

GENERAL SYNOD

JULY 2020

QUESTIONS

of which notice has been given under Standing Orders 112–116.

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HOUSE OF BISHOPS

The Revd Canon Wyn Beynon (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q1 Please could the House confirm the status of the Revised Catechism in the teaching of the Church of England?

The Bishop of Exeter to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Revised Catechism was most recently approved under Canon B 2 (Of the approval of forms of service) by the General Synod in 1995, with effect from 1 January 1996 until further resolution of the Synod. Accordingly, it is authorised for use in the Church of England in accordance with Canon B 1 (Of conformity of worship) as an alternative to the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer. Its approval under Canon B 2 conclusively determined that the Synod was of the opinion that the Revised Catechism was “neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter” (see the Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure 1974, section 4 (Safeguarding of doctrine)).

Mr Brian Wilson (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q2 Has the House of Bishops discussed the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill before or during its passage through Parliament?

The Bishop of Durham to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House has not discussed this Bill.

The MPA Council made a substantial submission to the Consultation process preceding the Bill. This was the subject of the answer to a

question at a previous Group of Sessions. MPA particularly stressed opposition to the concept of “no fault” divorce.

The Bishops of Carlisle, Portsmouth and Salisbury made interventions during the passage of the Bill through the House of Lords.

They spoke in favour of amendments on relationship support, and commented that the Bill created more problems than it solved.

Mr Jeremy Harris (Chester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q3 Noting the recent extensions of legalised abortion in the UK, what is the position of the Church of England regarding abortion?

The Bishop of Carlisle to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As it has consistently done, the Church of England continues to oppose abortion in principle while seeking to show love and compassion to all involved.

The Church of England combines principled opposition to abortion with a recognition that there can be strictly limited conditions under which it may be morally preferable to any available alternative. This is based on our view that the foetus is a human life with the potential to develop relationships, think, pray, choose and love.

Women facing unwanted pregnancies realise the gravity of the decision they face: all abortions are tragedies, since they entail judging one individual’s welfare against that of another (even if one is, as yet, unborn).

Every possible support, especially by church members, needs to be given to those who are pregnant in difficult circumstances and care, support and compassion must be shown to all, whether or not they continue with their pregnancy.

The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q4 What advice has the House of Bishops offered to its members in response to the deficit financial situations currently being reported by a number of dioceses?

The Bishop of Leeds to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops has received updates on the emerging financial situation across the Church, including dioceses. The House has engaged with the development of the sustainability funding support package for dioceses.

Following discussion, the House has agreed that dioceses should continue to develop long-term strategic plans for sustainability, in

terms of mission, deployment and finance. It has also agreed that the plans for deployment should be discussed with regional colleagues, and financial plans with national colleagues as part of the financial element of recovery work and central support.

We are grateful for the generosity of our worshippers which will continue to be vital to the financial health of our parishes and cathedrals.

Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q5 What plans exist to promote mission throughout the country by correcting the vast disparities of wealth between dioceses?

The Bishop of Leeds to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Solvency and Liquidity Group, referenced in GS Misc 1250, recommended work to ensure that a transparent assessment is conducted of how a commitment to the mutuality of dioceses might generate a mission and growth focused sharing of inherited wealth, paying attention to a nationally coordinated enterprise to generate new streams of income for the Church - the giving of the living. This recommendation was agreed by the House of Bishops and will be overseen by the Coordinating Group referred to in the same paper.

Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q6 Despite the Church Commissioners funds including sums that represent money granted by the Crown, in the form of Queen Anne's Bounty, to augment the incomes of poor clergy, some curates and other clergy have been furloughed with claims being made for state funding under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Without the matter having been considered by this Synod, a committee has been established to explore cutting clergy numbers.

Did the House of Bishops consider reducing bishops' stipends or expenses allowances to prevent cuts to priest or other clergy numbers; or is this in the work programme of a future agenda for the House of Bishops to consider?

The Bishop of Hereford to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Although we advised dioceses that it might be possible for the small number of clergy licensed as assistant curates to be furloughed, we have not suggested that dioceses should do this.

The House of Bishops has not considered reductions in bishops' stipends or expenses allowances and does not currently have plans to do so. This is ultimately a matter for the Church Commissioners

who fund these, as well as providing support for dioceses and cathedrals. Clergy numbers, by contrast, are primarily a matter for individual dioceses. The House of Bishops has recently agreed that plans for deployment in individual dioceses should be shared and discussed with regional colleagues. I am not aware of any Committee that has been established for the reduction of clergy numbers. RACSC is currently carrying out a review of clergy remuneration, which will address a spectrum of questions from diocesan affordability to clergy hardship and wellbeing.

Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q7 Given that virtually no progress has been made since 2018 on the issue of being transparent to churchgoers concerning male headship (Church Times 26.6.20), will the House of Bishops please address the issue of how best Parishes who receive the ministry of the Bishop of Maidstone, under the House of Bishops' Declaration, can give transparent information about their views on men's and women's ministry on their church websites and in written communications?

The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A This is not an issue the House of Bishops has addressed. It is for parishes to determine how best to communicate Christian beliefs, across the range of traditions that make up the diversity of our Church.

The Revd Mark Lucas (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q8 In the 5 guiding principles we read:

- Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and
- Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.

In the interests of mutual flourishing could the Chair of the House of Bishops please indicate how many:

- Diocesan Bishops,
- Suffragan and Area Bishops,
- Archdeacons,
- Cathedral Deans,
- DDOs

hold the traditional integrity, that presbyteral ministry should be male? And, of these, how many have been appointed since July 2014?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As there is no central record of clergy who cannot, on grounds of theological conviction, accept the ordained ministry of women, the information requested is not available.

We do hold some information from the diversity monitoring data provided by candidates during appointment processes. However, completion is voluntary and not all candidates choose to respond. Additionally, the labels which people use to describe their church tradition do not necessarily correlate with whether they are unable for theological reasons to recognise the priestly or episcopal ministry of women.

With those caveats, the available data indicates the number who describe themselves as traditional catholic or conservative evangelical is as follows:

- 2 Diocesan bishops (1 appointed since July 2014)
- 9 Suffragan or Area bishops (3 appointed since July 2014)
- 2 Archdeacons (both appointed since July 2014)
- 0 cathedral deans

Diversity monitoring data is not captured centrally for the appointment of DDOs.

The Revd Simon Talbott (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q9 Assuming the House of Bishops will finally have made time on 5 July to discuss the report of the Review Group established to enquire into the practical outworking of the Clergy Discipline Measure, what assurances can he offer that moves towards its replacement will also address the underlying structural and cultural deficiencies in the church and their impact on clerical ministries that are identified in the excellent work of the Sheldon Hub?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A I am grateful for the work of the Sheldon Community, as given expression both by their research project undertaken in conjunction with Aston University and in their maintenance of the Sheldon Hub.

You are right that these sources and others identify structural and cultural deficiencies in the Church in relation to the exercise of our disciplinary jurisdiction. I hope a new Measure will go some way to changing these matters, by, for instance, putting greater emphasis on pastoral support and ongoing training for those administering discipline. We are also exploring further ways of embedding such change, particularly in the inevitable interim between now and the enforcement of a new Measure.

Mr Tom Hatton (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q10 Given that: in the EU Referendum 53.4% of voters in England voted 'Leave' and that in the General Election in December 2019 47.2% of voters in England voted for the Conservative Party and 2% voted for the Brexit party: and the Church of England exists to bring the grace of God to the whole nation, has the House given any consideration to:

- (1) whether the membership of the episcopate reflects the full diversity of the political and social perspectives and aspirations held by the people of England; and
- (2) the implications for the Church's mission if a great many of those to whom it is called to minister feel alienated as a result of being unable to see their political and social perspectives and aspirations reflected in the episcopate?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Whilst the House of Bishops considers a range of issues of national concern and aims to ensure a diverse range of viewpoints are considered, there is no central record of the personal political and social perspectives held by the members of the House.

The Lords Spiritual have a record of holding the government of the day to account in the name of the gospel, fulfilling the charge of the Ordinal to "proclaim the gospel boldly, confront injustice and work for righteousness and peace in all the world." That involves both criticism and support where either is due. The Lords Spiritual are not whipped and sometimes end up in different lobbies. Scrutiny of Hansard will show that in the days of Labour governments, the Lords Spiritual were sometimes critical of government policy (e.g. on debt) and that since 2010, the bishops have also spoken in favour of a number of Conservative policies.

The Revd Mark Lucas (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q11 What is the total number in the college of bishops? How has this number changed over the last 50 years? Can this change be justified in the light of rapidly declining congregations over this period?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A There are 116 members of the College of Bishops (if there are no vacancies).

In the last 5 years, 4 dormant Sees have been revived, and Synod approved creating one new See. Two replaced former stipendiary assistant bishops, two have a focus of ministry with a national remit, and one was to provide additional episcopal leadership in a large diocese.

Even with these additional Sees, data from Ministry (previously Church) Statistics shows that the number of bishops in post has remained broadly consistent over the last 50 years.

The number of bishops is not governed by any single part of the Church. The Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 requires Diocesan Bishops to keep episcopal ministry within their diocese under review, and to justify filling a vacant suffragan see to the Dioceses Commission for approval (on behalf of the national church) before the process to fill the vacancy can begin.

The Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q12 In the light of one diocese where seven incumbents have chosen to leave in the last few years, what record is kept of the numbers and reasons of ordained clergy who in the last five years have 'left' the Church of England for local church ministry in other historic denominations or pioneer churches?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The records of these leaving clergy are primarily a matter for their Diocese to keep and to conduct any exit interviews with them. At present, no national record is kept of the numbers and reasons for such departures.

Ms Jay Greene (Winchester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops

Q13 What directions have been given to dioceses, as they address their new financial challenges, to ensure the continued diversity of churches and ministry across differences of gender, wealth, and theology?

The Archbishop of York to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Whilst these are essentially decisions for dioceses themselves; the Finance Committee of the Archbishops' Council has a remit for ensuring that funds are used in accordance with the Church Commissioners' charitable objectives that provision is made for areas with greatest need. Funding to support dioceses' recovery from Covid-19 will be distributed, taking into account diocesan and resident wealth. A purpose of the funding referred to in GSC 2173 is to help dioceses avoid indiscriminate cuts which may have otherwise fallen on ministry in the poorest areas. Lowest Income Communities funding, directed to dioceses with poor communities, has been advanced in 2020 to assist these dioceses with cash flow. In allocating this funding, it is for dioceses to ensure that all aspects of the diversity of our Church are supported.

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q14 Might re-structuring of dioceses (and even provinces) not help solve the financial crisis facing the Church of England? And, if so, is there currently underway any investigation into possible re-structuring?

The Archbishop of York to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House has in its recent discussions been giving some preliminary thought to a range of issues in the light of the current situation. As detailed in GS 2173, some immediate financial steps have been taken in consultation with the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners. Rather than jump to conclusions about the longer term, the House has set up a number of time-limited groups (as indicated in GS Misc 1250) to take these forward. I am chairing the Group on Vision and Strategy.

I appreciate the urgency behind your question but any re-structuring of our dioceses and provinces is unlikely to be a quick fix, and would in any case need to be explored in consultation with key stakeholders including the Dioceses Commission (which has statutory responsibilities in this area). That said I can assure you that the House is serious about looking at ways of ensuring that our Church is fit to meet the missionary challenges now facing us.

Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q15 Within GS Misc 1250 - 'The Emerging Church of England', Paragraph 16 includes the following: "*Phase 2 will involve large consultative sessions with a group of 125 from right across the Church over three days to test and refine together a set of strategic*

propositions - what God is calling us to be - that will shape our model of church for the 2020s. The approach to this consultation will be challenging, working at pace, collaborative and we pray, transformative.”

Given that it is envisaged that the approach to the consultation will be challenging etc. and take place over a number of days, what are the current thoughts on the timetable for this exercise, the process envisaged and the mechanism by which the 125 people will be selected so as to ensure good representation of the church both now and of the future?

Similarly how will the group of 10 in Phase 1 be selected and will it be they who produce the strategic propositions?

