

GENERAL SYNOD

April 2021

QUESTIONS

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ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q1 Please set out the number and distribution of different accounting systems used by the dioceses across England, and answer the question as to how it is possible to analyse the full extent of administrative duplication without there being a common accounting system which all dioceses are required to adopt?

Canon Dr John Spence to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A It is true that ten years ago dioceses were using eleven different accounting systems; we have not had time to check the current number. We are aware that several dioceses which are considering changing their accounting software are working together to see if a joint procurement exercise will deliver best value for them.

I offer the following remarks:

- (i) Dioceses have made substantial progress in driving consistency of presentation.
- (ii) Many dioceses are moving to new system procurement and we hope there may be some adaptation of common systems.
- (iii) We do not need to rely on accounting systems alone to identify where duplication is occurring. This work is being picked up within the Emerging Church of England work and in the Transforming Effectiveness workstream in particular.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q2 How is the Council assuring itself that the pioneer posts, fresh expressions and church plants which they fund are totally open about their theological convictions around the ordination and consecration of women and about sexuality and will remain free from "the unhealthy culture of fear" found by the reviewers of Emmanuel Wimbledon and the Maids Moreton case?

Canon Dr John Spence to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Applications for Strategic Development Funding are submitted by dioceses, in line with their own strategies for developing mission and growth. Projects funded to date reflect the diverse range of traditions and theological viewpoints within the Church of England.

The procedures for appointments within projects are the responsibility of the dioceses in receipt of the funding, but the funding agreements for awards state that: “The Archbishops’ Council also expects that policy and practice around recruitment and employment of all posts supported by the funding will follow best practice.” This would include taking due account of reports on safeguarding issues and the House of Bishops guidance on responding to and assessing safeguarding concerns and allegations.

Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops’ Council:

Q3 Has the Council any plans to disseminate relevant research findings to dioceses and other church bodies involved in decisions regarding the possible closure of church buildings, such as the findings from Strand 3c of the Church Growth Research Programme (Church Growth: Amalgamations, Team Ministries and the Growth of the Church) that: “We do not see closing churches as a ‘solution’ to the issue of amalgamations. Many small churches are currently growing, albeit by small amounts. Research suggests that when a church closes many of the congregation will not transfer to another church, but simply stop going to church. Closing churches is difficult and would make little difference unless large numbers were closed. Closures are decline management, not a growth strategy. There will be a limited number of churches which will close in future years and the process for doing so should be made as straightforward as possible – but churches have closed in previous decades and centuries. We do not see mass closure of churches as either necessary or desirable.”?

Canon Dr John Spence to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council:

A This research, funded by the Archbishops’ Council as part of the Church Growth Research Programme has been available online in the years since its publication in 2013 – including here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/church-growth-research-programme/findings-and-reports>. The research was launched at a significant event at the time, and a summary booklet ‘From Anecdote to Evidence’ was widely disseminated.

The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 sets out the legal framework for the closure and re-use of churches. The Legislative Reform Committee of the Archbishops’ Council has commissioned a

review of the Measure and a Green Paper will be published for the July session of General Synod for consultation and debate. This will explore a number of issues including the arrangements for closure and re-use.

Mrs Emma Gregory (Exeter) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q4 Given that the Civil Service has decided to phase out unconscious bias training on the grounds that 'it may have detrimental effects', will the Church of England follow suit?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A We remain committed to providing theologically grounded learning programmes based on the values of equality and justice, including the provision of good quality diversity awareness and we are looking at how we adapt our training in this area, particularly at key decision points such as recruitment and progression.

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q5 In his book, *The Road to Growth*, the Venerable Bob Jackson gives evidence of the relative missional failure of Team Ministries. Does the Council discourage the use in Dioceses of Team Ministries?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Bob Jackson's research is helpful in a number of areas, but does not necessarily provide a complete picture. There are a range of experiences of the value of formal Team Ministries depending upon context, expectations and the people involved.

That said, there has been a decline in the number of Teams being set up (22), and an increase in those being dismantled (30) in the last 2 years.

While Archbishops' Council's role is not to advocate one pattern or another, we are engaged in sharing best practice between dioceses who are seeking to discern the right patterns of deployment for lay and ordained ministers for each specific context.

Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q6 What impact has the Covid-19 crisis had on the number of clergy resigning, retiring early or going on long-term sick-leave (comparing prior average numbers with latest) and, in the expectation that there may be much need, what preparations are being made to support clergy emotionally, financially and practically (for example with extra time off for recovery) as we emerge from this crisis?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A There have been no indications of any significant increase in clergy resigning, going on long-term sick leave or retiring early. A similar number of stipendiary clergy retired during 2020 compared with the previous year, and the average age at retirement was very similar to 2019.

There are some indications that clergy have stayed in post somewhat longer than they might otherwise have done as they wanted to shepherd their current parishes through the pandemic.

Dioceses have been working throughout the pandemic to support their clergy and we would expect this to continue. THRIVE resources have been made available to clergy to assist them in their well-being. Senior clergy in many dioceses have offered pastoral support to their fellow clergy as well as Employee Assistance Programmes which are available both to clergy and their families.

The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q7 The Parochial Fees Order states that “any costs and expenses incurred in respect of routine administration (including arranging dates and times and the making of entries in registers), making the church available and lighting it are included in the fee payable to the parochial church council,” i.e. the statutory fee. The Legal Advisory Commission stated in February 2019, in an opinion to General Synod, that it is “accordingly illegal to make any additional charge to those specified in the fees order in relation to any of these matters in any circumstances.”

In response to concern about churches still charging additional fees without making it clear that they are optional, Michael Fabricant MP

obtained the parliamentary response from the Second Estates Commissioner on 5th February 2021 that “the National Life Events team has worked with Archdeacons across the country to encourage all parishes to distinguish between the statutory fee and additional charges clearer [sic].”

What form has this work with Archdeacons taken and how can Synod help to end this abuse, which risks seriously undermining the Church of England’s reputation as a church for all people?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council:

A The Life Events team are sometimes contacted directly about wedding fees by unhappy or confused wedding couples. The Life Events team then works with the relevant archdeacon to remedy these thankfully rare occasions. Clear guidance is available for everyone at <https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/the-cost-of-church-weddings/>.

A free downloadable form is provided by the Life Events team which helps clergy to clearly distinguishes the different fees, at <https://churchsupporthub.org/download/wedding-fees-form-2021/>.

With the amendment of fees due to the changes to marriage registration from the 4th May, a note will be sent out to clergy informing them of the changes to the fees, and to remind them of the clarity needed around statutory and optional fees.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council:

Q8 What oversight does the Archbishops’ Council have of Commissions set up by the Archbishops, including in relation to decisions on the appointment of members of such Commissions?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as President of the Archbishops’ Council:

A The Commissions are set up by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. The Archbishops’ Council does not have any formal oversight of the Commissions. Clearly the Commissions work closely with other bodies of the Church, including the Archbishops’ Council, and any resourcing matters are discussed when the Commission are being formed.

Mrs Rhian Parsons (Leicester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q9 At the time of writing this question, there are 5,772 people who follow the Church of England's Twitter page. Many of these followers may not know that posts come from the digital communications team, and are not the voice of the Archbishops or other senior church leaders. Will the Archbishops' Council consider including a clarification in the 'bio' section confirming who is writing these posts, and highlighting that any views expressed may not be representative of the entirety of the Church of England?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Comments on all of our social media channels are published only after an internal approval process has been completed. This process includes input and final sign off from the relevant owner of the proposed comment. Members of the comms and digital teams are fully aware that the posts are not to be used to express personal views and must reflect the official position of the Church of England on any specific issue. The policy in place is designed to ensure that statements made are done with the approval and sign off of the relevant office holder or issue owner.

As a point of clarification the Church of England currently has 106.5k followers on Twitter and follows over 5700 accounts on Twitter.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS

The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q10 What recommendations and resources are available to help local churches address the crisis in biodiversity?

The Bishop of Salisbury to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A We have a whole programme of webinars on why and how we care about Land and Nature:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/webinars-land-and-nature-churches-count-nature-week>

Close to home, many churchyards are havens of biodiversity, and the only locally accessible green space, whilst land around them has been developed or farmed.

This June, we are piloting “Churches Count on Nature” in partnership with A Rocha UK, Caring for Gods Acre and the Church in Wales. From 5th-13th June, church communities are invited to take part in this exciting ‘citizen’s science’ project, recording the plants and animals in their churchyard or local greenspace.

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/get-involved/expression-of-interest-in-churches-count-on-nature-2021/>.

Churches can take many practical steps to manage their churchyard for nature. Caring for Gods Acre run training and have a suite of free resources, including a starter guide, churchyard action pack, and education pack:

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/resources/>. A Rocha UK have a network of local volunteer advisors.

Synod members are encouraged to share these resources.

The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q11 Please could the Synod be told how many CofE churches have now been awarded Eco-church bronze, silver or gold awards.

The Bishop of Salisbury to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A We are pleased to say numbers are growing fast, and as of the end of December, 2200 Church of England churches had registered with the EcoChurch award scheme.

Of these:

- 427 have reached a bronze award,
- an additional 170 have reached silver, and
- an additional 9 have reached all the way to gold.

And for EcoDiocese:

- 32 dioceses have now registered, and
- 12 have achieved a bronze award.

EcoChurch is an effective framework for churches to use. It guides environmental action, step-by-step, across worship & teaching, management of church buildings, management of church land, community & global engagement, and lifestyle.

