

Members' Guide to Remote Synod proceedings, November 2020

20 November 2020

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Section A: Contact List

Synod Questions <i>for submitting Questions by noon on Wednesday, 11 November</i>	questions@churchofengland.org
Requests to Speak* <i>for submitting Requests to Speak up to 30 minutes before a debate</i>	requesttospeak@churchofengland.org
Zoom support and technical advice	synod@churchofengland.org
Technical issues with the remote voting website	votesupport@engaged.events
Clerk to the Synod <i>for issues directed to the Clerk to the Synod</i>	clerk@churchofengland.org

* You can also 'raise your hand' during the sessions. Please see Sections B and G below.

Section B: How Synod proceedings will work

1. Introduction

This Guide is aimed at helping Synod members navigate their way through the November group of sessions. This will be the first formal group of sessions to be held remotely, under the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020. The General Synod Business Committee and the Standing Orders Committee have both met for a consultation on the Special Standing Orders, and these Standing Orders will be made by the Officers of General Synod in the week commencing 9 November 2020.

While the informal meeting in July 2020 served as a 'rehearsal' for Synod members and staff members alike, there will be more functions and features in the upcoming formal group of sessions, such as remote voting and raising points of order. Please read this document carefully and email Synod Support (synod@churchofengland.org) if you have any queries or suggestions.

Members must download the Zoom app in advance for this meeting. Using the browser version of Zoom will not be sufficient, as those users will not be able to access Zoom polls, which will be used by the Chair to "test the mind of the Synod" (See Section B7 below).

The Zoom login details to the Synod sessions for each day will be sent to members according to the schedule below. We will be in touch again between now and the group of sessions to offer more information and practical advice.

Synod session date	Zoom login sent to members
Monday 23 November 1.00pm to 7.00pm	Friday 20 November 5.30pm
Tuesday 24 November 9.15am to 1.00pm and 2.30pm to 6.30pm	Monday 23 November 7.15pm
Wednesday 25 November 9.15 am to 2.00pm and 2.30pm to 3.30pm	Tuesday 24 November 6.30pm

2. What are the 'ground rules' for remote Synod proceedings?

Synod members are asked to bear the followings in mind:

- a. As with physical Synod meetings, this remote meeting will be a public meeting and members of the press and public will be able to observe proceedings via the livestream on the Church of England website and the Church's YouTube channel.
- b. The Business Committee has asked Synod members participating in remote meetings to observe the usual Synod policies, including the Code of Conduct.
- c. Members are asked to dress appropriately for the meeting and to give it their full attention.
- d. Members are encouraged to report back on proceedings to their Diocesan Synods and other diocesan meetings in the usual way.
- e. The 'chat' function on Zoom will be disabled but the General Synod Twitter feed will continue as usual.
- f. All members of the General Synod Panel of Chairs will be trained in handling Zoom meetings.

- g. The platform party (Chair, Administrator, Registrar) will gather in Church House, Westminster, to facilitate communication while observing measures compliant with current COVID regulations.
- h. To prevent members from becoming overtired with excessive screen time, the Business Committee has built in break periods. The timings of the items have also been extended to take the remote environment into account.

3. Order of proceedings

The Business Committee agreed the agenda for this remote group of sessions in the usual way. This has been published in the timetable on the website and on the App.

4. Participation

Members of the General Synod Panel of Chairs will chair all items at the November group of sessions.

Members will be muted at all times unless the Chair asks them to speak, in which case they will be unmuted for the duration of their intervention.

To note: Synod members will not be able to unmute themselves. Depending on the version of the Zoom app on a device, members may
(i) get a pop-up request on their screen to unmute themselves if the Chair calls them to speak; or
(ii) be asked to give permission for the host to unmute them during login
Please grant permission in either scenario so that you will be able to speak in a debate.

Given the constraints of chairing remotely, those Synod members who wish to speak in a debate are encouraged to send through their Request to Speak up to 30 minutes prior to the item to which they wish to speak. Members will also be able to use the 'raise hand' function on Zoom during the session (see Section G3 below). The Chair and the Administrator will monitor these requests and call these individuals to speak accordingly.

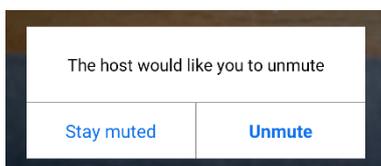
To note: speakers who submit Requests to Speak in advance will be given priority, but they must also use the 'raise hand' function at the appropriate time in order to indicate their presence at the meeting (otherwise they will not be called).

To indicate to speakers that they are nearing the end of their time limit, the Registrar will send a message visible to all Synod members when there is one minute left. This message will pop up on the Zoom screen. If a speaker does not stop speaking when the time limit for a speech expires, the Chair may intervene and direct staff to mute the speaker.

