

GENERAL SYNOD

**Analysis of Feedback from Synod members after
the November 2020 group of sessions and the February 2021 informal meeting**

This paper includes a summary of feedback received following the November 2020 group of sessions and the February 2021 informal meeting through two post-Synod surveys. The first survey form was circulated to members on 26 November 2020 and closed on 8 December 2020. The second was circulated on 3 March 2021 and closed on 14 March 2021.

November 2020 group of sessions

Overview of participants (Q1-Q3)

House

House of Bishops	17
House of Laity	101
House of Clergy	119

Age Group

18-25	3
26-35	4
36-50	36
51-65	124
66 or above	70

Province

Canterbury	165
York	69

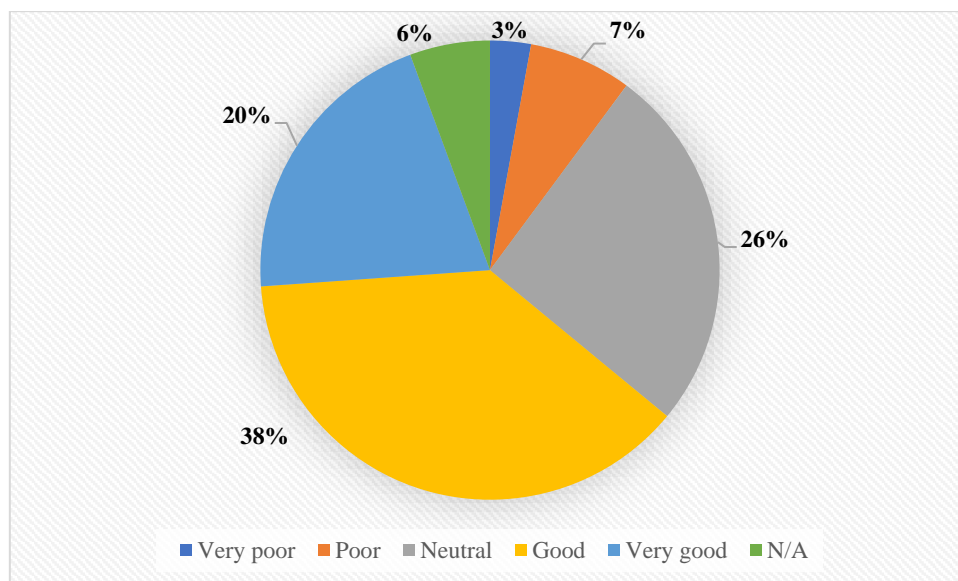
Rating of agenda items

Q4. How would you rate the following items on the Agenda?

	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Neutral (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
500. Standing Orders made under Section 1 of the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020	5 (3%)	22 (11%)	68 (34%)	77 (38%)	19 (9%)	10 (5%)	201	3.43
501. Amending Canon no. 40 and Amending Canon no. 41	0	5 (3%)	80 (41%)	78 (40%)	21 (11%)	12 (6%)	196	3.63
2. Presentation by the Presidents	6 (3%)	12 (6%)	24 (12%)	83 (41%)	73 (36%)	3 (1%)	201	4.04
3. Response to COVID-19	6 (3%)	15 (8%)	30 (15%)	99 (50%)	43 (22%)	5 (3%)	198	3.82
4. Report by the Business Committee	10 (5%)	18 (9%)	73 (37%)	72 (37%)	18 (9%)	6 (3%)	197	3.37
5. Questions	28 (15%)	57 (30%)	49 (26%)	43 (23%)	5 (3%)	9 (5%)	191	2.67
6. Vision and Strategy	9 (4%)	22 (11%)	29 (14%)	58 (29%)	75 (37%)	8 (4%)	201	3.87

504-505. Draft Cathedrals Measure - Final Drafting and Final Approval	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	44 (22%)	89 (45%)	51 (26%)	8 (4%)	196	3.99
7-14. Archbishops' Council Budget 2021 and Proposals for Apportionment 2021	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	47 (24%)	86 (43%)	47 (24%)	14 (7%)	199	3.94
506. Draft Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure	5 (3%)	8 (4%)	30 (15%)	101 (51%)	47 (24%)	8 (4%)	199	3.93
15. Appointment of one member of the Archbishops' Council	0	8 (4%)	101 (52%)	43 (22%)	22 (11%)	22 (11%)	196	3.45
16-17. Safeguarding (Presentation and Debate)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	21 (11%)	68 (34%)	91 (46%)	14 (7%)	200	4.3
502-503. Diocesan Boards of Education Measure - Final Drafting and Final Approval	3 (2%)	16 (8%)	56 (29%)	78 (40%)	28 (14%)	15 (8%)	196	3.62
507. The National Ministry Register (Clergy) Regulations 2020	1 (1%)	7 (4%)	41 (21%)	88 (46%)	42 (22%)	13 (7%)	192	3.91
523. Payments to the Churches Conservation Trust Order 2020	7 (4%)	15 (8%)	71 (36%)	58 (30%)	24 (12%)	20 (10%)	195	3.44