The Archbishop of York to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The process being used is known as *Future Search*, which has been deliberately chosen as a collaborative approach that enables large groups to collectively develop future vision over a period of several days. These sessions will happen over three days next week. Great care has been taken to ensure that the group is representative of the diversity of the church. The group is very diverse and weighted towards the young. There will be further iterations with Bishops and Diocesan Secretaries in September.

The group of 10 in phase 1 are selected to reflect a diversity of thinking and experience, to help develop initial thinking on strategic propositions. As the vision develops, we will know what kind of group and people will be required to crystallise and flesh out the vision and strategy in phase 3.

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q16 With reference to the proposals for Emerging Church, will the Vision and Strategy Group include in their criteria the financial and legal costs associated with cutting clergy numbers and closing churches, the pastoral costs to church communities and clergy wellbeing issues, and past reports identifying factors of growth and decline, such as *Anecdote to Evidence*, including the ways God grows his Church found in the Biblical accounts?

The Archbishop of York to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The work of the Vision and Strategy Group encompasses both vision – an overall sense of purpose and calling – and also strategy – what we believe God is calling us to do in this time to fulfil that purpose. Collectively, we will need to consider what resources, tools and gifts

we have and how we can make best use of them. At the heart of the vision will be a renewed commitment to Christ in worship, service and witness, as we believe it is through this that God grows his Church. Decisions about clergy numbers and church buildings are a matter for individual dioceses. The factors the questioner refers to are all issues that dioceses may want to take into account in their decisions on those matters.

Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q17 In the motion passed unanimously in February Synod mandated the NSSG to bring forward proposals to give effect to that commitment that follow a more fully survivor-centred approach to safeguarding, including arrangements for redress for survivors. Can you please update Synod on progress toward a survivor centred approach, and especially progress on a national listening service for survivors?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The charity Victim Support has been awarded the contract for Safe Spaces, which includes a national helpline for victims/survivors, a website and small grants programme for community support groups. The helpline will be staffed by advocates trained in trauma informed advocacy support and advice. The decision to award the contract to Victim Support was taken in partnership with survivor representatives from across both Churches (CCEW, Church of England). The service is expected to launch later in the summer. Survivor engagement work by the NST continues, including working with the Survivors Reference Group which has recently been represented on interview panels and involved in the development of draft policy for learning lessons reviews, and responding well to survivors. There is also survivor representation on PCR-2 Project Board, the Clergy Discipline Measure Working Group and the National Safeguarding Panel.

The NST will be developing a strategic framework for survivor engagement, led by the newly appointed Deputy Director for Partnerships.

See also my answer to Question 18.

The Revd Simon Talbott (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q18 Following the February General Synod's unanimous support for the Church offering additional redress to our Safeguarding victims, can you please give us a full update on progress to deliver a fully functional scheme?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A An initial paper on how to develop options for redress, taking a project management approach, went to the National Safeguarding Steering Group on 2nd April, the Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners on 23rd April, Archbishops Council Finance Committee on 24th April, and House of Bishops in May, receiving endorsement. A subsequent paper setting out the detailed resourcing required for the project scoping has been agreed, and we hope that recruitment will start shortly to make progress on developing options, ensuring survivor voices are central to this work.

The Revd Charles Read (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q19 What mechanisms currently exist to identify and deal with the use of a complaint to the National Safeguarding Team for vexatious or vindictive purposes?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Where a person provides information which amounts to a safeguarding allegation or concern, a core group will have the option to commence a Church investigation before a recommendation is made or any conclusion drawn. Following the conclusion of the Church investigation, the investigator will prepare a summary report. The report will include a clear statement, in their opinion, on whether they believe the case is substantiated or unsubstantiated, unfounded, malicious or false and/or whether there are ongoing safeguarding concerns.

Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q20 What are the triage processes (if any) by which complaints received are reviewed to ensure that they are sufficiently evidenced and focussed to enable the formulation of a viable triage issue which can then be properly and productively considered by an NST Core Group?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The practice guidance “Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers” (2017) does not provide for a triage process, but states the following: “where a safeguarding concern or allegation has been identified the Church should conduct its own investigation; the core group should establish a process for this to gather information and make an assessment on

the facts. This convened core group will manage the process for the duration of the case, and will meet as required. All information should be made available to the group to support decision making, as required". Following such an investigation – once it has gathered such information – the core group makes an informed recommendation to the bishop.

Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q21 How many National Safeguarding Team Core Groups are currently in existence?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A There are currently 27 active National Safeguarding Team Core Groups.

Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q22 As more people have been accustomed to conducting important meetings by zoom, has consideration been given to our Safeguarding Core Groups routinely meeting remotely, and recording their deliberations for the benefit of attenders/parties unable to be present, with all the attendant costs savings that might permit?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A During the Covid 19 pandemic, Safeguarding Core Groups have operated effectively using video conference facilities at both a Diocesan and National level. The current practice guidance does allow for virtual meetings, the pandemic has shown us that we can operate in more cost and time effective ways and we anticipate that the practice of conducting core groups virtually will continue in the future. A written record of key points and actions is circulated to members of the group afterwards, including those who were not able to be present.

Mrs Kathryn Tucker (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q23 In the secular Safeguarding world, in accordance with principles of Transparency and Accountability, parents who have allegedly neglected or abused their children, are routinely invited to attend Local Authority Core Groups, make representation thereto, and subsequently receive the minutes of the meeting so that, if appropriate, a challenge to any breach of their Human Rights by unfair process can be promptly identified and rectified. On what principles does the Church defend its current practice of not admitting respondents to the Core Group, even where the allegation

is of process failure only, not routinely confirming who was present, advising, influencing and making those decisions, and not providing the respondents with the minutes which record an outline of the allegations and evidence considered, and how the Group decisions were reached?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The example of a secular core group given has the function of being a multi-agency core group of practitioners and family members who will develop and implement a child protection plan. Parents are invited to such meetings because they are key to implementing the plan. The initial meetings held by multi-agency groups to decide upon an investigation or convening of a child protection conference are called strategy meetings, to which family members are not invited, nor are minutes shared.

Church core groups have a different purpose set out in practice guidance: “Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers” (2017), namely to manage the response to a safeguarding concern, ensuring that the rights of all involved to a fair and thorough investigation can be preserved.

There is no provision in the guidance for respondents to attend core groups, but I repeat the answer to Question 24.

The Revd Canon Rosie Harper (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q24 In the light of some recent concerns about access to safeguarding core group minutes and the ability of respondents to participate in safeguarding core groups, are there any rules or principles that determine who is permitted to be present at, and to access minutes of, core groups, that could explain the situations that gave rise to these concerns?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A House of Bishops practice guidance “Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers” (2017) outlines at section 3.1 who the membership of the core group may include. This list does not include the respondent. The guidance stipulates that minutes from core group meetings should be circulated to the attendees as soon as practicable after the meeting. Practice guidance provides for the respondent to be

provided with sufficient detail of what they are alleged to have done, including timeframes and location, in order that they have a fair opportunity to respond.

Although the practice guidance is not specific on this point, respondents can and have been given details of who has attended a core group, and for example received a letter from a chair setting out the outcome of the meeting.

Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q25 What are the principles and guidelines that determine whether the existence of a respondent's Core Group and the reasons it has been convened is kept confidential or released to the press at an early stage?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A House of Bishops practice guidance "Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers" (2017) sets out guidance in relation to core groups. The guidance makes no provision for details of a core group's working to be made public by the Church and the Church does not release details about the working of such groups to the media. If asked the Church may confirm that a matter is being responded to according to the above guidance.

The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q26 Organisations, such as in higher education and the NHS, operate under the 2014 Care Act in terms of the definition of an 'adult at risk' in terms of safeguarding. This definition differs from the 2016 Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure which uses a wider definition of a 'vulnerable adult'. May Synod have clarification as to whether clergy employed as chaplains by secular bodies (such as universities and the NHS) are subject in the course of their ministry within those secular organisations, to the safeguarding protocols of their employers or of the Church of England?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A From a safeguarding perspective there is likely to be little practical difference between a "vulnerable adult" and an "adult at risk". Clergy employed as chaplains in organisations wholly external to the Church will ordinarily be subject to the safeguarding policies, reporting requirements, and disciplinary processes of their employers in the first instance. But they are still required to have "due regard" to House of Bishops guidance where they are authorised to officiate in the Church.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q27 The Church has embraced the concept of “unconscious bias”: will the Secretary General and the NSSP urgently review the composition of the Martyn Percy Core Group and confirm to General Synod members within a month, that having considered the importance of fair and proper process, they can assure us that that Core Group process was free from unconscious bias, and that the Core Group decisions were untainted by it?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A House of Bishops practice guidance “Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers” (2017) provides that the membership of core groups should not comprise those who may have a conflict of interest or loyalty. We are not able to respond to specific ongoing cases but as a general rule we would accept that as far as is reasonably possible in the circumstances of each case, a core group’s work should be free from bias and we always keep the membership of core groups under review where there is a challenge on the grounds of potential bias.

Mrs Kathryn Tucker (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q28 The 2017 Bishops Guidelines for Safeguarding investigations specifically require that a Diocesan Registrar should not represent respondents to an investigation neither should his legal practice. There is no similar provision preventing Diocesan Registrars or their firms from representing a complainant. Is there a rationale for that inconsistency or was this a simple oversight that needs to be corrected to prevent injustice through the same potential conflict of interest?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Diocesan registrars – as legal advisers to the bishop – are required to give legal advice to core groups including diocesan safeguarding advisers. They may be called upon in due course to advise on matters such as suspension and risk assessments. The guidance makes specific provision for conflict in this respect because the respondent will be a Church officer in the diocese who might ordinarily seek advice from the registrar as part of their duties. The position of a complainant is different, but a registrar would be unable to advise the diocese and a complainant because of the conflict of interest.

The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q29 In the meeting of Synod in February 2020, the Revd Simon Talbott asked (Q58) if a protocol existed to ensure information was shared between the multiple John Smyth Inquiries – at current reckoning four in number: Makin (CofE), Titus Trust, Scripture Union, and Winchester College – to avoid further abuse of Smyth’s victims by requiring them to give evidence multiple times. Is such an agreed, signed, protocol now in place?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A A draft protocol has been developed by Keith Makin, independent reviewer commissioned by the Church of England, to review John Smyth. This protocol has been discussed and shared with other relevant parties who have submitted feedback, which needs to be considered before a final version is agreed and signed. In anticipation of the formal agreement, the reviewers have established good working relationships. Regular meetings are being held and information is being exchanged, within the requirements of GDPR and confidentiality.

The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q30 What provision has been made, whether financially or in personnel, to support the Bishops in leading the Church’s engagement with Living in Love and Faith following its publication this coming November?

The Bishop of London to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Leading the Church’s engagement with the Living in Love and Faith resources is a significant project in its own right and represents a new way of working for the Church. That is why an episcopally-led group, chaired by the Bishop of London, has been set up and a budget for this work is currently being negotiated. The group will be supported by Eeva John, the Communications Teams and other staff of the NCIs.

The Revd Canon Rosie Harper (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q31 What representation has been made by the House of Bishops to HM Government regarding the significant impact on the safety and wellbeing of the trans people brought about by the delay and uncertainty surrounding their reform proposals and fears that the current provisions may be undermined?

The Bishop of Coventry to reply as on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops has not made a representation to HM Government regarding discussions relating to the Gender Recognition Act. However, as part of the work of the Living in Love and Faith project we have become aware of the increasingly difficult environment for trans people in recent months. Our hope is that the LLF resources together with the Pastoral Principles will enable the whole Church to engage in matters of gender identity in an informed way with sensitivity and compassion.

The Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q32 There have been documents issued from the communications department which have negatively impacted LGBTI people and allies for example the statement on heterosexual civil partnerships and the original, though perhaps inevitable statement about delaying LLF. How are people who will be most impacted by such statements considered in their production, and whose responsibility is it to consider and mitigate that impact?

The Bishop of Coventry to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Living in Love and Faith project has sought to involve LGBTI people in a variety of ways: through membership of the working groups; through contributions to the lived experience stories that form a part of the resources; and through the advice of LGBTI experts in the variety of disciplines that have been drawn upon. In relation to decisions about delaying the resources, the LLF project sought the views of LGBTI people and shared the outcomes of this with the House of Bishops so that these views could be taken into account. Their decision to publish the resources in November drew on those views among others.

