

Report of Proceedings 2020

General Synod September Special Group of Sessions

Thursday 24 September 2020

Church House, London

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Special Session of General Synod Thursday 24 September 2020

THE CHAIR *Dean of Southwark (Very Revd Andrew Nunn)* took the Chair at 10.30 am.

The Chair: Good morning, members of Synod, and welcome to this special session of General Synod.

WORSHIP

The Revd Canon Michael Gisbourne (Chaplain to the General Synod) led the Synod in an act of worship.

ITEM 1 INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOMES

The Chair: As I say, this is a very special session, and thank you very much for making yourself available to be here and to transact the business that is before us. And thank you, of course, to the officers of Synod and to the staff here at Church House and everyone who has been enabling this particular session to take place.

Just one clarification, because on various pieces of paper there are different things said about when this morning session ends. It will end at 1.45 pm, not 2.45 pm as it says elsewhere, so that is a bit of relief – because you will need a bit of relief.

If you are trying to use an old voting card, sister or brother, it will not work. You need to have the new voting card, and you need to collect it at some stage, because we will need to use them, I suspect. So only the new voting card will work.

Please do take note of all of the arrangements here in relation to keeping this place Covid safe, so the one-way system, et cetera, and the sanitising and wearing face masks. We would really appreciate that.

Of course, we need to make sure that we remain quorate. We have all committed ourselves to today in order to enable the business of this Synod to be transacted, so we will be needing to look out to make sure that we do remain together and not drift off at some stage.

The Presidents have directed that there will be a Presidential Address. Under Standing Order 4(3) they have the right to do that. I invite the Archbishop of York, who I see standing near a lectern, to give us his address. Thank you.

ITEM 1A

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Thank you. Dear sisters and brothers, as has become our tradition, the Archbishop of Canterbury and I are sharing this address, so I am going first.

I hate this coronavirus. I hate it not only because so many people have died, but because so many people have died alone, unable even to hold the hand of their beloved. I hate it because our health service has been stretched to the limit. I hate it because so many are bereaved and could not even sit next to their family at the funeral or embrace each other. I hate it because weddings and baptisms and ordinations have been postponed or have gone ahead without the parties that were meant to be with them. I hate it because children's schooling has been disrupted. I hate it because so many people are ill, so many crying out in pain, so many isolated, lonely, fearful, depressed. I hate it because behind locked doors terrible things have happened. I hate it because the poor and disadvantaged have been hit the hardest. I hate it because it has left so many people across the world feeling hopeless, as if life itself has been taken from us. I hate this coronavirus.

And I reluctantly acknowledge that because of this coronavirus we have learned some hard lessons about ourselves. We have learned that we belong to each other, that my interest is tied up with your interest. We have learned again that death is real. We have learned that progress does not mean living in a pain-free world. We have learned that those whose jobs we thought of as menial or inconsequential are vital and essential. We have learned that, at the moment, the best way to love one another is to keep a distance. And we have learned that love transcends boundaries and, happily, can easily jump two metres.

And in the Church we have learned that even without the much grieved for assurance of sacrament and congregation and all the other happy familiarities of worship, Christ is with us, with us as He has always been, present in the midst of endeavour, suffering and ministry. We have learned that the local church is the centre and that pastoral care and all sorts of worship, old and new, can go on in old and in new ways and that loving your neighbour is, after all, what it is all about. And I reluctantly acknowledge that although there is nothing good about Covid-19, good can come out of it if we respect and love each other and learn how to inhabit the world differently so that the spread of the virus can be kept under control.

We, the Church of Jesus Christ, have an opportunity to take the lead in this, speaking out for the poor, making sure that the restrictions that we live by are administered fairly and work for the common good and by making sure that other things, like the curse of racism, the way we inhabit the planet and our relationships with each other, within the UK and Europe, do not slip from the agenda.

Therefore, despite all this, I am thankful. I am thankful for the faithfulness and hard work and ingenuity of those who serve in our health, emergency and essential services. I am thankful for those in public office who have made hard decisions, who inevitably come in for sharp criticism but who continue to give themselves to serve us and keep us safe. I am thankful for the witness and service of the local church in

our parishes, chaplaincies and other various expressions of church life, for people's creativity and tenacity, especially in care for the vulnerable and in sustaining the life of worship. I am thankful for those in the national Church who have sought to interpret Government advice and guide the Church through these difficult times. I am thankful that, despite all the horrors of a Covid world, we are learning a new commitment to Christ and how to be a humbler, simpler Church; that we are putting Christ at the centre of our lives and learning very, very painfully what it really means to be a Church that is dependent on Christ alone.

And I am filled with longing. I long for us to find ways of affirming and thanking all the people who work for us and with us. I long for us to find our voice in the building of a better world. I long for us to be a more Christ-centred and Jesus-shaped Church, witnessing to Christ and bringing the healing balm of the Gospel to our nation, for this is our vocation.

Synod, I hate this coronavirus. Nevertheless, I reluctantly acknowledge that there are important things for us to learn. I am thankful for the good things that have emerged, not least our dependence on each other and on God, and I long for us to share this more effectively in the world.

Finally, I am sorry for the inevitable mistakes we have made along the way but confident in God's mercy and of your own forbearance. I invite us now, even in this strange Synod, to do no other than boldly and humbly share the Gospel, in deed and word, across the life of our nation. Therefore, I cry out and invite you to cry out with me: "Death, where is your sting? Grave, where is your victory? For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord".

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): Thank you, Archbishop Stephen – and it is a great pleasure to be able to use that title. I had forgotten that since the 12th century it has been the tradition in the Church of England that after the Archbishop of York has spoken, if the Archbishop of Canterbury speaks next, you have to disinfect the lectern!

Thank you, Synod, for being here today. Thank you to those of you who have made the journey, who have made the effort and have shown your commitment. Thank you.

But we meet together as we face a new time of trial: the second wave. We go into it knowing the fragility of those who can be struck down. We fear the loss of those we love. We see how an economy can be brought to its knees by a virus and that all the economists in the world do not have an answer. We hear with great shame of the growth in food bank demand, in abuse and domestic violence, in the growth of poverty, and many of our churches have experienced it themselves. We do not know what kind of Church of England will emerge from this time except that it will be different. It will be changed by the reality that, for the first time, all churches have closed – the first time in 800 years. It will be changed because, for the first time, we have worshipped virtually. We do not know what kind of country will emerge.

We see good things: courage in the NHS, in the essential services, in the key workers – as Archbishop Stephen said, the most humble, the most overlooked and the most forgotten – giving everything. We see faithfulness to neighbour. We see communities pulling together for the common good. We see new life being found across our nation.

But we also see bad things. We see self-interest seeking. We see divisions deepening; other crises – crises of racism, of the economy, especially for the smaller businesses who employ so many, of hunger amongst children as well as adults, of the dangers of mass unemployment, with all the mental ill health, with all the peril to families and hopes that that brings. We see children who have missed out on much of the education they need. We see the tragedies of bereavement, the pains of long-term illness, whether Covid or not, made more severe by the pandemic. We see people crippled by mental health issues made more desperate through isolation.

And as well as the good and the bad we see uncertainties, especially at this moment, around Europe. For some, the promise of Brexit, twice voted for, may be welcomed, for others regretted, but the consequences of it remain uncertain. We are aware of questions about the very union of our United Kingdom, and we will face that head on in the next 12 months as we come to the elections next May. We continue most of all, and most savagely dangerously for all our futures, to prevaricate over the reality of the crisis in the environment.

Uncertainty is all around us – a pandemic that has been there since the crisis in 2008/09, created in that crisis, accentuated by austerity – and it has led to divisions which in the last few years have left us with uncertainty fatigue, which leads us to a rush to hasty decisions, often wrong. I want to echo what Archbishop Stephen said and apologise where we have gone wrong, perhaps through that uncertainty fatigue. The uncertainty may make us afraid of our newly realised fragilities, personally, in society, in the economy, in the nation, in the Church. In one sense it has given us a sort of national PTSD.

Yet the Church of England is not first and foremost an institution or an organisation. One might say, slightly cynically, it has never shown any danger of becoming an organisation! We are not our own to squabble over and seek to dominate. We are one small part of God's own people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, called by God to declare the wonderful works of the one who called us out of darkness into God's marvellous light. We are a people of faith and hope. As Isaiah says to Ahaz in Isaiah 7:9, "If you do not stand in faith, you will not stand at all".

In this nation, and around the world, this is a time of trauma, of loss and bereavement and struggle. Yet, amidst it all, the darkness does not overcome the light. We are here to bear witness to the light, for in so doing our faith bears witness to our hope within. We bring resilience, give courage, share mercy. We will bless our nation. Out of these times we will see renewal - not because we are clever but because God is faithful. We will see a renewed and changed Church emerging from the shocks of lockdown. It is a Church that at the most local has fed so many, been in touch with the isolated through the heroic efforts of all who take part in it, of clergy and laity, and those who even were not near the Church before these times. It is a Church which has continued to pray and to offer worship through our Lord Jesus

Christ, even if in new and unusual ways. I think I am on mute. We all know that! It has become a liturgical greeting: “I think you’re on mute”.

How much we give thanks for this Church, do we not? It has loved and served children in schools, it has loved and served the homeless on the streets, and, as it has done so, Jesus has been at work among us. In the last few months we have found the joy of meeting together again to worship and pray even without music. We have seen so many come forward for training as ordinands. We have seen buildings that could not be used for worship used for food banks. We have seen chaplains in hospitals standing shoulder to shoulder and strengthening the weary members of the NHS – and being strengthened by them. We have seen God’s order-bringing spirit at work among us and among others. We have seen the providence of God.

Today is a day of seeming formality – with this Chair, a definite formality – yet we meet as God’s people, not our own. We meet with the light who no darkness can quench, the Word who no clamour can still, filled, please God, with hope that makes sense because of God. We meet to debate, and hopefully to pass, a Measure. Yet, above all, we meet with Jesus Christ, and in our ponderings we may begin to discern the Church that God is causing, is caressing, is loving into emerging from these times, renewed in faith, infused with hope, compelled by love to serve and to bless the communities, the very nation that we pray will rise renewed from these times.

The Chair: I think we are allowed to applaud the Archbishop, while being very, very formal, as I am. We need to use alternate lecterns if we can, because two of our sisters are carefully sanitising the lecterns in between our using them, so when I call you to speak, please do go to the opposite lectern; that would be really helpful.

We are going to address now the one item of business, which is to undertake all the legislative stages for the draft General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure (GS 2176).

ITEM 500

SPECIAL AGENDA I

DRAFT GENERAL SYNOD (REMOTE MEETINGS) (TEMPORARY STANDING ORDERS) MEASURE (GS 2176)

Draft Measure for First Consideration

The Chair: So we move to Item 500, which is the First Consideration stage for this Measure. This is the First Consideration stage for the draft General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure. For this, members will need the draft Measure (GS 2176) and the Explanatory Notes (GS 2176X).

If, following this debate, Synod passes the motion at Item 500, we will proceed to the Revision Stage in full Synod. It is at that stage that the proposed amendments will be considered. The First Consideration debate is concerned with the general purport of the Measure. Speeches directed to points of detail rather than the general purport of the Measure are not in order.

I am pleased to be able to call the Chair of the Steering Committee, Mr Geoffrey Tattersall, to move Item 500: “That the Measure entitled ‘General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure’ be considered for revision in full Synod”. Geoffrey, you have up to 10 minutes to speak.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): Members of Synod, we find ourselves in extraordinary and difficult times. We are the legislative body of the Church of England, yet our Constitution, which is set out at Appendix D of the Standing Orders, requires that for members of Synod to vote they must be present together in the same place. We are all too painfully aware that currently we cannot meet with 500 people present. Moreover, it seems impossible to predict the extent and duration of the effects of this pandemic or what restrictions it will be necessary for the Government to impose either locally or nationally. We have business which requires to be transacted. We have to approve budgets and to transact other business. We currently have legislation going through the Synod. In a short time there will be a report from IICSA which we may wish to respond to.

Since the Government could not find parliamentary time to pass legislation to allow the Church to transact its business remotely, and not in accordance with our Constitution, it necessarily follows that this Synod has to do this by Measure. Such a Measure, if approved, will go to the Legislative Committee of the Synod, and thence to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament, and hopefully, in due course, would receive the Royal Assent.