Overall rating of the agenda: 3.70



Chairing and Speaking in Debates

Q5. Did you put in any Requests to Speak at this Group of sessions?

Yes	22.39%	45
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No	77.61%	156
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Q6. Were you called to speak?

Yes	33.51%	65
No	66.49%	129

Q7. Do you have any comments on the chairing of the items on the Synod Agenda?

140 respondents commented on the chairing, 70% were positive and commended the chairs for their patience, calmness and skill for managing the debates on Zoom. There were suggestions that the chairs be more willing to share with Synod when there are technical issues so that Synod are kept informed. There were requests that chairs stick to screen breaks to prevent zoom fatigue. Two members stated that they tried to make their maiden speeches but were not called.

It was noted that chairs should have announced the results of the zoom polls to Synod, this was addressed by sharing of the results by synod staff from Wednesday.

Remote Voting

Q8. How would you rate the following?

	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Neutral (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)	N/A	Weighted Average
Written instructions on voting before Synod began	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	19 (10%)	105 (53%)	68 (34%)	4 (2%)	4.2
Demonstration sessions on voting before Synod began	0	5 (3%)	19 (10%)	71 (36%)	77 (39%)	24 (12%)	4.28
Formal vote through the Crystal platform	18 (9%)	36 (18%)	39 (20%)	63 (32%)	36 (18%)	6 (3%)	3.33
Simple vote through Zoom poll	3 (2%)	6 (3%)	18 (9%)	66 (33%)	96 (48%)	10 (5%)	4.3

Qualitative responses to the written instructions:

10 comments were received. Some found the instructions adequate, while some found that there was too much information or too many documents.

Qualitative responses of the demo sessions:

22 members responded to this question. On the whole, they felt that it was useful to those that needed it but there was feedback that allowing 30 minutes for this was too long.

Qualitative responses to the formal vote:

There were 75 comments related to this. Many of the responders commented that the duplication of votes was an issue, and were concerned that if the business had been more contentious this would have been a significant challenge. It was noted that the process of voting was easy and it was requested that the link to the voting software be resent each day.

Members appreciated the honesty and openness around the issue of duplicate voting, and several respondents suggested there should be a discount or the fees should be waived.

Qualitative responses to the simple vote via Zoom poll:

59 members responded to this question. Most Synod members find this easy to use and appreciated that the results were being shown on the final day of business. They also noted that some votes seemed to present the wrong text, and that the 25/40-member rule needs to be explained more clearly in the Zoom context.

Q9. What changes or improvements would you find helpful on the Crystal platform in the future?

143 responses were received. Most people would like the issue of duplicate votes to be resolved – with variable tones from neutral to deep dissatisfaction. Most find the platform straightforward to use. Singular suggestions include having a customised page for each member with words such as “Welcome Jonathan”, and links to the wording of the notes. Some member do not understand the need for using the Crystal platform and its security advantage over Zoom polls.

Q10. What changes or improvements would you find helpful for the Zoom polling function in the future?

125 responses were received, most of which noted no improvements needed. One person noted the frustration for seeing only 25% of the polls. Members noted that the title of the polls need to be correct.

IT, Communications and Synod App

Q11. How would you rate the following?

	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Neutral (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)	N/A	Weighted Average
Synod App	1 (1%)	8 (5%)	23 (14%)	54 (32%)	55 (33%)	28 (17%)	4.09
Communications from the Synod Office to Synod Members	0	10 (5%)	25 (13%)	76 (41%)	74 (40%)	1 (1%)	4.16
Zoom teleconferencing platform	2 (1%)	13 (7%)	34 (17%)	102 (52%)	44 (22%)	2 (1%)	3.89

Q12. What changes or improvements would you find useful on the App in the future?

