

GENERAL SYNOD

Report on the Archbishops' Council's Activities

Introduction

The Archbishops' Council presents this report on its activities since the General Synod Meeting in February 2020. It has met four times on 24 March 2020, 12 May 2020, 16 July 2020 and 23 September 2020.

Meeting of the Archbishops' Council, 24 March 2020, held by Zoom

1. This meeting of the Council was the first to be held following the national lockdown introduced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This meant that the agenda was amended to focus on key and urgent issues. Many of the other papers prepared for this meeting were treated as deemed items.
2. The Council spent some time considering how the Church was responding to **Covid-19**. The Council was told that a Gold, Silver, Bronze structure had been established for managing the Covid-19 situation.
3. The Council reviewed a number of **finance matters**, including an update on the Comprehensive Budget Review and the work on the 2021 AC budget.
4. The Council were given an update on the recent developments on **Safeguarding** from the new Director of Safeguarding, including the appointment of Zena Marshall as the Deputy Director of Safeguarding.
5. The Council considered a number of items relating to **Governance**. This included an update on the Church Buildings Implementation Review, and proposals for two workstreams related to vision and strategy, and a review of governance.
6. The Council discussed the **Climate Emergency** and the work which had been undertaken since the February 2020 Group of Sessions.
7. The Council approved a number of **deemed items** of business, including the Minutes of the meeting on 5th – 6th December 2019, the Note from an AC workshop on 23rd January 2020, Year-end financial statements, Draft Annual Report, Serious Incident Reporting Policy, Designation of officer for the purposes of Clergy Discipline Measure, the Strategic Investment Board's annual report and the AC Nominations Committee Terms of Reference

Meeting of the Archbishops' Council, 12 May 2020, held by Zoom

8. This meeting was the last meeting for the Archbishop of York, and members used the opportunity to thank him for his service to the Council and the national Church.
9. The Council discussed **Covid-19**, including reviewing the national church activity in support of the Church's response to the pandemic, the work being undertaken to support dioceses and the consideration of furloughing by the national church.

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10. There was an update on **Finance**, specifically looking at progress on the draft 2021 budget in light of the challenges of Covid-19.
11. The Council reviewed progress on the **Vision and Strategy** and Governance work, and noted that a Coordinating Group would pull together the various workstreams to ensure that this work was joined up.
12. The Council discussed support for the **Church Urban Fund**. They agreed that Mission and Public Affairs Team should work closely with CUF on their delivery plan.
13. The Council were provided with an update on **Safeguarding**, including an update on proposals for redress for survivors.
14. The Council approved two **deemed items** of business: Statement of Funding Principles and Modern Slavery Statement.

Meeting of the Archbishops' Council, 16 July 2020, held by Zoom

15. The Council met for an additional meeting in July.
16. There was an update on **Covid-19**, specifically looking at the impact of Covid-19 on the priorities for Renewal and Reform.
17. The Council reviewed progress on the **Emerging Church** work strands which include the Vision and Strategy, Governance and the conclusion of the work of the Solvency and Liquidity Group.
18. The Council discussed **Racism** in the Church and reviewed the plans for the House of Bishops to establish a task force and then a Racism Action Commission, to address cultural and structural transformation.
19. There was an update on the proposals for **Legislative Reform**, which set out plans to look at legislation related to pastoral reorganisation, clergy terms of service and diocesan assets.
20. There was an update on **Finance**, which considered the impact of Covid-19 on church finances and the 2021 budget.
21. There was an update on **Safeguarding**, including an update from the National Safeguarding Steering Group.

Meeting of the Archbishops' Council, 23 September 2020, held by Zoom

22. The Council discussed **Finance**, including the outline 2021 budget, the National Stipends Benchmark and support for dioceses through sustainability grants. The Council was also asked to approve an Expert Panel to consider applications from cathedrals and major churches to the Major Works Fund component of the Government's Cultural Recovery Fund.
23. There was an update on the **Emerging Church**, looking at progress on Vision and Strategy, and Governance. The Council was also updated on work on Transforming Effectiveness which will build on the work of these groups.

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24. The Council reviewed progress on its own 2020 business plan in the **Mid-Year Review**.
25. There was an update on **Safeguarding**, including an agreement to pursue the principle of independent safeguarding. The Council also agreed plans for a pilot interim support scheme for survivors of abuse.
26. There was an update on the work of the **National Society**, and on the Church's involvement in education.
27. The Council approved one **deemed item** of business: Appointments by the Council.

Church House, Westminster, SW1P 3AZ
November 2020

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Secretary General

Published by the General Synod of the Church of England
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