Churches can learn more at the upcoming events being run jointly by dioceses and A Rocha UK on April 24th, May 8th, and June 12th (for details search for ‘eco church’ on Eventbrite), and also through

our webinars: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/eco-church>. Synod members are encouraged to share this information in their dioceses.

Mrs Enid Barron (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q12 What are the findings from the first year of the Energy Footprint Tool, and what should churches do about 2020 data if their buildings have been closed?

The Bishop of Salisbury to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The first year of the Energy Footprint Tool tells us that:

- Nearly 5,000 churches submitted data; a fabulous effort amidst last year's turbulence.
- 5% of responding churches were already net-zero carbon (most have installed electric heating and are on a 100% renewable tariff).
- A 12.5% carbon reduction has already been made across the country, compared to a comparative, although smaller, 2006 study.
- The total net carbon footprint from the energy use of church buildings is c.185,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases (tCO₂e).
- If all churches switched to 100% renewable electricity, it would cut our churches' collective carbon footprint by 22%.

2020 utility bills should be entered into the EFT as normal.

Adjustments have been made to the benchmarks within the system, to take account of the reduced activity levels.

Research and Statistics are now building on the success of the EFT to develop tools for other building types and transport.

Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q13 What efforts have been taken so far in developing the Vision and Strategy to ensure that the move towards being a church that is younger and more diverse results in much greater engagement than at present with people who would regard themselves as working class, including those owning their own home or renting private sector accommodation, as well as those living in inner or outer estates of social housing?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Chair of the House of the Bishops:

- A** Thank you for raising this important issue. I can assure you that in thinking about a more diverse church as part of the Vision and Strategy, one of the groups we have been considering is those who regard themselves as working class. The co-Chair of the group looking at a Younger & More Diverse Church, the Bishop of Durham, has been a key advocate of ensuring we keep this issue to the forefront. As well as communicating with the Bishop of Burnley concerning estates work, we have also been talking to Gary Jenkins who has recently written various articles on this subject.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- Q14** When the House comes to consider the final report of the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Task Group, and the establishment of the proposed Racial Justice Commission, will it take into account the recommendations of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities ('the Sewell Report') and the data and analysis underlying them?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Chair of the House of the Bishops:

- A** The Anti-racism Taskforce's focus was on combating racism in the Church of England. Therefore, when the House comes to consider the report, we will consider the significant issues within our own institutions in the Church. While the Sewell report and a variety of other such reports and research evidence will no doubt have some impact on the discussion, this report specifically deals with the systemic racism within the Church.

Ms Josile Munro (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- Q15** It is good to hear that the Archbishops' anti-racism taskforce plans to have published its report by the time this question is answered. Many reports by the Church addressing this issue have been published making good recommendations. What new actions and processes will be put in place to enable Dioceses and the national institutions to implement the recommendations given that we have not been effective in doing so previously?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

- A** Thank you for this very important question. Each Church body will need to consider in detail its response to the relevant recommendations in the task force report, and its approach to implementation. The task force is providing a detailed list of actions

and processes in the form of a proposed implementation action timetable, allocated to key bodies and senior officials. The details of these will be found in the report to be published this week.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q16 The recommendations from the report *Setting God's People Free* (GS 2056) approved by General Synod in February 2017 included the establishing of Discipleship Learning Communities in which a number of Dioceses participated. In all, (a) which Dioceses took part; (b) what was the overall cost of the programme; and (c) what are the main lessons learned which can be taken forward into the emerging Vision & Strategy of 'missionary disciples', 'mixed ecology' and 'younger and more diverse'?

The Bishop of Gloucester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- A**
- (a) 32 dioceses participated: Bath & Wells, Birmingham, Blackburn, Canterbury, Carlisle, Chester, Chichester, Derby, Durham, Ely, Europe, Exeter, Gloucester, Guildford, Hereford, Leeds, Leicester, Lichfield, Lincoln, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich, Oxford, Portsmouth, Rochester, Sheffield, Southwark, St Eds & Ips, Truro and Winchester.
 - (b) Direct costs are £281,000, excluding national or diocesan support costs for wider implementation.
 - (c) The following key learnings are being considered in future work: The DLC process i) enables dioceses to set specific strategic priorities, share best practice and establish peer accountability for implementation; ii) nurtures innovation and context specific resources through engaging worshipping communities as stakeholders; iii) encourages a network approach with Christian agencies and regional groups; and iv) focuses on gathering data to evidence change in practice.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q17 Following the principles established in *Setting God's People Free*, will the House endorse and actively encourage the inclusion of online personal reflections (with appropriate, but objective, checking) from lay people, both written and via links to recorded

material, on parochial, deanery and diocesan websites and on churchofengland.org, so that theological contributions based on scripture, reason and tradition can be welcomed from all throughout the Church?

The Bishop of Gloucester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Dioceses and worshipping communities determine their own priorities and content in their communications. However, increased use of stories that express a wide diversity of people and experiences of everyday faith is a growing presence in local, diocesan and national communications. Many such features also create the space for deeper theological reflection on the place of faith in the whole of life. Both of these are encouraging trends.

The Revd Canon Martyn Taylor (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q18 Please can we have an update on the current status of the report that Bishop Pete Wilcox was chairing in regard to inter diocesan generosity in regard to historic income?

The Bishop of Sheffield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Mutuality in Finances group has met 8 times since September 2020. Its initial findings were shared with the House of Bishops in December. Subject to the approval of the Business Committee, the group will provide an update of its work for the July 2021 group of sessions and will move a motion that Synod approve in principle that legislative proposals be developed to give dioceses more freedom to share historic assets with other dioceses.

The Revd Charles Read (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q19 What consideration has the House given to the anxieties of current stipendiary ordinands and curates regarding the availability of stipendiary posts in the next two years ?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Stipendiary Ordinands: The National Ministry Team (NMT) collates regular updates from dioceses. This is an ongoing process and we work 18-24 months ahead. Figures suggest sufficient title posts for 2021, and communications to update and reassure candidates have been made since last autumn. The Strategic Ministry Board will

review the 2022 position at its meeting later in April and consider whether specific communications and/or support are required.

Stipendiary Curates: In a current survey of Archdeacons, initial responses suggest most are confident of eligible finishing curates finding posts in 2021. We continue to monitor this.

The NMT, together with diocesan teams, are collating a national ministry plan to understand the future potential flow of candidates through discernment and formation and to form a national picture of clergy deployment plans across the Church looking several years ahead.

These issues are discussed regularly by both the Ministry Council and the Strategic Ministry Board.

Mr Clive Scowen (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q20 What progress has been made in relation to reviewing the House of Bishops' regulations relating to the ministry of Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers, and in particular those provisions which indicate that no licence should be issued once such a minister turns 70? What reason, if any, is there for not putting them on a par with clergy who can be licensed without limit of time beyond the age of 70, at the bishop's and PCC's discretions?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A In February 2021, the House of Bishops discussed lay ministry and agreed to the development of proposals both for a new national framework for lay ministry and for the simplification of the Canons on Lay Ministry. The Lay Ministries Advisory Group is taking these proposals forward and will consider the Regulations within that work, bringing recommendations back to the House of Bishops. The Central Readers' Council will be a key partner in this work and has started conversations exploring potential changes within this review.

A Vision for Lay Ministries (GS Misc 1265) highlights the call for mutuality within ministry, lay and ordained, and this principle will be considered and applied appropriately when reviewing the Regulations.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q21 Does the House of Bishops agree that no Christian man or woman should be refused or hindered in exploring or realising vocation because they believe marriage can be only between one man and one woman?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Yes, the House of Bishops agrees.

The Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q22 What is the acceptable route into fully recognised ordained ministry within the Church of England for those ordained in South Africa by Bishops of CESA (The Church of England in South Africa, now known as REACH SA) or ordained by CESA Bishops in this country, bearing in mind that there are now several such clergy (each by different routes) in regular CofE incumbencies in this country and that some of our Patronage Bodies receive applications for incumbency from such clergy?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A REACH SA is not in communion with the Church of England. Priests and deacons ordained in Churches not in communion may apply for permission to officiate in the Church of England under the Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967 if the orders of the ordaining Church are recognised and accepted by the Church of England, as is the case with REACH SA. The application is made, through the diocese where the priest or deacon wishes to serve, to the archbishop of the province. The bishop of the diocese must declare that he or she is ready to grant authority to the applicant to officiate within the diocese. The bishop must also declare that an applicant who is to be licensed or admitted to a benefice has been referred to the National Ministry Team's Candidate's Panel if a reference is required by the current Archbishops' Council policy.

The Revd Canon Jeffrey West (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q23 Following the publication in February by the National Network of SSM Officers and Advisers of a discussion document on the deployment of self-supporting ordained ministers, what action is the House of Bishops taking to review the training and deployment of SSMs and make better use of them in future?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A There is renewed momentum around self-supporting ordained ministry – including deepening our understanding of current practice across the Church. The discussion document mentioned is one very helpful element of this. Recent or current action by the National Ministry Team includes:

- The appointment of Revd Prebendary John Lees as the National Officer for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry;
- A review of our theological understanding of blended and interwoven vocations;
- A review of diocesan websites in relation to Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry;
- Consultation interviews with a range of senior diocesan staff; and
- A series of focus groups gathering self-supporting ministers from eight dioceses to ask about their lived experience of this way of ministry.

In addition, the National Ministry Team, with dioceses, are currently collating a national understanding of clergy deployment. This has started with Stipendiary Ordained Ministry, but it is planned to extend the scope of the next stage of this project to both Self-Supporting Ordained Ministry and Lay Ministries.

The Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q24 The 2020 U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) Annual Report designates India as “a ‘country of particular concern,’ or CPC, for engaging in and tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA)” With this in mind, while welcoming the FoRB report, I wish to know, a) what steps the church would take to support Indian churches

(the two Anglican Provinces [Church of South of India and the Church of North India] and other denominations), and Muslims, and, b) how could the church highlight the plight of religious minorities in India and encourage the Indian government to promote religious freedom as enshrined in the Indian constitution?

The Bishop of Leeds to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The 2020 USCIRF Report lists India as one of 14 CPCs. This designation reflects that the Indian Government has used its strengthened parliamentary majority to institute national-level policies violating religious freedom across India, especially for Muslims. Most notable has been the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. The national and various state governments have also allowed nationwide campaigns of harassment and violence against religious minorities to continue with impunity, and engaged in and tolerated hate speech and incitement to violence against them. These are worrying developments that need to be resisted. Lords Spiritual have raised concerns with Ministers in Parliament, while the Archbishop of Canterbury has stayed closely abreast of the situation following his visit to India in September 2019. Practical support and assistance to both Provinces is provided by the dioceses of Gloucester, Lincoln and Derby which have companion links with one or other of the two Provinces.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q25 Given the large body of evidence that children are best raised by both of the natural parents together (as referred to on page 73 of the LLF book, among other sources) will the House of Bishops make representations to the Archbishops' Commission on Families and Households that it should (a) take as a given that Christian marriage, as defined in Canon B30 and the Book of Common Prayer, is the most favourable foundation for the nurture of children and the flourishing of families; and on that basis (b) seek ways of promoting, supporting and sustaining marriage to more couples, for the benefit of children, families, communities and society in general?

The Bishop of Durham to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A We recognise the evidence referred to, and stand by the definition of marriage in Canon B30. However, we must not allow the best to become the enemy of the good. Children grow up in many family contexts, and it is vital to consider aspects such as bereavement, adoption, and fostering as well as marital breakdown. The Church has always sought to affirm and support all families rather than stressing an ideal in a way which discourages and judges.

The Archbishops' Commission – of which I am the Vice Chair although answering today on behalf of the House of Bishops – will address the challenges and the positive aspects of family life, and will consider families and households in the diverse variations in which they exist across our society today where, for instance, a third of households are single persons. We will seek evidence from many sources, within and beyond the Church.

Mr Clive Scowen (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q26 What steps will the bishops take, either collectively or individually in their dioceses, to promote a new movement of prayer for the Church and the Nation as we emerge from lockdown and pestilence?

The Bishop of London to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Many Christians will want to reflect and pray about the events and circumstances of the pandemic, and consider prayerfully the shape of their lives and ministries in light of them. National resources for prayer and worship have been available throughout the pandemic, joining existing initiatives such as *Thy Kingdom Come* and seasonal campaigns such as *Comfort and Joy* and *Live Lent*. Some bishops have also encouraged clergy and laity to use additional diocesan resources to discern the next steps on the journey of recovery from lockdown and in our lives as disciples. These resources encourage Christians to think and pray about (among other things) the sacraments, the Five Marks of Mission, and the shape of the future church community.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q27 *Living in Love and Faith – Next Steps* refers to the Bishops using the LLF resources and listening to what is emerging, enabling the whole people of God “to feed into the Bishops’ discernment for the Church in 2022”. Does that mean that *Living in Love and Faith* is now a process that is intended to include the possibility of the Church of England’s existing teaching on same-sex relationships being replaced by new teaching on that subject?

The Bishop of London to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A In their Foreword to the LLF Book, the Archbishops explain that the book “is intended to enable all those in the Church of England who wish to take part by using this book – and the other *Living in Love and Faith* resources – to learn and reflect together to help the entire church in its task of discernment.” Furthermore, in the Appeal, the Bishops “exhort [the people of God] to walk with us in a new stage of our common life in Christ so that [...] godly discernment and right decisions can be made over contested matters of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage”. The outcomes of this discernment and decision-making are unknown and will emerge in time as the process of listening, learning and discernment draws to a close in 2022.

The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q28 Has the LLF Next Steps Group formed its “diverse Reference Group” and if so, who are its members, or if not, when will it do so?

The Bishop of London to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A So far, 14 people have accepted the invitation to form the Reference Group for the LLF Next Steps Group. Their names can be found on www.churchofengland.org/LLF. Some further members are being sought. In addition, the LLF Diocesan Advocates are also forming equivalent groups more locally to assist their work of animating and supporting church-wide LLF engagement in their dioceses.

The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q29 Given that Sir Keir Starmer has publicly dissociated himself from the Black-led Jesus House Church on the basis of their belief about marriage being between one man and one woman – a belief shared by Mosques, and Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches – what personal or public support has the House given or is planning to give to Pastor Agu Irukwu, a baptised Anglican from Nigeria, as part of our solidarity with our black sisters and brothers and as a signal that all are welcome in the Church of England?”

The Bishop of London to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Archbishop of Canterbury has spoken to Pastor Agu and has written to Sir Keir Starmer regarding this incident. The new Racial Justice Commission, and the deep friendship with Jesus House through Churches Together and other ecumenical networks are testimony to the Church of England’s commitment to ensuring that all are welcome in the Church of England.

Mrs Andrea Minichello Williams (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q30 In the July 2017 Group of Sessions (GS 2070A and GS 2070B) this Synod voted to “endorse the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK of November 2015”. What is the definition of conversion therapy in the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy?

The Bishop of Carlisle to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The definition in *the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK, November 2015* was “‘Conversion therapy’ is the umbrella term for a type of talking therapy or activity which attempts to change sexual orientation or reduce attraction to others of the same sex. It is also sometimes called ‘reparative’ or ‘gay cure’ therapy”.

Mrs Sarah Finch (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q31 In the coming months, what further steps will the Lords Spiritual be taking to voice their opposition to the calls for the law on temporary at-home abortions to be made permanent, “Home use of both pills for early medical abortion for up to 10 weeks gestation”?

The Bishop of Carlisle to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- A** The MPA Council made a submission to this Government consultation in February 2021. Any further steps will be determined by the Government's response to its consultation which has not yet been published.

Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- Q32** Following the House of Bishops' response to the UK Government's consultation on "Home use of both pills for early medical abortion" has there been any further interaction with Her Majesty's Government on this subject?

The Bishop of Carlisle to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- A** As the Government has not yet published its response to this consultation, there have been no further interactions with Her Majesty's Government on this subject.

The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- Q33** Is the working party on the reform of the CDM process considering the proper legal and ethical case management of a complaint, in circumstances where a respondent is under litigation disability, whether temporary or permanently?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- A** Whilst the Clergy Discipline Measure and Rules do not explicitly provide for the appointment of a litigation friend or other similar orders where a respondent lacks mental capacity, the wide case management powers of the Chair of a tribunal or court are sufficient to enable such steps to take place. The working group will examine whether specific provision for dealing with the issue of capacity should be codified into the procedural rules that will accompany any new measure.

The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q34 Will the CDM working party consider the inclusion of a procedural power to strike out a complaint for material abuse of process and/or prosecutorial misconduct, on application, which comes to light after the complaint has been initially accepted?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Rule 1 of the Clergy Discipline Rules 2005 provides that allegations of misconduct made under the Measure must be dealt with justly and in a way that is fair to all relevant parties. If a tribunal or court were satisfied that an abuse of process arose it would have jurisdiction to dismiss a complaint on that ground. The working group will examine whether a power to strike out an allegation of misconduct should be codified into the procedural rules that will accompany any new measure.

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q35 What provision is available or proposed for parishes in a Joint Council, formed by Schemes made under the revised Church Representation Rules CRR M37 (in reliance on Rule 77), who hold to traditional teachings of the Church and find themselves in a minority and overruled by the 2/3rds majority decision-taking powers of Joint Councils, so that their integrity may continue to be upheld (as reflected, for instance, in the Five Guiding Principles)?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A First, I should make it clear that no parish is obliged to join a joint council. A parish will only do so if its own annual (or special) parochial church meeting votes by a majority of at least two-thirds to do so.

Secondly, even if a parish does join a joint council, that does not necessarily mean that all decisions in relation to the parish are then taken over by the joint council. A scheme establishing a joint council could, for example, provide that decisions concerning matters relating to the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests remained with an individual parochial church council and did not transfer to the joint council. It would then remain the responsibility of that PCC to take such decisions in respect of its own parish.

The Revd Charles Read (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q36 What consideration has the House given to means of addressing the culture of deference identified by the IICSA inquiry and its report?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As part of the leadership development programme, that is the programme working with bishops and deans, matters relating to the culture of the meetings of bishops and how bishops operate individually are being taken very seriously. A culture of deference is not specifically limited to safeguarding; It is a much wider issue and is part of the culture and understanding of the episcopal role. These matters are considered and addressed by bishops through the development programme, through individual coaching and through the work of the meetings of the bishops where thought is given to implicit as well as explicit issues.