Members would like to see features and contents such as

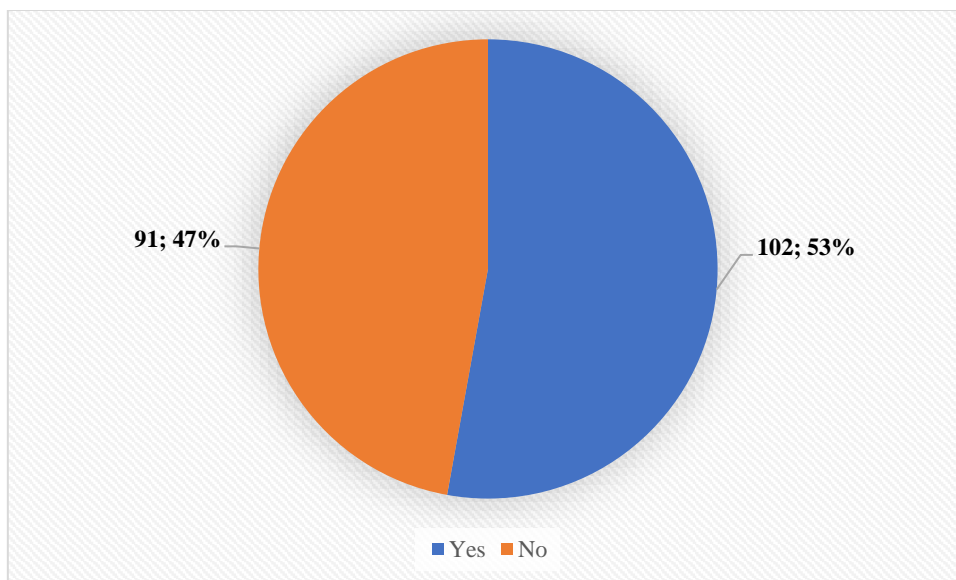
- List of members with Synod numbers and photographs
- Large fonts option for the visually impaired
- Better layout to flick between agenda and documents
- Quick update of Order and Notice papers
- Voting through the App
- A Microsoft App for those using Surface tablets
- Live links from Agenda items
- The App is difficult to access for new members
- Clearer indication when updates are available

Q13. What changes or improvements would you find useful on the Zoom teleconferencing platform in the future?

Members would like to see amended motions be displayed on the screen. A number of members would like to see the breakout rooms work to meet other delegates. Others noted the need for more frequent breaks. Some would like the muting and unmuting process to be faster.

Q14. Did you use social media to comment on Synod or to contact Synod members?

Yes	52.85%	102
No (Please skip Q. 15 below)	47.15%	91



Q15. If so, please specify which platforms you used. (Please check multiple boxes where appropriate.)

Facebook	38.74%	43
Twitter	50.45%	56

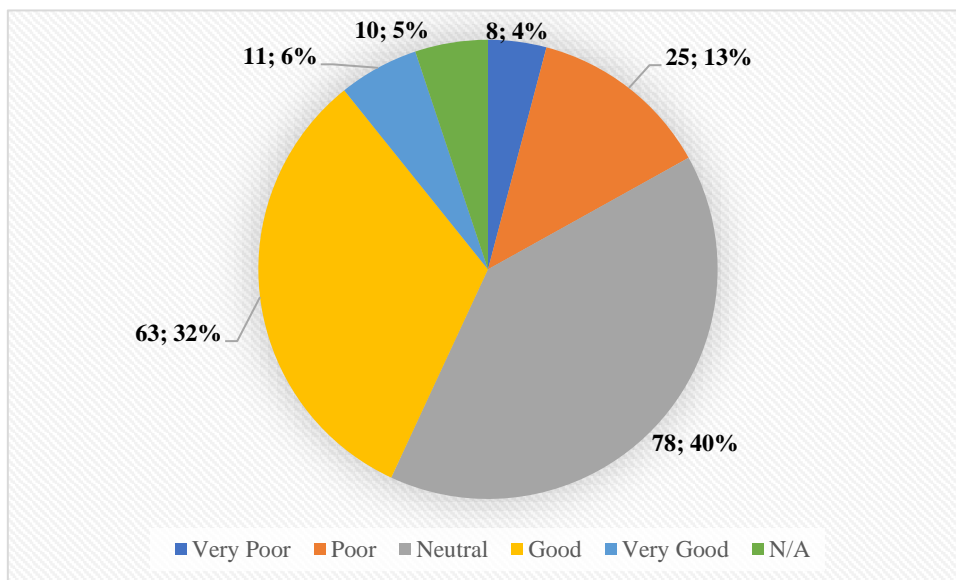
Blogs	2.70%	3
WhatsApp groups	52.25%	58
Other (please specify)	12.61%	14

The answers under “Other” include emails, iPad, text and Messenger. The total for this question exceeds 100% because respondents are allowed to choose more than one option.