It must be stressed that muting members who are speaking is not intended as a rude gesture but is merely a practical way of ensuring the meeting keeps to time. Members may therefore find it helpful to have to hand a stopwatch (as can be found on mobile phones) or a clock with a second hand so they can keep track of time.

5. Speaking

- Depending on the version of the Zoom app on a device, when the Chair asks you to speak, you may get a pop-up request on your screen to unmute yourself.



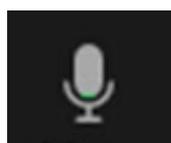
Or, when you log into Zoom, you may be asked to grant permission for the host to unmute you.

Please speak when you can see that your microphone icon has changed and no longer has a red line through it (see pictures below) and identify yourself as you would normally i.e. by name, number and diocese.

- As a courtesy to other Synod members, please ensure that if possible your video is enabled when speaking (see Section G1 for advice on set up). However, if internet speed presents an issue, you may choose to disable your video.
- Please be mindful of the need to speak more slowly and to be facing the screen full on (not sideways) and close enough to allow lip reading. Do not have a bright light source immediately behind you, otherwise you will not be clearly visible.



Your microphone is muted



Your microphone is unmuted

6. Points of Order

To raise a point of order, members **are asked to click the “Participants” tab in the bottom of the Zoom screen and then search for an attendee named “Point of Order”.** **Please then send a direct message to this attendee, which is a staff member, that you wish to raise a point of order.** This will attract the attention of the Administrator, who will then ask the Chair to attend to the point of order.

(Please refrain from using the ‘No’ button (white cross on red background) as written in the previous version of this Guide. This method has proven to be problematic for administrators and the Chair to effectively monitor points of order.)

7. Testing the Mind of Synod

With situations such as motions for closure or requests to vote by Houses, the Chair will normally test the mind of Synod by asking for an informal raise of hands. In those moments on the Zoom platform, members will see a pop-up poll. You may then indicate whether you wish to consent to the Chair’s suggestion. This process will **not** go through the remote voting platform as outlined in Section C below.

8. Delays and technology failure

During the meeting, it may be necessary for the Chair to call for a short pause, for example in order to seek clarification from the Registrar or Administrator, if a member of the 'remote platform party' experiences a technology failure or if staff members need to rectify a technical fault. Please bear with us if this should happen.

If the entire meeting is suddenly terminated for everyone (due to a technical issue), then members are advised to monitor their emails as we will send out a replacement Zoom invitation as quickly as possible. Please note you will have to use the new Zoom invitation as the original one will have become invalid.

If bandwidth issues occur during the meeting, members should turn off their Zoom virtual background (if there is one on), and as a last resort, their video camera.

Section C: Remote voting

1. Remote voting via an online platform

The remote voting facility will be provided by Crystal Interactive, the company that has provided the hand-held voting devices for Synod in the current quinquennium. You will receive an email from votesupport@engaged.events during the week commencing Monday 16 November with your personal voting details. Please contact Synod Support (synod@churchofengland.org) if you do not receive the email.

The email you receive will contain a link to the voting site, your username (which will be your email address) and a unique 6-digit voting code. These details must be kept private and not divulged to any other person.

Synod Members are responsible for providing their own devices for accessing the voting site and for ensuring they have an adequate broadband connection.

The Synod Team will provide additional information in the coming weeks.

2. System training and test voting

The Synod Team will be carrying out tests and refinement of the voting system over the coming weeks.

We will be holding a series of training sessions on the voting system, where members of the Synod Teams will talk you through how to use the voting system with an opportunity for questions. These sessions will be at the following times:

- (i) Tuesday 17 November, 10am to 10.30am
- (ii) Wednesday 18 November, 10am to 10.30am
- (iii) Saturday 21 November, 10am to 10.30am

The Synod Team will be in touch next week with further details on these sessions.

There will be opportunities for all Synod Members to test the voting system, 30 minutes before the beginning of each day's formal proceedings. The precise timings are:

- 12.30pm, Monday 23 November
- 08.30am, Tuesday 24 November

- 08.30am, Wednesday 25 November

Members are encouraged (but not required) to participate in all these tests.

Section D: How to request to speak in debates

- Members are encouraged to email their Request to Speak to requesttospeak@churchofengland.org indicating briefly what they wish to say up to 30 minutes prior to the item to which they wish to speak.
- Members will also be able to use the 'raise hand' function on Zoom during the session. Please refer to Section G6 below.

Section E: Synod Questions

1. How to participate in Question Time

Any member who wishes to ask a question at Question Time should do so by using the 'raise hand' function on Zoom. Priority will be given to the person who asked the original question. Members will be called by the Chair at the appropriate time and they should ensure that they ask a question and not make a speech; they should aim to take no more than one minute to ask their question.