The current Standing Orders assume that members of Synod will be together in one place to transact its business. Indeed, if, as Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, I had suggested to the Synod that it could transact its business remotely, I am pretty confident that in normal times this would have had a rather mixed reception, but these, I stress, are not normal times and we do need to do something.

I am sure that all members of Synod will appreciate that it is very important – indeed, it is crucial – that the draft Measure passes through all its legislative stages today, and at paragraph 44 of the Explanatory Note it explains in very stark terms the consequences of the Measure not receiving Final Approval, because in that event Synod will not be able to meet and transact business remotely and will not be able to transact business until such time as it could meet physically in the usual way, which may be some time away.

Notwithstanding that we all wish to meet in the usual way, with all members present in the same place at the same time, and we hope and pray that that will happen soon, the draft Measure allows the General Synod to meet and transact business remotely. Clause 1 provides that temporary special Standing Orders are made for that purpose by the group of six – the Presidents, the Prolocutors of the Convocations and the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the House of Laity.

It should be noted that clause 1(4) expressly excludes the business which may be transacted under such Temporary Standing Orders – excludes from that Article 7 and Article 8 business. However, as I have already said at a question and answer session of the Synod, there is a legitimate debate to be had as to what business

Synod should be able to transact under these temporary Standing Orders, and Mr French's amendment will give us the opportunity to debate whether Article 7 business should be included.

Clause 2 deals with two matters: consultation and publication. Clauses 2(1) and 2(2) refer to what consultation must take place with both the Business and the Standing Orders Committees and expressly provides: "Consultation undertaken before the commencement of [the] Measure is as effective... as [that] undertaken after [its] commencement". Clauses 2(3) and 2(4) address the question of publication.

Clause 3 deals with how the Standing Orders will operate. There are a number of matters which we can note:

(1) The Temporary Standing Orders come into force the day after they are published.

(2) The question of whether to approve such Standing Orders is to be the first item of business at the first meeting of the General Synod after they come into operation.

(3) If approved, with or without amendment, the temporary Standing Orders come into force for a period of 12 months.

(4) General Synod can resolve that the temporary Standing Orders should not cease to be in operation and shall "continue in operation... for such period as... General Synod specifies" and even if they have expired they may be revived. However, the wording of clause 3(6) has been approved, as the Steering Committee will explain later, by amendments from Mr Lamming, with the help of Legislative Counsel.

(5) The Temporary Standing Orders shall have effect notwithstanding that there are inconsistent provisions in the Constitution or the Standing Orders. This is largely because both of those documents assume the physical presence of members.

Clause 4 deals with the amendment of the temporary Standing Orders, which is to be in the usual way: a report from the Standing Orders Committee with proposals for amendment which are approved or not, as the case may be, by the Synod as a whole.

There is also an Explanatory Note to the Measure which explains matters further. Such Explanatory Note also annexes an illustrative draft of the temporary Standing Orders. It may be noted that such illustrative draft provides that: first, all members need not be together in the same place and that meetings can be held in different locations by electronic, digital or virtual means; members are to be regarded as being present if they are able to hear and be heard, and, if practical, to be seen and to see, and it also includes presence by electronic means; and, indeed, such Standing Orders shall have effect despite any inconsistency with the existing Standing Orders.

These, I would have thought, are pretty uncontroversial, but, of course, the matters of application for them are going to be largely matters for the Business Committee.

In dealing with this draft Measure the Steering Committee has adopted a radically different way of promoting the Measure by trying to seek a consensus as to the terms of the draft Measure. First, after the draft Measure was first published, it invited informal suggestions for its amendment. The Steering Committee then met and considered them and caused a revised Measure, which you have before you, to be issued. Secondly, there was a question and answer session with Synod at which members were able to – and did – ask questions about the draft Measure, and I hope that members found that helpful. Thirdly, members of Synod have made proposals for amendment of the draft Measure which have been drafted by Legislative Counsel, and these were considered at a further meeting of the Steering Committee on Monday. Moreover, the Steering Committee, believing it would be helpful for all the members of Synod, particularly given that many would not be present today, to know before today the views of the Steering Committee as to the amendments proposed, and if they were not accepted the brief reasons for not accepting them, resulted in the fact that there was a Notice Paper I produced which set out the Steering Committee's views.

Chair, I beg to move Item 500 standing in my name.

The Chair: Mr Tattersall, thank you very much for that. So this item is now open for debate. The normal rules apply, so if you are intending to speak, you would like to speak, please stand or indicate so that I can identify you. The speech limit from the opening is five minutes. Remember, this is on the general motion as a whole. All those who wish to speak, please. Is anyone wanting to speak?

The Chair imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): Mr Chairman, I am looking ahead and wondering how in the future some geeky – not that they often are geeky – church historians may reflect as they read the proceedings of this particular session, “What is all the fuss about?”, never mind the cost of bringing us all here today. And by then perhaps the Covid era – because I believe we are in a Covid era which is ongoing for many, many generations potentially, as has influenza – in the future will feel like normality, part of everyday life, assumed, understood, lived with, accommodated, just as we have had to do with influenza. Of course, by then I suspect climate change will be much more important to those reflecting back.

But I think it is worth noting at this point why we are here: this novel coronavirus endemic in England, and probably the whole world now, a virus – SARS-CoV-2 to give it its full name – one of many coronaviruses, which cause the common cold, but this one is bad news. If you catch it, you can infect others. Worse, it can infect you, causing your organs to fail and your blood system to clog up. Even such mild symptoms seem to show significant damage to the heart in many. It is a nasty thing, as we heard from Archbishop Stephen. We do not like it. It is not a nice virus.

So what brings us here to look at this Measure, a Measure to provide, unusually for us in full Synod, a special session, lots of people putting themselves out? Thank you for coming. Fundamentally, we must choose whether to find a way to meet non-physically to transact our business effectively and properly by Zoom, or whatever

other modern technology is developed, or do we go into hibernation – or is it aestivation in the summer – where we become inactive and everything stops?

For this period we are in, this season is unknown in length. This week the Prime Minister talked of six months. I think he is just softening us up. Is it 12? Is it 24? Is it in some ways for ever but, like the flu, we get to know it and live with it? This is our greatest known unknown. Where will it take us and how are we feeling about it? No one can predict, but we have to plan, for it is folly not to plan even if we do not know what the future fully holds. Will we meet in February? Certainly not in November this year. Will we meet in July? How will we change over a new Synod? What about the following years? We just do not know.

This morning our decisions are really important. We are deciding what Synod can do and what it cannot do. This particularly applies to the sort of business we feel we can transact by Zoom, or its equivalent. What does Zoom business mean? What about the checks and balances we need? Who is properly accountable? Some would say we need to test out this system first to see how it works for the whole Synod by Zoom before we feel confident that we can deal with more complex and complicated and contested matters. Others would say, “No, we can’t slow down. We can’t just stop putting off the important things. We must not lose momentum. We must not get lost over time”, for time is never on our side. Either way, this novel coronavirus, this Covid-19 disease virus, challenges us in so many ways, personally and corporately.

I am delighted that 50 other colleagues and members of the House of Laity were willing to come today. They volunteered themselves – and thank you – as well as those from the other Houses. We must be conscious, too, that in our own House there are over 250 people who are not here physically. Many of you - we thank you - are watching, listening and praying online. We have to be conscious of those who are not here as we make our decisions.

My plea is that we welcome this Measure, that we seek to revise it in full Synod. We have done it before. It does work. But we must be conscious too of those who cannot be with us physically, but are with us in their prayers and in their virtual presence. Thank you for being there with us. We must remain mindful of what we can do and what we should not do today, of the sort of business we feel we can transact, of the sorts of checks and balances we feel are right.

Of course, in the future we can amend the Standing Orders. We have a very good Standing Orders Committee and a wonderful Chair in Geoffrey Tattersall, with hugely helpful legal advice. The future can be changed, but for today let us be wise, let us be generous; let us listen and vote within the power of the Spirit.

Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford): I am in a bit of a moral dilemma. I think Synod works really well when we meet together, we meet in the tea rooms and we develop arguments. We are a sociable bunch. I find Zoom rather impersonal. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said, we are too often on mute, “We can’t hear you”, that sort of thing. However, we are in an emergency situation. There is no doubt about it. We have business – IICSA, et cetera – that needs to be transacted, but I do not want to take away the involvement of all of Synod.

Someone said about Synod that we are in a new norm. Well, I do not want this to be the new norm. I do not want us to be working remotely. I do not think we get the character or we get the people really involved and connected. I would much prefer what the House of Commons is currently undertaking, where it is a part remote and a part real. That seems to work quite well, but, even then, as I know we are going to have here, there will be difficulties with connections; that people will be trying to speak, and you are going to have, Chairman, wherever you are sitting, a picture of 25 faces on one screen. When we met virtually a few months ago, it was very difficult to get called. You were very kind to me, but I realised that you have to press the button quickly. It is a blue one, which I obviously approve of, and I did get called, but how are people really going to get fully involved? How secure is the voting going to be for people who actually vote? Can we be confident of that security? Indeed, is it possible for everyone who wants to be called to be called? With 25 on a screen you can feel as if you are there, but getting the papers, because it is virtual? I worry, and this is no disrespect because I have already praised you, Andrew, the Chairman has immense power when we meet virtually. When we are here standing up, people can see, and you will be influencing the debate because you are part of it, and I am worried that that might be a problem.

Yes, of course I agree that business needs to be done, and Jacqui has given us very useful advice on the legality, but I wonder even today if we are totally representative of the communities from which we come, from the dioceses. I would look to Parliament and think their idea of a half and half might be the way forward.

I am going to listen to the debates today and listen very strongly to the emotions as well as the motions. I am keen to see where the sunset clause goes. We are getting reassurance from Geoffrey Tattersall that it is for 12 months, but is it really going to be 12 months? Of course, if we are in a pandemic and it is continuing, it may have to be extended. I want this not to be the new norm. I am a traditionalist. I think I am now in my 36th year on General Synod. I have had the experience of Parliament and being a member of the Ecclesiastical Committee, and I want to see how it will respond to all of this. I know Andrew Selous is meeting at the Board of Governors. I deeply regret that it is a clash. I am a Governor and am trying to go to both meetings. Parliament needs to be on our side as well. We were democratically elected. It is our right and duty to respect the views of those who put us here.

I urge caution. I do accept that because of the emergency situation we will probably need this, but let us look very carefully at the legality of it, the corporate side, the individual voices still being heard. In a Synod like today, I was called because I was the only one standing. How is it going to look when we are doing it remotely? Can we truly be representative? Let us listen to this debate, recognising that emergency situations require emergency action, but this should be a short-term reaction, not a long-term one, and we should not be today establishing any particular legal precedence.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I am going to spend most of the rest of the day being somebody else: Mr David Lamming. That is an onerous task, as some of you will understand. I am just taking this opportunity to say what I really think. The first thing I want to say is Geoffrey Tattersall and all

around him in the Legal Department have done a fantastic job, and we are very grateful to them. Whatever the outcome of the amendments, Geoffrey, you know I am on your side.

The second thing I want to say is the Church has risen to a unique challenge. This shows flexibility, integrity, good thought. We are trying our very best to come out of a difficult situation, and we are showing ourselves not to be the woolly old fossils we have the reputation of being but people who can actually get this right and get it right in one go. We have assembled a wise group of people to help us do that and I think that wisdom will prevail. We understand these uncertain times.

However, we have put in safeguards and provisions. I share the previous speaker's concerns, particularly in the area of Article 7 and Article 8 business. I think it is important when we are considering those matters that we take a great deal of time and are in community. But we are not going to do that at present, as the motion stands, we are just going to concentrate on what is essential and good.

Therefore, I commend this motion to the House. I hope it all goes through and I hope we can use this as a stepping stone to becoming a much more flexible, light touch but nonetheless wise, prayerful, spiritual and, if I might say so, biblically referencing and understanding Church, which is addressing the issues of the day, using technology to good effect. After all, technology is there to be mastered; it is not there to master us.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Christopher Smith (London): Thank you to those who have spoken before me for doing some scene-setting. I just wonder whether I might add a very little theological scene-setting reflecting on what it is we do when we meet. To claim to be a Synod is to claim authority for regulating a particular part, a local part, of the Church as a whole. If, as we believe it to be, the Church is the Body of Christ, then a local part of the Church is both a part of the whole and complete in itself. This then is the Body of Christ meeting. This you might even say is the Body of Christ in an unusual but not insignificant way at worship. The Body of Christ meets for "when two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them".