Worship

Q16. What was your experience with the following?

	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good	N/A
Worship via Zoom	8 (4%)	25 (13%)	78 (40%)	63 (32%)	11 (6%)	10 (5%)



Q16. Weighted average: 3.24

Q17. Would you offer any further comments on worship?

102 responses were received. Many responses indicated a feeling that corporate worship for a body such as Synod doesn't work on Zoom, as it doesn't feel collective or connected, or is not conducive to prayer.

Detailed comments covered the following points:

Format

- Needs to engage much more closely with what Synod is debating.
- Too formal, missed having anything contemporary.
- Good to include BCP.
- Fewer words, more time for prayer. Standard orders of MP/EP are boring/old-fashioned! Use Taizé or Iona forms,
- Readings & Collect for the day often not appropriate.

- Lack of Old Testament readings

Music

- Include music, eg pre-recorded hymn to all sing at home, or contemplative piece and an image to focus prayer.
- Use worship music videos to enhance.

Leaders

- Tuesday evening's worship was sensitively led and well received.
- No range of voices leading: too much of a monologue. Include a second voice for the reading/intercessions/responses and put responses on screen as subtitles.
- Grateful to the Chaplain for not engaging in "competitive pausing at the half-verse in the Psalms".
- Lead from a place of worship, not a study!
- Clear and prayerful.
- Good to have lay as well as clerical leadership.

General

- Couldn't find the worship booklet: please put on the app as well.
- Please share the text on screen.
- Just top and tail the day with a prayer by the Archbishops.
- Online viewers were sad that worship was not streamed *[staff member note: This is a perennial question and raises questions of copyright as well as the fact that worship falls outside of the formal session of Synod and therefore not recorded or broadcast].*

Accessibility

Q18. How accessible did you find the following?

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	N/A	Weighted Average
Using Zoom	2 (1%)	5 (3%)	19 (10%)	74 (39%)	90 (47%)	0	4.29
Worship materials	6 (3%)	15 (8%)	50 (26%)	78 (41%)	33 (17%)	10 (5%)	3.64
Presentations and videos	1 (1%)	7 (4%)	32 (17%)	97 (51%)	53 (30%)	1 (1%)	4.02
Written materials, such as GS papers	4 (2%)	9 (5%)	29 (15%)	99 (51%)	49 (25%)	3 (2%)	3.95
The Church of England website	0	21 (11%)	54 (28%)	70 (36%)	32 (17%)	15 (8%)	3.64

The Synod App	2 (1%)	7 (4%)	26 (14%)	63 (33%)	55 (29%)	38 (20%)	4.06
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Q19. Can you give us details of your experiences with regard to accessibility, whether positive or negative?

General

- One member replied “Not able to access technology, so totally excluded” *[Unfortunately responses are anonymous so we are unable to reach out to this person to find out more].*
- Not having to travel was appreciated by several members, including from a carbon footprint point of view, though people also missed getting together.
- Synod needs to accept that things work differently on Zoom and not try to replicate physical meetings. The Agenda is limited once ‘must do’ legislation is allocated.
- Too many of the usual voices dominating debates, which excludes others.
- It was felt that the staff team had responded helpfully and efficiently to queries. A very new member of Synod was very appreciative that the team had made the process of joining as easy as possible for them.
- Sometimes hard to know which debate was happening – needs an item number on display as at physical meetings. Helpful when Chairs were clear about which document(s) were needed.

Sessions

- There were many comments about the length of the sessions and delays/cuts to breaks. This caused both physical discomfort and mental fatigue, however one member found Zoom helpful in this regard as they were able to walk around the room whilst listening to the debates. Giving permission to turn off video and just listen would be helpful.
- Failure of the breakout groups meant people felt disenfranchised or isolated.
- One member suggested breakout rooms or some other means of chatting with other members during the lunch break/after sessions.
- There was one complaint about the voting system.

Access to papers

- Members found it difficult to juggle multiple devices in order to have papers, the Synod session and voting platform open at the same time. Suggestion to embed the papers in the Agenda.
- A number of replies were unhappy at not receiving hard copies of the papers. Not easy to read on small-screen devices.
- A number of members had significant difficulty finding papers and order papers on the website. Some requests for papers to be set out in logical batches on the website according to business.
- The Questions Notice Paper was missed by several people as it is uploaded as a Notice Paper rather than under the main Synod papers.
- Several people were unable to find the worship booklet, and asked for it to be shared on screen as is done at a physical meeting of Synod. It also needs to be available separately on the app.
- Order Papers, Notice Papers, GS papers, GS Misc papers all pretty confusing.
- It was good to have got into the practice of emailing Order Papers, though there was an initial delay in doing this. Fortunately the website came back to life and it

was possible to find them there.