Ms Jay Greene (Winchester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q33 What directions have been provided by the House of Bishops or the Pastoral Advisory Group to assist Diocesan Directors of Ordinands in responding to prospective candidates already in same-sex marriages?

The Bishop of Newcastle to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops Pastoral Guidance on Same Sex Marriage, published in 2014, includes a section on 'Clergy and Ordinands'. It concludes that 'The House is not, therefore, willing for those who are in a same sex marriage to be ordained to any of the three orders of ministry.' One of the responsibilities of the Pastoral Advisory Group

is 'To respond to requests for advice from bishops regarding specific cases of pastoral care and discipline involving clergy in same-sex relationships, clergy responding to lay people in same-sex relationships, and other cases concerning LGBTI+ people which may arise in the course of bishops' ministries.' This includes requests for advice regarding candidates and ordinands. Its advice is sought and received in confidence and always encourages bishops and their staff to embody a personal, compassionate and pastorally sensitive approach to the implications of the Church's current position for the individual concerned.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q34 What actions should anyone who has undergone conversion therapy conducted in Church of England churches take in order to ensure that this practice is stopped in accordance with General Synod's decision in July 2017?

The Bishop of Newcastle to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A They should speak with their bishop who will be fully aware of the 2017 Synod decision. The bishop will seek to discover the full facts of the matter and will frame an appropriate response.

Should the bishop feel the need for support in coming to a decision, the Pastoral Advisory Group bishops are always ready to offer support and advice.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q35 Does the Church support those who wish to get away from unwanted sexual attraction, of any kind, because of their Christian faith or their desire to keep the family unit intact?

The Bishop of Newcastle to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A We know that sexual attraction and orientation are complex matters which cannot be changed simply by an individual's wish to do so. We also know that psychological damage can be done if people deny the reality of their sexual attraction or seek to be attracted in ways contrary to their innate orientation.

Sexual orientation is no bar to church membership, as has been affirmed in numerous reports from *Issues in Human Sexuality* onwards. The Church's calling is to journey with people and help them learn how to live with their sexuality in ways which enable themselves and others to flourish.

The Revd Canon Paul Cartwright (Leeds) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q36 What consideration has been given to the theological and psychological importance of church buildings as venues for public worship and private prayer, and as a physical presence at the heart of local communities?

The Revd Canon Paul Cartwright (Leeds) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q37 Given the wide range of views held in the Church of England on the proper role of church buildings in its ministry and mission, has the House given any recent consideration to the theology of sacred space? If not, will it now invite the Faith and Order Commission to do so?

The Bishop of Fulham to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A With permission, I will answer Questions 36 and 37 from Canon Cartwright together.

In 2015, the Report of the Church Buildings Review was published. The review was chaired by the Bishop of Worcester. Its wide-ranging 'principles regarding the use and stewardship of church buildings' and specific recommendations were anchored in a substantial treatment of the theology of church buildings, constituting the whole of Part 2 of the report. The community benefits of church buildings were also a significant part of the report of the 2018 Taylor Review of Cathedral and Church Building Sustainability, which recognised the importance to people of all faiths and none and led to a £2m pilot project exploring just these factors.

Brigadier Ian Dobbie (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q38 Was legal advice taken before the guidance set out in the Archbishops' letters of 24 and 27 March 2020 was issued and, if it was, will the House agree to publish it?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Legal advice was not taken as the pastoral letters were advisory and it was not considered that the guidance had any particular legal implications.

The Revd Charlie Skrine (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q39 Can the House explain how it considered the guidance set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March to be consistent with the relationship between bishops and incumbents as understood by (a) the law and (b) the ecclesiology of the Church of England?

Mr Richard Morgan (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q40 Can the House explain how it considered the guidance set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March to be consistent with the relationship between bishops and incumbents as understood by (a) the law and (b) the ecclesiology of the Church of England?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A With permission I will answer questions 39 and 40 together.

It was not considered that the guidance had legal or ecclesiological implications for the relationship between bishops and incumbents. As guidance, incumbents needed to take it seriously and accord it due weight; but the taking of decisions within benefices remained a matter for incumbents in consultation with parochial church councils.

Mrs Rhian Parsons (Leicester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q41 Given that advice from the Church Buildings Division made it clear that it was acceptable for a designated person to enter a church building for the purpose of checking that it remains safe and secure, why did the House not consider it acceptable for clergy to enter the building to use it for the purpose for which it exists - i.e. prayer and worship?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Government guidance during 'lockdown' was to avoid all non-essential travel and to 'Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives'. Entering a church building occasionally during this period to ensure that it remained in a safe condition was an essential undertaking. While praying in a church building is very important for clergy (and others), it could not be considered an essential practice.

Mrs Rhian Parsons (Leicester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q42 Given that the closure of church buildings to their clergy was not required by the Government, but was the outcome of a policy decision by the archbishops and bishops, will the House agree to reflect on whether the decision in that respect, which effectively equated church buildings with leisure facilities, was the correct one?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House will reflect on all aspects of its response to the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK, particularly through the work of its Recovery Group. This will include the closure of church buildings which remained unique sacred spaces throughout that period.

Mr Richard Morgan (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q43 In the Prolocutors' letter of 31st March they stated that "we believe that it is right to accept and to take on trust our Bishops and Archbishops on this matter [sic]. They do not take these decisions lightly." How much time, precisely, did the archbishops and bishops in fact devote to collective consideration of whether clergy should be able to enter their own churches, during their closure to the public, for the purposes of prayer and worship?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The precise time bishops and archbishops spent in prayer, reflection and discussion regarding advice for clergy to refrain from praying in, or streaming services from, church buildings has not been recorded, but it incorporated two online collective meetings as well as numerous conversations by email, phone and 'Zoom' in addition to detailed consideration of written material.

Mr Paul Boyd-Lee (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q44 Will the House agree to consider whether the way in which the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March were expressed was adequate to enable the Church to understand (a) the precise character of the guidance they contained and (b) the justification for it?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops reviews all its responses to the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK, particularly through its Recovery Group, in order to learn from its experience. All issues will be thoroughly discussed.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q45 If, as the Archbishop of Canterbury stated on the Andrew Marr Show on Easter Day, the policy on the closure of churches set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March represented "guidance, not instruction", with the result that its effect was to give clergy a discretion as to how to apply it in the circumstances of their particular ministry, why did the archbishops' letters not contain any detailed guidance to clergy on how to exercise that discretion, particularly in terms of striking the appropriate balance, in the circumstances of their particular ministry, between (a) maximising the effectiveness of that ministry and (b) minimising the risk of infection?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The guidance set out in the letters of 24th and 27th March was that clergy should refrain from praying in, or streaming from, church buildings in response to the government's instruction to 'Stay Home,

Protect the NHS, Save Lives. This guidance was considered to be self-explanatory.

Mr Tjeerd Bijl (Europe) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q46 Will the House consider whether the guidance on the closure of churches set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March was expressed in terms which properly allowed for the diversity of churchmanship, sacramental theology, and theology of place within the different parish and other contexts in which it would need to be applied?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops reviews all its responses to the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK, particularly through its Recovery Group and seeks to learn from its experience. Empathetic pastoral care infuses all expressions of theology and practice in the Church of England and actively informed the advice given by archbishops and bishops in their letters of 24th and 27th March.

Miss Emma Forward (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q47 When the archbishops and bishops were considering in March whether clergy should be instructed not to enter their own church buildings during the Covid-19 pandemic, either for private prayer or for the purpose of streaming worship online from the church building, was any account taken of the fact that such a policy would have a more severe impact on some church traditions than others?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Given the realistic possibility of hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of Covid-19 infections, the Prime Minister issued instructions on 23rd March that all non-essential travel should cease and non-essential services be suspended with the clear message, 'Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives'. On 24th March, the archbishops and bishops issued a pastoral letter strongly encouraging clergy to respond accordingly by closing church buildings for all purposes. Following this letter the Government made provision for 'ministers of religion' to pray in, or stream services from, church buildings. Subsequently, on 27th March the archbishops and bishops wrote a further pastoral letter reiterating this *advice* in the interests of the common good, while explicitly acknowledging the pain that this would cause many clergy and laypeople. In 'going the extra mile' clergy of all traditions sacrificially contributed to a national effort to limit the transmission of the virus.

Mr Paul Boyd-Lee (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q48 Will the House (a) undertake an urgent review of the appropriateness of the guidance set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th

March and (b) consult widely, including with representatives of a wide range of traditions in the Church, on the nature of any guidance on the use or closure of church buildings that may need to be issued in the event of similar circumstances arising again in future?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops reviews the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK through its Recovery Group and seeks to learn from its experience. The House of Bishops represents a wide range of traditions in the Church and seeks to listen to all viewpoints while acknowledging its leadership role in making any future decisions, particularly those that might require swift action.

Mr Tjeerd Bijl (Europe) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q49 Given that the guidance on the closure of churches set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March bore disproportionately on certain traditions in the Church, how does the House intend to respond to the consequent dismay in those traditions, including the concerns that have been drawn from that guidance about the future general direction of travel of the Church of England?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops has established a Recovery Group which reviews and seeks to learn from the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK. All issues will be explored thoroughly. No inferences on the 'future general direction of travel of the Church of England' should be drawn from the advice given in the archbishops' and bishops' letters of 24th and 27th March.

The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q50 When the archbishops and bishops discussed the policy on the closure of churches set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March, did they understand it as involving the giving of (a) guidance or (b) instruction?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Both pastoral letters made clear the responsibilities that clergy had in adhering to government instructions to 'Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives' while the letter of the 27th March made explicit that the letters contained advice, not instruction.

The Revd Canon Howard Stoker (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q51 If, as the Archbishop of Canterbury stated on the Andrew Marr Show on Easter Day, the policy on the closure of churches set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March represented "guidance, not instruction", why was it expressed in imperative terms?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The pastoral letters of 24th and 27th March emphasised the need to follow government instruction and to respond positively to the gospel imperatives to love our neighbour and to care for the vulnerable. The letter of 27th March, in particular, emphasised the advisory nature of the pastoral letters.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q52 When issuing the guidance set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March what was the understanding of the archbishops and bishops with regard to the relationship between that guidance and the legal obligations imposed by:

- Canons B 11, B 13, B 14 and B 14A relating to the saying of Morning and Evening Prayer and the celebration of the Holy Communion in churches and cathedrals;
- Canon B 15 relating to the receiving of Holy Communion by all who have been confirmed;
- Canon B 18 relating to the preaching of sermons in parish churches;
- Canon B 22.4 relating to the delaying of baptism; and
- Canon C 24 relating to the responsibilities of priests having a cure of souls in relation to these matters,

and why did the letters not explain its understanding in that respect or any legal advice it had received about it?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Given the urgency of the situation following the Prime Minister's announcement of 'lockdown' on 23rd March and the need to respond swiftly, the pastoral letters contained concise advice that did not explore the relationship between the guidance offered and the canons stated. In these unprecedented circumstances, legal advice on this issue was not sought.

Mr Clive Scowen (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q53 Was the guidance set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March approved by the House of Bishops and, if not, what authority did it have?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The guidance was issued by the Archbishops and Diocesan Bishops jointly, as the bishops of their respective dioceses. As guidance, it did not have authority in a legal sense but it is considered that guidance issued by diocesan bishops on such important matters has substantial persuasive force and needs to be considered carefully by those to whom it is addressed.

The Revd Charlie Skrine (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q54 Did the House consider that the guidance set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March attracted the duty of canonical obedience? And, whether or not it took that view, why did the guidance not explain what the position in that respect was, so that clergy were clear what it was?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The guidance contained in the archbishops' and bishops' letters of 24th and 27th March was advisory. The duty of canonical obedience was not considered in producing the guidance and is not considered to be relevant to it.

Mr Bradley Smith (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q55 If, as the Archbishop of Canterbury stated on the Andrew Marr Show on Easter Day, the policy on the closure of churches set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March represented "guidance, not instruction", why did the House not dissociate itself from statements made in at least one diocese that disciplinary proceedings would be taken against clergy who failed to follow that guidance?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops was not made aware of such statements at any of its meetings and consequently did not discuss them.

