadline for responses was 10th July 2019.
4. The Secretariat would like to acknowledge the support of the National Deaneries Network, Diocesan Lay Chairs Network and Diocesan staff for circulating this consultation to interested parties and for encouraging substantive engagement with the questions posed in the consultation document.
5. The consultation document provided seven options for respondents to consider. These were as follows:
 - Option one: The term limit as provided for in the new Rules
 - Option two: Reversing the default position so that there would be no term limit unless the APCM resolved to impose it
 - Option three: Increasing the number of consecutive terms which could be served, and what the new number should be
 - Option four: Giving the APCM power to specify what the term limit should be in that parish
 - Option five: Giving deanery synods power to impose a deanery-wide term limit
 - Option six: Giving diocesan synods power to impose a diocesan-wide term limit
 - Option seven: No term limit
6. Respondents were invited to rank the options according to order of preference, and to provide further comments.

Responses

7. By the close of the consultation, the Secretariat received responses from 928 individuals, this included:
 - 391 PCC Secretaries
 - 37 PCC members
 - 137 lay chairs of deanery synods
 - 128 members of deanery synods

GENERAL SYNOD

- 46 area and rural deans
 - 71 members of General Synod
 - 48 Churchwardens
 - 20 members of the National Deanery Network
 - 5 Diocesan Secretaries
 - 17 clergy
 - 1 Bishop
 - 6 Archdeacons
 - 10 lay chairs of diocesan synod
8. It was noted that there were some respondents that held more than one role, and they have been counted within all the sector groups that they responded that they held. There was the opportunity for respondents to submit their response anonymously, so some did not provide personal details when responding.
 9. The Secretariat received responses from 39 dioceses. There were no stated responses from the dioceses of Coventry, Durham and Sodor and Man. However, it is possible that these dioceses were represented in the anonymous returns.

Quantitative Responses

10. The 928 respondents rated the options according to their preferences. In some cases, these were consolidated responses from the parishes, but the majority of responses reflected individual opinions.
11. The rankings were analysed using STV software and the results can be found in Annex One. There were 11 forms returned which were unable to be ranked using the STV software, as these ranked more than one option as the same number.
12. The most popular option from the respondents was **option two: reversing the default position so that there would be no term limit unless the APCM resolved to impose it**, closely followed by **option seven: no term limit**. The analysis was based on all respondents.
13. Following the request by the Elections Review Group to undertake a review of responses based on different constituencies, analysis was done on the area and rural deans which led to the same outcome as above.

Qualitative Responses

14. In addition to the ranking of the options, respondents were invited to provide additional comments and there were 674 respondents which provided additional information.
15. This feedback was analysed and there were a number of similar themes highlighted by the responses.
16. The most common comment made by respondents was that limited terms of office for Deanery Synod lay members could lead to some Deanery Synods not being able to replace retiring members. This was related to the second most common comment which stated that the efficacy of Deanery Synods could be undermined by losing experienced members. Several respondents

GENERAL SYNOD

noted that as Deanery Synods only met three times a year, it can be challenging for new members to be able to deliver on their role.

17. It was noted by several respondents that the decision regarding terms of office held by members should be made at the local level, and that a national approach might not reflect the local situation. This was particularly acute for those in rural parishes.
18. A further comment made by respondent was that there was a perceived lack of equity with other bodies such as Diocesan Synods or General Synod, where there is no limit on terms of office. It was also noted that as this is only applicable to the laity, this can undermine the role of the laity in relation to the clergy. Some respondents raised the question of whether this could undermine the work being delivered under the Setting God's People Free programme.
19. There were a number of respondents in favour of endorsing the current rules to introduce limited terms of office. Option one had 207 respondents ranking it as their first choice. The comments provided in relation to this reflected that terms of office can enable new members to join and the power of the Annual Parochial Council Meetings to disapply would enable the Deanery Synod to manage its own local needs.
20. The introduction of term limits could lead to more diversity of members, including younger members, particularly as there would be an expectation that there would only be a commitment for three years.
21. Several respondents noted that this would bring Deanery Synod lay members in line with the requirements for Churchwardens, albeit noting that there are different responsibilities for these roles.

Recommendation

22. The Election Review Group discussed the outcome of the consultation and reviewed each of the options. It was proposed by the Group that there should be a recommendation put to Synod based on Option Two and Option Four, this would be as follows:
 - Reversing the default position so that there would be no term limit unless the APCM resolved to impose it, and giving the APCM the power to specify what the term limit should be in the parish.
 - Request that the Business Committee bring a Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution giving effect to the first limb of the recommendation to the July 2020 group of sessions for approval by the Synod. Under Standing Order 36 (4)(e), the Resolution requires a majority of each House of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting.

The Revd Canon Sue Booy
Chair of the Business Committee
January 2020

GENERAL SYNOD

Annex One

The tables below illustrate the results using STV. The quota needed by any option to achieve a majority, as there were 917 ballots which were valid, the quota needed was 458.5.

The tables below show the stages which the software went through to be able to deliver a majority. On the first stage, option six has the fewest votes and was excluded. The papers allocated to option 6 (15) were reallocated as per the choice of the voters. The next stage saw option three excluded, and 31 votes were reallocated. At the next stage option five was excluded and 51 votes were reallocated, then option four was excluded with 147 votes reallocated. The final stage was to exclude option one and reallocate 241 votes. This led to the final stage with two option left, the results led to option two receiving a total of 388 votes compared to option seven which received a total of 358 votes.

Stage 1

Quota = 458.50

Stage 2

There are no outstanding surpluses, and Option six, with 15.00 has fewest votes and is therefore excluded.

Excluding Option six

Transferring papers worth 1.00

Stage 3

There are no outstanding surpluses, and Option three, with 31.00 has fewest votes and is therefore excluded.

Excluding Option three

Transferring papers worth 1.00

Stage 4

There are no outstanding surpluses, and Option five, with 52.00 has fewest votes and is therefore excluded.

Excluding Option five

Transferring papers worth 1.00

Stage 5

There are no outstanding surpluses, and Option four, with 147.00 has fewest votes and is therefore excluded.

Excluding Option four

Transferring papers worth 1.00

GENERAL SYNOD

Stage 6

There are no outstanding surpluses, and Option one, with 241.00 has fewest votes and is therefore excluded.

Excluding Option one

Transferring papers worth 1.00

Option two SELECTED

with 388.00

over vote required 373.00

Finished