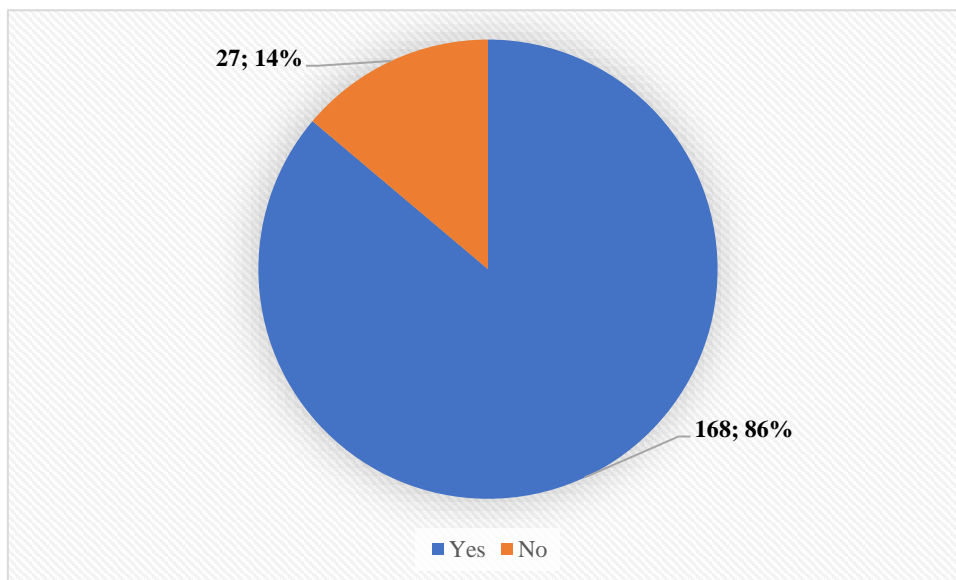
Audio and Visual Quality

- Zoom was not helpful for those with visual impairment (particularly blue hands and voting).
- Some speakers were hard to hear, and those asking if they could be heard wasted debating time.

After Synod Finishes

Q20. Do you feel equipped to report back to your diocese, constituency, organisation or department on what took place at General Synod? If not, what would make you feel better equipped?

Yes	86.15%	168
No (please specify)	13.85%	27



Most Synod members mentioned they would use the Church Times digest. A few mentioned they use the Church of England press release and others ask for a quick release of the business done document, which the Legal Office produces as soon as it possibly can.

General Comments

Q21. How would you rate the November 2020 General Synod meeting overall?

Very poor (1)	Poor (2)	Neutral (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)
8	18	45	105	18

Q22. Weighted average: 3.55

Q22. Are there any other areas you wish to feedback to us on?

123 members provided additional comments. The vast majority praised the staff for being able to deliver this meeting over zoom. There were a number of constructive comments which included:

- Make sure the timing is adhered to, as it can impact partners and families
- Could the agenda item be displayed during the debate
- Could there be a clock on the screen to enable people to know how long is left
- More scheduled breaks should be included as zoom can be draining

There were comments that the business should only contain the key items, and that the agenda should be stripped back. Several members commented that they missed the personal interaction of members, and the ability to network and catch up in the tea rooms and over lunch.

February 2021 Informal Meeting

Overview of participants (Q1-Q3)