Mrs Mary Nagel (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q56 In producing the guidance set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March did the archbishops and bishops take account of how, at a time of crisis and when the laity would be unable themselves to worship or pray in their churches, it would be important to many of them to know that their clergy were doing so, and to be able to see them doing so?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A In producing guidance set out in letters on 24th and 27th March the archbishops and bishops took account of a wide range of issues including the potential impact on all clergy and laity throughout the Church of England.

Mrs Susan Kennaugh (Sodor & Man) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q57 Given the wide diversity of theology and practice that has previously pertained to the Church of England, why did the archbishops and bishops consider it appropriate in the letters of 24th and 27th March to direct clergy of all traditions to give overriding priority in their

ministry during the Covid-19 pandemic to the perceived need to “show solidarity” with the laity, and why was the reasoning of the House in that respect not explained either in letter?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Empathetic pastoral care infuses all theologies and practices throughout the Church of England and informed all discussions in the House of Bishops which, itself, reflects the diversity found within the Church. Such concern was implicit in all communications by the House and was made explicit on a number of subsequent occasions.

The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q58 When the archbishops and bishops were developing their guidance for the use of church buildings during the Covid-19 pandemic, was any attempt made to establish whether the primacy of “showing solidarity” and “leading by example” reflected what the laity (whether active church members or others) might want of their clergy in such circumstances?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Given the realistic possibility of hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of Covid-19 infections, the Prime Minister issued instructions on 23rd March that all non-essential travel should cease and non-essential services be suspended with the clear message, ‘Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives’.

On 24th March, the archbishops and bishops issued a pastoral letter strongly encouraging clergy to respond accordingly by closing church buildings for all purposes.

Following this letter the government made provision for ‘ministers of religion’ to pray in, or stream services from, church buildings.

Subsequently, on 27th March the archbishops and bishops wrote a further pastoral letter reiterating this *advice* in the interests of the common good.

These were truly unprecedented circumstances and the archbishops and bishops had to act swiftly and decisively after prayerful consideration and deliberation among themselves taking account of public health and other guidance from a range of advisers.

Mrs Mary Nagel (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q59 What is the response of the House to the many laity in the Church who consider that the pastoral provision made for them by the Church at a time of crisis was significantly impaired, following the issue of the letters of 24th and 27th March, by their inability to see the clergy continuing to pray, say the Daily Offices or celebrate the

Eucharist in their churches, or even have the reassurance that they were doing so?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK significantly impaired many aspects of life for all members of our society including clergy and laity in the Church of England. In seeking to respect and address the needs of all, some in the Church were more greatly affected than others and to them the House is grateful.

Mr Robin Whitehouse (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q60 Following the issuing of the guidance set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March, a number of concerns were expressed about it, in the Church Times and elsewhere. Will the House consider whether the response made on behalf of the archbishops and bishops to those concerns was adequate and appropriate?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops reviews all its responses to the first wave of the covid-19 pandemic in the UK, particularly through its Recovery Group and will seek to learn from them.

Mr Clive Scowen (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q61 In formulating the guidance set out in the archbishops' letters of 24th and 27th March, what weight was given to "optics" and fear of what the secular press and media (including commentators on social media) would say if clergy were seen to be continuing to use their churches for prayer or celebrating the Eucharist or for livestreaming services?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A In formulating the guidance set out in the archbishops' and bishops' letters of 24th and 27th March the sole concerns were to act in the best interests of both Church and society, particularly its most vulnerable members.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q62 In the light of the reception given to two recent significant pieces of work (namely the pastoral statement on opposite sex civil partnerships and the guidance on the closure of church buildings during the Covid-19 pandemic), will the House conduct an urgent review of the way that significant decisions of the episcopal leadership of the Church are (a) taken and (b) communicated and explained?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A A lessons-learned review is being conducted on the communication of the opposite sex civil partnerships announcement. The review will be communicated to the House of Bishops. The lessons to be learned from the way the Church of England responded to the Covid-19 pandemic will, I have no doubt, be the subject of a review when the pandemic comes to an end.

The Revd Timothy Goode (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q63 When the daily news of deaths from Covid 19 are shared in the media, we often hear what percentage of those who have died had underlying health issues. As a disabled person I am deeply concerned that the dignity and value of those who are living with underlying health issues, including disabled people and residents of care homes, are being diminished in this crisis and that, unless checked, we are in danger, as a society, of slipping into the language of eugenics. Would the House of Bishops once more go on record and state that all those living with underlying health issues, are made in the image and likeness of God, are of unique value to God and God's Church and should always be entitled to the same quality of healthcare as the rest of the population?

The Bishop of Carlisle to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A This is a message that the House of Bishops and other spokespersons for the Church of England have made consistently throughout the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK and it is one that will continue to be made for the reasons stated. Every human being is of equal and immeasurable value and it is the privilege and responsibility of the Church to promote and protect this understanding of our God-given identity and to strive for it to be given practical effect in healthcare and all other settings.

Mr Robin Whitehouse (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q64 Given that Canon B 41 provides that "No chaplain, ministering in a house where there is any chapel dedicated and allowed by the ecclesiastical laws of this realm shall celebrate the Holy Communion in any other part of the House but in such chapel", will the House consider issuing guidance to its members on whether that provision applies to see houses and, if it does not apply, on the relevance to see houses of the theological principles underlying it?

The Bishop of Coventry to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House has no plans to issue guidance on the provisions concerning chaplains ministering in houses, whether see houses or otherwise.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q65 Did the Government offer the Church of England to regulate its own mode of closing or opening during the Covid-19 pandemic and did the Church turn this offer down and ask the government to regulate?

The Bishop of London to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A No such offer was made by the Government to the Church of England.

Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q66 What plans or ideas are being formulated to allow Carol Services to take place in some form if Covid 19 restrictions continue to December?

The Bishop of London to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Advent and Christmas are inevitably going to look very different. Assuming church buildings are open for worship, gatherings will need to be smaller to enable social distancing, with logistical challenges around cleaning, managing people flows etc. Resources for individual use and national online services will be produced by the national digital team. In addition, guidance notes for parishes are presently being worked on. For example, churches which have traditionally welcomed large numbers to a carol service may find that they need to offer several. Capacity issues may mean that these need to be simpler and easier to manage than may normally have been the case. Guidance has already been offered to the Children's Society in thinking about how to offer Christingle services this year. It may well be the case that an increased proportion of our population wish to engage with worship this Christmas, be that online or offline.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q67 Bearing in mind the significant number of older folk in our congregations and that the average risk of death from COVID19 is 37 times greater for 65 & overs, and 127 times greater for 85 & overs, compared to those of 'working age' and young people, what continuing special provisions are being taken to ensure that physical congregations do not lead to increased danger by inter-generational transmission?

The Bishop of London to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops' Recovery Group has published detailed guidance on a wide range of services and activities as well as a comprehensive risk-assessment template on the Church of England Covid-19 webpage which contain advice on how best to minimise risk, especially to those who are clinically or otherwise vulnerable to Covid-19.

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q68 Will the House of Bishops reconsider the prohibition of use of small individual cups as a valid 'common sense' *pro tem* way of sharing the Communion wine while current constraints remain?

The Bishop of London to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Legal Advisory Commission has stated "it is contrary to law for individual cups to be used for each communicant" and that "the doctrine of necessity cannot be appealed to in order to justify the use of individual cups even in circumstances where there is a fear of contagion from the use of a common cup. ... the Sacrament Act 1547 makes provision for cases where a necessity not to deliver a common cup arises: in such a case the normal requirement that the sacrament be delivered in both kinds is disapplied by statute. Even if a shared cup cannot be used for medical reasons, the use of individual cups remains contrary to law In such cases reception should be in one kind only." The House cannot authorise or encourage a practice which would be contrary to law.

Miss Emma Forward (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q69 The Professional Guidelines for the Clergy state that "The clergy must remember that they are public figures whose opinions when proffered have weight and significance. ... The power of the internet for doing harm as well as good must always be borne carefully in mind and weighed before saying anything which may prove be damaging to oneself as well as to others." In the light of the criticism made of Dominic Cummings on social media for his conduct during the 'lockdown', including by a number of bishops, will the House consider offering more specific guidance to bishops and other clergy on:

(a) the circumstances in which it is, or is not, appropriate for bishops and other clergy to comment adversely on Twitter and other social media on the conduct of a particular person in public life (including whether the person concerned should

- have had the opportunity to respond to the criticisms being made of him or her before an adverse judgement is expressed publicly); and
- (b) the tone and content of any adverse comments (including guidance on the need to avoid the Church being seen to promote, or to be complicit in, the damage to the character of the person whose conduct is in question)?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Specific advice to Bishops, clergy and lay people in relation to the use of social media is available on the Church of England website and forms part of the Digital Charter, launched in 2019.

This advice is already well established and understood, with thousands of individuals and organisations having signed up to it since the launch.

The Church's Digital Charter and Social Media Guidelines set out helpful principles which the House would encourage everyone across the Church and beyond to consider when using social media.

Mr Graham Caskie (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q70 The Professional Guidelines for the Clergy state that "The clergy should promote reconciliation in the Church and in the world wherever there are divisions." With a view to ensuring that the Church promotes reconciliation rather than division, particularly in the case of matters on which society is already sharply divided, will the House consider offering more specific guidance to bishops and other clergy on (a) the circumstances in which it is, or is not, appropriate for bishops and other clergy to comment on Twitter and other social media on such matters and (b) the tone and content of any such comment (including by the making of un evidenced claims that figures in public life have engaged in lying)?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Professional Guidelines for the Clergy state that "The clergy must remember that they are public figures whose opinions when proffered have weight and significance. ... The power of the internet for doing harm as well as good must always be borne carefully in mind and weighed before saying anything which may prove be damaging to oneself as well as to others."

The Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy also go on to state that:

‘Reconciliation lies at the heart of the gospel: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Corinthians 5.19). The clergy should promote reconciliation in the Church and in the world wherever there are divisions, including those which exist between people of different faiths.’

The House fully appreciates the need to promote reconciliation where there are divisions.

Mr Graham Caskie (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q71 At a time when people’s freedoms are constrained by law and Government guidance in the interests of public health, will the House remind archbishops, bishops and other clergy of the need to avoid giving the impression by their public statements that either:

- (a) they are partisan, or at least inconsistent, in the judgements they make about compliance with the law and Government guidance, whether by particular individuals (such as Dominic Cummings) or by particular sections of people (such those demonstrating against racism); or
- (b) they are encouraging or condoning behaviour which is inconsistent with that law and guidance, or with the law on public order more generally?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A It is appropriate for the clergy to play a positive part in civic society and politics, promoting the kingdom values of justice, integrity and peace in public life.

It is well established by the House that clergy should not encourage or condone behaviour which is inconsistent with the law and guidance, whether on public order or any other matter.

The Church of England’s Digital Charter, launched in 2019, sets out helpful principles which the House would encourage all church members to take into account when making decisions on how to engage with social media.

We will continue to participate while emphasising the need to maintain civility and compassion in the face of hostility, underscoring the importance of considered and thoughtful debate.

The Revd James Hollingsworth (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q72 Does the Communications Team, or any other entity within the national Church institutions, seek to monitor whether content posted on the social media accounts of serving Church of England bishops

complies with the Church's and Archbishops' media guidelines? If not, why?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Communications teams of Lambeth, Bishopthorpe and Church House are responsible for keeping abreast of what is happening on social media.

They are mindful of the Professional Guidelines for the Clergy state that "The clergy must remember that they are public figures whose opinions when proffered have weight and significance. ... The power of the internet for doing harm as well as good must always be borne carefully in mind and weighed before saying anything which may prove be damaging to oneself as well as to others."

In recent months social media platforms have been a crucial way for the Church to cascade information on Covid-19 and to share the Christian message with regular churchgoers and those exploring faith at this very challenging time. Many millions have engaged with a wide variety of content and weekly online services.