We have communicated over the internet, with some degree of success, in an emergency situation, in which for a time it was illegal for us to meet in person, but without the Body of Christ assembled, there is an incompleteness in the life of the Church, which we know very well is painful. Like grace, the activity of the Body of Christ is not limited by the visible boundaries of the Church but, even so, the Body of Christ meets, and we ought in no way to assume that emergency provision to enable urgent business to be done is the normal way in which we should meet.

I wonder whether perhaps we ought to draw fewer parallels between ourselves and the secular Parliament, whose activities, whether kindly or harmful, are, for the most part, organised for secular ends. This place may stand in the midst of a secularised world, but the contribution we make here, we make as the Body of Christ, which is not the aggregate of its members, but stands as part of the worship of the head of this body, who is Christ the Lord.

Canon Peter Adams (St Albans): Synod, I am standing here for those not with us today. As such, I welcome this Measure. Jamie Harrison has acknowledged those not here. My thoughts go beyond them. Just as it has been said the Church is the only club for those who are not members, I suggest we need to see ourselves as providing governance and leadership, at least in part looking to those who are not our members. I suggest we approach our debates on this Measure as such.

While prompted by the pandemic and responsive to it, I suggest this Measure takes just another small step towards nimbler fitter governance and leadership, for a nimbler fitter Church, a Church visibly more concerned about our world, our community, than itself, a robust Church with robust engaged governance. Archbishop Stephen's big project, about which we heard as members of the House the Laity just a week or two ago, is designed for just that. Some of our responses to this Measure seem to reflect, to an extent, our own responses to this. The amendments we will consider today are understandable, but we must ask ourselves whether they are important.

This Measure enables us to do business during a lockdown. It also takes us a step towards a governance and leadership which meets, debates and transacts business more effectively and, perhaps, I dare to suggest, more regularly. It gets us past the issues of who can afford to become a member that we are so regularly stymied by as we consider things such as Synod dates. Yes, we must meet face to face, talk deeply and at length in our meetings, but also over coffee in the tearoom and perhaps a beer at night, as we do in York. Nothing replaces that, but let us look to the possibilities this opens up to make online meetings succeed, perhaps more regularly and mixed models, as Peter Bruinvels has said.

I was not planning to speak today. I have nothing substantial to add to my friends who pore over the detailed legalities, though I recognise their importance. The wise Mrs Adams at breakfast, talking about our own PCC this evening, an upcoming APCM, remarked, "I wonder who will want to be part of this in ten years unless something changes". She is right. Let us see our work today as a commitment to becoming a nimbler fitter Synod and a nimbler fitter governance and a nimbler fitter Church.

The Chair: This is only a comment. There is nobody standing, but we have not heard any women members of this Synod speak. Thank you, otherwise it will be a man thing and that would be very unfortunate. You both have three minutes. Just wait for all the sanitisation. Go slowly round the outside.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Yes, I was very conscious that there were no women speaking. I was sitting there thinking, "Why is that and what does this say about us?" One reason I think it is really important for us to pass this Measure today is because it gives everybody a voice. We cannot all meet in the same place, but we do need to hear each other still, so we have to find a way.

Some of the early prophets – Zephaniah and Jeremiah, and perhaps some of you theologians will tell me others too – encouraged people "not to let their hands hang limp". This has been really with me during this lockdown period because we have to

work with all our God-given creativity to find ways to keep on doing what God has called us to do. Synod, God has called us to provide governance and leadership for his Church, so we have to work together to find a way. I am really grateful to Geoffrey Tattersall and the team for this legislation.

I have a question for you, Mr Tattersall, and this may not be part of your brief, but is there a way of us also thinking about, or perhaps this is for the Business Committee or the Presidents, how we transact our business on Zoom? I think like many of you, I did not particularly enjoy the meetings that we had I think we might need to work in different ways to make it good. I would like to suggest, Peter, perhaps we could have a virtual coffee room, for example, so we could have those opportunities to chat. Certainly in my own work, as a lay person I work part time in business and part time in the NHS, I have carried on and I have got better at using Zoom over the past six months because I have had to. I think, Synod, if we commit to do this we will get better. Like all things, we need to practise and commit to being better for the sake of one another and the people we represent.

Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield): First, I want to warmly thank those who have worked on this Measure for us. Secondly, I want to commend it to you all. Thirdly, I want to say that I am sure of the expansion of the audience for this Church in this pandemic and I want to thank everybody who has worked online so very hard to maintain and to look after their congregations.

We have to be aware that in the future we are going to be more scrutinised because more people can see what we are doing. We have to be aware that widening our base is something that is in our mission. We have to be aware that when we are making decisions, we can be seen to be prevaricating, helpful, argumentative, and really human. We have to acknowledge that in widening our base, as we are doing now, making it possible for people in care homes to see what we are doing, for people who are disabled who will never be in this room, we are open to more scrutiny.

I am actually welcoming this and, as a pragmatist, I would also point out to you that our dioceses are already working remotely, our PCCs are already working remotely, and all the organisations that are secular that I belong to and the councils are all working remotely and with success. I am not defeated by technology. It is there for us to harness and use. It is not there to be an impediment to us unless we create it as such.

Please think about the future of the Church of England. Think about all the developments that have recently taken place and the way in which we are widening our audience in this nation. From my point of view, I hope that all the proceedings today will be something which we can support, even if we are not wholeheartedly supporting it, and I hope that some of the anxieties that have been expressed will actually be allayed today by those who speak.

The Chair: Bishop, and then I will be moving a motion of closure.

The Bishop of Chester (Rt Revd Mark Tanner): Thank you for inviting me to speak. I am not sure if this is a maiden speech because I have spoken in a different seat in

this Synod. Like others, I welcome this motion. Like others, I miss being able to meet in person, it is painful, but I think this is a good Measure and I am encouraged by the safeguards that are in it. I want to summarise that which has already been noted. There are a number of advantages to us meeting virtually. One is disability access, another, of course, is the financial benefit that we have talked about, and another is the ecological environment that we have. One of the things that has encouraged me in this current time is that we are rediscovering what it is to be a learning Church that does not have to get everything perfect first time. I was very touched by both Archbishops apologising. We have got some things wrong, I am sure, but we are grateful for their leadership, and we are grateful to push forward together.

I encourage Synod, even if you feel this might be a difficult motion to pass, to treat it as a learning opportunity as we grow together, as we look forward, as we look outward and as we keep the things that are important to us important to us.

The Chair: No one is standing, so I will ask Geoffrey Tattersall to respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): Jamie Harrison brought us down to earth by telling us that the consequences of this pandemic are pretty enormous and the length of it is pretty uncertain, and that we really have a stark choice: do we do nothing, in which case we can do nothing business wise, or do we do something?

To Peter Bruinvels, yes, it may well be that we can meet in a remote way in part with some people present and some people not. That will be a matter for the Business Committee to determine so that we can do the same as in Parliament. Indeed, in terms of voting, that is a matter for the Business Committee, but I can say that the Central Secretariat is already talking to the parliamentary authorities about how things are done so we can learn from their experience. As to his remark about the Ecclesiastical Committee, the Ecclesiastical Committee is currently working on Zoom already, and it is envisaged, I think, that if this motion were to get Final Approval in due course, that it would meet remotely.

Jonathan Alderton-Ford, it is always nice to know what you think particularly, even though you are sometimes too grateful with the praise. As to Article 7 and 8 business, that is something we can come on to, and there we are.

As to Mr Smith, this is not just the new norm, we are not creating a new norm; we are trying to do something rather than doing nothing. Of course, we all like to meet each other for social things in the tearoom or at York in the bar. We cannot do those things. It is very unfortunate, but we live where we are.

To Mr Adams, yes, I too would like us to be a nimbler Church. As the Archbishop of York said this morning, in a way, some of coronavirus, which we all hate, has brought out the best in us. It has made us try to work out how we can do things effectively and appropriately.

As to Alison Coulter, she asks whether we could do some of our business on Zoom. That is a matter for the Business Committee, not for the Measure. Yes, I too have

got better at doing Zoom. I can now actually turn the unmute button off from time to time. I hope I have mentioned everybody. If not, I am very sorry, but that is my response to the debate.

The Chair: Synod, I therefore put Item 500, that the Measure entitled “General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure” be considered for revision in full Synod.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That is clearly carried. That now proceeds to the Revision Stage in full Synod.

As indicated on the timetable, I am going to adjourn the sitting briefly at this point. The sitting will resume for the Revision Stage in 15 minutes, so let us say midday. Thank you very much.

DRAFT GENERAL SYNOD (REMOTE MEETINGS) (TEMPORARY STANDING ORDERS) MEASURE (GS 2176)

Draft Measure for Revision in Full Synod

The Chair: Synod, we come now to the Revision Stage for the draft Measure. The motions and amendments are set out on the Order Paper. As we are proceeding to revision in full Synod without a prior Revision Committee stage, the 40-member rule does not apply to the proposed amendments. All amendments that are moved may be debated and voted on. The speech limit for the movers of amendments and for the Steering Committee’s reply is five minutes. Other speeches are also limited to five minutes unless I announce a different time limit.

ITEM 503

The Chair: I call Revd Paul Benfield to move his amendment, Item 503. Happy birthday, Paul. We cannot sing to you but we can wave and applaud or whatever.

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): This amendment is, I hope, very easy to understand. It allows the six officers of Synod to make Standing Orders once only. It is necessary for them to do so in the unusual circumstances in which we find ourselves now. But, once they have done so, once they have made Standing Orders, Synod itself should have control of its own affairs and the officers should have no particular role.

Synod itself should decide whether to approve or amend the Standing Orders. Synod itself should decide whether to extend their operation. If the Standing Orders lapse, Synod itself should decide whether to revive them. If we leave the Measure as it is, then in ten years’ time this Measure will still be in force and the officers can make new Standing Orders to deal with some new situation which we cannot now foresee. Those new Standing Orders might be far more radical than what is

proposed now. They might even reduce the current quorum to below one-fifth of each House. The officers should not have such powers. Synod should be in control of its own business. I beg to move.

The Chair: Thank you, Paul. I call the Chair of the Steering Committee, Geoffrey Tattersall, to respond. You have your five minutes.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): On behalf of the Steering Committee, I accept this amendment and, at the appropriate time, I will also accept a consequential amendment also proposed by Fr Benfield, amendment 8 at 513. I will also invite Synod, for the same reasons, to support Mr Lamming's amendments, 510 and 511, because they emphasise the Synod's power to revive the Standing Orders.

Matters have quite quickly evolved in the drafting of this Measure. In the original draft Measure circulated to members of Synod, the "group of six" – if I can call them that – not only had the power to make the Standing Orders but also had the power to make them more than once if they had ceased to be in operation. By contrast, Synod also had the power to amend them, extend their operation and to resolve that they should be revived if they ceased to be in operation. However, the last part of clause 4(3) purports to allow the group of six to make further Standing Orders when they have ceased to be in operation. It does so notwithstanding that clause 3 gives that power to Synod too.

The Steering Committee is persuaded that the group of six should only be able to exercise its powers to make Standing Orders once and should have no power to amend them or revoke them, as was always provided by the first part of clause 4(3). That is why the Steering Committee accepts Fr Benfield's amendment at 503.

The Chair: Item 503 is now open for debate.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Synod, I for myself do not believe this amendment is really necessary because so much of what Fr Benfield seeks is already provided for in the Measure as it has been revised by the Steering Committee following the informal exercise. The only circumstance in which the officers can exercise their power to make Standing Orders again is when Synod has chosen to revoke all the Standing Orders or, conceivably, when they have lapsed, although, as Geoffrey Tattersall said that power is conferred on Synod as well by clause 3(6).

It seems to me extremely unlikely that that situation would arise but, even if it did, Synod still is in control because any Standing Orders made by the officers can be rejected by Synod if Synod does not like them, or if they think they have gone too far, and can also be amended by Synod as the first item of business after they have been made. It does not seem to me that, even in the wholly unforeseen circumstances that Fr Benfield fears, there is any real danger of Synod having anything imposed on it which it does not consider wise and proper for its business.

