

GENERAL SYNOD

Discerning in Obedience: a theological review of the Crown Nominations Commission**A report from the Monitoring Group established by
the Archbishops of Canterbury and York****Summary**

1. This paper sets out reflections of the oversight group monitoring the implementation of "*Discerning in Obedience*". It updates members on progress since their last report GS Misc 1232.
2. Members will recall that the arrangements for progressing the recommendations of the report "*Discerning in Obedience: a theological review of the Crown Nominations Commission*" (GS1171) included the establishment "*of a small oversight group to monitor the progress on the discussion and implementation of arrangements*" (see GS2080 paragraph 11 and Annex 1 of the paper which also included CNC related issues raised in the "*Review of the nomination to the See of Sheffield and related concern: Report by the Independent Reviewer*"). This group was asked to report back to General Synod and this is its third report following meetings in January and October 2020.
3. Membership of the group is as follows

The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave (Chair)
The Ven. Nikki Groarke
Canon Dr Addy Lazz-Onyeobi
Dr Lindsay Newcombe
4. Caroline Boddington, Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments was in attendance at both meetings. Aiden Hargreaves-Smith, Chair of the group reviewing the election processes to the Crown Nominations Commission, attended the meeting in October 2020 to report on the progress of that group. The Very Revd Peter Bradley has resigned from the group and we will approach the Appointments Committee to nominate a replacement.

Crown Nominations Commission – update

5. The Archbishops and Central Members were charged to: i) review the proposals relating to the culture and operation of the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) and Vacancy in See process not requiring Standing Order Changes; ii) consider those recommendations requiring Standing Order changes for the Standing Orders committee.
6. Cultural change takes place over time and, as we indicated in our last paper, we hope that members of the CNC continue to be alert reviewing how they work. An issue of particular interest to this group is the way in which the Commission engages with the aspirations of the Five Guiding Principles and with Mutual Flourishing. We understand that the central members continue to explore their responsibilities within this at their meetings. The report of the Implementation and Dialogue Group will be something they will wish to reflect

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on in detail when it is issued. We would like to make a specific recommendation that there is a regular report to Synod on all episcopal nominations so that General Synod can monitor progress on this issue.

7. Since our last report the General Synod has approved a change to the Standing Orders such that the Commission is relieved of the absolute requirement to identify a second name. We indicated in our last paper that adopting a process whereby the identification of one name is not contingent on the identification of a second name was a positive step.
8. In a previous paper we noted that one of the more complex recommendations of the report is that the Archbishops should make a statement jointly that on the evidence presented to the CNC, all candidates under consideration are eligible for consecration in accordance with the teaching of the Church and any guidance given by the House of Bishops, and so eligible for the House of Bishops (5.5). This has some similarity with the requirement that the Archbishop of the Province must “concur” with a suffragan nomination. This has been remitted to *the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC)* as we proposed and the Archbishops are considering their reflections.
9. We note that consideration of the recommendations in relation to the membership of the Canterbury CNC (5.19 and 5.20) is still outstanding.

Election Processes and Operation of Vacancy in See Committees

10. Members will recall that issues relating to the process of Vacancy in See Committees have been remitted to a group which is charged with reviewing the election processes for membership of the CNC. The Terms of Reference of the Group are as follows
 - to review the process for the election of Central Members to the Crown Nominations Commission;
 - to review the process for the election of diocesan representatives from the Vacancy in See Committee;
 - to review the matter of disclosing declarations of interest in synodical elections; and
 - to take a broader, theologically informed view of representation in and of the church so as to stimulate a wider discussion in the church on electoral process and related matters.
11. The Chair of the group, Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith attended our October 2020 meeting and updated us on the progress of their work. Other members of the group are
 - Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith *(Chair)*
 - Canon Linda Ali
 - Revd Peter Breckwoldt
 - Mrs Anne Foreman
 - The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs
 - The Very Revd Jane Hedges
 - Revd Dr James Walters

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12. This Review Group is behind its intended deadline, for reasons which we understand. It had its first meeting in October 2018 and it soon became evident that the task, which initially presented as a simple process review, required careful consideration of some complex issues. It had hoped to report back to General Synod in July 2020 but clearly this was not possible. They have approached the Business Committee to request that February 2021 General Synod consider their reflections and recommendations.
13. Members of Synod will recall the consultation exercise undertaken by the review group through a Synod Fringe meeting in July 2019 and an online survey over that summer.
14. It is not for us to share the thinking of the group; like others we look forward to the wider exploration of the cultural and process issues their work will raise in Synod.

House of Bishops/Development and Appointments Group

15. The Development and Appointments Group (DAG) were charged to review the management of Episcopal Lists on behalf of the House of Bishops and we stressed the need to make these clearer and less mysterious. The pilot process whereby existing suffragan bishops and those in the pool for ministry as a Suffragan Bishop might have the opportunity to express interest in vacant Suffragan sees has now been mainstreamed following positive feedback from candidates and appointing groups.
16. DAG has decided to focus on the detailed work of reviewing system of episcopal lists until some of the Emerging Church groups have made their reports given that the impact of the recommendations of these groups on the role and ministry of bishops is not yet clear. Following our own meeting we have been advised that they have decided that in order to keep the lists fresh, candidates who have been on the lists for over five years should meet with their Diocesan Bishop to review whether they should remain on them.

Conclusion

17. This paper has set out our reflections on the progress that has been made in relation to the report "*Discerning in Obedience: a theological review of the Crown Nominations Commission*". Once again, we would like to express our thanks to those who have are involved in developing its recommendations.

+Michael Lich, Chair of the oversight group
October 2020