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q37 In a publicly available legal advice given in 2011, the Legal Advisory Commission expressed the opinion that it is contrary to the law for individual cups to be used for communicants. This advice was comprehensively and powerfully challenged by a publicly available legal advice given by 6 barristers in 2020. In 2021, the position of the House of Bishops on the distribution of wine at Communion continues to be based on the 2011 LAC advice and, it seems, unpublished further advice received from the LAC. Could General Synod, as the legislature for the Church of England, please be provided with the unpublished further advice which the House of Bishops appear to be following?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As I stated in February, while the Addendum to the Opinion of the Legal Advisory Commission, *Holy Communion: Administration of the Sacrament* (2011) touches upon issues raised in the barristers' opinion, it was not intended as a direct response to that opinion. The Commission decides which of its opinions it 'stars' for publication. It has not starred the Addendum.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q38 The press release issued following the meeting of the House of Bishops on 19 January 2021 stated (inter alia): *“The House affirmed it would be premature to make decisions on the eucharist in a digital medium and the administration and reception of Holy Communion, particularly in a time of national pandemic and resolved to undertake further theological and liturgical study and discussion on these issues over the coming months.”* In a comment on the Thinking Anglicans blog the Bishop of Willesden, the Rt Revd Pete Broadbent, explained, “we don’t do doctrinal and liturgical change in haste, even in a pandemic. More thought is required.”

When will the House of Bishops address this issue, taking account of all the relevant material including (i) the legal Opinion dated 12 August 2020 (commissioned by Synod member Mrs Mary Durlacher) by six barristers (three of whom are members of the Synod) including three QCs, that the use of individual cups to distribute the consecrated wine at Communion is lawful, and (ii) the provision in article 30 of the Thirty-nine Articles that “The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both parts of the Lord’s sacrament, by Christ’s ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike”?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops is actively considering the shape of the theological and liturgical study that it intends to carry out in respect of Holy Communion. Those responsible for this work will draw on the full range of material available.

Ms Christina Baron (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q39 What steps have been taken to ensure that Advice for hosting a Maundy Thursday meal or similar documents issued in future take account of inter-faith relations?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops and the Liturgical Commission together with specialists in this area of work will work collaboratively to avoid similar issues in the future.

In relation to the withdrawn Maundy Thursday prayers, I refer you to my answer to questions 72-73 later in this Notice Paper.

The Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q40 What steps are being taken to work towards mandatory reporting of safeguarding issues and disclosures?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Going before Synod in April is the draft Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure. This will introduce a Code of Practice for “relevant persons” which, much more clearly than the House of Bishops safeguarding guidance and the use of “due regard”, will specify requirements of “relevant persons” in respect of safeguarding, including the requirement to report concerns and allegations to the relevant safeguarding adviser. We also await IICSA’s final report which is expected to contain recommendations on this matter.

The Revd Canon Paul Cartwright (Leeds) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q41 Is it the intention of Paragraph 4.24 of the House of Bishops Policy on Granting Permission to Officiate 2018 that any finding of a past failure to follow safeguarding procedures, however minimal the current risk, should result in a lifetime removal of PTO?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A No. Paragraph 4.24 is concerned with situations where a cleric presents a risk to children and/or to vulnerable adults. A past failure to follow safeguarding procedures is nevertheless a matter that the bishop should consider when assessing a cleric’s suitability to exercise ministry in the light of the matters set out in paragraphs 4.26 to 4.28. Where there has been a past failure to follow safeguarding policy the bishop will need to be satisfied, in the light of advice from the diocesan safeguarding adviser, that the cleric has received up to date safeguarding training and that he or she understands and will comply with his or her duties under the relevant statutory guidance. If the bishop is not satisfied with that, PTO should not be granted.

The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TEs) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q42 Has a comprehensive conflicts of interest policy for use within the Church of England's safeguarding system been adopted and published?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A This work is being addressed as part of the National Safeguarding Team's ongoing revision of 'Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns against Church Officers' House of Bishop's guidance.

Mrs Debrah Mclsaac (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q43 In response to a question about Core Groups and Safeguarding at the July 2020 General Synod, the Bishop of Huddersfield, on behalf of the National Safeguarding Team, said "it is vitally important that the respondents should be properly represented, they have full understanding of the allegations made against them and they have opportunity to respond to those [allegations]. That is a basic issue of justice...respondents must be properly represented in order that they have a full chance to respond to any allegations."

Have those who have been subject to a Core Group since last July been afforded these rights of full and timely disclosure of the allegations made against them, and have they been properly represented in relation to all allegations?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As I stated in July 2020, a core group is concerned with managing process. Core groups operating under the statutory guidance issued by the House of Bishops do not determine whether a person has done any act complained of, nor do they decide whether any penalty or other sanction will be imposed on a respondent. Those are determinations made under other legislative frameworks, including criminal and clergy discipline processes, for which a core group is not responsible. Accordingly, neither complainants nor respondents are represented as part of the deliberations of a core group. Since July 2020, respondents have been provided with full and timely information by core groups to enable them to seek legal

or other representation. The only occasions when information is not immediately shared are when disclosure would place a victim or member of the public at risk or would interfere with a criminal or other investigation.

Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q44 How many Working Groups have been established to explore revisions to the Core Groups (as referred to in para 3.4 of GS 2204) and when will they complete their work?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A There is one main working group on “core groups” as part of the revision of the “Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against Church Officers.” This is a major piece of work which will set out the process pathways for the different types of role: clergy, elected, employed and voluntary, as the processes will be different in some respects. The policy will also differentiate between circumstances where the person is alleged to be the perpetrator, and those where the person is alleged to have responded poorly to a safeguarding disclosure. In addition to this work, a second group met on two occasions specifically to consider core groups, and the work from those meetings has been fed into the continuing group. This is extremely detailed work as core groups are only one part of the overall process. Drafts will hopefully be ready by the end of 2021.

Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q45 In response to a question in July 2020 the Bishop of Huddersfield stated the importance of respondents being fully represented and aware of the allegations made against them. Please can the Synod be told whether those subjected to a Core Group since last July have

- a) been afforded these rights on all occasions, and
- b) had a choice in who represents them at these meetings?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Respondents have been accorded full information and as much choice as possible as to who represents them – the only checks on this are if there is a risk to a victim or member of the public if information is disclosed or if disclosure would interfere with a

criminal investigation or other statutory investigation. There have been cases recently where it has been essential to time disclosure to respondents after police have completed certain actions in order not to interfere with police investigations. “Core groups” are not courts and do not make findings of guilt or innocence; rather, they assess and manage risk in any situation. Neither Respondents nor Complainants attend core group meetings. They are met with by the person investigating the matter and can have supporters with them when this happens.

Mrs Debrah Mclsaac (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q46 What is the NST’s policy in relation to proper representation and timely disclosure of information to a respondent being investigated for process failures as distinct from physical or spiritual abuse?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The National Safeguarding Team’s practice in relation to disclosure of information is the same in regard to both allegations of process failings and allegations of actual abuse. Respondents will be provided with full and timely disclosure in order to enable them to understand and contribute and seek representation if required unless such disclosure would place a victim or member of the public at risk or would interfere with a statutory criminal investigation or other investigation by statutory services.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q47 The Oxford Diocese Report on the murder at Maids Moreton specifically blames “the abuse of trust in a religious paradigm and attitudes towards sex and sexuality” and the “silence” around these matters for contributing to these events. The report by Thirty-One:Eight into Emmanuel Church Wimbledon points, more worryingly, to networks of support for powerful leaders and records that it was “difficult to articulate” the “fear of repercussions” experienced by those who participated in their Inquiry. Secrecy clearly leads to an “unhealthy culture of fear”(The 31:8 Report). How is the House of Bishops approaching the new arrangements for governance and accountability which recent reviews recommend to ensure openness and transparency in conservative evangelical parishes and peculiars?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The National Safeguarding Team is reviewing all of the recommendations in recent reviews which will be factored into the National Safeguarding business plan. The changes to the Learning and Development pathway for Safeguarding aim to promote healthy Christian cultures in all Church bodies, regardless of their tradition. The Archbishops' Council has also accepted IICSA's recommendations for increasing independent oversight of safeguarding and for assuring its quality and consistency across the Church of England.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q48 How many clergy have been the subject of investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings on the basis that they knew of the matters alleged against John Smyth and Jonathan Fletcher but failed to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities by disclosing that information?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Since the National Safeguarding Team was made aware of Smyth's horrific abuse, it has worked closely with both the police investigation and then the independent review commissioned by the Church which is continuing to look at further evidence. Any concerns raised by the review team about actions of individuals have been immediately looked into by the National Safeguarding Team as per the Terms of the Reference. As this process is ongoing, we are not able to provide further details. The review report will be published in full later in the year with further details.

An independent review commissioned by Emmanuel Church, Wimbledon into the Fletcher case has just been published. The National Safeguarding Team is continuing to work with Southwark Diocese on this.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q49 Is there a single NST caseworker with overall responsibility for collating evidence and intelligence about the allegations against Jonathan Fletcher and John Smyth to ensure that an overall joined up picture is assembled from the various reports which are emerging?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A There are a number of National Safeguarding Team caseworkers involved in the response to matters relating to John Smyth however, this work is overseen by the National Deputy Director for Casework who has overall responsibility for collating evidence and intelligence about allegations against John Smyth and ensuring matters are referred from the Makin review in line with the terms of reference for the review. The same Deputy Director is also part of the Southwark response to Jonathan Fletcher to ensure a consistent approach.

Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q50 The Independent Lessons Learned Review conducted by safeguarding agency ThirtyOne:Eight in its report on Jonathan Fletcher and Emmanuel Church Wimbledon published on 23rd March this year identified 66 recommendations. ThirtyOne:Eight are to be congratulated for their excellent report. Many of their recommendations concern relationships between diocese and parish churches especially but not exclusively around safeguarding; the role of the National Safeguarding Team; and the process regarding information around removal of Permission to Officiate. More widely they address the problems posed by leaders who acquire celebrity status and the cultures of bullying and abuse that often accompany these. Will the Bishop please outline the steps that are being taken to address these recommendations?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The National Safeguarding Team is working with the Southwark diocese and responding to the report in order to implement the recommendations locally and across the national Church. Recommendations for learning will be factored into the National Safeguarding current business plan and particular regard will be given to constructive liaison and relationships between parishes, dioceses and the national Church.

Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q51 The Independent Lessons Learned Review conducted by safeguarding agency ThirtyOne:Eight in its report on Jonathan Fletcher and Emmanuel Church Wimbledon published on 23rd March this year outlined the problems posed by “churches operating under denominational banners [that] are effectively operating independently and in effect being allowed to do so.” They call for effective structures of accountability and oversight to be implemented. These problems relate to safeguarding but are much wider. Some of these are particularly enabled structurally by their status as Peculiars. How do the House intend to address this failure which has enabled such terrible abuse?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Bodies such as “Proprietary Chapels” are not institutionally part of the structure of the CofE. They are private organisations that operate under trust deeds that may for instance state that their ministers should be CofE clergy. It is within the discretion of the diocesan bishop whether to license a member of CofE clergy to exercise ministry in one of these organisations. My view would be that no bishop should do so unless satisfied that the organisation has adopted and implemented safeguarding policies that comply with Church of England standards – i.e. that are equivalent to the policies and procedures contained in our statutory guidance – or in due course the safeguarding codes, and that they are willing to be subject to external supervision to ensure compliance. See further what is said about these organisations in the note from the Steering Committee on the Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure para 28.

The Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q52 Following the recently published reports into the abuses by John Smyth and Jonathan Fletcher, what steps have been taken by the House of Bishops to identify and name those clergy who have failed to report abuses or abusers who have subsequently continued their actions, to the detriment of subsequent victims?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A All evidence received indicating abuse or failures in safeguarding practice will be addressed in accordance with the House of Bishops Practice Guidance.

Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q53 In the light of the recommendations of Scripture Union's John Smyth Independent Review (Executive Summary 4 March 2021, published 25 March 2021), and the fact that concurrent Smyth Reviews are expected to be published during 2021, including the Church of England (Makin) Review: (a) what plans are being made to make available full support and reparation to survivors in the UK, including through the Interim Pilot Survivors Scheme, and will such support and reparation be extended to survivors of the subsequent abuse perpetrated by Smyth in Zimbabwe, and if so how; and (b) is consideration being given to recovering relevant damages and costs from relevant trustees if found to have breached their charity duties, either through direct claim or by complaint to the Charity Commission?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As always, we bear in mind that the needs of each survivor are different. The Archbishops' Council's interim scheme may be able to provide support in connection with the effects of Church-related abuse and any application would be assessed in accordance with the scheme's criteria. We don't at present anticipate that the Council will be able to provide support or reparation in Zimbabwe. We would expect all responsible bodies to provide support and reparation as and where appropriate.

Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q54 What has been the financial cost to date of the Makin review into the allegations relating to the conduct of the late John Smyth QC?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- A** There is no measure that can estimate the true impact of the horrific abuse conducted by John Smyth on victims/survivors and the Church of England. As with any Independent Reviews, there is always a financial cost, but this has to be balanced with establishing the truth and listening to the voices of victims and survivors. It is not our practice to publish the cost of reviews.

Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- Q55** What is the best estimate for the financial costs to conclusion of the Makin review into the allegations relating to the conduct of the late John Smyth QC?

The Bishop of Huddersfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- A** There is no measure that can estimate the true impact of the horrific abuse conducted by John Smyth on victims/survivors and the Church of England. As with any Independent Reviews, there is always a financial cost, but this has to be balanced with establishing the truth and listening to the voices of victims and survivors. It is not our practice to publish the cost of reviews.

SECRETARY GENERAL

The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS) to ask the Secretary General:

- Q56** What policy or guidance does the Church of England give to churches and PCCs within its jurisdiction concerning due diligence in terms of receiving financial donations from charitable trusts?

Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:

- A** The Church of England has not issued specific guidance on this subject.
- All PCCs are charities (regardless of whether they are registered with the Charity Commission or excepted charities because their annual income is less than £100,000). Therefore, policy and guidance issued by the Charity Commission (e.g. Chapter 2 of their compliance toolkit) and the Chartered Institute of Fundraising will be relevant.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Secretary General:

Q57 In answer to a question (Q.24) from Mr Martin Sewell in February 2021, asking you to provide for Synod members the latest position in relation to the complaint about CDM processes addressed in an open letter to the Charity Commission dated 11 August 2020, you stated that a meeting took place between the Charity Commission and Archbishops' Council staff and trustees in the autumn of 2020 and that, as requested, you "provided information to the Charity Commission on safeguarding policies and proposed improvements." You added that the Charity Commission "was grateful for this information and was reassured by the steps the charity is taking to address the concerns raised in the open letter of 11 August 2020 to the Chair of the Commission" and that "it was agreed that conversations between the Charity Commission and the Archbishops' Council would continue as improvements and changes to safeguarding policies are made."

Please inform Synod what information was given to the Charity Commission that 'reassured' the Commission (stating whether this, and any written reply from the Commission, is in the public domain and, if so, where) and whether, as yet, there have been any subsequent conversations or exchanges between the Commission and the Archbishop' Council?

Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:

A At the meeting with the Charity Commission in the autumn of 2020, I and Archbishops' Council staff and trustees offered background information on safeguarding policies and what improvements were planned in this area. Following that meeting, I shared more information with the Charity Commission which included the NCI External Complaints Policy, which is a public document, and information about our proposals for updating safeguarding policies. Since that meeting, I have also sent a copy of the IICSA report on the Church of England, and the Church of England's response which are both published on the Church of England website.

In March 2021, I had a further meeting with officials of the Charity Commission at which we discussed various topics which included safeguarding. The meeting was not specific to the complaint referred to above. They were content with progress on improvements and changes to safeguarding policies and have asked for continuing updates on IICSA progress which I have agreed to provide.

CLERK TO THE SYNOD

Mr Philip French (Rochester) to ask the Clerk to the Synod:

Q58 Is it expected that the July 2021 group of sessions will be held at York in the usual way? If that is not yet known, when could members of General Synod expect to have clarity on the arrangements for the final formal meeting of this Synod?

Dr Jacqui Philips to reply as Clerk to the Synod:

A At the request of the Presidents, the Business Committee plans to hold the usual residential General Synod meeting in York this July. Staff are making plans with the University of York accordingly, whilst paying careful attention to health and safety requirements at the venue. The Business Committee continues to monitor the Government's Road Map and accompanying advice and will review the situation at its next meeting on 24th May when it sets the July Agenda. Should the Business Committee consider that it is not possible for the Synod to meet in York, an alternative plan is in place for the Synod to meet remotely during the July dates using the Remote Meetings Measure.

The Revd Bill Braviner (Durham) to ask the Clerk to the Synod:

Q59 What provision is made for those with additional accessibility requirements, and those who support them, to receive the text of presentations or speeches ahead of Synod debates, and/or in alternative formats, in order to enable them to fully engage with matters under consideration?

Dr Jacqui Philips to reply as Clerk to the Synod:

A The Synod Support team always requests those making speeches and presentations at Synod to provide these materials in advance as far as possible in order to ensure that they can be shared by staff with the BSL interpreters and other members with specific disability-related requirements who need assistance with following Synod proceedings. We recognise there is still a way to go in making this practice consistent, and we would actively encourage all those who present items to Synod to provide materials ahead of time as requested so that staff can pass them on to those mentioned above.

Mr John Freeman (Chester) to ask the Clerk to the Synod:

Q60 Can the Clerk please arrange that the voting system devised by Crystal Interactive works for all members of Synod, as it has so far not done so for me despite many requests for help. Otherwise, would it be possible to use the voting facility available on Zoom instead?

Dr Jacqui Philips to reply as Clerk to the Synod:

A The Crystal Interactive voting system was chosen for its easy-to-use interface that mirrors the ordinary voting experience as well as its ability to record the results of votes accurately and quickly. We have worked with Crystal Interactive to create voting guides and videos for users.

The Synod team provided training on the system for Synod members in the run up to November Synod and further training has been provided prior to the April group of sessions. Crystal Interactive also provide support and troubleshooting for individual users if required.

The Zoom facility cannot be used for formal votes as it does not allow votes to be recorded by Houses, or properly record the voter ID for each vote. It is also not sufficiently secure to be used for votes on formal and/or legislative business.

We do welcome feedback from members on how the Crystal voting system could be improved.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford) to ask the Clerk to the Synod:

Q61 What actions have been taken to follow up the decision taken nearly four years ago by the General Synod to call on the Government to ban conversion therapy?

Dr Jacqui Philips to reply as Clerk to the Synod:

A Following the debate in July 2017, I wrote on behalf of the General Synod to Ms Jackie Doyle-Price MP who was then the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Health conveying the result of the vote on the Motion on Conversion Therapy. This letter was subsequently acknowledged by the Department.

NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL

Mrs Sarah Finch (London) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q62 Does the Education Office consider that the use by Church of England schools of materials provided by Stonewall, a political campaigning group dedicated to promoting and normalising LGBT values in society, is consistent with the Education Act 1996 which prohibits the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in schools?

The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A It is for schools to decide which resources they use and which organisations they want to work with, not least because schools operate in a variety of different contexts. Schools have both the expertise and knowledge that makes them best placed to make these decisions.

