

NOVEMBER 2020 GROUP OF SESSIONS

Guide to the November 2020 group of sessions:

A report from the General Synod Business Committee

Introduction

1. The Business Committee is charged under Standing Order 4 with settling the agenda for each group of sessions and determining the order in which business is to be taken. Subject to Standing Order 1, it is also responsible for all matters relating to the sessional arrangements of the Synod (Standing Order 125).
2. This is the first time that the General Synod will be meeting remotely on an official basis following the Final Approval of the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure at the physical meeting on 24 September 2020. Under the terms of the Measure, the Officers of the General Synod have agreed the Temporary Standing Orders (GS2177). These have been posted on the General Synod website and circulated to members. Under the terms of the Measure, the question of whether to approve the temporary standing orders will be the first item of business at the meeting.
3. This report falls into four parts:
 - Part I comments on practical arrangements for the November group of sessions
 - Part II comments on general categories of Synod business
 - Part III comments on the shape of the agenda for the November group of sessions
 - Part IV reports on other work and recent decisions of the Business Committee.

Part I: Practical Arrangements for November group of sessions

Sessional Arrangements

4. The General Synod will be meeting virtually via Zoom. Further guidance on how to participate in the meeting, including how to vote will be sent directly to members by Synod staff. The timings of the sessions are as follows:
 - 1.00 pm – 7.00 pm on Monday 23 November
 - 9.15 am – 6.30 pm on Tuesday 24 November
 - 9.15 am – 3.30 pm on Wednesday 25 November
5. As this is a virtual meeting, regular screen breaks have been built into the Agenda to allow members to take a break from the proceedings.

Synod Worship

6. The group of sessions will begin with an act of worship via Zoom. The full details and timings of worship are listed at the start of the Agenda.

Part II: General Categories of Synod Business

Categories of Synod business

7. When constructing agendas, the Business Committee seeks to view the agenda as a whole and to ensure that it covers a balance of subjects. Synod business tends to fall into four main categories as follows.

Standing items

- This includes items such as the debate on the Business Committee Report and Synod Question Time.

Legislative business

- This can take a variety of forms. Full details of the legislative business for a group of sessions are set out in Special Agenda I.

Ordering the life of the Church

- Business which concerns the way we order our own life together.

The Church and the World

- Particular business which debates current issues and takes account of the way in which the Church relates to our public context.

8. Inevitably, some of the subjects which come under these areas may overlap. The Business Committee is aware that meeting for a long period over Zoom is not optimum and so we have endeavoured to schedule only the most urgent and time critical business on the Agenda for this Group of Sessions in order to keep the meeting to a manageable length. For this reason, we have decided not to schedule any Diocesan Synod Motions or Private Members Motions at this group of sessions.

Legislative Business

9. The General Synod's main role as set out in its constitution is to consider and pass legislation by Measure, Canon and Act of Synod. As the national legislative body of the Church, the Synod's role, powers and constitution are different from that of other Church bodies such as a PCC or a Diocesan Synod. A note on the Synod's legislative process is available on the Synod App and the General Synod web pages on the Church of England website.

Part III: The Shape of the November Agenda

Standing Items of Business

10. The debate on the Report from the Business Committee will take place on the first day. This offers Synod members the opportunity to comment on the agenda or on the content and conduct of the Synod's business more generally.

11. This will be followed by a joint Presidential Address from both Archbishops. There will be an opportunity for Synod members to ask questions, after which they will be directed to join virtual break-out groups.

Handling of Synod Question Time in November 2020

12. The Business Committee has allocated 75 minutes for Synod Question Time. The Committee is aware of the rising number of Questions that are submitted in advance of each group of sessions, but this was the maximum time available given the compressed nature of this virtual group of sessions. Members will also have had the opportunity to pose questions after the Presidential Address.

Legislative Business in November

13. There are 13 items of legislative business. The Business Committee has determined that six of them are suitable for the deemed approval procedure under SO 71, while a further item is automatically subject to that procedure. Those seven items will therefore not be debated unless a member gives due notice by the relevant deadline in Special Agenda I that the member wishes any of them to be debated, or wishes – where permissible – to give notice of an amendment. The other seven items require debate and have been allocated places in the Agenda.
14. The first item of business at this group of sessions will be the motion to approve the **Standing Orders made under Section 1 of the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020 (GS 2177)**. Under the terms of the Measure, the Officers of the General Synod have made the Temporary Standing Orders. These have been posted on the General Synod website and circulated to members. Under the terms of the Measure, the Synod may approve these temporary standing orders with or without amendment.
15. The other legislation that has been allocated time for debate includes the **Cathedrals Measure** and the **Diocesan Boards of Education Measure**. Both received First Consideration in July 2019 and had their Revision Stage in February 2020. These are being presented to Synod for Final Drafting and Final Approval.
16. The Royal Assent and Licence has been received for **Amending Canon No. 40** and **Amending Canon No. 41** and they will be formally enacted. Amending Canon No. 40 makes provision for the formal recognition of religious communities in the Church of England and for related matters, and Amending Canon No. 41 amends existing Canons concerned with the form of service registers and updates various references in the Canons
17. **The Draft Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure** will be presented for First Consideration. This legislation implements one of the recommendations from IICSA which called for the existing duty for a relevant person to ‘have due regard’ to safeguarding guidance to be replaced with more straightforward provision.
18. **The National Ministry Register (Clergy) Regulations 2020** will enable the establishment of a national ministry register. They require the Archbishops’ Council to compile and maintain a record of all clergy who are authorised to exercise ministry in the diocese or other area or place.