House

House of Bishops	11
House of Laity	88
House of Clergy	116
Non-voting	2

Age Group

18-25	1
26-35	3
36-50	28
51-65	108
66 or above	77

Province

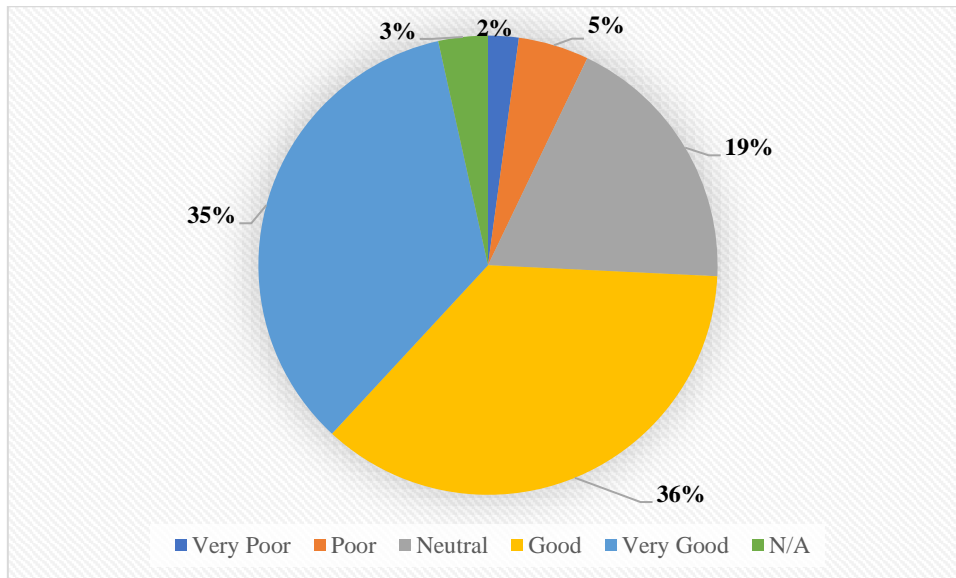
Canterbury	151
York	66

Rating of the programme

Q4. How would you rate the following items on the programme?

	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Neutral (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
Reflections from the Presidents	5 (2%)	14 (7%)	37 (18%)	70 (34%)	76 (37%)	2 (1%)	204	3.98
Vision and Strategy	7 (4%)	11 (6%)	47 (24%)	76 (38%)	56 (28%)	3 (2%)	200	3.83
Safeguarding Update	3 (1%)	9 (4%)	42 (21%)	90 (44%)	54 (27%)	5 (2%)	203	3.92
Archbishops' Commission on Housing	1 (1%)	8 (4%)	19 (10%)	76 (38%)	76 (38%)	18 (9%)	198	4.21
The Four Stories of Hope and Salvation	5 (2%)	9 (4%)	40 (20%)	62 (31%)	78 (39%)	7 (3%)	201	4.03

Overall rating of the programme: 3.99



Chairing and Speaking in Debates

Q5. Did you put in any questions through the chat?

Yes	21.46%	44
No	78.54%	161

Q6. Did the speakers address any of your questions?

Yes	23.46%	42
No	76.54%	137

Q7. Do you have any comments on the comperes of the programme?

124 respondents commented on the comperes of the programme. The overwhelming majority responded positively about the comperes' handling of the webinar environment. A small number of members reflected that they wish the meeting to be conducted in a more interactive manner.

Test Vote

Q8. How would you rate the following?

	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Neutral (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)	N/A	Weighted Average
Written instructions on the test vote	0 (0%)	3(1%)	17 (8%)	99 (49%)	80 (39%)	4 (2%)	4.29
Test vote through the Crystal platform	7 (3%)	2 (1%)	17 (8%)	90 (45%)	78 (39%)	7 (3%)	4.19

Qualitative responses to the written instructions:

12 responses were received. One person liked the suggestion of using different devices for proceedings and for voting, while another person did not agree. Two members found the instructions to be too long. There are a number of other responses.

Qualitative responses to the test vote:

30 responses were received. Some members suggested clarifying that even though members would be able to vote on the same items more than once in the voting period, only the final votes would be counted. Some members reported connection issues that cause them to have a shorter voting period than designated. Some reported success in voting, while a small number of members flagged that the system did not work for them.

Q9. What changes or improvements would you find helpful on the Crystal platform in the future?

75 members responded, with most people reported that the current platform is working well with no changes needed. Suggestions included bigger fonts and more responsive customer service when issues arise.

IT, Communications and Synod App

Q10. How would you rate the following?

	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Neutral (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)	N/A	Weighted Average
Synod App	1 (1%)	8 (5%)	23 (14%)	54 (32%)	55 (33%)	28 (17%)	4.09
Communications from the Synod Office to Synod Members	0	10 (5%)	25 (13%)	76 (41%)	74 (40%)	1 (1%)	4.16
Zoom webinar platform	2 (1%)	13 (7%)	34 (17%)	102 (52%)	44 (22%)	2 (1%)	3.89
Zoom 'lunch room' facility	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	22 (12%)	14 (7%)	13 (6%)	134 (72%)	3.66

Q11. What changes or improvements would you find useful on the App in the future?