Schools can use the DfE's recently published implementation guidance '[plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum](#)' and must consider the [statutory guidance](#), which sets out clear advice on choosing resources. Annex B of that guidance links to some suggested resources, including Stonewall lesson plans on LGBT inclusivity. The [Relationships, Sex and Health Education | The Church of England](#) charter sets out helpful guidance for schools in this area.

Schools are aware of their duties in relation to political impartiality and must exercise their own judgement reasonably, in line with their legal responsibilities, in the selection of providers and resources to be used.

CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL

Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:

Q63 What progress has been made in obtaining a charity exemption for Insurance Premium Tax, and so relieving PCCs of this financial burden, following the question I raised on this subject at the February 2019 Group of Sessions?

The Revd Peter Kay to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:

A The Secretary of the Church Buildings Council raised this with the relevant officials in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and HM Treasury. The advice was that Government is not minded to create an exemption for this tax. Work has instead focused on securing the continued funding of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Fund, which gives grants equivalent to VAT for building works, worth up to £42m a year, and on securing funding for roll out of the Taylor Review recommendations.

MINISTRY COUNCIL

The Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q64 The traditional Catholic and Conservative Evangelical constituencies understand it still to be the case that the role of Permanent or Distinctive Deacon remains a recognised vocational category within the Church of England, able to be accepted and recommended for training. On this understanding, how many Permanent or Distinctive Deacons from these two integrities are there by diocese in the Church of England and what form of training was permissible or made available to them?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A Distinctive Diaconate (DD) remains one of two categories of sponsorship for ordained ministry. We do not collect data by Church Tradition so cannot provide a breakdown of DD from different integrities.

A recent audit identified 150 licensed DDs. There are 20 ordinands in training, 1 residential, 2 contextual and 17 on regional pathways. Last year 13 DD candidates were recommended. Average over the previous 4 years was 6.

Ordinands preparing for DD ministry will complete an IME 1 programme alongside those preparing for priestly ministry but with a focus on the role of the deacon in connecting church communities with their local communities; as people of reconciliation, as those who minister in community service and education and as those who bridge the church and the world. As with all ordinands, training is also given as to how to live with and embrace difference as expressed in the Five Guiding Principles.

Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q65 What efforts are being made to foster vocations amongst those people who would identify themselves as coming from a working-class background?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A Widening participation is an important goal within Ministerial Vocations. Ways this is expressed in relation to social diversity include:

- Local/diocesan initiatives such as M-Power in Blackburn, the Mustard Seed Programme in York and the Estates Course in London, encouraging discipleship and raising up local leaders from Estate communities;
- The National Estate Churches Network encourages local indigenous leadership;
- The Ministry Experience Scheme which offers a year's experience to young people from a very wide range of backgrounds;
- The National Mentor Directory – for people from underrepresented groups exploring ordained or formal lay ministerial vocations offering confidence, affirmation and support.
- Agreed methodology across the NCI's for measurement of social background. Benchmarking to begin in 2021;
- The new Shared Discernment Process, launching in Autumn 2021, seeks to address barriers to people from socially, economically and educationally deprived backgrounds discerning a call to ordained ministry
- Working with TEI colleagues to consider new and creative formation and assessment methods.

COMMITTEE FOR THE MINISTRY OF AND AMONG DEAF AND DISABLED PEOPLE

Ms Josile Munro (London) to ask the Chair of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People:

Q66 We are very thankful for the work that Roy McCloughry as our National Disability Advisor has done and wish him well in his retirement. What actions are being taken to maintain and develop the aim of being an enabling church? What are the plans to maintain, develop and expand work with the national institutions and diocese to ensure that the Church is responsive and accessible to people with disabilities, mental health challenges, or on the autism spectrum?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Council for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People:

A I share your warm appreciation of Roy McCloughry's work as National Disability Advisor.

For me personally and for colleagues on Archbishops' Council and CMDDP, ensuring full inclusivity for people with visible and invisible disabilities is a gospel imperative. As a Church we must make a difference to the way people with all kinds of disability experience the ministry and mission of the Church.

In the context of Transforming Effectiveness, it would be irresponsible to appoint to this post when the structures and resources for all national work are in flux. We are developing a clear understanding of what changes we seek, how such change will be resourced, and only then will ask what the role of the NCIs in such change might be. That does not mean that work with disabled people, in church and in society, is any less of a priority for the Church as a whole.

MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Q67 With the knowledge that the Armed Forces Bill incorporating the Armed Forces Covenant, currently before Parliament and due to be enacted this Summer, will impact on the Church of England and Dioceses who have signed the Covenant who will then be required to show 'due regard' as concerns all service personnel and their families as well as veterans in the provision of Education, Health Care and Housing Services – will he now reconsider his answer given to me in February and invite the Chairman of the Business Committee to find time for an urgent debate to show best practice and our response to the Bill at the Summer Group of Sessions?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

A We will be studying the progress of the Armed Forces Bill as it progresses through Parliament. Once the Bill becomes an Act of Parliament, we will consult to form a picture on how the Church of England and Dioceses who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant expect it to impact on them. If the view from parishes and dioceses is that a General Synod debate on the subject would be helpful, then we would be happy to request one from the Business Committee and support a debate if requested.

It is, of course, a matter for the Business Committee to determine whether such a debate should have a place on the Synod's agenda.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Q68 Given the Church's commitment to freedom of religion and belief globally, what is its commitment to upholding it in England for those whose employment or public appointment is threatened because of their Christian faith or for parents who resist indoctrination of their children in schools in ways contrary to their beliefs and values?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

A As GS 2197 notes, freedom of religion and belief (FoRB) is seamless – there is no true freedom if it is not enjoyed by all faiths and beliefs, and all peoples. Threats to FoRB take different forms in the domestic and other global contexts. In the Church of England we give thanks for the relative freedoms we enjoy whilst remaining vigilant against the erosion of those freedoms.

There is no room for complacency, and we monitor cases and developments closely. In our various conversations with government, the Equality and Human Rights Council and others, we continue to press for religious freedom to be accorded its proper place as a fundamental liberty, of equal status to other freedoms and rights.

The Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Q69 In July 2019 I asked a question about the forthcoming changes to marriage registration. These have taken some time to come to fruition. Given a starting date of May and the limited training provided by the GRO, what steps are being taken by the Church of England to ensure that clergy understand and are able to implement these changes?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

A We have been seeking to work in partnership with GRO to ensure that all clergy and administrators can access the training provided by GRO. We have also co-presented with GRO two Q and A sessions. In addition the Life Events Team has hosted webinars linking the practical changes with the pastoral experience of couples coming to be married. Further webinars are being offered on Monday 26th April in the afternoon and evening. Practical tools are provided to clergy through www.churchsupporthub.org and in partnership with Church House Publishing.

This has been a long journey to ensure that the church's concerns were incorporated as far as possible in the revisions which were driven by the political agenda, and we believe we have got the best achievable outcome. The programme for introducing the changes was determined by the Parliamentary timetable and has been outside our control.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:

Q70 With National Lockdown not due to end until June 21st 2021 and a decision pending as to whether the York Group of Sessions should take place just under 3 weeks later either on-line or in person – will the Business Committee consider offering Synod Members a ‘blended’ Synod for those unwilling to attend in person for a variety of health and other reasons – should a decision be subsequently reached to meet in person?

Canon Robert Hammond to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:

A Currently it is not feasible for Synod to meet in a ‘hybrid’ manner with some members participating remotely and some in person. This is for two reasons:

- It would require the creation of bespoke video-conferencing software to enable this to happen securely in either London or York. Planning, implementing and operating an IT project such as this would both take considerable time and involve significant costs.
- The Standing Orders of General Synod may require changes to make meeting in this format legal.

Clearly the GSBC is unable to introduce the necessary legal and practical arrangements necessary for a ‘hybrid Synod’ to take place prior to July 2021. However, we will keep the situation under review and will discuss with the Presidents and Officers of Synod should they deem it necessary to introduce such changes in the future.

CLERGY DISCIPLINE COMMISSION

The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester) to ask the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission:

Q71 Several clergy who have appealed to their bishops over their handling of CDM judgments are known to have obtained financial settlements linked with Non-Disclosure Agreements. Please could General Synod know

- the number of such cases since 1 January 2004
- the settlement size in each case, and
- how synodical approval for these settlements was obtained in each case?

Dr Jamie Harrison to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission:

A The Clergy Discipline Commission does not collect data in relation to the existence of any financial settlements or non-disclosure agreements, whether entered into in connection with CDM proceedings or otherwise.

There is no statutory provision for the use of financial settlements or non-disclosure agreements in allegations of misconduct that are made under the CDM. The Measure, along with the Clergy Discipline Rules 2005 and Code of Practice, make clear that all penalties by consent and determinations by a tribunal or court should be made public. In the response to the IICSA recommendations submitted jointly by the National Safeguarding Steering Group, the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council, a commitment was given that any new disciplinary system would take the same approach.

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

Ms Christina Baron (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q72 What was the process by which the, subsequently withdrawn, "Advice for hosting a Maundy Thursday meal at home" was produced and signed off?

The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q73 Who authorised the publication of the Seder liturgy which appeared briefly on the Church of England website in Holy Week and what consultations took place within the Church of England and with representatives of the Jewish community before its publication?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A With permission, I will answer questions 72 and 73 together.

The short form of prayer referred to was intended as a way for households, unable to gather in church on Maundy Thursday, to commemorate the institution of the Eucharist and look forward to sharing in the sacrament in the future. It was not intended as a contribution to the Church of England online services or for use in public worship.