I also had a particular concern that it seemed to me that in removing clause 4(3) there was a possibility that, if Synod had revoked all its Standing Orders and not made new ones, there would be nobody empowered to make Standing Orders if they were needed again and we would have to embark on further legislation to give fresh

powers. I am advised that the Steering Committee's view is that clause 3(6) not only enables the Synod to revive Standing Orders that have lapsed under clause 3(4), but also to revive Standing Orders that Synod has expressly revoked.

I find that advice surprising but I am certainly not going to debate that in full Synod. I would invite, however, the Steering Committee to consider, over lunch, when they come to look at drafting amendments for final drafting, adding some words into clause 3(6) to make it absolutely clear beyond doubt that the power to revive will apply to Standing Orders which have been expressly revoked as well as those that have lapsed under clause 3(4).

The Chair: I see no one standing, therefore I put Item 503 to the Synod.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 504

The Chair: I now call on Mr Philip French to move his amendment, Item 504. You have five minutes, Philip.

Mr Philip French (Rochester): The amendment standing in my name would have the effect of including Article 7 business within the scope of this Measure. For clarity, and to provide some reassurance to Jonathan and others, please note that it does not also cover business that is subject to Article 8 procedures. Let us remind ourselves about Article 7. That Article of our Constitution refers to "a provision touching doctrinal formulae or the services or ceremonies of Church of England or the administration of the sacraments or sacred rites thereof".

Article 7 business is referred to the House of Bishops to agree in which terms it should be taken to Final Approval. Either Convocation or the House of Laity may also claim reference on the matter. So, then, Article 7 business is serious business and we treat it with special care. It is not, however, particularly uncommon nor necessarily controversial. Since 2015, this Synod has dealt with nine Article 7 items: Amending Canons No. 36 through 41, yes, all six of them; what became the Ecumenical Relations Measure; and, rather surprisingly, small parts of two Miscellaneous Provisions Measures.

During the July 2018 legislative marathon in York, we handled seven of these at various stages and it has taken up to two years to see Article 7 business through from start to finish during this quinquennium. Well, who knows what practical or pastoral needs for ecclesiastical legislation involving Article 7 an extended pandemic might generate. One might think of occasional offices; distanced reception of Holy Communion; the conduct of public worship; attendance recording, now not only for service registers but also for contact tracing; there might be requirements for additional ecumenical hospitality and flexibility; or simply more of our usual business, including the simplification agenda which can hardly become less urgent now.

Given this background, combined with the fact that we will have to work with remote meetings for many months if not years to come, and having already lost the July 2020 group of sessions, why should we choose not to include Article 7 business

within the remit of this Measure? It is not as complicated as Article 8 which would require reference to diocesan synods. All of the other players are contained within the General Synod itself. Technologies like Zoom are perfectly capable of supporting the Convocations or the House of Laity in separate virtual rooms. Besides, the option of a reference often is not claimed.

To close, let us recall two significant examples of Article 7 business that we have handled over the past five years. Amending Canon No. 37 allowed the usual burial service to be used after the tragedy of a suicide and for the unbaptized, a matter of grace and kindness. Amending Canon No. 40 codified the recognition and governance of Religious Communities within the Church of England, partly to ensure that due attention must be given to safeguarding. In the perilous circumstances we now find ourselves, it would be unfortunate to close off the possibility of dealing with sensitive matters for the foreseeable future.

Synod, please support me in voting in favour of Item 504 to include Article 7 within the remit of this Measure so that we can do our job properly. But, if not, then do please join me in approving the Measure anyway so that we can do our job at all.

The Chair: I call on Mr Tattersall to respond.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): As Mr French says, the effect of clause 1(4) of the draft Measure is that it is not possible for Article 7 business to be transacted at a remote meeting of the General Synod. The suggestion that Articles 7 and 8 should be excluded from the Measure came from the Business Committee when they were initially consulted about the possibility of legislation, presumably on the basis that it did not think it was appropriate for matters relating to doctrine to be dealt with under emergency powers for remote meetings.

As I indicated in the question and answer session to General Synod, it seemed to me, and the Steering Committee agreed, that this is an amendment which raises a legitimate issue as to what business should be transacted and this is really a matter entirely for the Synod to determine, not for the Steering Committee to give you any lead. But it seems to the Steering Committee there is a balance to be struck between those who wish the maximum flexibility as to what business should be transacted at such meetings, particularly when the length of this pandemic is uncertain, and those who wish to adopt a much narrower approach as to what business is to be transacted.

I need to only add one word of caution, and that is this. If you do not pass this amendment and amend the Measure in this way, then it will not be possible for there to be amendments to the Standing Orders later to achieve this, simply because it will not be authorised by the Measure. Having said that, this is a matter for Synod.

The Chair: This item is now open for debate. You have five minutes at the moment.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Before I make my remarks, can I thank colleagues in the House of Clergy for giving up time to be here today and particularly to those who came at very short notice. Thank you very much indeed. Synod, I am

persuaded by Mr French's argument and, in general, I think our legislation should allow us to do as much as possible in this remote way as we can.

We are not comparing a Synod as we know it with a Synod as we might know it because we have never done General Synod remotely before and, as such, I think there are some invidious comparisons to be made with meeting physically. We should also perhaps remember that not everything we do when we meet physically is entirely, let us say, smooth, straightforward and as quick and efficient as it could be.

But having expressed my support for Philip's amendment – and I would very much like to vote for it – my concern today would be for those of tender consciences who would feel as if the passing of this additional clause would give them a problem in voting for the whole of the Measure.

Before I decide how to vote on this amendment, I would like to hear from members of the Synod who might be in that situation to make their views known in this debate in order that members of Synod can gauge the risk of not passing the Measure as a whole at Final Approval. Caution is necessary, I think. My heart says one thing, my head says another and I think it would be really helpful, as we are in this very unusual situation today and we have not had a chance to consult together in the ways that we normally do, to tread carefully.

Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Much as my friend and brother, Jonathan Ford, appears sometimes in the guise of David Lamming, I am the Revd Debbie Flack, Vicar of Lille from the Diocese in Europe. The Diocese in Europe has expressed its support for this amendment because they are, of any of our dioceses, ones that are used to being dispersed and not being in one place and having a variety of practices and places to meet and to worship in.

Over the last six months, we have found several concerns about doctrine and practice that have challenged the Church. Just the ones mentioned by Mr French on the issue of distribution of Communion and how we receive are a few of them, but there are others. I would strongly support this amendment and base it on the fact that, if we can trust Synod to do the rest of our business, why are we not trustworthy for this business which if we were physically present we would be competent for?

Yes, there is the matter that the Convocations and the House of Laity may be consulted, but just as much as Synod can be consulted remotely so have the Convocations and the House of Laity been consulted remotely. We are competent, we can do this and there is a glimmer of growth here. It is the history of our Church that doctrine follows practice. We have an opportunity, a window, where we might have a little leniency on practice, carefully measured, carefully monitored, that may help us refine and improve our doctrine to bring greater glory to God and greater relevance to the Gospel in this generation.

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): I want to thank Mr French for this amendment, as well as thanking you for being here, and stress that I am going to speak first as Chair of the Business Committee and then personally. As Chair of the Business Committee, I would like to say that you all know how quickly things move at the moment. When we met as Business Committee, our primary concern was to serve

the Synod by talking about the way that this Measure – which we really need – could best be presented to the Synod.

We knew, as my colleague Simon Butler has pointed out, that Article 7 business was one of those things that are difficult and difficult for very good reasons for members of this Synod. By testing the water with us, Mr French is bringing something really important to your attention. What we need in this legislation, I think, is something that is going to offer us the best opportunity to do the practical things that are necessary for the life and growth and mission of the Church in a timeframe that we cannot actually put a limit on.

At this point, I need to say as Chair of the Business Committee that we are here to serve you and this is what we are trying to do. I just want to speak personally a little bit and say that, for my own part, I would want to support Mr French. I do not know about others of you but, as we approached Easter, I think I made my plans four times, maybe five, about how I was going to celebrate Easter over the past few weeks. We have seen things change more rapidly than I think even those of us who were trying to think quite carefully thought they would change and we need to have some legislation that is nimble. It may well be that we could really regret not being able to consider some things, particularly about occasional offices and attendance, as Mr French pointed out, if we are not able to consider Article 7 business by remote means.

I am going to swap back to Business Committee mode for a moment. You will have to excuse me in this, but it presents me with an opportunity to say that the House of Laity and the Convocations, you will know, have been enormously helpful in preparing for this meeting and for using Zoom meetings and all the technology available to us to get our preparations right. That, in particular, would encourage me both as an individual and as the Chair of the Business Committee to say that I would now think that, carefully managed, this Synod could cope with this.

But it is for the Synod to say and I hope you will consider, as I will, all the speeches that follow this one so that we can serve the whole membership of the Church of England to the best of our ability in these difficult times.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Revd Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle): I do understand and sympathise with the concerns behind this amendment, but I am one of those of tender conscience of whom Simon Butler is so kindly considerate. Mr French rightly reminds us that this is about doctrine and, from the earliest days of the Church, doctrine has been decided as a gathered worshipping community. We do that because we recognise, as Scripture tells us, that the Holy Spirit reveals all truth to the Church as a whole, not just to individual members within it, however much some of us might think that we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit rather more clearly than those of our brethren.

Therefore, it is only by living out that committed covenantal relationship with one another and through our worship, therefore, with the trinitarian God that the whole Church together is able to discern the revealed truth of God brought to us by the Holy Spirit. There is a danger with remote decisions that doctrine becomes a matter

of mere utility because it is convenient to address it, or, perhaps even worse, merely a matter of personal opinion determined by members in isolation.

Arguably, the biggest problem we have already had in doctrinal matters is remoteness from one another. I, therefore, urge the greatest caution in exacerbating that remoteness by amending this Measure. We might remember the catastrophic consequences to the Body of Christ of taking decisions remotely from one another in the schisms of the Church between Orthodox and Catholic, between Catholic and Protestant, between Anglican and Methodist, divisions that have caused unbearable long years of pain that, with hindsight, we might wish we had taken more care to avoid.

As the title of this Measure makes clear, it is intended to be temporary and is passed in the hope that we can resume meetings in person. Now it may be, I recognise, that the prospect of such a meeting recedes over time to the point where it becomes unendurable, and it might also be that in that intervening period we have built up sufficient trust and awareness of remote meetings that we do feel confident to pass an amendment to this Measure – or perhaps a new Measure – to allow Article business in some form in the future. That cannot be done by Standing Orders but it could be done by passing a new Measure at another remote meeting.

But I think it is important that such a significant and theologically important step is decided by the whole Synod, not just the select gathering here today, and remember that most of Synod is on mute today. That decision should be taken by ensuring that we do pass this Measure and give a voice to all who are not with us today so that we can decide this matter together as a Church and so I hope that we will resist this amendment.

Canon Shayne Ardron (Leicester): I had not realised which way I would be voting on this but, having heard Philip French speak, I decided that I would love to vote for this because I was thinking, with the IICSA trial and different things, what will we need to change about the way we worship and what preventions. I was involved with the thing for the Religious Communities and it would have been a real shame if that could not have happened. Yes, there may not be people here who can vote on this and they will be on mute but, when things come to Synod, there will be a voice for everybody to be heard.

As a member of the House of Laity, I have been most encouraged by the meetings that we have had in the run-up to this one so that lots of different voices can be heard. I think in some ways the way that we are working now enables more voices to be heard and people to have time. If you are like me, you are someone who reflects on the things that are being said and we have had plenty of opportunity for that in the run-up to this. I can understand people's concern and I would not want this Measure to be voted down, but I would be wanting to vote for this because everyone will have a voice when these things come to Synod, so I vote for it.

The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler): I would like to speak in favour of supporting this amendment. I hear the concerns of someone like Stewart Fyfe, but, as Philip French outlined very clearly, Article 7 business ranges across rather a wide range of matters, some of which are far less controversial than others.

I think Synod needs to recognise that we are likely to be in this for at least 12, probably 18 to 24 months. To hamper ourselves from doing some of that business by not being able to tackle Article 7 matters would seriously, I think, restrict us developing the mission of the Church. Each matter would come individually. Therefore, where there are particular concerns – and I will probably have some myself – which are under Article 7, Synod can vote them down. Where we think that they are sensible, then we vote for them. The whole point about this amendment is that it gives us the option to be able to tackle them one by one.

I am one of those who is experiencing dealing with legislation in Parliament by blended and remote means. It is odd. It is strange. But Parliament is dealing with very, very serious issues and managing it. I trust this Synod to be able to do the same. I urge you to pass this amendment.

