

Dear Friends

This letter comes to you in preparation for the Extraordinary meeting of the Synod on 24th September. The Business Committee met in August to consider the planning for this special session and I'd like to thank members of staff and the committee for making time for this during what is usually a rather less busy time!

This will be a most unusual meeting necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic – and it is unusual in two ways. First because there is a single item of Business; a Measure to be completed within the session that will make it possible for the Synod to meet virtually should that be necessary. This is similar to the action taken by Parliament to ensure that they would be able to meet virtually. There is none of our usual Business – no Business Committee Report or Presidential Address, no Diocesan or Private Members Motions and no Questions.

Secondly In order to meet safely with proper precautions for Covid-19 we needed to ask for your help and co-operation in achieving a synod large enough to legislate and small enough to keep everyone safe. Given the smaller size of this Session it may help to remind you that the 40-member rule does not apply when Synod proceeds to Revision in Full Synod without a prior Revision Committee stage. We are particularly indebted to the Chair and Vice Chair of the House of Laity, the Prolocutors and the staff who support these two Houses for the work they have undertaken to help achieve this. Thank you too – whether you are attending or staying at home; we have a Synod of a size to legislate safely. If you are staying at home you can follow the discussions on the Livestream as usual.

It is important to get this work done well and it is not always possible to predict accurately the length of time needed for proper debate and discussion. For this reason we have allocated a generous amount of time to enable a full discussion of the Measure and ensure that all the stages of the legislation can take place and this means that we have had to ask you to be prepared to stay rather later than we reasonably expect the business to end. It is also possible that the Chairs will need to seek variations in the timing for business depending on how the debate goes.

I look forward to seeing you on 24th September – thank you so much for your help in facilitating this unusual session of the General Synod.

Sue Booy on Behalf of the Business Committee

September 2020