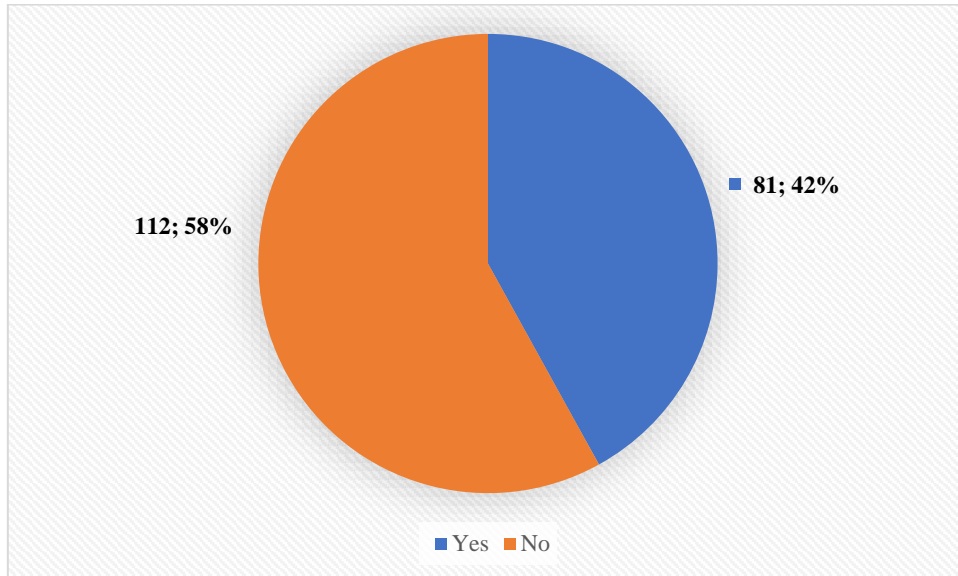
72 answers were received. Members reflected that they used the App more at physical meetings. They suggested potential functions such as saving reading progress, full-text search within documents and having a list of Synod members.

Q12. What changes or improvements would you find useful on the Zoom teleconferencing platform in the future?

Members would like to see questions posed by other members. Most of the 100 members answering this question do not prefer using a webinar as the platform for Synod meetings.

Q13. Did you use social media to comment on Synod or to contact Synod members?

Yes	41.97%	81
No (Please skip Q. 14 below)	58.03%	112



Q14. If so, please specify which platforms you used. (Please check multiple boxes where appropriate.)

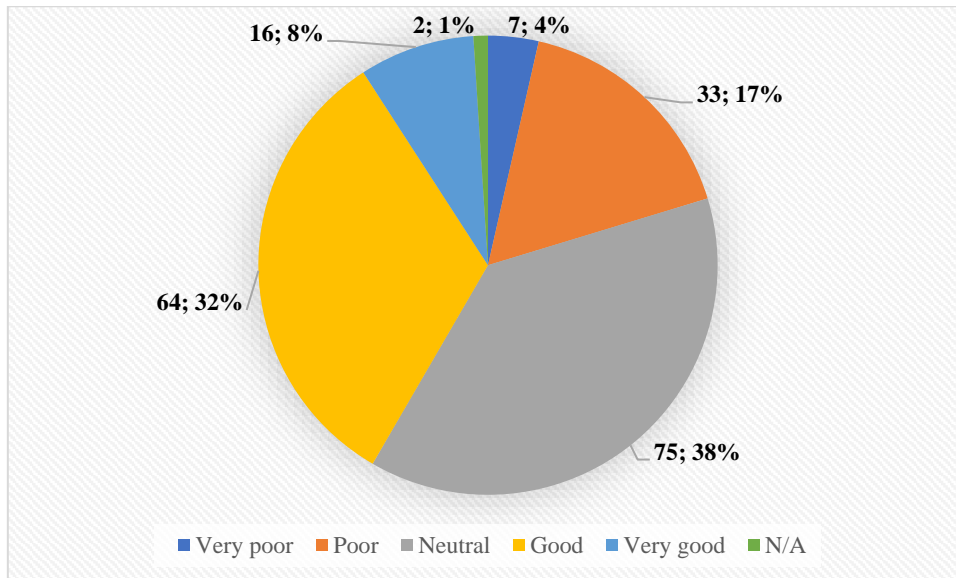
Facebook	22.99%	20
Twitter	51.72%	45
SnapChat	1.15%	1
TikTok	0%	0
Blogs	3.45%	3
WhatsApp groups	51.72%	45
Other (please specify)	3.45%	3

The answers under “Other” include text and Messenger. The total for this question exceeds 100% because respondents are allowed to choose more than one option.