Revd Alison Booker (Leicester): I do want to support this amendment, I think it is really important, but I find myself in the bigger picture of this somewhat torn between pragmatism, of needing to do and therefore needing the Measure to pass, and not wanting to do something that might stop it, to care for others who might find it difficult tied into that, but also an ability to see some of this as being beyond the pragmatic and the immediate to the visionary.

I am really aware that my teenage children are natives to this digital world. It is their normal in many ways. I had computers at secondary school, but I was an adult before computing could be held in my hand. From toddlers they have known nothing else. I notice that our language, unavoidably, is probably unhelpful. My children may use “digital” or other words, but often I hear, and myself use, words like “remote” or “virtual” in contrast to “real”, yet when I FaceTime or WhatsApp video call to speak to my mum or dad or my daughter I do not feel as though my conversation was remote or virtual. It was different to being physically there but no less real. This might be about how we use this technology rather than if.

It feels like this amendment would expand what can be done in a way that feels less fearful of this new digital context. I want us as a Synod to be wise and careful, to be pragmatic, caring, but also visionary. This is about a Measure that gives us a gift, and we need to use it in ways that enable us to work differently, hear different voices, do more, more diversely, more often. Bishop Paul was just saying we can vote things down. My grandmother would have said: “Just because you can do it doesn’t mean you have to”. I support this amendment.

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford): I am one with a tender conscience and, like everybody here, I hate this virus. In fact, those with long memories will perhaps remember that I was the first person to raise the issue of coronavirus in February, in a question saying “What can we do to prepare our churches? What can we do to make it easier?”, and I raised the issue of individual cups instead of the common chalice and that did not get very far. In July I raised the question again and the power of the mute button was heard – or not heard. As a result we had an informed opinion from leading legal barristers, but that has not got very far either because the House of Bishops is the deciding body on doctrine. I am worried to hear that doctrine follows practice. So please, Synod, this is Article 7 business which is

doctrine and needs to be properly debated and properly heard. I would resist this motion.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): I want to speak in favour of this. You will be aware that Chelmsford has now a diocesan vacancy, and I would just like to put on record now Chelmsford Diocese's grateful thanks to Archbishop Stephen – or, as many of us call him, the Church of England's gift from Leigh-on-Sea and Chelmsford. Thank you for everything you have done for the diocese, Archbishop.

We had our Vacancy in See. We had our first meeting on 26 March, which was three days after the lockdown. We had all of our meetings of Vacancy in See by Zoom. We were told that the Vacancy in See Committee is highly relational. We were told how difficult it would be to have a successful Vacancy in See Committee operating purely electronically.

It was not easy. It was not easy at all. But we did it. We had some really difficult and tough decisions. We had lots of meetings. We had small groups. We broke down into smaller groups to operate. At the end of it we came to a consensus. It was not easy, a number of people were not happy with the whole process, but at the end of it we produced a really good, and I hope successful, diocesan Statement of Need. It is not easy, but it is possible to have some of those highly relational conversations and highly relational decisions in a different way.

I would encourage Synod to reflect on some of that experience of the Diocese of Chelmsford's Vacancy in See for conducting something – I know it is not doctrinal, but it was highly relational – to still come up with a solution that is successful. I will be voting in favour of this.

The Chair: Fiona Gibson, if you would speak, and then I am going to test the mind of Synod about closing this debate.

Revd Fiona Gibson (St Albans): I am such a Synod newbie, my first group of sessions being February 2020, that I fully confess before my brothers and sisters that I had to look up what on earth Article 7 and Article 8 business was before I could come to this special session. I am also one of those of tender conscience. So I would respectfully ask that, whilst I am sure we can come to a mind and debate difficult issues of doctrine remotely or online, we do not force that through or make that a requirement in this Measure. I would respectfully ask that we allow more time for us to get used to how things work, that we take the time we need to, and, if necessary, the full Synod on Zoom, or whichever other medium we use, could pass another Measure in 12 to 18 months' time, should we at that point be comfortable and ready to proceed with debating these important issues.

So for the sake of those of us who just are not quite sure yet and want a little bit more time to be comfortable and to know that we can do this properly and well and diligently, I would ask, please, to resist the amendment.

The Chair: Thank you. And then I am going to test your mind, Synod.

Dr Nick Land (York): Like many of you, I have been chairing boards and committees and courts over the past few weeks over Zoom. They have gone very well when they have been about concrete material issues, but what I have very quickly realised is that when something emotionally impacts on people, it is much more difficult to pick it up as the chair and to feel what is going on in the room. Is that person who has disappeared distressed, or have they gone to put the kettle on, or has a small child interrupted them?

Well, doctrinal and liturgical issues are some of the things which are absolutely core to our belief. Some of them mean a great deal to us and others we are quite happy to disagree on. But we, of course, do not always agree what is core and what is adiaphoral. Indeed, the very issue of “Does doctrine follow practice?” is something which many of us would have quite significant disagreement on. We do not always agree on this because we have not always listened intently to one another, so we do not know what is central to one another’s life in Christ. That is why we have special processes for Article 7 business: so we give the most careful consideration to that business. I do not think I have confidence in our current Zoom processes to allow us to do that. Clearly, if, in a year’s time, we are still in the same situation, we may well have to come back together and establish what those processes are.

One further point. Earlier this week we had our first Archbishops’ Council in York with Archbishop Stephen. It went extremely well. It got to matters arising that I wanted to ask a point on and my internet failed. I live in a rural area. The BT engineer is there now for the third time in three months. There will be a new divide in this new system between those who have fast and reliable internet and those of us for whom a byte is a dream, never mind a megabyte, and we just have to therefore be careful in terms of this issue to think about what processes we put in place to ensure it is secure.

So I, too, have a tender conscience at the moment. I come to support this Measure, but I cannot support it if Article 7 business is in there without understanding what those additional controls would be.

The Chair: I am minded to seek the closure of this particular debate on this motion.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I therefore put Item 504 to the vote.

The motion was put and lost on a show of hands.

ITEM 505

The Chair: I therefore call Mr Clive Scowen to move his amendment at Item 505. You have five minutes, Clive.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): As the vote on First Consideration indicates, virtually all of us believe that this legislation is necessary to enable Synod to discharge its legal duties and transact urgent business during the period when it is not safe to have a

full Synod meeting in the same place. However, and I think the result on the last amendment possibly indicates this, I believe that many of us regard this as a necessary evil and that meeting remotely is a poor substitute for meeting in person, as I believe Parliament has found, even though it has had to do it.

A lot of us found the informal session in July, confined though it was to addresses, presentations and questions, unsatisfactory, despite the huge amount of work that had gone into making it as good as it could be. While small meetings on Zoom, family talking to one another, a PCC, that sort of size body, can work reasonably well, 400 people trying to debate complex or sensitive matters on Zoom is not, in my view, likely to result in a good outcome. Even those of us who like remote working and find Zoom easy to use need to recognise that there are many members of this Synod, many of whom are not here today, who find it really challenging and stressful and would find contributing to a debate on Zoom really difficult, as well as people like Nick Land who have a problem with a reliable connection in the first place.

Just one example of the problems that could arise on a debate on Zoom is how the Chair's attention is to be drawn to an urgent point of order, a request to vote by Houses and so on. These things are so easy in a physical meeting but are extremely difficult to achieve in a timely fashion on Zoom.

On this amendment I suggest that there are two issues: first, should non-urgent business which requires debate be excluded from competent business for remote meetings; and secondly, if so, who should determine whether business is urgent. On the first question I recognise that there are some truly urgent items of business which we will have to debate remotely in November. That will be hard enough. But we should not allow to be added to that business which can reasonably wait until we can safely meet again in person. Of course, there is no certainty about when that will be, but I would suggest that there is good reason to think that, come next July, a physical meeting may well again be possible. So in all probability, this amendment is about what business will be competent this November and next February, and possibly next July. Clearly, if we could not meet again physically next July, business which was not urgent in November or February could become so urgent so as to qualify for consideration in July if that meeting too had to be on Zoom, but let us not take debatable business in a remote meeting until it has become truly urgent.

So if we think, as I do, that non-urgent business requiring debate should not be competent for consideration at a remote meeting, who should decide whether it is urgent? Deciding on the competence of business for consideration at a particular group of sessions is not part of the Business Committee's usual remit. What it does is decide which pieces of competent business should be included in the agenda for that group of sessions. Competence is normally self-evident from the Constitution and the Standing Orders.

This amendment proposes that the appropriate body to decide whether a matter is so urgent that it cannot wait until the next physical group of sessions is the six officers, four of whom are elected by the Houses of this Synod. This will not intrude on the proper role of the Business Committee. A decision by the officers that a matter is urgent will not require the Business Committee to include it in the agenda for that group of sessions any more than urgent pleading from senior people

normally does. All a determination of urgency will do is make the business competent for inclusion. It will be for the Business Committee alone then to decide whether inclusion on the agenda is indeed appropriate.

I urge Synod to pass this amendment so as to limit the business capable of being taken at a remote meeting to that which is truly urgent. I beg to move.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Scowen. I call on Mr Tattersall to respond.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): On behalf of the Steering Committee I resist this amendment. The problem is that we do not know for how long this pandemic will last, what will be the local or national consequences of it and how we might be prevented from meeting in the usual way. I hear Mr Scowen say that he is hopeful that there will be a proper meeting in July. I, too, share that hope, but I have no idea whether it is realistic or not. In such circumstances we need to be flexible. The words in the amendment, “so urgent that it must be dealt with”, do not seem to offer a great deal of flexibility.

The Steering Committee is persuaded that it should be for the Business Committee, as it normally is, and of which Mr Scowen is a member, to determine what items should be placed on the Synod’s agenda as is provided by Standing Order 4(1). By contrast, the “group of six”, if I can call them that, do not set the agenda, and we do not think it is appropriate that they should in effect do so by determining what item is so urgent that it must be dealt with on the agenda. Moreover, it is difficult to see how this in practice would work. Presumably, under the proposed amendment, the group of six would decide if a matter was so urgent before the Business Committee met. That would be a new approach, which we think should be resisted. So for all those reasons, Chairman, I resist this amendment.

The Chair: Thank you. This item is now open for debate. Can I encourage members to give short speeches because there is a lot of hot air already in this room and we have another hour of this to go? The gentleman in green, followed by the chap in front. You have five minutes, but that does not mean you have to use it.

Revd Canon Wyn Beynon (Worcester): Thank you for calling me a gentleman – that does not happen a lot! I am actually one of the oldest priests on General Synod at the moment, one of the oldest four according to the statistics. I have also been ordained probably longer than any of you – probably one or two of you longer than me, I expect, but not many.

I am appalled at the fearfulness of my younger brothers and sisters in orders. We live in a new age. We need to move forward. We have got to stop these amendments that are just dragging us back through all kinds of points of order and all that stuff.

Actually, Synod is not very good. This is not a very good forum for the Church. Loads of people cannot come here because they cannot get the time off. Anybody who thinks that a Synod is a great place to do a debate has not sat through the last five and a half years that I have.

So let us just grow up a bit here. We have got to move forward. Zoom is not a problem. We can get the technology sorted so that we can actually do all the things that mean people can be noticed. We can improve all of that. The technology is already there. We have got to get into the 20th century, never mind the 21st. We have got to stop foot-dragging and move forward. Imagine the number of people who might be able to come to Synod if they did not have to take time off. It would be a very different Synod; I hope not such a fearful one.

It is time for change. I am disbanding my benefice at the moment, partly because I told the Archdeacon it did not work. That is what we need to do with the Church of England. We need to do a lot of disbanding and we need to be less fearful. Stop being what you have been for the last five and a half years, which is a fearful, foot-dragging House, a rebellious House, because God is calling us forward and you are not listening. Well, wake up. God is calling you to change now.

Revd Canon Simon Fisher (Liverpool): Unlike Wyn Beynon, I agree with most of Clive Scowen's comments but I disagree with his amendment. It seems to me that a remote meeting, or whatever we call it, is not the best way to transact our business. We are good at being together, but we are also bad at being deferential – that is, we are too deferential. The Church of England has a deference problem, and so does Zoom have a deference problem. It gives control to the people who are in control. That is not a good thing.