Mrs Karen Galloway (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q73 The Church's and Archbishops' media guidelines (which apply to all content posted on the national social media accounts run by the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop of York) involve commitments to be respectful (including by not posting or sharing content which is "inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful") and kind (which involves considering "not just whether you would say it in person, but the tone you would use"). Will the House agree that those guidelines should also in future apply to all content posted on the social media accounts of the serving bishops of the Church of England? If not, why?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Digital Charter was published by the Church of England in 2019. This a voluntary pledge that we are encouraging individual Christians as well as churches and other organisations to sign to help make social media and the web more widely positive places for conversations to happen.

The Digital Charter and guidelines have been widely seen and engaged with, both across the Church of England and in wider society. The Charter encourages truth, kindness, welcome, inspiration, togetherness and the importance of safeguarding in all that is done.

Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q74 Given the frequency with which some bishops comment on social media on matters of public interest, will the House issue guidance to bishops encouraging them to make it clear on whose behalf they are speaking when doing so, so that readers know whether the views they are reading are those of the Church of England, the diocese concerned or simply the individual bishop concerned?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Statements issued as being the formal position of the Church of England, or House of Bishops are flagged as such, and would appear on the official national website and social media accounts.

Bishops, as leaders of the Church, have long spoken on a range of issues of the day. The usual presumption is that statements from individual clergy and laity reflect their personal views, albeit these views are formed in the light of their faith in Jesus Christ and their lived experience as church members and ministers.

The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q75 What training or guidelines on the use of social media in commenting on current affairs does the House of Bishops offer its members?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A New bishops are given media training on appointment. In addition, the Church of England provides national social media training for clergy and laypeople. Thousands of people across England and in Europe have taken part in this and it continues to be offered via online webinars.

When taking part in national debates about current affairs, the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy state:

“9.5. It is appropriate for the clergy to play a positive part in civic society and politics, promoting the kingdom values of justice, integrity and peace in public life, calling attention to the needs of the poor and to the godly stewardship of the world’s resources”.

Mrs Karen Galloway (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q76 The Professional Guidelines for the Clergy state not only that “The call of the clergy to be servants to the community should include their prophetic ministry to those in spiritual and moral danger”, but also that “The clergy must remember that they are public figures whose opinions when proffered have weight and significance”. Will the

House therefore consider offering guidance to bishops and other clergy on how and when to exercise a prophetic ministry properly on behalf of the Church, and in particular how they can avoid the dangers of:

- A. creating a perception that they are simply using their office to promote their own political views; and
- B. compromising their ability to minister effectively to those with different political or social views?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A It is appropriate for the clergy to play a positive part in civic society and politics, promoting the kingdom values of justice, integrity and peace in public life.

All bishops and clergy should of course be consistently mindful that they are ministering to all people, irrespective of political or social views.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q77 Those who sign up to the Church of England's Digital Charter commit themselves, amongst other things, to:

- (a) "hold ourselves to high ideals of checking that what we post online is fair and factual";
- (b) "Think the best of people, whether they share our views or are speaking against them [sic] and aim to be constructive in the way we engage"; and
- (c) agree to the Church's and Archbishops' media guidelines.

Will the House invite all its members, and all other serving bishops of the Church of England, to (i) sign up to the Charter and (ii) state publicly that they have done so? If not, why not?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Digital Charter, issued in 2019, was the result of a collaborative effort across the Church, both nationally and locally. Everyone is encouraged to sign up and thousands have done so, including clergy, lay leaders, regular churchgoers and those of other faiths and none.

When signing up, individuals or groups are encouraged to share this on social media using materials available on the Church of England website. The response over the last year has been very positive indeed, and colleagues in the Archbishops' Council have been encouraged by the positive reaction to the Charter and guidelines, both across this country and internationally.

The Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q78 What risk assessment has the House of Bishops taken on its public Statements, Communications, Reports or Guidelines during this quinquennium and their effects on the Church's stipendiary workforce?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops works closely with both colleagues across the National Church Institutions, other relevant bodies and dioceses. They consult as widely as possible within reason, ensuring materials are issued in as timely and accurate manner as possible.

Statements issued as the formal position of the Church of England, or House of Bishops are flagged as such, and appear on both the Church's national website and social media accounts. These are checked with the relevant people and signed off for distribution.

Ongoing monitoring of publications and reports is carried out and key articles are collated and distributed.

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q79 What proportion of each diocese's total annual income is paid to fulfil its "Total Apportionment post pooling" obligation towards the funding of the Archbishops' Council in line with the Table of Apportionment approved annually by Synod? Please provide the answer in tabular form for the most recent year for which data is available.

Canon John Spence to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A A table showing the total apportionment requested from each diocese in 2020 before and after the pooling adjustment as a percentage of their budgeted income (before any transfers) is given below.

The apportionment calculation is not just based on income and expenditure but has regard to expected giving income and parish investment income.

It should be noted that the 2020 pooling adjustment in respect of additional maintenance costs for ordinands depends on the level of such grants paid by each diocese in 2018/19.

Diocese	Apportionment pre -pooling as percentage of budgeted 2020 income	Apportionment after pooling as percentage of budgeted 2020 income
Bath & Wells	7.0%	7.4%
Birmingham	4.0%	4.4%
Blackburn	5.6%	5.4%
Bristol	5.3%	4.2%
Canterbury	4.9%	5.2%
Carlisle	6.4%	7.6%
Chelmsford	5.6%	5.0%
Chester	8.2%	8.7%
Chichester	8.2%	7.7%
Coventry	5.9%	6.4%
Derby	5.3%	5.7%
Durham	5.0%	5.3%
Ely	6.7%	7.4%
Exeter	5.7%	6.1%
Gloucester	7.4%	7.8%
Guildford	8.8%	8.4%
Hereford	6.5%	7.0%
Leicester	4.5%	2.6%
Lichfield	5.7%	6.2%
Lincoln	7.1%	8.3%
Liverpool	5.6%	4.6%
London	8.5%	7.0%
Manchester	6.0%	6.0%
Newcastle	5.4%	6.5%
Norwich	4.9%	4.9%
Oxford	8.0%	8.6%
Peterborough	5.9%	6.1%
Portsmouth	5.4%	6.4%
Rochester	8.4%	9.3%
St Albans	7.2%	7.3%
St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	5.9%	6.4%
Salisbury	7.9%	8.4%
Sheffield	5.5%	5.1%
Sodor & Man	6.5%	7.2%
Southwark	6.5%	6.8%
Southwell & Nottingham	4.4%	4.3%
Truro	4.5%	4.1%
Winchester	7.9%	7.7%
Worcester	5.9%	5.4%
York	5.7%	6.6%
Leeds	5.2%	6.0%

Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q80 According to reports to this Synod previously, parishes in the poorest areas are already struggling to make ends meet; and are having their priests taken away by dioceses seeking to save money or abandon parish ministry.

Will the Archbishops' Council direct resources in a way that ensures the poorest communities do not lose their local churches or priests?

Canon John Spence to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A There is no evidence that any diocese is deliberately targeting the poorest areas for cuts. Dioceses are facing hard choices in response to financial difficulties and the national church's role is to support them in delivering sustainable ministry.

The Archbishops' Council provides support (£26.3m in 2020) in the form of Lowest Income Communities Funding. This seeks to target monies on dioceses to provide some extra capacity for the strategic reallocation of funds to support the Church's mission in the lowest income communities. Funding goes to those dioceses whose populations have lower than average incomes.

Each year dioceses are asked to account for how the funding has been used, to ensure it is targeted on low income communities as intended.

One of the Strategic Development Funding criteria is a focus on deprived communities, and a significant amount of funding has already been targeted on those areas.

The Revd Brunel James (Leeds) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q81 As a board member of a Together Network Joint Venture I have been alarmed by the recent departure of key staff from the Church Urban Fund. Can any assurance be given to CUF supporters that the organisation has a financially viable future please?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Church Urban Fund is an independent charity. The Archbishops' Council appoints two members of the Board and has made an annual grant.

The loss of a major funder last year created a funding crisis for CUF prompting some staff redundancies while a rescue strategy was put in place. The Archbishops' Council liaised closely with CUF, making

available expert support on the financial situation and way forward. The Council was advised that the measures taken by CUF to cut costs meant that, whilst the next few months' funding may be fragile, projections indicate future viability, and are based on realistic assumptions. As an earnest of its support for CUF, the Council confirmed that it would honour its commitment to its usual annual grant for 2021.

CUF now has a new Chief Officer, Rachel Whittington, and MPA is looking forward to working closely with her and CUF on future strategic priorities.

Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q82 The Synod agreed on 2030 to reach net zero emissions, which will be challenging given the number of buildings with heating systems using 100% fossil fuels, but Manchester Cathedral has a ground source heat pump system for 80% of its heating, supplemented by gas boilers for 20%, installed 2013, so would the responsible group clarify whether 'net zero' is achievable with that example?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The 2030 target is challenging, however a strategic focus on buildings using the most energy (cathedrals, major churches, secondary schools, and offices) makes the task more achievable. Our webinars and guidance on "defining and measuring net zero" aim to help dioceses think through the challenge. The consultation is open now, and the EWG will report back to Synod in November.

Tackling heat loss (through draught-proofing and insulation) and decarbonising heat (through electric heating + renewables, heat pumps, or potentially hydrogen) need to be a major focus for work. Heating makes up 70%+ of church energy use.

If Manchester Cathedral's electricity is from 100% renewable sources and they either use 'green' gas or offset the residue, then – yes – they could be rightly proud that their heating and lighting were 'net zero'. There will be some carbon footprint from the reimbursable travel of staff and volunteers, needing to be reduced or offset.

Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q83 The two page document 'The practical path to net zero carbon for churches' dated April 2020 does not comment on biomass boilers, but a corresponding webpage refers to St Michael and All Angels Church, Withington as 'perhaps Britain's first zero carbon church'

having installed a biomass boiler with a solar cell system in 2010, so would the responsible group clarify whether 'net zero' is achieved in that example?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A St Michael's has taken a whole package of measures to cut its carbon footprint including swapping to LED lightbulbs, installing solar PV panels, and installing a biomass boiler. Much of their electricity come from the PV panels and the remainder from a 'green' tariff. Their heating is from the biomass boiler, with wood chips purchased as a waste produce from sustainable sources, plus more recently they have added electric under-pew heating. St Michael's is therefore – yes – very largely 'net zero'. There will be some small residual emissions associated with occasional printing and clergy mileage, but these are minimal.

Biomass is not in the 'practical path to net zero' because it has not been recommended in any church energy audits so far. Also, its sustainability depends critically on the source of the wood pellets. It is, however, covered in the "heating principles" on our website, as one possible energy source.

Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q84 What effects has the COVID-19 pandemic had on the work of the Evangelism and Discipleship Team in relation to Children and Youth Ministry (as described in GS 2161)?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The impact of COVID-19 on work with children and young people appears to be mixed. Many churches have found fruitful contact through use of digital platforms. In other places this has proved more difficult. Two projects are underway to help identify clearer patterns.

As called for in GS 2161 a piece qualitative research has been instigated with 36 churches with data indicating sustained growth of more than 10 under 16's in the last five years. Whilst focussed on general trends, this will now offer insight into the impact of COVID-19.

There is anecdotal evidence of 'shared provision' approaches emerging, where a centralised hub of on-line programmes is put in

place whilst maintaining individual group identities. Work is underway to identify what learning might be more generally applicable in this model.

The E&D team is also involved in the wider *Faith at Home* provision that has seen broad engagement across churches.

The Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q85 With weddings in Church of England churches at an all-time low, is consideration being given to reform of the law to make the celebration of marriage celebrant based, rather than building based, as happens in Scotland and various other jurisdictions, so that clergy can lead the solemnisation of marriage whatever the location?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Law Commission is conducting a major review of UK Marriage Law which has not yet reported. The Archbishops' Council gave evidence to the review.

England currently has a premises-based, not a celebrant-based system. We have considered the matter and do not favour a change to this situation. There is much evidence that, for couples who chose a church wedding, the location is significant and no evidence that widening the range of locations at which a wedding can take place would result in additional demand for a religious ceremony.

The pressure for a celebrant-based system is coming largely from secular organisations who do not have a network of their own premises but see this as a market opportunity akin to funerals where secular ceremonies have grown rapidly in recent years.