19. **Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2020** and **Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2020** are for deemed approval. These are the usual annual orders that prescribe, respectively, the annual retainers payable to diocesan registrars, and the fees payable in respect of proceedings in ecclesiastical courts and tribunals.
20. **Payments to the Churches Conservation Trust Order 2020** is also for deemed approval. This Order puts into effect the Church Commissioners' proposals for financing the Trust in 2021 to 2024, allowing flexibility for how the proposed grant of £4.5m is sourced while protecting the operation of the Measure and the Commissioners' ability to support the Church's mission.
21. **Scheme for Variation of Membership of Deanery Synods.** This scheme, made by the Manchester Diocesan Synod, provides for two deaneries to exceed the 150 members set out in the Church Representation Rules. The scheme has been laid before the Synod but is debated only if a member gives notice of a wish to do so.
22. **Draft Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2020** are for deemed approval. These confer on clergy holding office under common tenure the same entitlement as employees to paid bereavement leave for parents that lose a child.
23. **Religious Communities Regulations 2020** are for deemed approval. The Regulations are made under Canon DA 1 which makes provision for a community to be declared by the House of Bishops to be a religious community in the Church of England if it meets requirements set out in regulations made by the House of Bishops and approved by the General Synod. The regulations specify conditions relating to governance, financial affairs, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, the making of vows or promises, and the minimum number of members required for a community to be eligible for a declaration.

Ordering the Life of the Church

24. The Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop of York will be delivering a joint Presidential Address on Monday 23 November. This will provide the Presidents with the opportunity to share their thoughts on key issues, and to welcome the launch of the Living in Love and Faith Resources. Synod members will be able to engage with the resources in smaller groups using Zoom break out rooms after the presentation.
25. On the afternoon of Tuesday 24 November there will be a debate on the 2021 Archbishops' Council Budget and Apportionment. This would normally have been taken in July but has been held over to this group of sessions as the July sessions had to be cancelled.
26. On the evening of Tuesday 24 November the General Synod will be asked to approve the re-appointment of a member of the Archbishops' Council.
27. On Wednesday 25 November the Synod will be able to engage with the work on safeguarding following the publication of the report on the "Anglican Church" on 6 October by the Independent Inquiry into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

The Church and the World

28. The Presidents will introduce a debate on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic on Monday afternoon. This will recognise the selfless contributions of key workers, including clergy and church workers, and call for continuing engagement with government to ensure those most affected are given the right level of support and help.
29. On the morning of Tuesday 24 November there will be a presentation from the Archbishop of York on the work on formulating a Vision and Strategy for the Church of the future.

Part IV: Other Work of the Business Committee

Synod App and Email address

30. Additional functions continue to be added to the Synod App. The Business Committee has agreed in principle that all members of General Synod should be issued with a standard General Synod email address from the start of the new quinquennium in November 2021.

Environmental Update

31. The Business Committee considered the suggestions from the Environmental Working Group (EWG), which seek to make care for creation an integral part of Synod's spiritual life, to reduce carbon footprint, and to demonstrate good environmental practice. While some of the EWG's suggestions are already in place, the Business Committee is committed to study and plan the effective implementation other suggestions whenever possible.
32. Under the COVID-19 pandemic, the operation for printing and mailing papers have been suspended for safety reasons. Papers are sent to members electronically only.