This amendment, it seems to me, gives more control to the people who are in control by allowing the six officers, with all due respect to them, to control the flexibility of the business that we are going to be offered. I am sure the Business Committee, Mr Scowen among them, will take careful consideration as to what business is appropriate in a different format, but I see no reason for restricting it in this way. I say that as one who agreed with Fr Benfield's amendment and who disagreed with Mr French's amendment. I think we should restrict ourselves in terms of remote meetings, but we should not allow others to restrict us, and therefore I will also be resisting this amendment.

The Chair: Thank you. I see no one standing. I therefore put Item 505 to the vote.

The motion was put and lost on a show of hands.

ITEM 506

The Chair: I now call Mr Tattersall to move Item 506: "That clause 1 [as amended] stand part of the Measure". You have five minutes, but I do not think you are going to need it.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): I so move.

The Chair: Thank you. This item is now open for debate. I see no one standing. I therefore put Item 506, "That clause 1 [as amended] stand part of the Measure", to Synod.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 507

The Chair: Item 507 is an amendment in the name of Mr David Lamming. As Mr Lamming is not present and cannot move the amendment, it may be moved by another member under Standing Order 23. I understand Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford intends to do so. Jonathan, you have up to five minutes.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): In the spirit of this Synod I will not be taking five minutes. I feel like somebody who is reading the Psalms, when it comes to that bit, “Who can plumb the mind of the Creator?” Therefore, I think that the Explanatory Note explains what this will do very well. Synod has to decide whether it is important that something is put on the website before it receives Royal Assent as opposed to afterwards. I am quite open as to what Synod might decide, and I think Synod is wise enough and old enough to make its own decisions.

The Chair: Thank you. Beautifully done. Mr Tattersall, you have a right of reply now.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): The Steering Committee believes that this amendment is unnecessary and on behalf of the Steering Committee I resist it.

This amendment is concerned with a situation where, before the Measure receives Royal Assent, the group of six publish the temporary Standing Orders that they have decided that they will make once Royal Assent has been given, and there is already a duty – that is clauses 2(3) and 2(4) – on the group of six to ensure publication on the Church of England website of such temporary Standing Orders and so forth. In that situation, Mr Lamming’s amendment would require the group of six, once they had formally made the Standing Orders following Royal Assent, to issue a formal notice that they have done so, to ensure that the notice is published on the Church of England website and sent to each member.

Mr Lamming explained to the Steering Committee that the rationale for his amendment was to ensure that the Standing Orders were made in exactly the same form as those published earlier, before the commencement of the Measure. In fact, that is required to be so expressly by clause 2(4), which says, “If standing orders proposed to be made under section 1 have been published before the commencement of (the) Measure, and (the) standing orders in the form published are made after that commencement” and so forth.

The Steering Committee believes that Mr Lamming’s requirement that formal notice be given that the Standing Orders have been made in the same form as the version previously published is thus unnecessary, adds undue complexity to the Measure and serves no useful purpose. I ask Synod to resist this amendment.

The Chair: Item 507 is now open to debate. I see no one standing so I put it to Synod.

The motion was put and lost on a show of hands.

ITEM 508

The Chair: Item 508 is also an amendment in the name of Mr Lamming. Again, I understand Mr Alderton-Ford intends to move this amendment.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): David has a soft and cuddly side, and this represents that. I would suggest also he is a good man aside. He wants to ensure that every person who is entitled to attend Synod, because most of them can still speak but not vote, receives the same level of information as the rest of us. The Explanatory Note again succinctly tries to explain what he is trying to do.

The Chair: I therefore call Mr Tattersall to reply.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): I ask Synod to resist this amendment. While the Standing Orders require that documents are sent to members, there is no obligation to circulate them to others who are invited to groups of sessions, although as a matter of established practice they are sent to such individuals. We do not envisage that this practice will change and Mr Lamming's amendment, by seeking to align non-members with the members of General Synod, creates an obligation on the group of six to send copies of the temporary Standing Orders to such non-members. We can see no reason why the current practice in relation to persons who are invited to groups of sessions should not continue. Moreover, we do not believe that so providing in legislation is either necessary or desirable.

The Chair: Item 508 is now open for debate. I see no one standing. I therefore put Item 508 to the vote.

The motion was put and lost on a show of hands.

ITEM 509

The Chair: I therefore call Mr Tattersall to move Item 509, "That clause 2 stand part of the Measure".

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): I so move.

The Chair: Item 509 is now open for debate. I see no one standing. Therefore, I put to you, Synod: "That clause 2 stand part of the Measure".

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 510

The Chair: Item 510 is an amendment in the name of Mr David Lamming. If he is willing, I call on Canon Alderton-Ford to move Item 510.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): This amendment is something much more substantial and helpful to the Synod. What it is trying to do is if a crisis suddenly occurs, if we have gone off using remote meetings (Temporary

Standing Orders), and suddenly we have to have a remote Synod – for example, this week it was very likely this Synod would not take place because of a sudden lockdown – what this allows us to do is to still go ahead and call a virtual Synod and at that virtual Synod agree the Standing Orders so that we can do it.

It is a very useful clause, as I understand it, and would help the Synod a great deal. Therefore, I hope that you will vote for it. For those of you who are really worried as to where Mr Lamming is, he has a long-booked holiday and he has gone to a monastery. Unfortunately, the monastery he has gone to is Whitby, which does not have a roof and a wall. I hope he and his wife are enjoying themselves. Nonetheless, levity apart, I hope Synod will really take this seriously and vote it through.

The Chair: Mr Tattersall, you have a right to reply here.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): Chair, this amendment makes it clear that the Standing Orders may be revived, amended or unamended. Although this might be implicit, on reflection it seems to the Steering Committee that it is much more appropriate to make this explicit, and therefore we support this amendment.

The Chair: Item 510 is now open for debate. I see no one standing. Therefore, I put Item 510 to the vote.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 511

The Chair: That is clearly carried. Item 511 is also an amendment in the name of Mr Lamming, who is on silent retreat. If you can be his voice, please, Canon Alderton-Ford.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I think you all know who I am by now. Once again, the Explanatory Note explains what he is trying to do. I am not going to waste your time in trying to elaborate on that. Geoffrey will doubtless fill in any blanks that I leave. I am keeping up the practice of speaking less time at the platform than he is getting to it, and I hope therefore you will vote accordingly.

The Chair: Mr Tattersall. You are building up steps on your watch or Fitbit, or whatever, amazingly. It is doing you a lot of good.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): Mr Alderton-Ford, thank you very much for those kind words. I am losing weight, but that is another story. I certainly am now. This amendment makes it crystal clear that not only can Synod revise the Standing Orders but also expressly puts in words how that might be achieved, and that is a welcome amendment which is supported by the Steering Committee.

The Chair: Item 511 is now open for debate. I see no one indicating. Therefore, I put to Synod Item 511.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 512

The Chair: That is clearly carried. Mr Tattersall, would you now move Item 512: “That clause 3 [as amended] stand part of the Measure”?

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): I so move.

The Chair: Item 512 is now open for debate. I see no one standing. Therefore, I put to Synod: “That clause 3 [as amended] stand part of the Measure”.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 513

The Chair: That is clearly carried. Item 513 is consequential on Fr Benfield’s main amendment Item 503, so I call on Fr Benfield to move his amendment at Item 513.

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): I do so move.

The Chair: I call on the Chair of the Steering Committee, Mr Geoffrey Tattersall, to reply

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): I have already indicated that I will support this amendment.

The Chair: Mr Tattersall is supporting this amendment. Item 513 is now open for debate. I see no one standing, so I put Item 513 to the vote.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 514

The Chair: That is clearly carried. I therefore call Mr Tattersall to move Item 514: “that clause 4, as amended, stand part of the Measure”.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): I so move.

The Chair: Therefore, I put to Synod Item 514: “That clause 4 [as amended] stand part of the Measure”.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 515

The Chair: That is clearly carried. Item 515 is an amendment in the name of Fr Thomas Seville which takes the form of a proposed new clause after clause 4. The procedure under Standing Order 59 for new clauses is as follows. First, a motion is

moved that the new clause be generally approved. If that motion is not carried, that is the end of the matter, and the amendment is not made. If that motion is carried, the Synod then considers any amendments to the new clause of which notice has been given. There then follows a further motion that the clause, as amended, be inserted in the Measure. I therefore call Fr Thomas to move the motion at Item 15 that the clause be generally approved. You have five minutes, Fr Thomas.

Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities): The basic reason for this clause is to give us a chance to share the reasons for and against giving a time limit on this Measure. That is something which some of us think is wise and will benefit the Church. Others, I have clearly gathered from many contributions on other matters, would be hostile to it, but I think we need to have a debate on this, on what is a temporary Measure. It is temporary.

The Chair: I call Mr Tattersall to reply.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): The Steering Committee resists this amendment. Its effect would be to impose a sunset clause on the Measure as opposed to a sunset clause on the temporary Standing Orders. It would reduce the Synod's ability to decide whether to continue or discontinue the temporary Standing Orders if the Measure were to expire, because in that case a new Measure would need to be passed by the Synod at a meeting such as this, with the necessary parliamentary approval. That would be unfortunate and might not even be possible. There is an analogous case in terms of the Coronavirus Act of 2020 when the regulations in respect of local authorities were required to be made by a fixed date. Of course, the difference here is that Parliament can readily pass further legislation extending the date whereas General Synod would have to pass a further Measure at a meeting such as this. The Steering Committee believes it is sufficient for there to be a sunset clause in relation to Standing Orders and it is unnecessary, and we submit counterproductive, for there to be a sunset clause in relation to the Measure itself.

The Chair: Item 515 is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): I just want to point out that if we do not pass this amendment, we will be passing a Measure which will be in force for however long it is in force for, perhaps many years; a Measure which contradicts the Constitution of this body. That seems a slightly surprising thing to do. Across the road, some people are getting rather worried about Parliament not following its legal obligations under a certain treaty. Is it right that we should pass a Measure which will last permanently in contradiction of our Constitution? Although it is temporary, this clause can be used in subsection 2 by Synod resolving to continue as is necessary, but I am uneasy about passing a clause contradicting our Constitution which will remain in force for ever.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester): While I acknowledge that the business of the Church of England must go on, and that the General Synod plays an important role in that business, my concern lies, if we do not pass this particular

amendment, in the fact that there is a lack of legal certainty within the proposed Measure as to when it will cease, the sorts of points that Fr Benfield has been raising. Precisely stated, temporary Measures which are prescribed in an open-ended way can very easily become permanent, thereby undermining the fundamentally participatory framework of the General Synod which requires the give and take of in-person meetings and requisite scrutiny.

It is well-established in law that the quality of an administrative measure must be carefully addressed before it is enacted, ensuring that the measure has the requisite precision in defining the conditions and forms of any limitations on basic safeguards.

While the Coronavirus situation certainly creates novel obstacles to ensuring the proper administration of Church affairs, it does not relieve us of our obligation to ensure that Measures are adopted with the appropriate regard for procedure and legal certainty, and not to render us into an uncertain legal position *ad infinitum*.

We can look at examples with regard to Parliament and emergency measures around the Coronavirus Act. We need only look to our very living history to show how temporary Measures without a clear sunset clause can become permanent. On Monday 30 March, the Department of Health and Social Care introduced a new regulation making allowance for women to have telemedicine abortions, popularly referred to as “DIY abortions”. These regulations remove the safeguard of visiting a clinic and being examined before being given the first of two tablets to end their pregnancy. The Department had introduced the regulation as temporary and necessary, but within a few months, and 90,000 pills by post later, that measure has been declared as seeking to be permanent by the Department of Health. Doctrine becoming practice; practice becoming law. That undermines the legislation over this – the Abortion Act – and is currently subject to judicial scrutiny by the Court of Appeal. Judgment is imminent.

While I am not here suggesting that there is anything nefarious in not having an expire-by date or sunset clause for the proposed temporary Measure, it is nonetheless incumbent on us not to risk the integrity of parliamentary process, of in-person meetings, of existing procedure, for expediency’s sake.

We have all been able to come here, and therefore, at an appropriate time, in one year’s time, we can return again knowing how this works. That is therefore scrutiny, proper expediency and a measured way to take forward these kinds of Measures in these unusual times. What the lockdown has taught us as a nation of believers is that meeting in person matters. Fellowship and the ability to have free dialogue with others without the constraints of technology are vital in a healthy democratic process, particularly when vital questions of law are being asked.