All members, whether they asked the original question or not, must use the 'raise hand' function at the appropriate time in order to indicate their presence at the meeting (otherwise they will not be called to speak).

Any member called on to answer a supplementary question should complete this within one minute after which time they may be muted by a member of staff at the request of the Chair.

Please refer to Section B5 above for more guidance on speaking during the meeting.

Section F: Signing Private Members' Motions

During the course of the group of sessions, members can sign Private Members' Motions on the PMM webpage, <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/work-general-synod/private-members-motions>. This function will not be active until the beginning of the group of sessions.

When accessing the webpage, please scroll down to the bottom for the PMM form. You will not receive an email confirmation, but you will see on the webpage that your submission is complete.

Members can also sign PMMs via the App. Tap 'contact' and then tap 'Sign PMMs' to fill in the form. You will not receive an email confirmation, but you will see a pop-up dialogue box that confirms your submission.

Section G: Technical advice (please also read the FAQs which are at the end of this document).

1. Technical preparations

Virtual participation will take place over an online meeting system called Zoom. Zoom can be accessed via your internet browser, the computer app or mobile app. You should ideally use a laptop or desktop computer to help ensure better sound and video quality.

Members must download the Zoom app in advance for this meeting. Using the browser version of Zoom will not be sufficient, as those users will not be able to access Zoom polls, which will be used by the Chair to “test the mind of the Synod” (See Section B7 above).

Members are asked to test their sound and video before the meeting begins. Keep a distance of less than two feet between yourself and the microphone.

When you are unmuted to speak, please do everything you can to minimise background noise, such as silencing phones and turning off electronic alerts etc.. We understand that this won't be possible for everyone, and we will try and be as accommodating as possible if there are interruptions from elsewhere.

To enhance your own experience as well as assisting others, consider your video background (as plain as possible), sit face-on to the camera (not sideways), do not have a window or light source behind you, and if you are called to speak ensure you are close enough for those who need to lip read.

However, if you experience problems with your internet connection then you may find that turning your video off (by clicking on the video icon) may help.

2. Joining the meeting

The Zoom login details to the Synod sessions will be sent to members according to the schedule below:

Synod session date	Zoom login sent to members
Monday 23 November 1.00pm to 7.00pm	Friday 20 November 5.30pm
Tuesday 24 November 9.15am to 1.00pm and 2.30pm to 6.30pm	Monday 23 November 7.15pm
Wednesday 25 November 9.15 am to 2.00pm and 2.30pm to 3.30pm	Tuesday 24 November 6.30pm

Members **should not share the meeting link** to avoid anyone unexpectedly joining and disrupting the meeting.

Members are asked to rename themselves as they join the meeting with the following protocol:

3 digit Synod number (including any leading '0's)
Space
B, C or L (to indicate House of Bishops, Clergy or Laity)
Space
Name

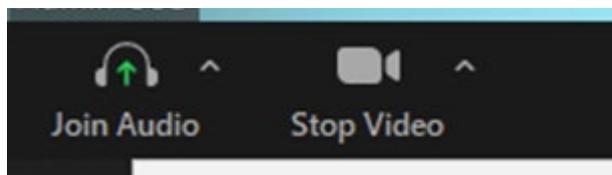
For example: 044 B Tim Thornton or 188 C Dylan Redding or 328 L Fiona Bacon



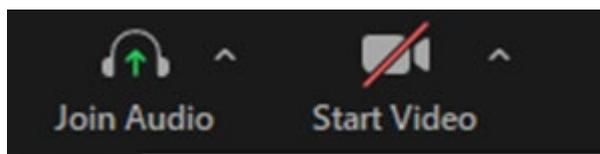
This is really important, particularly to find and identify members who wish to speak or ask questions in order for staff to unmute them successfully. In the July group of sessions, someone was called to speak but could not be found as they were not identifiable from their login name.

If you forget to rename yourself when you join the meeting, you can rename yourself at any point by opening the participants list, clicking the 'more' button to the right of your name and then clicking rename.

Members will need to enable their video during the joining process or can do so at any point having joined the meeting. If you are not prompted to 'join with video' then you can click on the video icon (see picture below) to start your video.



Video is in operation – click icon to stop



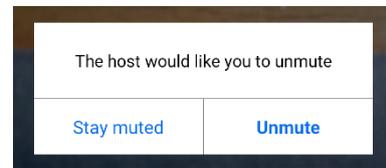
Video is not in operation – click icon to start

If you have any technical issues before or during the meeting, please email Synod Support at synod@churchofengland.org.

3. During the meeting

Once in the meeting, Members will see the panel of controls below at either the bottom or top of their screen.