Worship

Q15. What was your experience with the following?

	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good	N/A
Worship via Zoom	7 (4%)	33 (17%)	75 (38%)	64 (32%)	16 (8%)	2 (1%)



Q15. Weighted average: 3.25

Q16. Would you offer any further comments on worship?

89 responses were received. While many enjoyed the worship led by St Anselm, many struggled with worship over Zoom. Many members continued to ask for a greater variety of worship traditions and styles, and some wished to have someone else lead the response rather than the leader doing it himself.

Accessibility

Q17. How accessible did you find the following?

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	N/A	Weighted Average
Using Zoom	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	24 (13%)	69 (37%)	90 (48%)	0	4.29
Worship materials	5 (3%)	6 (3%)	48 (25%)	81 (42%)	47 (24%)	7 (4%)	3.85
Presentations and videos	2 (1%)	10 (5%)	16 (8%)	103 (54%)	56 (29%)	3 (2%)	4.07
Written materials, such as papers	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	33 (17%)	102 (52%)	51 (26%)	5 (3%)	4.04
The Church of England website	1(1%)	5 (3%)	46 (24%)	80 (42%)	33 (17%)	26 (13%)	3.84

The Synod App	0	1 (1%)	22 (12%)	55 (29%)	47 (25%)	66 (35%)	4.18
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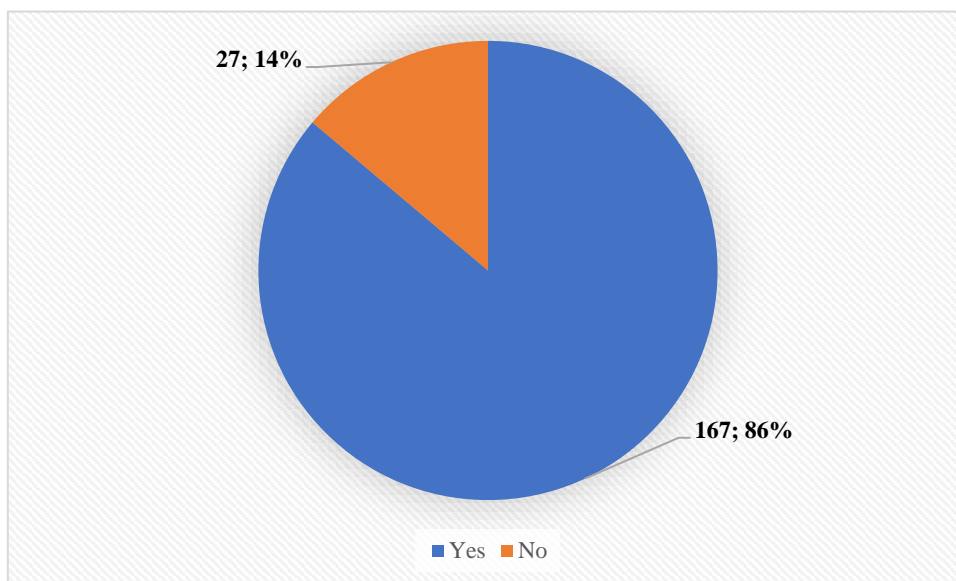
Q19. Can you give us details of your experiences with this meeting with regard to accessibility, whether positive or negative?

100 responses had been received. Many members applauded the visibility of the BSL interpreters. One member suggested developing the subtitle function. A number of members found the webinar inaccessible in the sense that they could not speak as if in the meeting format.

After Synod Finishes

Q20. Do you feel equipped to report back to your diocese, constituency, organisation or department on what took place at General Synod? If not, what would make you feel better equipped?

Yes	86.08%	167
No (please specify)	13.92%	27



For those who answered 'no', many felt they had little to report on. Others raised questions about the purpose of the meeting and wondered about the thoughts of other Synod members. A number of members would like a summary to be provided to them.

General Comments

Q20. How would you rate the February 2021 meeting of General Synod members overall?

Very poor (1)	Poor (2)	Neutral (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)
19	36	40	71	30

Q20. Weighted average: 3.29

Q21. Are there any other areas you wish to feedback to us on?

103 members provided additional comments. The vast majority praised the staff for being able to deliver this meeting over zoom. There were a number of comments reiterating the constraints of the webinar format for Synod member engagement. While some members found the meeting 'the best', others found it 'disempowering'. Several members were pleased to see the Archbishop in action and thinking, and many expressed their desire to meet in person in July.

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