The Church is a manifestation of the Body of Christ. I would like to close by sharing the words of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights on the importance of Church structure, rules and participation in the life of the Church community. The European Court said this: “Religious communities traditionally and universally exist in the form of organised structures. They abide by rules which are often seen by followers as being of divine origin. Religious ceremonies have their meaning and sacred value for the believers if they have been conducted by ministers

empowered for that purpose in compliance with these rules. Participation in the life of the community is thus a manifestation of one's religion protected by Article 9".

I therefore urge members of Synod to take all steps necessary for safeguarding the participatory nature of Synod, in particular, and safeguarding the future of Synod and the things that it decides by ensuring that no temporary Measures are adopted without a clear sunset clause.

Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford): I was not planning to speak, but I think it is important to resist this amendment. As a general rule, I am a big fan of temporary emergency rules being firmly temporary, and not dragging on, as so often happens. I quite understand that and that is normally where I stand.

However, this Measure gives power to Synod to revoke, to make, to amend Standing Orders. Powers are given to Synod and no one else. We have made amendments to ensure it does not stay with the officers and it goes to Synod. We do not know how long it will last. I really hope it is a short pandemic, and it will be over and done with by next summer, and speaking as someone with a son getting married next month, I would like it to be over by next month. I hope it does not go on for ever. However, if it goes on for a while, Synod needs to keep the powers to make its own rules and ensure that power is firmly with the Synod, so I would ask you to resist this amendment.

Point of order: After the next speaker I would propose a motion for closure.

The Chair: I will just see what the next speaker says and then I will have a mind on that.

Ven. Gavin Collins (Portsmouth): No pressure there then. I would urge you, Synod, to resist what I consider to be an unwise and potentially dangerous amendment of this proposed new clause. The Standing Orders that we will be allowing to be made under the main Measure will all have a sunset provision in them, so they will be temporary by nature, but the main Measure itself, if the new clause is adopted, once lapsed, as the Chair of the Steering Committee said, we would have to start from scratch.

It is not so much about whether the present Coronavirus crisis has ended, but once that has ended, if this provision came in and we allowed the Measure to lapse and another pandemic were to come, we have already been told we would have to meet in this way to bring in a new Measure. Do we have really short-term memories? Remember we lost our July sessions altogether because there was not time for a provision such as this to go through to allow that to be a substantive session. We had a very constructive engagement via Zoom, but we could not have a formal session of Synod. If we adopt the proposed clause here, we could find ourselves in that same position again, for no benefit at all. I urge you, Synod, to resist what I consider to be an unwise proposal.

The Chair: I am moved to test the mind of Synod. All those in favour of a closure of this debate, please show. Those against?

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: I therefore put Item 515 to the vote, the amendment standing in the name of Fr Thomas Seville.

The motion was put and lost on a show of hands.

ITEM 517

The Chair: That is clearly lost. I call on Mr Tattersall to move Item 517: "That clause 5 stand part of the Measure".

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): I move Item 516.

The Chair: You are moving 516. It is 517. I was right the first time. Are you moving that?

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): Yes.

The Chair: It is now open for debate. I see no one standing. Therefore, I put Item 517 to the vote.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 518

The Chair: I call Mr Tattersall to move Item 518: "That the Long Title stand part of the Measure".

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): I so move.

The Chair: Thank you. That Item is now open to debate. I see no one standing. Therefore, I put Item 518: "That the Long Title stand part of the Measure".

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: That is clearly carried. That completes the Revision Stage for the Measure.

You have been so fantastic that we have all got 20 extra minutes for lunch, so you do not have to rush it at The Ivy, if that is where you are off to. Synod resumes at 3.15. Enjoy your lunch. May I just read a notice to you? "Could you remember to maintain social distancing within the assembly room and tearoom at all times, including during the breaks, and to replace face coverings as quickly as possible after tea, coffee and lunch. There are no chairs in the tearoom in order to encourage you to return to your seats as soon as possible. Please respect the one-way system that is in place and be polite to the staff who are offering you kind directions as to how to follow it." Thank you. Have a nice lunch.

THE CHAIR *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 3.15 pm.

**SPECIAL AGENDA I
LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS
DRAFT GENERAL SYNOD (REMOTE MEETINGS) (TEMPORARY
STANDING ORDERS) MEASURE (GS 2176)**

Draft Measure for Final Drafting and Final Approval

ITEM 501

The Chair: Good afternoon, everyone. I hope you enjoyed your lunch break and are ready for Items 501 and 502 on the Agenda.

First of all, we are going to take Item 501, the Draft General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure (GS 2176) as amended at the Revision Stage. Synod will now take the Final Drafting stage for the Draft General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure. Members will need the draft Measure, GS 2176A, and the Report of the Steering Committee, GS 2176Y, which hopefully members have already found on their seats. I call upon Mr Geoffrey Tattersall, Chair of the Steering Committee, to move Item 501, "That the Synod do take note of this Report". You have up to ten minutes. Thank you.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): Members of Synod will have seen, and I hope read, the Report of the Steering Committee dated today. You will see that the material part of it is that at paragraph 4 the Steering Committee has agreed one drafting amendment, which is to add the words in clause 3(6) at lines 44-45, "(whether under this section or section 4)" to the Measure. That is a simple drafting amendment. You will see the history of this at paragraph 6, "Mr Scowen questioned whether or not ..." The Steering Committee was advised that the situation was okay, as it were, but to agree to a drafting amendment to put the matter beyond any kind of doubt. So, there we are, that is the drafting amendment and that is the Report of the Steering Committee.

The Chair: Item 501 is now open for debate. You have up to five minutes. I see no one indicating that they wish to speak and so I call upon Geoffrey Tattersall to make any further comment.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): No, thank you.

The Chair: That is great then, is it not. I put Item 501 then to the vote.

The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.

ITEM 502

The Chair: Item 501 is clearly carried. That means we can now move to Item 502 on the Agenda. I call upon Mr Geoffrey Tattersall, Chair of the Steering Committee, to move Item 502, "That the Measure entitled 'General Synod (Remote Meetings)

(Temporary Standing Orders) Measure' be finally approved". As you know, Geoffrey, you have up to ten minutes.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): Well, I am sure Synod will be delighted to know that Geoffrey Tattersall, Manchester 366 does not intend to take ten minutes. Now, now, I could do but I will not. We believe that the draft Measure has been improved by the amendment which Synod has accepted and I can, therefore, be brief. Can I say to members that, whatever different views have been expressed by individual members of Synod today, I hope that we can now unite together to give this draft Measure a resounding Final Approval to enable us to meet remotely as circumstances permit.

The Chair: I would like to remind members at this stage that motions for the closure, the speech limit or move to next business are not in order in this debate. Item 502 is now open for debate.

Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter): First, I would like to thank the members of General Synod staff and the Steering Committee for a well-organised and expeditious session. I came here today to support a Measure that I believe is vital for the legal and financial operation of the Church at this time and I am glad that we have reached this point. I do not think I have got a tender conscience but I am conscious of the limitations of virtual meetings from daily practice at Zoom prayers through services, PCCs, deanery synod and, of course, our General Synod earlier this year.

I am convinced that Zoom and its equivalents, though very useful, are not a good place or a way for passionate or complicated debate. It is too easy if not to be gagged then to be muted by one's self or others and so I am glad that Article 7 business is not being included and I accept the result about the sunset clause. I am particularly grateful for paper 1252, the advice that came with our initial papers and I hope that the Business Committee will act with great restraint in the business they choose to bring before a remote Synod.

At a time when parishes are struggling to do the simplest things to restore services, to restart groups for young and old, to support the needy and serve their community, I am grateful that this Synod has spared us from further argument and, I hope, not too many new initiatives. Perhaps we will be able to find more time for the extra questions so that the central Church can be held to account, scrutiny and challenge, and I am grateful for the apologies that we have heard today.

Perhaps in 18 months' time, if we are still in the Covid era and we have learnt that a remote Synod can work effectively and the new Synod has mastered the technology well, then we can revisit this debate and widen the scope of this Measure. I just want to say to the Business Committee, please exercise restraint and let us gain confidence in one another and this Measure.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield): Madam Chairman, can I add my thanks to all those who have brought this business to us, both staff and all those members who have worked so hard for this. I just wanted to address a couple of remarks to those

that are not able to be with us today. We are, actually, a privileged few here in Synod today who have been able to meet together. We have been able to debate and we have been able to come to a mind, and I am really grateful that we have come to this mind that we can go forward now and meet in many different forms.

I just wanted to say to those who have followed us or will be following what has happened here today, and are just members of this Synod as we are, that we are thinking of them, we are praying for them and we do hope that, in future, the Business Committee will make every effort to be an inclusive Synod so that no one feels that they cannot be here by one means or another, whether that is physically or virtually. They would just like us here.

If I may, Madam Chairman, just to say can we show our appreciation for those brothers and sisters in Christ who have foregone the opportunity to be here so that we can be here and try to move forward on their behalf.

The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin): Can I add my thanks to those who have worked on bringing this to the Synod. The Archbishop of York began by giving thanks for certain things in these Covid times and I want to add my thanks also. When I worked in Hackney, a wise old nun said to me, "Rose, this is your reality, deal with it". This is our reality and so we cannot stay sitting thinking we must do it the way we have always done, we have to deal with the reality as we find it. I want to echo a word that was said earlier and that word is "trust". We have to start getting to that place where we trust each other and not always see conspiracy theories around the corner as to why we are doing something or not doing the other thing.

Finally, being able to be included or to include others is really important, so I hope and pray that together we will use this opportunity to meet virtually when we do to ensure that we continue in God's work. This is not just us saying we are dealing with finance and legal matters. Perhaps we need to keep framing it that we are doing God's work.

Revd Wyn Beynon (Worcester): In 18 months' time, we might still be in the pandemic or there might be a second one. International security, did you know that last week the biggest paratroop exercise in decades happened when we dropped 250 paratroopers into the Ukraine? I wonder why? Last week, three lots of Russian aircraft intruded into NATO airspace. That is the most in a week. 20 years ago, they were not doing it at all. I wonder why? Civic society breakdown over lockdown. We can start to see the thing creaking if it happens that Brexit does not deliver what was promised. How attitudes change rapidly. We are not that different to the United States and the sad things that we are seeing there.

This is the reality of our nation and we need to be getting on with being God's people out there and including more people. What we are doing today – I thought this was just going to be boring legislative stuff – it is absolutely vital that we move on, that we actually become a new kind of Church that we recreate – no, that we break ourselves down, allow God to break us down and then recreate us. Let us get the theology right here.

Imagine, for instance, as I had last week, three PCCs, the same PCC each night running, discussing how to rearrange the parishes. Imagine three evening Synods on the trot, who else could come? What a different constituency it could be. What a different voice we might hear as a Church. Let us see this in the big picture of a very, very uncertain world where we do not offer hope of whistling in the dark, but the hope that is sure and certain, the hope of the resurrection. But that requires death and things will have to die in order to change. Synod, be bold because the Lord, your God, is with you.

Revd Mark Lucas (Peterborough): I want to begin just by saying I absolutely love tech. I am a bit of a tech nerd. I love computers. Before I was ordained, I spent ten years working in the computer industry. That was in the dark ages when the IBM PC had just been invented. I was there at that time and an exciting time it was too. Over 25 years of ministry, I have used computers at every possible opportunity. I have built computers and computerised other people. You name it, I have done it with computers.

There is no doubt that we need to enter the 21st century and it seems that we are taking a step to do that, but I would just want to stand here and urge caution in the enthusiasm with which that step is taken. Everybody who uses technology needs to be cognisant of the fact that it is not secure. Whatever we may believe, whatever we may be told, if big business and the big banks cannot make it secure and they constantly have data breaches, then if I may be so bold as to say what hope the Church of England. Security is a major issue. Be aware of it. Can I just say we need to be careful not to say or do anything online that we would not do in public.

The second thing to say is that there are far more opportunities for misunderstanding in online conferencing than there are when we meet people in reality. Now we all know that and there are all kinds of reasons for that. Partly, we cannot see people's body language. We cannot respond to those kind of little hints that we get in direct conversation. But, also on a technical level, the compression of a data stream cuts out certain nuances of speech that we lose. You will know that from having telephone conversations with people. You can lose a whole section of what is going on in a conversation because of what is actually missing. We also need to be aware, as has already been mentioned, that the internet is not uniformly good in this country. We hope it will be one day but it is not there yet.