The sensitivity of some of the elements was noted by members of the Liturgical Commission during the preparation of these domestic

resources for Holy Week. It is clear that the prayers should not have been published or filmed, since they may have been misunderstood by some as promoting the use of the Seder by Christians.

We apologise unreservedly for any offence caused, and will continue to work alongside key Jewish partners (who, we understand, appreciate this was an unfortunate error of judgement) and other interfaith contacts to encourage mutual understanding.

Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q74 In recent weeks there has been much negative reaction to a Church of England twitter post about how we “loved every minute” of broadcasting during the stressful and challenging year since the first lockdown. Then an item was posted online promoting a ‘Christianised Seder’ on Maundy Thursday. The latter was withdrawn and an apology issued. Who authorised these posts, and how is the risk of such posts causing offence or reputational damage managed?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A Comments on all of our social media channels are published only after an internal approval process has been completed. This process includes input and final sign off from the relevant owner of the proposed comment. Members of the comms and digital teams are fully aware that the posts are not to be used to express personal views and must reflect the official position of the Church of England on any specific issue. This ensures that statements made are done with the approval and sign off of the relevant office holder or issue owner.

The reference to ‘lov[ing] every minute’ was a response to the supportive and overwhelmingly encouraging feedback on the online services and other content provided by the Digital team which began in the first lockdown.

In relation to the withdrawn Maundy Thursday prayers, I refer you to my answer to questions 72 and 73.

Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q75 Who composed, and signed off, the Church of England’s prayer for the National Day of Reflection in March 2021, specifically its petition, “As we remember those who have died, help us to trust they are at peace with you”?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A The resources for the National Day of Reflection were gathered from various sources, including the Liturgical Commission and the Life Events Team.

The Commission’s own offering, entitled *An Act of Prayer... to mark 23 March*, does not make use of this prayer. Given the sensitivity surrounding the liturgical commemoration of the departed, the Commission always recommends to those who draw up and use prayers in such contexts to retain the language used in our authorized and commended resources, in particular as found in the *Book of Common Prayer* and *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Mrs Enid Barron (London) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q76 When will the Church Commissioners know if the move to appoint four alternative directors to the board of ExxonMobil (see answer to Q39 at the Feb 2021 session of General Synod) has been successful and, if it has not, what further action do they plan to ensure that their relationship with ExxonMobil is in line with the Church’s Ethical Investment Policy?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The alternative directors have been formally nominated to the board by the activist campaign supported by the Church Commissioners, and are on the ballot for the ExxonMobil Annual General Meeting on May 27th. The results of investors’ voting decisions will be found out on the day.

Should the campaign not be successful the Commissioners will review their relationship with the company in accordance with their climate change engagement approach and restriction criteria (see Question 83). In the event of success we will continue to engage with the company and support the new directors in implementing a transformation programme that will bring the company in line with investors’ expectations and the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q77 What is the current level of investments held by the Church Commissioners in renewable energy, clean technologies and other climate solutions; what percentage of the total Commissioners' investments do they represent; and what steps are being taken to increase these investments, as requested by the motion passed at General Synod in July 2018?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A At year-end 2019, the Commissioners held approximately £480m of assets with an explicitly positive environmental focus (c.5.5% of total assets under management) which included:

- Several specialist funds focusing on renewables and energy efficiency;
- 31 MW wind power capacity on our timberland (which provides enough electricity for the equivalent of around 20,000 homes); and
- 104,000 acres forestry, with 5 million trees planted since 2019.

This figure excludes our largest public equity mandate with one of the world's leading sustainability-focused managers.

We expect the figure to increase when the 2020 analysis is complete, as over the past year we have invested in:

- A UK Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure fund, with our £30m investment matched by the government; and
- Further direct and specialist renewables and energy efficiency funds.

We continually assess new opportunities and have a strong pipeline, including 168MW of additional wind power under construction on our timberland, which would provide enough electricity for the equivalent of 108,000 homes.

The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q78 Noting the 2030 Net Zero target adopted at February 2020's General Synod to help address the Church's contribution to the climate emergency; further noting the increasing urgency of the biodiversity crisis and decline of species, and the Prime Minister's pledge to protect 30% of the UK's land and sea for nature by 2030;

what plans do the Church Commissioners have for helping address the biodiversity crisis by protecting 30% of their 105,000-acre landholdings for nature by 2030?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A We are currently undertaking a natural capital assessment of the Commissioners' 92,000-acre rural portfolio. This will provide baseline results on the existing ecosystem features, such as air quality. Once this assessment is complete, we will develop a measurable strategy for achieving net zero whilst protecting and where possible enhancing nature across the portfolio – mutually reinforcing and interdependent aims.

Mr Bill Seddon (St Albans) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q79 Given the direction of UK agricultural policy, how are the Church Commissioners supporting tenants in transitioning to regenerative agriculture in general and encouraging participation in the Environmental Land Management pilot schemes in particular?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A Our current focus on encouraging regenerative farming practices within new farm tenancies includes obligations in respect of soil analysis and testing at the beginning and end of tenancies to ensure ongoing soil health. A more robust tender process will, in future, allow potential tenants to evidence their environmental credentials alongside their future improvement plans for the holding in question.

Where existing tenancies are in place, the decision to participate in Environmental Land Management tests and trials rests with the land occupier, in this instance farm tenants. Nonetheless, our managing agents discuss relevant environmental opportunities when appropriate during regular meetings with our tenants.

The Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q80 What are the Church Commissioners' plans to reduce the environmental impact of tenants' activities on the Commissioners' land?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A We are seeking to improve the environmental impact of farming activities by implementing changes to Farm Business Tenancy clauses for all new lettings of over 2 years. This will require new tenants to ensure that soil quality is maintained throughout the term and degradation does not occur as a result of agricultural cultivations, having a positive subsequent impact on many farm practices and the surrounding environment.

The Commissioners are discussing this area with similar institutional landowners, sharing best practice and ideas on improving the environmental impacts of tenanted rural estates.

The Revd Canon Mark Bratton (Coventry) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q81 What are the preliminary results of the Church Commissioners' natural capital assessment of their landholdings; specifically, what area of woodland, SSSI, and Priority Habitat (as defined by Natural England) is in the possession of the Church Commissioners; and what plans do the Commissioners have to improve the condition of nature in any existing SSSIs and Priority Habitats they own?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A To date we have received the initial carbon baseline results, with the wider natural capital baseline information to be finalised in the second quarter of this year. Given the scale of the portfolio this exercise is not straightforward and requires significant data gathering and analysis. The headline results have highlighted that, as expected, certain farming practices, such as dairy production, are high emitters of carbon, but land uses which have high carbon output can be offset and balanced by CO₂ removals from improved grassland and woodland.

From the publicly available land cover data, approximately 13,000 acres of woodland, SSSI and priority habitats are held within the Commissioners' rural portfolio. Once the full results of the assessment are available, we will develop a strategy to tackle emissions and environmental issues (see also Questions 78-80).

Mr Bill Seddon (St Albans) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q82 What steps are the Church Commissioners taking to ensure they meet their 2025 GHG emissions reduction target?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Commissioners have an interim target to reduce our public equity and direct real estate emissions by 25% by 2025, in line with a 1.5C scenario and Asset Owner Alliance guidance. As data improves, targets will be set for all asset classes. We have analysed these portfolios' carbon footprints and will focus on the highest emitting assets.

As our public equity portfolio is externally managed, we do not select individual stocks, therefore we are engaging our managers on their emissions and decarbonisation strategies. We are also actively identifying low carbon assets.

Likewise, engaging tenants and managing agents is key to reducing real estate emissions, along with identifying opportunities for efficiency improvements or renewable energy sourcing.

Whilst restrictions (see Question 83) will reduce our footprint, truly tackling climate change relies on reducing emissions in the real economy. Engaging large emitters on emissions reduction strategies continues to be vital in the long term.

The Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q83 What 'climate hurdles', or criteria for disinvestment, have the National Investing Bodies set for oil and gas companies to meet in 2021 and 2022?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The focus areas for 2021 and 2022 are:

- 2021: Pushing energy companies to set targets aligned with global governments' emissions reduction commitments.
- 2021: Encouraging high carbon companies to integrate climate change into their operational decision making (The scope of our restriction programme covers all 167 companies covered by the Climate Action 100+ initiative, which represent 80% of emissions from publicly listed companies).
- 2022: Urging demand side companies (i.e. other high carbon sectors, such as automotive, airlines and steel) to set targets aligned with global governments' emissions reduction commitments.

In line with the 2018 Synod motion, fossil fuel companies not aligned with the Paris goals will be restricted by 2023.

Dr John Appleby (Newcastle) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q84 How does the financial performance over the last five years of the investments by the NIBs in fossil fuel companies compare with their investments in renewable energy companies?

Loretta Minghella to answer as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A Given that our active managers change their equity positions over time, it is very difficult to gather up to date, granular data.

However, given the MSCI All Country World Alternative Energy index has returned an annualised +18.5% over the last 5 years, and the overall MSCI All Country World Energy has returned an annualised +0.8%, it is highly likely that our renewable energy investments have outperformed those in traditional Oil & Gas over that period.

We note that different parts of the market will outperform at different times – for instance, the Alternative Energy index has declined -10.4% in 2021, whilst the broader Energy index has returned +22.2%. The Commissioners hold around 1.5% of the public equity portfolio in Energy stocks, compared to 3.4% for our benchmark, and we remain intentionally underweight in this sector for both financial and responsible investment reasons.

