

GENERAL SYNOD**STANDING ORDERS MADE UNDER SECTION 1 OF THE GENERAL SYNOD
(REMOTE MEETINGS) (TEMPORARY STANDING ORDERS) MEASURE 2020****Explanatory notes**

The General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020 (“the Measure”) makes provision for the General Synod to meet and transact business remotely in accordance with temporary special standing orders made for that purpose by the officers of the Synod.

The officers of the General Synod have made the special standing orders set out in GS 2177 for that purpose. The special standing orders are subject to approval by the General Synod, with or without amendment.

Introduction

1. The General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020 (“the Measure”) makes provision for the General Synod to meet and transact business remotely, in accordance with temporary special standing orders made jointly by the Archbishops, the Prolocutors of the Lower Houses of the Convocations of the Clergy, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity (“the officers of the Synod”).
2. Before making special standing orders under the Measure, the officers of the Synod must consult the General Synod’s Business Committee and its Standing Orders Committee. The officers consulted those committees on, respectively, 28 October and 30 October 2020. Both committees expressed support for the proposed standing orders and did not suggest any changes.
3. The officers have therefore made the special standing orders in the form in which they are set out in GS 2177.
4. Once made, special standing orders are subject to approval (with or without amendment) by the General Synod at its next meeting. The question whether to approve them must be the first item of business at that meeting.
5. Special standing orders automatically expire after 12 months unless that period is extended by resolution of the Synod. If special standing orders have expired or have been revoked by the Synod, they may be revived by resolution of the Synod (whether at a physical or at a remote meeting).

Special standing orders

6. Special SO 1 provides for the ordinary standing orders of the General Synod to apply subject to the modifications set out in the subsequent special standing orders. As a

result, the general procedure for the Synod's business should remain familiar to members even if some of the details will, of necessity, be different.

7. The concept of a "session" or "sessions" of the Synod is retained for remote meetings. Under SO 153(1) of the Synod's standing orders, "session" means the proceedings of the Synod or a House of the Synod on any one day, whether or not interrupted by a mid-day or other temporary adjournment.
8. Under special SO 2, a session will be able to take place, and members able to participate, without all of them, or any of them, being together in the same place. This means that a session can take place either entirely remotely, or on a "hybrid" basis with some members physically attending and some attending remotely. The precise arrangements in the case of each group of sessions will be determined by the Business Committee.
9. Special SO 3 is an interpretative provision. A reference in the Synod's usual standing orders to the place where sessions are held is to be read as including more than one place, including "virtual" locations.
10. Special SO 4 modifies the meaning of "present". A person is regarded as being present if he or she can hear and be heard, and where practicable see and be seen, by the other persons present and by members of the press and public.
11. Special SO 5 provides that a reference to being present includes being present by electronic means.
12. Special SO 6 provides, consistently with section 3(7) of the Measure, for the special standing orders to override any inconsistent provision in the Constitution of the General Synod or its Standing Orders.

Means of voting etc.

13. It was not considered necessary to include provision for voting in the special standing orders. Standing Order 38 of the Standing Orders of the Synod provides, other than in the case of a vote by show of hands or physical division, as follows:
 - (8) Voting (by whatever means) is otherwise to be conducted in accordance with such instructions as the Business Committee from time to time issues; and, subject to that, the administrative arrangements for taking a vote are to be made by the Registrar under the direction of the Chair.
 - (9) The Business Committee must also give instructions to ensure that, where the voting on a question is conducted by electronic means, the names of the members voting in favour of the question, the names of the members voting against and the

names of the members wishing to record an abstention from voting are made publicly available in such manner as the Business Committee may determine.

14. It will accordingly be for the Business Committee separately to give instructions for remote voting under these provisions, in the light of technical advice on the available methods of voting provided by staff.
15. For similar reasons, it was not considered necessary to include special provision for the manner in which members may indicate their support under the '25-member rule' for amendments to motions or the '40-member rule' for amendments to legislation; or to indicate their wish to raise a point of order or move a procedural motion. The 25-member rule and the 40-member rule (as set out, respectively, in SO 29 and SO 59) already provide for members to indicate their wish for debate on an amendment to continue by means other than standing in their place. And the Standing Orders of the General Synod do not specify the manner in which points of order or requests for procedural motions are to be raised. SO 17 (right to speak) simply provides that a member wishing to speak must rise in his or her place or, if unable to do so, indicate by some other means the wish to speak.
16. As a member participating remotely will not be in "his or her place", the provisions in the SOs of the General Synod enabling members to indicate by some other means are applicable to all such members. The Business Committee is responsible, under SO 125(6), for all matters relating to the sessional arrangements of the Synod. It is considered that this covers such matters as the manner in which members participating remotely must indicate a wish to speak or a wish for debate on an amendment to continue. The Business Committee will accordingly issue instructions as to how members who wish to give such indications must do so using the Zoom platform.

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