Feedback on General Synod groups of sessions

33. The Business Committee has now put in place a regular process of requesting Synod members to fill in a post Synod questionnaire to give their feedback on the most recent group of sessions. Some key findings from the questionnaire issued after the informal virtual meeting July 2020 are summarised below with the Business Committee's response to the points made:

COMMENT	BUSINESS COMMITTEE RESPONSE
Some members feeling emotionally difficult with Zoom meetings	The Committee sympathises with the response while noting that using a virtual platform has become necessary under the pandemic
Some members dominating speaking time	The Committee notes that the new format may have put off some members. The survey shows that 19% of the respondents requested to speak and

	17% did speak, but the Committee will continue to raise this issue with the Synod Panel of Chairs.
The pace of chairing is too quick	The chairs and staff members will learn from the experience and pace debates accordingly. Particular learnings will be taken for the handling of Synod Question Time.
More breaks are needed.	The Committee has taken this into account for the Timetable of this official virtual meeting.
A range of comments in regard to Zoom arrangements, generally positive but also with a number of criticisms	The Committee thanked staff members for their work. Staff members will work to improve the virtual provision based on the input.

34. Synod members are encouraged to complete the Feedback Questionnaire following each group of sessions so that improvements can continue to be introduced.

Accessibility of Synod Meetings

35. Members are referred to the Business Committee's statement on Accessibility (GS Misc 1201) which may be viewed in the Members' Resources section of the Synod web page at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/GS%20Misc%201201%20.pdf>.

36. One of the Deaf Anglicans Together representative commented that they appreciated the subtitled videos, could follow the live proceedings with the BSL interpreter and for them Zoom was very successful. Similar accessibility provisions will be continued in future virtual meetings.

List of Speakers at General Synod meetings

37. In recent groups of sessions, the Business Committee has introduced the practice of publishing the list gathered by the Legal Office of all those who spoke in debates and other items on the floor of Synod. This information is already public in the form of the Report of Proceedings and it is also used by the Panel of Chairs. The Business Committee took the view that it would be helpful for Synod members to have this information available to them in a user-friendly form.

38. The List of Speakers from the September 2020 Special Group of Sessions is circulated as a GS Misc 1258 for information.

Record of Business Done

39. The Legal Office produces a formal record of business transacted at each group of sessions of the General Synod in the form of 'Business Done', which is published on the Synod page of the Church of England website.

40. In addition, the Business Committee publishes a running record of the business transacted at General Synod during the current Quinquennium, with updates on subsequent developments in relation to individual items. For the most recent update, please refer to GS Misc 1257.

Business Committee Policies

41. The Business Committee has a number of policies covering various aspects of Synod's activities. These and other guidance may be viewed on the Members' Resources web page at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/synod-members-resources>

42. The Business Committee reviews its policies regularly on a phased basis at its meetings and updates them as necessary. Synod members may wish to offer feedback on any of the policies to the Business Committee in the relevant section of the Feedback Form.

On behalf of the Business Committee, The Revd Canon Sue Booy
Chair of the Business Committee

October 2020

Membership of the Business Committee

November 2020

Chair

The Revd Canon Sue Booyes

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd Pete Broadbent, Bishop of Willesden

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Revd Canon Graeme Buttery

The Revd Prebendary Simon Cawdell

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones

Elected by the House of Laity

Mrs Anne Foreman

Canon Robert Hammond

Mr Clive Scowen

Appointed by the Archbishops' Council

Mr Adrian Greenwood

Mr Joseph Diwakar

The Secretary to the Committee is the Clerk to the Synod, Dr Jacqui Philips and the Assistant Secretary is Dr Alvin Siu Hei Lee.

Forecast of future General Synod business

February 2021

Legislative Business

- Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution (relating to Deanery Synod terms of office)
- Revision Stage and Final Drafting and Final Approval for Measure amending Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016
- Motion under Canon F 12 specifying how an electronic register book is to be kept (with details on a GS paper)
- Legislative Reform Order relating to Pensions Board governance
- Legislative Reform Order relating to Church Commissioners governance
- Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (residential canons)
- Administration of Holy Communion (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (regulations under Canon B 12, making amendments consequential on Diocesan Boards of Education Measure) (*deemed business*)

Non-Legislative Business

- Vision and Strategy
- A motion about religious liberty from MPA
- Implementation and Dialogue Group Report
- CNC Elections Review Group Report
- Safeguarding
- Leeds DSM on Wealth Gap
- Debate on Archbishop's Housing Commission
- Vision for Lay Ministry (if not Jul 21)
- White paper on pastoral reorganisation (if not Jul 21)
- ARCIC: Walking Together on the Way (if not Jul 21)

July 2021

Legislative Business

- Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2021 (*deemed business*)
- Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2021 (*deemed business*)

Non-Legislative Business

- 2022 Budget and Apportionment
- Shared Discernment Process Presentation
- Safeguarding

- Appointment of Chair of AC Finance Committee
- PMM
- Vision for Lay Ministry (if not Feb 21)
- White paper on pastoral reorganisation? (if not Feb 21)
- ARCIC: Walking Together on the Way (if not Feb 21)
- Motion on the ethics of Artificial Intelligence (if not Nov 21)

Dr Jacqui Philips
Clerk to the Synod
September 2020