

GENERAL SYNOD

SPECIAL SESSION OF SYNOD SEPTEMBER 2020

FIRST NOTICE PAPER

ITEM 500

General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure (GS 2176)

Draft Measure for Revision

The Steering Committee for the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure has considered the amendments of which due notice has been given for the Revision Stage. The amendments appear, together with short explanatory notes, on Order Paper I.

The Steering Committee intends to respond to the amendments as follows:

Item 503

Amendment in the name of the Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn) to provide that the officers of the Synod may make only one set of special standing orders and may not amend or revoke them

The Steering Committee intends to support the amendment. It considers that once the six officers have exercised the emergency power to make special standing orders, all subsequent decisions about special standing orders should be left to the Synod itself.

Item 504

Amendment in the name of Mr Philip French (Rochester) to permit the Synod to deal with Article 7 business at a remote meeting

The Steering Committee recognises that there are arguments for and against the amendment and does not intend to indicate either support or opposition.

Item 505

Amendment in the name of Mr Clive Scowen (London) to limit the business that can be debated at a remote meeting to business which the officers of the Synod have certified as sufficiently urgent

The Steering Committee intends to resist the amendment. The Committee considers that the amendment would be unduly restrictive. It also considers that the six officers should not be involved in determining the business that is to be taken at a remote meeting and that decisions as to the arrangements for groups of sessions and the content of the agenda should be left to the Business Committee.

Item 507

Amendment in the name of Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to provide that, if proposed special standing orders are published online before the Measure receives Royal Assent, the officers of the Synod must, once they formally make the special standing orders, publish notice that they have done so online and inform members

The Steering Committee intends to resist the amendment. It considers that it is unnecessary and would lead to superfluous additional documentation being produced, as members will have to be sent the special standing orders in any event.

Item 508

Amendment in the name of Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to require that a copy of the special standing order must also be sent to the Church of England Youth Council, Deaf Anglicans Together and any bishop to whom a diocesan bishop's functions have been delegated

The Steering Committee intends to resist the amendment. The Synod's main standing orders require official papers to be sent to members; they do not contain requirements about sending papers to those who are invited to attend groups of sessions and who are sent the Synod papers as a matter of established practice. The Steering Committee considers that the sending of special standing orders to non-members should be dealt with following the usual practice and is not apt for inclusion in primary legislation.

Item 510

Amendment in the name of Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to provide that, if it is proposed to revive special standing orders which have lapsed, members may amend them (so that they would revive as amended)

The Steering Committee intends to support the amendment. The Committee considers that the proposed power to revive special standing orders with amendments is consistent with the objective of enabling the Synod to control its own processes.

Item 511

Amendment in the name of Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to provide that, if special standing orders have lapsed, the debate on whether to revive them can be held at a remote meeting

The Steering Committee intends to support the amendment. The Committee considers that in the event that special standing orders have lapsed, the Synod should be able to debate and

vote on a motion to revive them without having to meet physically to do so.

Item 513

Amendment in the name of the Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn) which is consequential on item 503 and removes the power of the officers of the Synod to amend or revoke special standing orders or to make new ones

The Steering Committee intends to support the amendment as it is consequential on **item 503** (which the Committee intends to support).

Item 515

Amendment in the name of the Revd Thomas Seville (Religious Communities) to provide for the Measure to expire on 30 November 2021 unless the Synod resolves to keep it in force

The Steering Committee intends to resist the amendment. It would reduce the Synod's ability to decide whether to continue or discontinue arrangements for remote meetings, because if the Measure were to expire a new Measure would need to be passed by the Synod and approved by Parliament. It also carries the risk that if the Measure were not kept in force, it might become necessary to repeat the process of holding a physical meeting of the Synod in circumstances similar to those in which the meeting on 24 September 2020 is being held.