Mr John Mason (Chester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q86 What plans, if any, does the Legislative Reform Committee have to consider which of the formalities and legalities surrounding parishes and benefices could be lightened or removed so that congregations and PCCs can build on the successes during lockdown of "online" church working collaboratively with others over larger geographical areas in furthering the mission of Jesus Christ? Please can you give any specific examples of such legislative or administrative reforms which are being considered to rethink the parish system and unlock it for mission?

The Revd Canon Simon Butler to reply as on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Legislative Reform Committee is considering how the legislative framework could change, in response to the experience and consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, and to more long-standing obstacles to mission. This includes examining what can be done within existing frameworks, and providing better guidance and communications.

The Committee agreed to a consultation on a Legislative Reform Order to address challenges caused by the complex and restrictive provisions which apply to diocesan funds and other assets. It is seeking the approval of the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops for other work which would require legislation by Measure and hopes to consult through a new 'green paper' approach. If this work is approved, it is likely to require significant legislative time during the remainder of the lifetime of this Synod.

If Mr Mason or other members would like to make further suggestions, the Committee will be pleased to consider them.

The Revd Brunel James (Leeds) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q87 As a participant in the 'Windrush Debate' in February, please could I ask what concrete steps have been taken at the different levels of the church towards pursuing the goals identified in the original motion and its amendments?

The Archbishop of York to reply as President of the Archbishops' Council:

A Since February much consultation and thinking has gone into addressing this motion. Later events have drawn even greater attention to the church's failings in this area. The fruit of that earlier thinking and consultation is crystallising in the plans for a Task Force to address immediate action and for a Commission to drive culture change across the church. We want that work to be led by someone with independent credentials as requested in the motion.

Clause (b) of the motion, calling for research on the loss to the Church of England from our neglect of the Windrush generation, is methodologically challenging. MPA was planning a case study approach in specific parishes which would enable us to evaluate the "might have been" questions. As this would rely on personal interviews, best conducted face to face, further development of the plan is on hold until that approach is once again possible.

The Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q88 Given the recent departure of His Grace the Archbishop of York John Sentamu, the Archbishops' Council and the entire senior management staff do not have any membership (except one member of the council) from a BAME background. Now that a task force has been announced by the House of Bishops to address racial equality in the structures of CofE, what are the steps, immediate and long-term, being taken to address the visible lack of representation in the Council (given its role in providing leadership, strategy and executive responsibility to the national church)?

The Archbishop of York to reply as President of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Council recognises the importance of its role in providing leadership, strategy and responsibility to the national Church, and acknowledges that there should be better diversity within the Council.

The Council consists of a maximum of 19 members, of these only 6 are appointed, the others are elected or ex officio. When appointing members, the Council considers the skills and diversity gap within the Council, and actively seeks to encourage applications from under-represented groups, including those of BAME backgrounds. The most recent recruitment round in 2018 was supported by a professional recruitment company, and resulted in two women being appointed and one BAME man.

The Council would encourage the electorates of the House of Bishops, Clergy and Laity to consider this issue when electing their new representatives later next year. There are ten members elected by Synod, and a more diverse Council would be welcomed.

SECRETARY GENERAL

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford) to ask the Secretary General:

Q89 During Covid-19 restrictions could churches and church buildings be used (1) as food banks or (2) as additional space for local schools to offer spatially distanced tuition?

Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:

A From 26 March until 3 July the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 required that places of worship be kept closed, subject to certain permitted exceptions. From the outset, the exceptions permitted using a place of worship "to provide essential voluntary services or urgent public support services (including the provision of food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable people, blood donation sessions or

support in an emergency)”. From the 1st June, early years childcare was permitted. The permitted uses did not allow places of worship to be used as additional teaching space for schools. From 4th July, when the statutory closure requirement ended, churches have been permitted to provide teaching space for schools in accordance with relevant guidance.

The Revd Anne Stevens (London) to ask the Secretary General:

Q90 Could the Secretary General update the Synod on the progress towards equal pay in the NCIs and explain what steps are being undertaken to correct any imbalance?

Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:

A Staff are covered by a unified pay policy underpinned by job-evaluation to ensure the same pay level for posts with work of equal value. We conduct an annual review of the gender pay gap, 2019 data indicates our mean pay gap is 21%. Causes are explored on our website.

We take a short and long-term view on actions to reduce our gender pay gap as part of an action plan on belonging and inclusion. We introduced unconscious bias training for panel members and ensured balanced representation. We pressed Executive Search providers to identify diverse candidates. We ran sessions for leaders on bias and analysed staff survey data, with questions on discrimination. Longer term work includes reviewing policies and exploring behaviours that may present barriers to retention and progression. During Covid we are aware of society-wide gender-related evidence on domestic duties and ensured inclusive communications, noting particular concerns for BAME staff.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Secretary General:

Q91 In your statement of evidence to IICSA, you explained in clear terms, at paras 87-90, that there were anomalous historic legal immunities enjoyed by “ Peculiar ”, and further, confirming that, whilst required to meet the National Church’s standards of Safeguarding conduct, for historical but still current structural reasons, there is a class of clergy within such places who remain outwith the jurisdiction of the Church of England at a national corporate level. What, therefore, is the Church/NST authority for now saying that the immunity you so carefully described, does not presently apply to the Dean of Christ Church Oxford?

Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:

A The clergy of any peculiars other than Royal Peculiar are subject to the ordinary disciplinary processes of the Church including the provisions of the Clergy Discipline Measure. Christ Church, Oxford is

not a Royal Peculiar. I apologise for the error in my evidence to IICSA. I have written to the Inquiry to correct my evidence and to apologise for the error.

CLERK TO THE SYNOD

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Clerk to the Synod:

Q92 When was the size and membership of General Synod last considered and reviewed? What was the outcome in terms of the reduction in the numbers of members? In outline, please describe the process that was followed, including how the process was started.

Dr Jacqui Philips to reply as Clerk to the Synod:

A Between 1993 and 1997 the operation of Synodical government was reviewed by a Commission chaired by Lord Bridge of Harwich which produced the Bridge Report. Synod debated the Bridge Report and subsequently established a group to review the proposals. The report from this Group was debated in July 2001. As this debate raised some concerns, the Business Committee agreed to undertake more work, and presented a further report to Synod in July 2002. Synod approved the report and its recommendations and as a result new legislation in the form of the Church Representation Rules was put before Synod. These proposed that the House of Laity would consist of 140 members from Canterbury province, and 60 from York. The Church Representation Rules were debated in 2003 and 2004, and finally approved in July 2004. They were implemented in time for the 2005 quinquennium.

NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL

Mrs Sarah Finch (London) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q93 Can the Chair of the National Society Council confirm that materials from the charity Brook, a leading provider of sexual health services, are not used in its church schools?

Dr William Belcher (Gloucester) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q94 In view of the political and agenda-driven, campaigning nature of Stonewall, on what basis does the Church of England allow the use of Stonewall resources and training within Church of England Schools?

Mrs Kathy Playle (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q95 In light of the decisions of Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Doncaster, Barnsley and Kent Councils to withdraw Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) materials, following widespread parental concerns, is the Church of England now planning to review materials for use in RSE, across all ages in all its schools to ensure that they promote safety and reflect the teaching of the Church of England on sex and marriage, and honour both girls and boys as fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God?

The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society:

A Questions 93, 94 and 95 are answered together.

There are nearly 4,700 Church of England schools. It is the responsibility of each individual school and its governing body, in consultation with parents, to set policy and agree the curriculum offer in this area (following the DfE guidance). The National Society has no authority or remit to insist on any particular resource being used or not being used in any school, but we have set out principles and guidance for how the subject should be approached in our charter which can be accessed on the website at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/relationships-sex-and-health-education>.

The publication of the Church of England's *Living in Love and Faith* resources will be invaluable in helping schools address this subject.

Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q96 Sections 75 and 82 of the DfE Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education call for investigation into gender identity. What steps is the Church of England making to ensure schools remain loyal to the biblical and scientific models of one man and one woman "as He created them" and the marriage model of a man and a woman?

The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society:

A The DfE guidance makes it clear that pupils should be "taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way." It is the responsibility of individual school governing bodies to set policy in this area and we are confident that Church of England schools will, with appropriate support from their diocese, want to ensure that the Church of England's teaching is understood. The Church of England's *Living in Love and Faith* resources will be invaluable in helping them to do so.

Dr William Belcher (Gloucester) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q97 What provision is there in the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum requirements for CofE, church school, secondary aged youngsters for basic anatomical and physiological information about adolescent development and the realities and impact of sexual activity on still-developing adolescent bodies?

The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society:

A Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) will be compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education and the Department for Education has set out guidance for the subject which can be accessed at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf

Schools are free to determine how to deliver the content set out in that guidance, in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. The school is responsible for setting that curriculum, not the national church or diocese. The guidance sets out what pupils will be expected to know by the time they leave secondary school and the details of this in relation to intimate and sexual relationships are found on p29 of the guidance and include the fact “that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.”

Ms Sophie Mitchell (Church of England Youth Council) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q98 Since the decision was made by the Education Office and the National Society Council to disband the Church of England Youth Council in November 2019, how does the Church of England plan to engage young people in General Synod and ensure that their voices are heard in the next quinquennium?

The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society:

A The proposal that the Church of England Youth Council (CEYC) should cease to exist was made following discussion with its chair and core group, recognising its engagement with young people in recent years has been restricted to a rather small group. The National Society agreed to the proposal to transition to an annual gathering for young Anglican adults, retaining the breadth of tradition that CEYC has embraced and continuing to give a voice to young adults in the Church of England. This will be planned by young adults

with the intention of exploring lived faith within the Anglican tradition. Representation to General Synod will be drawn from those involved, with a 2-year term of office as is currently the case. General Synod Observers will also be drawn from this work. Progress on this has been impacted by the current Pandemic but will be picked up again soon.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q99 In these times of severe financial strain in so many parts of the Church, how can reserves marked 'restricted' and 'designated', and substantial pools of investment returns, within both parishes and dioceses, be made more accessible across the Church so that we do more to live up to the principles of sharing which were such a feature of the early Church?

Canon John Spence to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

A Diocesan and PCC trustees must decide how their funds are used to support their charitable objects which may include supporting mission and ministry in other parishes and dioceses as well as their own. They must act within Charity Law and use restricted funds for their defined purpose.

Trustees can designate unrestricted funds for a particular purpose and reverse that designation. They can also consider passing a total return resolution to enable them to spend accumulated total return on their charitable purposes, within parameters decided by the trustees. There is both scope and immediate need for dioceses to work together to support those suffering most from projected parish share loss during 2020, sharing ideas and initiatives to enhance the overall picture.

Work has begun on a draft Legislative Reform Order to propose broadening restrictions for various restricted diocesan funds. This will be brought to General Synod for consideration in due course.

The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q100 How many Diocesan Glebe Committees have members of the Clergy (excluding Archdeacons) sitting on them as co-opted or elected representatives?

Canon John Spence to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

A As far as I am aware, the NCIs do not hold a record of the membership of Diocesan Glebe Committees.

The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q101 What percentage of staff employed by the Diocesan Boards of Finance have been furloughed under the Government scheme during the pandemic?

Canon John Spence to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

A My understanding is that 40 DBFs have furloughed some of their staff. The percentage of staff furloughed ranges between 7% and 65%. The median proportion of DBF staff who have been furloughed is around one-third.

The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q102 How do any diocesan plans to make stipendiary clergy posts redundant affect applications to the Strategic Development Fund for grants to enable appointments and church planting initiatives?

Canon John Spence to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

A The aim of Strategic Development Funding (SDF) is to help dioceses invest in their strategies to deliver long-term mission and financial strength. In assessing applications, the Strategic Investment Board considers how the proposals fit with the broader strategic plans of the diocese.

The Board recognises that such plans may include the reorganisation of ministry provision. This may include changes which result in specific posts being made redundant for good reasons, such as the reallocation of resources, improving sustainability, and the introduction and development of new models of ministry.