For those of us who live in large centres of population, the internet is great and I am privileged to have a fantastic internet connection but I know, for example, that where my parents live in rural Oxfordshire they only got superfast broadband last year. It has only just been put in. I know that some of you here may not have it at all yet and that is a requirement for proper access to online conferencing. I want to say yes, I am really pleased by this step, it is a great thing and a great move and a step forward for the Church of England, but we must be cautious for all those reasons I have outlined. We need to be careful and do it properly and wisely.

Revd Canon Simon Fisher (Liverpool): I was not looking forward to coming today. I was not looking forward to the inevitable restrictions that we are under. Everyone loves the tearoom but it is not the same this year. I was not looking forward to the fact that so many people are unavoidably absent. I was not looking forward to it

because I thought we would take the opportunity to bite and tear at one another, that levels of grumpiness would be high. We often do bite and tear at each other with these internal matters and levels of grumpiness are high in the Church and outside it, but I do not think we have bitten and torn at one another. I think we have done well today.

Credit to the Steering Committee and to Geoffrey Tattersall for bringing forward a Measure in a consensual spirit and for doing the work of drafting and of negotiation with those who wish to put amendments so that it has been brought forward so that what is needed to be done is being done, I hope, but with a tenderness towards those of tender conscience and nervousness, such as myself. I think this has been done in that spirit and I think the way that people have spoken in this Synod has also been in that spirit. That is going to be a necessary spirit going forward, particularly when we meet online with all the lack of nuance and issues that the last speaker raised. I think we need to work in this way. I think we have proven that we can work in this way.

I want to highlight one particular thing which was really helpful from the Steering Committee, and that was the publication in advance of the amendments and the Steering Committee's response to them. I think that has really helped our business because we have been able to see what the attitude of the Steering Committee is.

That has helped those who have been putting their amendments to really concentrate on the things that need arguments to be made and to skirt over things that are uncontroversial. That has helped us to be more focused and it has made our business less painful than it sometimes is. I think it has helped us all as members to also focus our thoughts and decision-making on things that we need to do. That is also going to be even more important as we move online.

I would encourage us, if we possibly can, to continue the level of communication that we have had, the level of negotiation and consensus building, the extra meetings we have had in the Houses of Clergy and Laity, the kind of exercise that we had when the question time online – that was very helpful – and that briefing that says, you know, "Here is an explanation of each item of business, here is the attitude of Steering Committees", or the mover's only main business to amendments that may be put. If there are ways in which we continue to do these kind of things, then, as we move online – temporarily, as I hope – then we will be able to do it well and for that way of working to be really effective. Until we meet online, thank you.

Ven. Simon Heathfield (Birmingham): Like many, I am delighted today, delighted at the outcome, delighted at the quality of debate and the way in which the Measure has been developed and very glad for the Committee's work in that. I want us just to be aware of one assumption and one misconception. One assumption Mark has already mentioned just two speakers ago, and it is that we must not assume that every Synod member will have equal access to stable online connections. Our Synod staff are brilliant. I wonder whether it might not be too much of a burden to somehow monitor the ability of members to access and embrace the technology as we start to use it just to ensure that no one is left behind or excluded in any way.

The misconception is simple: that, in the event of the nation taking note of what goes on in General Synod – I will leave you to decide – we may be misconceived as actually ignoring a great divide. By doing this, we are not ignoring the great reality of digital poverty in our communities: the unseen divide that emerged during lockdown of those with no contract or device, no broadband or connection, one of the things that separates out people in today's society.

Let us be clear what the Church of England is and is not saying. This Measure is a necessary Measure for our work and governance, not an assumption about our own members or those excluded from our own society for whom we will work with greater passion and energy to bring justice for all.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): In my youth, I used to chair old-time music halls and so I want to enter into that spirit by proposing a number of votes of thanks, starting with you lot, Synod, who are present here. I think you have done really well today and we are going to finish before 4 o'clock. As Elizabeth has already mentioned, we need to give a big vote of thanks to the members of Synod who have foregone the right to be here. It is really important that we have been conscious all the way through of the 200 or so who are not here.

Thirdly, we need to thank the Synod staff, many of whom here are and others who are not at present in the room but have contributed massively to this whole enterprise. To the Steering Committee who have met and seen this through, including over lunchtime, and have done all that in relatively quick order, we are very grateful to them as well. Last but not least, I think we should give a massive round of applause – if not invite him to take a bow – to the Chair of the Steering Committee, the one and only Mr Geoffrey Tattersall.

Revd Andrew Lightbown (Oxford): I hate technology. I absolutely loathe it and have done since I was first made to sit in front of a computer and it said "Syntax error". But we have to embrace it and it is right that we do, so I am delighted that we have passed this motion because we are not just focusing, as the Bishop of Dover said, on governance and trivial issues – and governance, of course, is never trivial – but we are focusing on everything we do on Kingdom building and that seems to me to be so important and it is another extension of the Church saying, "We are here, we care. We are developing. We are responding to need as it arises". We can talk about the important matters and, hopefully, we can resolve to do something about them. That is why we should meet online or in person or just use the means that we have got available at the time according to the constraints and opportunities of the time.

It is vital that we are doing this because if there is one thing I am utterly, utterly convinced about, it is simply this: that an unhealthy world needs a healthy Church and if we are not talking we are not building each other up and we are not discovering new ways to love, to serve, to proclaim, to do all the things that we are asked to do or mandated to do as the Body of Christ. We must not stand still. We have got so much of importance to say and to do.

For that reason, we should continue to meet and never view everything we do as just governance, just boxes to be ticked, just procedures to be gone through, but a way

of building up a healthier Church for an increasingly fractious and unhealthy world which, at the end of the day, despite my hatred of technology, is actually all I really care about.

Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells): Chair, on Saturday I conducted a wedding which I enjoyed hugely, but it was different, and many of you will have used this joke when you are standing at the front conducting worship that, at the moment, they all look as if they have come ready to rob a bank. I imagine it looks like a bit like that if you are on the platform.

As and when this Measure gets passed, sometime between 3.45 and 7 o'clock – and I am not anxious to delay us anywhere near the 7 o'clock end – it occurred to two or three of us at lunchtime that if we are not standing for Synod again, or if perhaps we are standing and do not get elected, this will most likely be the last time that we meet here in the Church House Assembly Hall. I am not a betting man but I am pretty willing to put down a fiver that we will not be here in February, even if we wished to be, and this Measure enables us to carry on the Synod's business despite that.

So it seems the moment, adding to the thanks we have already given, to also be thankful for this astonishing building and to take a last look at that lovely glorious message around the roof, "Those who have endured the heat of the conflict" and so on, but also to say thank you to the staff, not just of Church House who will have to carry on whether we are online or not but to the staff of the Corporation of Church House.

When you think about that noisy tearoom and the security people and all the things that happen to make this building work, that is Corporation of Church House staff. I came to work in this building in 1997. I have been on the Synod since 2006. I am not sure I have ever said thank you to a Church House Corporation staff person, so I will say that now and I hope you will say it with me.

Revd Alison Booker (Leicester): This is my second time speaking today – that is as many times as in the last five years. I am really pleased that we have got to this point. I think meeting online is really important. The sharpness with which Synod has been thinking about what that means – digital poverty, inclusion, all of those things – I think is really good.

But I would like to make a plea that we have that same sharp thought about inclusion and what is easy for some and not so easy for others with regard to meeting physically. Not everybody finds it easy to stand up in front of a really large group of people. We are much smaller today, but actually I still find it really quite big, and when we are all here I find it really difficult. I first had to come to London staying in hotels. When I grew up, posh people stayed in hotels. I was not very good with hotels. I have got a little better in my five years of Synod and have found my way around breakfast, but there are lots of things about the way we meet physically that are harder for some than others, and the sharpness we have looked at today in terms of the digital and the different I needs looking at the things that we are more familiar with too so we can be more inclusive at every level.

The Chair: Thank you, Alison. Jamie Harrison, please, as Chair of the House of Laity.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): Thank you, Madam Chair. We had a very good meeting, I think, on Zoom, of 140 members of the House of Laity some weeks ago. It was a chance to hear from Geoffrey and also from Archbishop Stephen. In that meeting I said that I would be very keen for those who could not be here to share some ideas and Liz and I would attempt in different ways to maybe pass on comments we had not already heard from a very full and helpful conversation – and I will try to be brief because I know we all want to move on – particularly those with disability. I think we need to be very careful how we manage the processes that make everyone, as we have already heard, able to participate fully. Disability covers many areas, as you know, and it is something that sometimes is under the radar, and we need to make sure the radar is working at that level.

It has been very good to have conversations, for instance, with Sam Margrave from Coventry, who has been very attentive and very much wanted to come today but for perfectly sensible reasons felt unable to, which is a sadness to me as he has often been an interesting and helpful member of the Synod, often challenging us in different ways, and that challenge needs to continue under the new system, whatever it is. He, for instance, wants to hold people to account, and I completely agree with him – part of our Synodical governance work, the work of watching and checking and questioning and scrutinising, that is so fundamental – and Sam is one particularly amongst many who want to do that and continue to do that.

We have heard of the difficulties of equipment. Is the right equipment in the house or home for the person needing to use it? We have our Deaf Anglican friends. How can they be fully involved? And so on.

So I want to say thank you to those again who have given information to the House, who have been helpful in their conversations with us and have given us the sort of steer that I think has been evident today. Yes, to pass this remote working is essential. I think we have come to a good mind today, but that mind needs to keep working into the future to open up to a wider constituency of members as we come, hopefully next summer, to the end of this Synod, with a chance to elect a new Synod in the autumn. So thank you again for those who have participated, particularly those who have been at home participating, looking forward to what the future holds.

The Chair: Thank you, Jamie. I see no one indicating that they wish to speak, so I call upon Geoffrey Tattersall to reply to the debate, please. You have up to five minutes. Thank you.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester): Well, what a thoughtful debate, and what a lot of interesting points being made.

Yes, it is true that we have tried in this Steering Committee to do things slightly differently, and we have done them in a way, hopefully, to try to build on a consensus, and maybe there is something to be learned from the way we have done it. I am not suggesting we should or should not, but maybe there is something to look at.

To Mr Hamilton: the points about restraint to be exercised about the agenda and extra time for questions are, of course, matters not for the Measure but for the Business Committee.

I agree with Liz Paver that we are the privileged few and we should remember those who are not here and who elected to stay at home and so forth.

I agree also with the Bishop of Dover that we have to try to work out different ways of working things through and we have to start trusting each other. One of the things which has impressed me is that actually, although we might come from all this in a different way, we have resolved that and we did not have 40 members standing, largely, I think, because we all want to see this through. It is absolutely vital, as Mr Beynon said, that we get this through.

Some of the matters raised by Mr Lucas are matters for the Business Committee, I accept.

So, yes, there we are. The only other thing I want to say is this. We do owe a lot of gratitude to the Church House Legal Office because it was they – I am talking really about the Chief Legal Adviser, Alex McGregor, and Chris Packer – who between them drafted this Measure and have given the Steering Committee enormous help. We also need to thank those members of Synod, some of whom are not here, some of whom are here, who either informally suggested or formally proposed amendments which have taken us to where we are. I want to thank members of the Steering Committee, who have had to evaluate all these things, and in particular the staff of the Synod and, as Adrian said, or as somebody said anyway, the staff of the Corporation and the officers of Synod who have masterminded us meeting together. Finally, I want to thank you who are here simply because, with great respect, we could not have done any of this, literally, without you. Thank you very much.

The Chair: So the question is, “That the Measure entitled ‘General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure’ be finally approved”. Therefore, in accordance with Standing Order 37, I order a counted vote by Houses. Please remember that in order for your vote to be registered you need to make sure that you are using the voting card which you were given today. Thank you.

The vote on Item 502: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 14, none against, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 42 in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Laity, 45 in favour, none against, with two recorded abstentions. The motion was therefore carried in each of the Houses and therefore carried by the Synod as a whole.

The Chair: The Measure entitled “General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure” now stands committed to the Legislative Committee.

I would like to thank you very much for your contributions during the course of today. Please may I remind you, although that concludes this item of business, to leave your voting cards near where you are sitting and also that, immediately after the

Archbishop of Canterbury has prorogued us, Julie Dziegiel will lead us in worship. I invite the Archbishop of Canterbury to prorogue us in a moment. Thank you.

ITEM 2 PROROGATION

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby) prorogued the Synod at 4.02 pm.

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