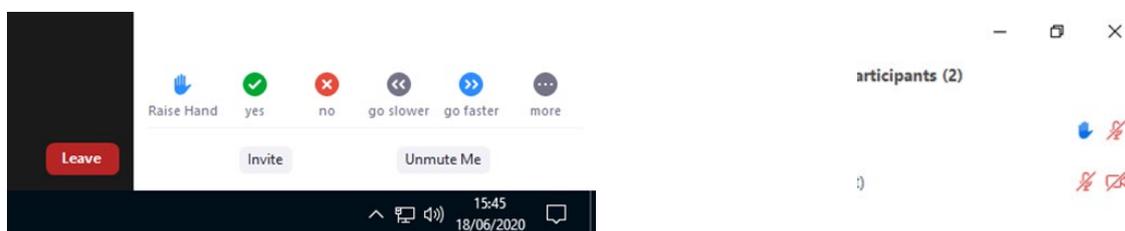
- **Mute** – mute or unmute your microphone. Please do not use this functionality. Members' microphones will be muted and unmuted centrally. **If you receive a request to unmute, please select unmute to agree to the request.**



- **Stop Video** – start or stop your camera
- **Participants** – view the meeting participants
- **Chat functionality** is unavailable by design. Members will not be able to participate in proceedings through the instant messaging/chat function.



The **'raise hand'** function can be found by clicking on 'Participants'. On the right-hand side, underneath the list of participants, you will then see the blue 'raise hand' button which you can click when required. It will then display the blue hand icon next to your name in the list of participants. To note: blue hands will be lowered by the staff team at the end of an item or after each question in Question Time.



To **raise a point of order**, are asked to click the **"Participants"** tab in the bottom of the Zoom screen and then search for an attendee named **"Point of Order"**. Please then send a direct message to this attendee, which is a staff member, that you wish to **raise a point of order**. This will attract the attention of the Administrator, who will then ask the Chair to attend to the point of order.

(Please refrain from using the 'No' button (white cross on red background) as written in the previous version of this Guide. This method has proven to be problematic for administrators and the Chair to effectively monitor points of order.)

We recommend that you watch in 'speaker view' rather than 'gallery view' as you will see whoever is speaking rather than a large number of small pictures of those in the meeting. To switch between the views, press the button which is usually found in the top right hand corner of your screen (see below) bearing in mind that once you have selected a view, the button will then change to offer you the other option.



4. Voting

For Chairs to test the mind of Synod, a Zoom poll will pop up on members' screen. See Section B7 above for more details.

For formal votes, please see Section C above.

5. Accessibility

British Sign Language interpreters will be available throughout the sessions. Anyone wishing to use this service should 'pin' the appropriate BSL interpreter on their Zoom screen in order that they remain permanently on screen during a debate. Please contact us in advance via email on synod@churchofengland.org to request details of the BSL interpreters, and further instructions on 'pinning' an interpreter's screen.

Section H: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

If I accidentally leave the meeting can I re-join?

Yes, you should be able to re-join by clicking on the link again. If not, go to Zoom.us, click on join a meeting and entering the meeting ID and password (which you can find in the emailed invitation).

Do I have to have my video turned on?

If you are intending to speak it would be a courtesy to all members to have your video turned on so you can be seen. However, if you are having trouble with your internet connection, you may find it helps to turn your video off.

Why can't I see everyone in the meeting?

You can only see a maximum of 100 participants on screen in a Zoom meeting – everyone attending is listed in the participants list though (click on participants button to view, and type in the name of any person you wish to find).

If I need help to access the meeting what do I do?

If you email synod@churchofengland.org we will do our best to respond as quickly as we can.

If I put my 'hand up' to speak for one question will it remain up for the rest of them?

No, staff will 'lower hands' after the chair has called all speakers during an item or after 2 supplementary questions have been asked during Question Time.

Can I use my iPad or other tablet device to access the meeting?

Yes, though the display will look different from that on a laptop or desktop computer

Can I use my mobile phone to access the meeting?

Yes, though you will get a much-reduced display so we recommend that you don't use a smart phone unless you have no other option. We do recommend that you use your smartphone for the voting app; you can have the Zoom meeting and voting open in separate tabs on a larger device, but having them on separate devices is likely to be easier to use.

My internet has failed, can I dial in and listen on a phone?

Yes, you can dial in by landline or mobile phone (the phone numbers will be on the email invitation) however due the length of the session you may incur considerable costs so please check with your phone provider before making such a call.

What is the difference between 'speaker view' and 'gallery view'?

In speaker view, you see one large picture of whoever is speaking on your screen, whereas in gallery view you can see more (much smaller) pictures and it may not be obvious who is speaking.

If I have a technical problem with Zoom during the meeting who can I contact?

Please email synod@churchofengland.org. Please bear in mind, however, that at certain times of a day, we may be dealing with a large volume of emails, so an immediate response may not be possible.