All applications must demonstrate additionality, so that SDF cannot be used to replace funding for posts already supported by the diocese.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q103 In your short speech at the end of the safeguarding debate in Synod on 12 February 2020, you said, clearly in relation to that part of the amended motion urging the NSSG "to bring forward proposals... that follow a more fully survivor-centred approach to safeguarding, including arrangements for redress for survivors": *"Let us be very clear. This is not about affordability; it is about justice. Justice cannot have a different value depending on the finances of this or that*

diocese. Whatever we are told is required by those responsible that is required for redress, then those funds will be found.”

In the light of this statement, will you confirm that, notwithstanding the impact of Covid-19, the Archbishops’ Council will, in its 2021 budget, continue to support the safeguarding work of the national Church and, in particular, ensure that the necessary resources are in place to fund the preparations for a redress scheme that the motion in February called on the NSSG to promote?

Canon John Spence to reply as Chair of the Archbishops’ Council Finance Committee:

A From GS2173 members will be aware of the financial challenges the Council is facing in setting its 2021 budget. But I confirm that the budget will continue to support the safeguarding work of the national Church and that preparations for a redress scheme are expected to be in the work programme for the National Safeguarding Team in 2021.

Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops’ Council Finance Committee:

Q104 Given the need to change the culture of the church (and hence of this Synod) to focus on equipping Christians for everyday life – as identified in ‘Setting God’s People Free’ - what priority will be given to resourcing this in the 2021 budget?

Canon John Spence to reply as Chair of the Archbishops’ Council Finance Committee:

A From GS2173 members will be aware of the financial challenges the Council, in common with other parts of the Church, is facing in setting its 2021 budget which I hope will be brought before Synod in November. The Council will need to consider which of a wide range of priorities, including work identified in ‘Setting God’s People Free’ can be funded in the light of the resources expected to be available. However, resourcing this workstream goes beyond what is in the Council’s budget. For instance, Ministry Council are considering how greater focus might be given to the development of lay leaders and ministers.

MINISTRY COUNCIL

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q105 For the last annual period with reliable figures, (A) How much, approximately, was spent by the national Church and the Dioceses on the discernment, selection and training of candidates for ordained ministry? (I’m looking for the total spent in the year). (B) How many

were ordained deacon in that same year? (C.) What were the equivalent amounts spent for those training for licensed lay ministries? (D) And how many lay ministers were licensed in that period?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

- A** A) We only have figures for the national church spend in these areas which is £24,818,000 for ordinands across all the year groups of initial training. This does not include any diocesan expenditure on discernment and selection.
- B) There were 575 ordained deacon (355 stipendiary and 220 self-supporting).
- C) The costs of discernment, selection and training of candidates for lay ministries are met by Dioceses. Information on the overall spend is not collected nationally. The National Church staffing budget for Lay Ministry is £70,000
- D) The number of Readers / LLM (Readers) admitted for the first time during 2019 was 286.

Reader / LLM (Readers) are vitally important in the life of the church but are only a small part of the wider picture of lay ministry which encompasses other licensed lay ministries, including Pioneers and Evangelists, alongside authorised lay ministries and the thousands of people in locally recognised ministries in their worshipping communities. The ongoing lay ministry data project, due to be completed later this year, will provide additional insight into the numbers of people in public, recognised lay ministries.

The Revd Canon Rebecca Swyer (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q106 Given the recent national drive for a 50% increase in vocations to ordained ministry, what steps is the national church taking to assess how many title posts dioceses can afford in 2021 in the light of the current pandemic, and is consideration being given as to possible additional financial support for dioceses to ensure there are enough title posts for all those due to complete IME 1 training in 2021?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A The Ministry Council is fully committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, those who are expecting to be appointed to a stipendiary title post in 2021 can do so. The National Ministry Team is currently ascertaining exactly from each Diocese the number of stipendiary curates that they at present would expect to fund in 2021 given financial pressures made more complex by the pandemic. We

continue to monitor and review those numbers against the numbers expected to leave training in summer 2021. A paper with the outcome of this work will be presented to the Strategic Ministry Board at their meeting on July 9. We will then be working with Dioceses to seek the best outcomes for everyone concerned.

The Revd Charles Read (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q107 Many ordinands currently in formation for stipendiary ministry are expressing anxiety about whether there will be sufficient stipendiary posts for them on ordination in 2021 or 2022. Can the Chair please explain:

- a) What the funding mechanism is for stipendiary curacies;
- b) What discussions have taken place in the Ministry Council, House of Bishops or elsewhere to ensure that all those currently sponsored for stipendiary ordained ministry will have a reasonable chance of securing a title post?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A I would like also to refer to my answer to Question 106 concerning the process held by the Strategic Ministry Board for ensuring that all those sponsored for stipendiary ministry will have a reasonable chance of securing a title post. The funding of stipendiary curacies is in general the responsibility of dioceses. The SMB have set up a rigorous process to assess, against a number of criteria, applications from Dioceses for funding for additional curacies. Given the exceptional circumstances arising from the pandemic, the SMB are also discussing with other national church colleagues how best to assist Dioceses in meeting their wider ambitions for all stipendiary curacies.

Mr James Cary (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q108 What work has been done to reconcile the planned 50% increase in vocations to ordained ministry with the possibility of a reduction in the number of stipendiary posts across the Church?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A I would like to refer to my answer to Question 106 concerning the work being done to bring together the 50% increase in vocations with curacy posts, and also to my answer to Question 109 below on the ways in which work is being done to help Dioceses draw up their ministerial development strategies which might tie into this 50% increase in vocations target.

Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q109 What are the current forecasts, by year, for the total number of (a) stipendiary clergy positions, and (b) clergy leaving stipendiary positions, across the Church of England as a whole?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A The National Ministry Team is focusing its data collection work at the moment on establishing the connection between the vocational targets set by the House of Bishops and the provision of stipendiary curacy posts.

Dioceses hold responsibility for their ministerial deployment strategy and the House of Bishops recently agreed that Regional Bishops Meetings will together consider the plans of their constituent dioceses and share these with the Ministry Team. The Ministry Team will draw together the data on all ministerial posts once dioceses have developed their forecasts. As a contribution to this work, the team is involved in developing a tool to help dioceses plan their posts (at incumbent level) over the next ten years.

The Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q110 Can the Church of England afford to provide the necessary funding for the training, housing and future stipendiary ministry and pensions of the current cohort of those approved for theological training?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A Yes, I am confident that this will be the case. The Strategic Ministry Board meeting on 9th July will, in particular, look at the cohort or those preparing for ordination in 2021. We recognise, as with any cohort, that not all are training for stipendiary ministry.

The most important factor in the long-term financial health of the Church of England will remain the mission and financial health of its parishes and the continued generosity of its worshipping communities. This is a shared responsibility and endeavour which includes its parishes and dioceses, as well as the national institutions.

The Archbishops' Council, working together with the Church Commissioners, aims to support dioceses both through funding programmes such as Strategic Ministry Funding and Strategic Transformation Funding, and through activity such as the National Giving Strategy, and resources to enhance digital engagement.

Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q111 What element of the national BAME vocations strategy is dedicated to ensuring BAME ordinands are fully supported through IME Phase 1 and what resources are provided by Ministry Division to dioceses to ensure title posts for these ordinands are made available?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A The Mentor programme which accompanies minority ethnic candidates and ordinands through the whole discernment and formation process is one aspect of the vocations strategy aimed at those in IME 1. The programme also includes regional conferences for minority ethnic candidates to engage with role models. Along with Common Awards colleagues, the TEI sector is actively considering how their practices can be inclusive of all, for example by a process of decolonising reading lists by widening the theological texts and resources from which ordinands draw in their learning to ensure that minority ethnic heritage voices are more clearly heard. Work is also underway to offer specific open days for minority ethnic candidates. Title posts are rightly the responsibility of the Dioceses. However, one of the criteria used by the Strategic Ministry Board in evaluating Diocesan applications for funding additional curacy posts is the support they provide to minority ethnic candidates.

Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q112 What advice was given by Ministry Division to dioceses concerning the use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for the purpose of furloughing curates?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A The National Ministry Team were consulted in the formulation of advice which was issued to dioceses by the National Church Institutions. The advice explained how it was legally possible to furlough curates, and outlined the consequences, such as that the curate would have to refrain from all ministerial activity and that the curacy might in some circumstances might need to be extended. However, it made clear that this was not a specific recommendation, and it was for dioceses to decide whether or not it was reasonable to do so.

Mr James Lee (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q113 Regarding study of biblical languages by ordinands, how many ordinands undertook modules in biblical languages in each of the past three years for which statistics are available, with this number broken down by training pathway (e.g. full-time residential, full-time non-residential (mixed-mode) and part-time)?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A As stated in the answer to Question 25 in November 2019's Synod Questions, study of biblical languages is included as a requirement or option in some pathways across all the different forms of training, and this is encouraged by the Quality and Formation Panel. We do not have statistics for the number of ordinands who take these or any other particular courses in any given year. However, our estimate is that last year there were approximately 75 people involved in taking credits in Greek or Hebrew in the Common Awards programmes.

REMUNERATION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE

The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

Q114 Please can you confirm any provision that is made for retiring clergy in addition to pension provision – and in particular whether any support is available for retirement expenses including removals?

The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

A I am not aware of any national provision or recommendations, although it is possible that some dioceses may assist with removal expenses.

Removal expenses are paid by the DBF when clergy move house following a new appointment, because the house is provided to enable clergy to carry out their duties. This is not the case with their retirement home, although many clergy continue to exercise a ministry in retirement after applying for PTO.

Clergy incurring removal costs on their retirement have a lump sum paid at retirement and would be able to use part of this if necessary.

The Revd Canon Martyn Taylor (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

Q115 Is there a national framework for handling clergy redundancies to ensure that there is parity across the whole church?

The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

A As the great majority of clergy are office holders, it is not legally possible to make them redundant, and there is no national framework for this. Clergy may be dispossessed from offices which cease to exist as a result of pastoral reorganisation. This is subject to the processes in the Mission and Pastoral Measure, which gives

clergy, parishioners, and other interested parties the right to make representations to the Church Commissioners' Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee against draft pastoral schemes.

Canon Jenny Humphreys (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

Q116 Who is responsible for updating the Dignity at Work policy so that it complies with the 2010 Equality Act?

The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

A RACSC produced advice called Dignity at Work in 2008 to assist dioceses with producing their own anti bullying and harassment policies. This advice is available on the Church of England website, and needs to be updated to reflect not only changes in legislation, but also developments in the understandings of abuse, and the availability of further guidance. At the request of the House of Clergy, the Committee is engaged in a review of clergy remuneration. This limits our ability to carry out other work, but we shall do this as soon as we can.

MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Q117 What is the Council is doing to promote the proclamation of the Gospel (first mark of mission) overseas in line with the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, as recorded at the end of Matthew's Gospel?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

A The longstanding practice of the Church of England is that overseas mission is done through the Mission Agencies and the Diocesan Companion Links. The MPA Council provides a co-ordinating function through Partnership for World Mission and the World Mission Adviser. The Mission Agencies and the Dioceses promote the Great Commission through exchange of mission partners, visits between partners, local church support and financial assistance. The Church of England also receives encouragement through these partnerships to fulfil the Great Commission.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Q118 What plans are there to assess, address and influence the government policy over growing inequality gap between rich and poor in England that has been brought into sharp focus by the impact of both Covid-19 and the lockdown?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

A In the short-term, MPA's work in this area is focusing on the financial needs of low-income families with children, including the need for more targeted support for children, as well as leading the ongoing campaign to lift the two-child limit. MPA has initiated a joint research project with CPAG to monitor the financial impact of Covid-19 on low income families with children, with the first report due in August. In the longer-term, MPA will continue to highlight the structural drivers of inequality in income and wealth, and the ways in which this is manifested in the housing market and across other policy areas. For example, the Archbishop's Commission on Housing, Church and Community, which reports in early 2021, will offer a Christian perspective on the housing crisis, with a particular emphasis on addressing inequalities in access to decent and affordable housing.

Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Q119 Following the legal aid debate in the February 2020 session of General Synod, has contact been made with any government department about the impact of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO), and if so, what response has been so far received?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

A There have been no formal discussions with government departments on this topic since the Synod debate. We all await announcements on the ongoing government review of the thresholds for legal aid entitlement, and how to simplify the Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) scheme. These were expected to report towards end of this year (but be delayed further by recent events). We had prepared materials and support to enable bishops to take part in a House of Lords debate on access to Legal Aid in March 2020, but that debate was suspended indefinitely.

MPA continues to hold a watching brief on this subject and will pursue the issues whenever opportunities to influence policy appear.

Mr Jeremy Harris (Chester) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Q120 What representations has the Church of England made about the increasing persecution of Christians in India, including by the Indian police?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

A The Mission and Public Affairs Council is conscious that in several countries, India included, religious and minority groups are facing social stigma and harassment as a result of Covid-19, while extremists are exploiting fears to spread hate by blaming the

outbreak on ethnic or religious groups and encouraging those affected to spread it to these groups. Religious freedom conditions in India, which were deteriorating before the pandemic, have therefore experienced a significant turn downward with religious minorities under increasing assault. Bishops have raised these concerns in Parliament, while MPA has briefed relevant staff at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) as well as the Office of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion of Belief. MPA continues to assist the FCO in implementing the recommendations arising from the Foreign Secretary's 2019 Review of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians.

COMMITTEE FOR MINORITY ETHNIC ANGLICAN CONCERNS

Mr Bradley Smith (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns:

Q121 In the light of the Archbishop of Canterbury's claim in his video posted on 2nd June 2020 that 'white supremacy' is "endemic and longstanding" in this country, will the Council prepare a briefing for the House of Bishops on:

- (a) the concept of "white supremacy";
- (b) the evidence in favour of the argument that British society manifests "endemic and longstanding ... white supremacy";
- (c) in the light of its conclusions on (b), and of the potentially inflammatory nature of the term, whether the Church's vocation not only to challenge racism wherever it occurs but also to promote racial harmony will be helped or hindered by making the charge that British society manifests "endemic and longstanding ... white supremacy"?

The Dean of Manchester to reply as Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns:

A If the House of Bishops asks for such a briefing, we will certainly provide it.

But the answer is implicit in clause (c) of the question.

We cannot progress much further until white people start to understand the implications of being white, question attitudes they absorb as "normal", and overturn lingering beliefs about racial hierarchies. The daily experiences of BAME people, who are labelled in many derogatory ways, reveal how they can be perceived as inferior to white people.

Racism is not a problem for BAME people to resolve so that white people's ideas can remain comfortably untouched. Prayerful

reflection on one's own identity, and how one places oneself within a world view, is central to Christian discipleship.

If it takes a "potentially inflammatory" phrase to prompt change, maybe advancing God's Kingdom on earth requires that. Promoting racial harmony means challenging any notion of racial superiority in Church and society.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:

Q122 In outline, what are the plans for any remaining meetings of the General Synod during 2020, either in person or virtually?

The Revd Canon Sue Booy to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:

A The Synod is due to meet during the period of 23-25 November in Church House London. It requires a change to legislation in order to permit Synod to conduct its official business on a remote basis. The Officers of General Synod are considering the option of holding an Extraordinary physical meeting of the Synod in September solely for the purpose of enacting legislative change to enable Synod to meet officially on a remote basis should it be necessary for it to do so in November or a later date. Planning is under way to ensure the safety of members attending any physical meeting of Synod whether in September or November.

CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION

Mr Tom Hatton (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:

Q123 Has the Commission given any consideration to the need for the episcopate to be sufficiently diverse, in terms of the political and social viewpoints of those nominated to diocesan sees, to avoid a situation in which a great many of those to whom the Church of England is called upon to minister are alienated from it as a result of its collective leadership lacking any empathy with, or being actively hostile to, their own political and social perspectives and aspirations?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:

A The Crown Nominations Commission is concerned with how the those being nominated to diocesan sees reflect the whole body of Christ, but the personal political affiliations of those being considered for episcopal ministry are not known.

The Commission is charged to discern who God is calling to serve as Bishops in the Church of God in a particular place at a specific time. That discernment includes considering how individuals will be a

prophetic voice in society, as charged by the Ordinal “to proclaim the gospel boldly, confront injustice and work for righteousness and peace in all the world”, irrespective of their political and social viewpoints.

The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:

Q124 What role does evidence of current ministry play in the consideration by the Crown Nominations Commission when making decisions about appointments?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:

A The members of the Crown Nominations Commission have access to a wealth of information to assist in their discernment. This includes the candidates’ own reflections on their current and previous ministries in a “CV” and personal statement, and references from their bishop and three other people who collectively offer a broad range of perspectives from first-hand experience of serving alongside them. At interview, candidates answer questions by sharing examples from their own ministry.

These sources of information provide what the Discerning in Obedience report (GS Misc 1171) refers to as “clues” to help give the Commission “an insight into what God intends to do through this or that person in this or that place”.

DIOCESES COMMISSION

Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the Dioceses Commission:

Q125 Will the financial pressures on the Church caused by the economic aspects of Covid 19 lead to a change in emphasis by the Dioceses Commission, leading to fewer or different dioceses in the future?

The Revd Paul Benfield to reply as Acting Chair of the Dioceses Commission:

A The Commission is indeed very conscious of the financial pressures facing the Church. When it met last month these were at the forefront of its mind as it carefully considered the business before it (including a number of submissions to fill suffragan sees from diocesan bishops).

The Commission was also briefed about the strategic work initiated by the House of Bishops (as indicated in GS Misc 1250). It fully expects to engage with this work as part of its statutory role in respect of the diocesan structure of the Church of England.

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q126 The paper, published on the Church of England website, “Guidance on Spiritual Communion and Coronavirus”, states (inter alia):
“Making a Spiritual Communion is particularly fitting for those who cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the duty of receiving Holy Communion ‘regularly, and especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun or Pentecost’ (Canon B 15).”

What legal advice was obtained before making this statement, bearing in mind:

- (a) that one of the conditions a lay person must meet to be qualified for election to this Synod is that he or she “has received Communion according to the use of the Church of England, or of a Church in communion with it, at least three times in the twelve months preceding [the date of dissolution of the Synod]” (Church Representation Rules, rule 50(1)(a), (2) and (10)), and
- (b) that a similar requirement applies to those bodies for which eligibility for membership depends on the person being “an actual communicant” (as defined by CRR rule 83(2)(a)), namely a PCC, Deanery Synod or a Diocesan Synod (see CRR rules M8(1)(b) and 36(3))?

The Bishop of Exeter to reply as Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A The definition of ‘actual communicant’ in the CRR does not require receiving Holy Communion at the festivals mentioned in Canon B 15 (this being impossible for almost everyone at Easter and Pentecost this year). To qualify for election under the rules, one must receive Holy Communion three times in twelve months.

The practice referred to as Spiritual Communion is *by definition* not the same as receiving Holy Communion physically. As the Book of Common Prayer indicates, someone who is desirous and prepared but unable to receive (as many have been this year) may yet ‘eat and drink the Body and Blood... profitably to his Soul’s health.’

The impact of the pandemic and churches being closed for public worship have indicated the need for further theological work on Holy Communion. It is not likely that such work would be concluded before the next round of elections.

The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q127 “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear” (*Isaiah 59.1*)

The Book of Common Prayer contains specific prayers for deliverance in, and thanksgivings after, times of dearth and famine, war and tumults, common plague or sickness.

None of the prayers in the *Common Worship* library (even in the Litany) and in the recent publication “Prayers for use during the coronavirus outbreak”, seem to ask God for deliverance. Would the Liturgical Commission consider producing prayers to articulate this biblical expectation of a Sovereign and loving God?

The Bishop of Exeter to reply as Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A The Liturgical Commission welcomes the widespread use of material from the Book of Common Prayer, and normally produces new material to complement it at the request of the House of Bishops. It would welcome opportunities to craft prayers with this Biblical theme.

The language of deliverance is already used a number of times in *Common Worship* (notably at baptism, and in the Litany with its refrain, ‘Good Lord, deliver us.’). The *Common Worship* Psalter contains eighty-two references to deliverance, some of which are echoed in the prayers which conclude each psalm. In specific relation to famine, war, and sickness, the Litany specifically prays for deliverance ‘from famine and disaster [and] from violence’.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q128 In the motion passed unanimously in February, Synod mandated the NSSG to bring forward proposals to give effect to that commitment that follow a more fully survivor-centred approach to safeguarding, including his speech to Synod on 12 February 2020 the Chair of the Finance Committee of the Archbishops’ Council, John Spence, said at the end of the debate in Synod about safeguarding: “*Let us be very clear. This is not about affordability; it is about justice. Justice cannot have a different value depending on the finances of this or that diocese. Whatever we are told is required by those responsible that is required for redress, then those funds will be found.*” Will the Church Commissioners please outline what they are doing to put in place and fund a redress scheme for survivors of abuse as called for by the Synod?

The Bishop of Manchester to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners' Board of Governors:

A The Church Commissioners recognise the importance of a holistic redress scheme including financial compensation as well as emotional or therapeutic support and apology. We are committed to helping this work move forward expeditiously and are working with the National Safeguarding Team and National Safeguarding Steering Group. We stand ready to help the Church fund the work to develop such a scheme and look forward to its introduction.

The Revd Canon Howard Stoker (Norwich) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q129 Due to the financial pressures of Covid 19 pandemic has place upon dioceses, I understand that Church Commissioners are allowing Dioceses to accrue up to a 3-month debt in payment towards clergy stipends. Yet why are dioceses being charged interest on the debt at a rate of 2% over the base rate when high street banks are offering loans at a lower rate of 1.7%? Why are dioceses being charged interest at all?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Commissioners do not have power to make preferential loans. In March, in order to make a swift response to the financial impact of Covid 19, we made £50m of liquidity support available to dioceses by extending the existing Stipends Account forbearance facility (from a previous maximum of £5m). The intention was to provide cashflow support quickly; therefore we did not revisit the pre-existing interest rate. The same terms apply to any diocese using the forbearance facility and this is unsecured, so we recognise that some dioceses may be able to borrow at a lower rate elsewhere.

This initial liquidity support has subsequently been supplemented by making grant support available to dioceses and cathedrals. The grants to dioceses funded by the Commissioners and made available by the Archbishops' Council can include a sum for up to one year's interest costs (up to a maximum of base rate +2%).

Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q130 It is noted that the Commissioners were able to find £55 million for the Lambeth Palace Library given its exceptional collection and need. Covid-19 has placed the rest of the Church in exceptional need and hugely weakened financially. Please can the Commissioners respond even more generously to safeguard our dioceses and cathedrals in these unprecedented circumstances by releasing some of their considerable reserves to enable ministry to this and future generations to be continued.

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The budget for the Library was £23.5m plus VAT and fees. Apart from a short delay for COVID, it is on time and within budget and is a remarkable building which we can be proud of.

In late March, in the early days of the Covid-19 crisis, working with the Archbishops' Council, the Commissioners provided over £75m of urgent liquidity assistance to dioceses and cathedrals by way of extending the forbearance arrangements on the clergy stipends accounts and making advance payments of grants including Lowest Income Community and other grants for 2020.

In May, the Council and Commissioners announced further financial support for dioceses and cathedrals: up to £35m in grants for those dioceses in most need which will give short-term financial assistance whilst they develop transformation programmes; and grants to Cathedrals from a £10m Cathedral Sustainability Fund.

The Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q131 Given the immense public interest over the last weeks in individuals and companies which benefited from the international slave trade, what are the Church Commissioners doing to ascertain whether Queen Anne's Bounty, which forms the seed base of the funding for the Commissioners now, has more than a passing connection with the slave trade?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner

A The Commissioners' Board discussed this matter last month and has established a working group to explore whether it is possible to throw more light on whether Queen Anne's Bounty (1704), or the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (1836), benefitted from the historic slave trade.

The assets the Church Commissioners inherited in 1948 were primarily UK agricultural property and bonds. We have diversified the portfolio in recent decades, with an expansion into global equities and other global asset classes, and are not currently aware of these including profits from historic slavery.

Sadly, we recognise that slavery is not only an historic phenomenon and we devote significant energy to trying to help eradicate modern slavery through our Responsible Investment work.