The Ven Elizabeth Snowden (Chelmsford) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q85 What level of investments were held by the Church Commissioners in oil and gas companies at the end of 2020?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Commissioners held 1.4% of the public equity portfolio in Energy stocks as of 31 December 2020 (equating to 0.5% of the total portfolio). This equated to less than half of our benchmark's weighting in these securities.

Due to expected restrictions, as a result of our engagement activity guided by TPI data, coming into force over the next two years (see Question 83), we expect this figure to decline significantly.

The Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q86 Given that BlackRock has advised the New York City Pension Fund that disinvestment from fossil fuels does not negatively affect, and may in fact improve, financial returns, what steps are the NIBs taking to ensure that they do not suffer financial losses due to stranded assets?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The NIBs' climate engagements specifically target companies highly exposed to transition risks, and stranded assets. Engagements include pushing companies to adopt strategies fit for a low carbon future and ensuring their capital expenditure is in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The NIBs' restriction criteria (see Question 83) will result in companies unwilling to pivot, and therefore most exposed to stranded assets, being restricted from the portfolio.

Additionally, the Church Commissioners are co-leading a global initiative encouraging banks to adopt net zero strategies and reduce their exposure to potentially stranded assets, thus tackling the issue from this systemically important angle too (see Question 87).

Each NIB is also integrating this challenge into its investment decisions. For example the Commissioners and Pensions Board have significant allocations to the [FTSE Transition Pathway Initiative Climate Transition Index](#), further minimising exposure to companies with high carbon assets and fossil fuel reserves.

The Revd Canon Jeffrey West (Oxford) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q87 Given that Barclays and HSBC have financed fossil fuel companies with around £88.5 billion and £65 billion respectively since the Paris Agreement in 2015, what steps are the National Investing Bodies taking to call on banks to stop lending to fossil fuel companies?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Church Commissioners are co-leading a global initiative engaging the largest global fossil fuel financiers, including HSBC and Barclays, on developing robust and ambitious net zero strategies. This campaign is supported by other investors with \$11trn of assets under management.

They have developed a set of investor expectations highlighting the steps investors expect of banks to reduce their financed emissions

in line with the Paris goals. This includes a call for banks to set targets to reduce financing of all high carbon activities, from fossil fuels to land use change, and withdraw services from clients that fail to align with the Paris Agreement.

The initiative is also working with the Transition Pathway Initiative to develop a net zero banking standard that objectively measures the quality of banks' climate targets, disclosure and strategy for achieving net zero.

The campaign represents a significant global effort to engage the largest, systemically important banks on climate change.

Ms Sophie Mitchell (CEYC) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q88 Recent research conducted by Tearfund and Youthscape found that 8 out of 10 young Christians in the UK think Christians should respond to climate change, and only 1 in 10 think their Churches are doing enough to respond. Considering the Church's commitment to grow younger and more diverse, has there been any effort to include the voices and views of young people in decisions on the Church Commissioners' investments, with particular regard to land use & shareholdings?

Loretta Minghella to answer as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Commissioners do listen to young people in their decisions. We are committed to diversity, of which diversity of age is an important component. The investment team who manage the portfolio on a day to day basis and make recommendations to the Assets Committee, includes a number of young people, particularly in our 7 person strong Responsible Investment team, all of whom care passionately about our response to the climate emergency and other social and environmental issues. In 2020 the Commissioners joined the net zero asset owner alliance, committing to net zero in alignment with the Paris agreement. Also in 2020 we produced our first impact report showing our approach and commitment to climate solution investments, and made funds available to the Archbishops' Council for a Social Investment Fund. Research suggests that young people particularly advocate for these kinds of investments.

The Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q89 Public Health England reports that access to green space is an important factor in health and wellbeing, including reduced depression, anxiety, fatigue, and enhanced quality of life. Low-income communities often have reduced access to these green

spaces. Covid-19 has particularly highlighted these inequalities. What is the Church Commissioners' policy in considering local community wellbeing when making decisions over land tenancies and sales, and is this policy conveyed to land agents responsible for management and sales?

Loretta Minghella to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A We fully recognise the importance of green space for health and wellbeing.

When considering any disposals (lettings or sales) of property, we will typically advertise opportunities on the open market to seek to ensure that all local stakeholders have an opportunity to register their interest.

Our managing agents are familiar with our approach. A number of existing tenancies within the Commissioners' portfolio are to local community groups including parish councils and sports associations allowing for land use as allotments, sports pitches and sports clubs for wider community use.

The Revd Canon Anne Brown (Truro) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q90 *Coming Home*, the recent report of the Commission of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York on Housing, Church and Community, states that the Commission has created 'An interactive map that accurately identifies all church land'. Diocesan Leaders are able to request access to these maps via the Good Steward Mapping Tool, but the maps have not been made publicly accessible, with the stated reason being concerns over dioceses experiencing pressure from developers. Developers already have easy access to this information via their land acquisition teams, but the wider public – who might be called upon to help defend Diocesan land from being developed – do not. Will the Church Commissioners consider taking steps to have the maps made public?

Loretta Minghella to answer as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Archbishops' Commission has carried out detailed work with property consultants, Knight Frank, to begin to map the entire land ownership of the Church of England. This goes far beyond the land ownership of the Church Commissioners. The Commissioners remain in close contact with the Commission and its successor body, the Housing Executive team, to engage with its plans for the future ownership, hosting, maintenance and use of this map.

Mr Andrew Gray (Norwich) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q91 In view of the new tripartite document (GS2206P) regarding the future governance of the CCT, will the process of revising the management framework involve a neutral third party (an individual or organisation unconnected to the DCMS, Church Commissioners and CCT) to advise on best practice?

Dr Eve Poole to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Churches Conservation Trust is jointly funded by the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport and the Church Commissioners, which is why the management agreement is between these three parties. The Government oversees many arms-length bodies and has standard arrangements in place for managing Accounting Officer responsibilities.

Mr Gray raised the matter of independent third parties with me at the November Synod, and I have briefed my Committee, and the Church Commissioners' Board of Governors, as well as our counterparties at DCMS about his concerns, and also discussed them with the CCT. We have written to Mr Gray three times since with responses to a number of other questions and would be happy to have a meeting to discuss his detailed concerns.

Mr Andrew Gray (Norwich) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q92 With reference to the re-commencement of "champing" (GS2188X) can the Church Commissioners confirm that CCT churches involved in "champing" [unsupervised camping in churches] are providing alternative escape routes, detection and warning systems, fire-fighting equipment, lighting and emergency signage in line with practice for historic buildings issued by HM "Fire Safety Risk Assessment for Sleeping Accommodation" as stipulated by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005?

Dr Eve Poole to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Churches Conservation Trust takes the safety of its Champing™ visitors extremely seriously and complies with the general requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other safety legislation. The Government's Fire Safety Risk Assessment for Sleeping Accommodation applies to places whose main purpose is the provision of sleeping accommodation, so it does not apply to CCT churches. The CCT commissioned health and safety specialists to develop its framework for managing the risks of Champing, and a site-specific assessment is completed for each church and reviewed regularly. Visitors are thoroughly

briefed, and the churches have fire and smoke alarms, signage and appropriate emergency lighting. The Trust also holds comprehensive public and employer liability insurance for all its Champing churches. Nevertheless, we urge members of Synod to alert the CCT over any specific concerns, and remain at Mr Gray's disposal for a meeting to discuss the matter further.

Mr Tom Hatton (Southwark) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q93 As part of the forthcoming review process (outlined in GS2206P), will the Church Commissioners, mindful of the fire which destroyed St George's Church in Goltho, Lincolnshire and the illegal rave held at All Saints East Horndon on New Year's Eve, insist that the CCT insure their buildings against fire and flood in line with other heritage organisations?

Dr Eve Poole to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:

A The lightning strike at Goltho and the illegal rave at All Saints were very unfortunate. The Churches Conservation Trust has stabilised Goltho, and is planning repairs at All Saints, for which the local community has raised £25,000 in support. As a Government-funded body, the CCT follows the Treasury rules which are also applied to the Historic Palaces, namely a self-insurance model, where buildings and contents insurance are not taken up. This is because the significance of the building is in the fabric, and if that is destroyed by fire or flood it cannot be replaced like-for-like. Where the damage is less severe, then options for repair and restoration would be considered if sufficient historical fabric remained in place. Nevertheless, the CCT does insure those buildings which it has developed, e.g., St Paul's, Bristol and All Souls, Bolton, and holds appropriate public and employer liability insurance for its churches.

Mr Tom Hatton (Southwark) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q94 How much Gross and Net profit has "champing" [in CCT properties] made for each and every year it has been undertaken?

Dr Eve Poole to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:

A Champing™ enables members of the public to camp out overnight in a CCT church. It was launched as a new initiative by the CCT five years ago and has attracted international acclaim. While its intent was primarily to grow the CCT's income, Champing has also proved a great way to attract new audiences to enjoy these special buildings. Over 5,000 guests have visited since it started, resulting

in 529 new memberships for the CCT. It is not appropriate to share commercially sensitive information on turnover and profit, but we can confirm that there was a profit for the first two years, and a slight deficit on the scheme in the next two. The CCT has learnt as the project has developed, and expects this activity to return to profit in 2020-2021. A version of Champing is soon to start in Romania, inspired by the positive example of the CCT.

PENSIONS BOARD

The Revd Andrew Lightbown (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q95 Bearing in mind the Church's Net Zero targets, what proportion of the Pensions Board's properties have an EPC rating of Grade C or above, and what steps are being taken to improve the efficiency and lower the carbon footprint of properties owned by the Pensions Board?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Pensions Board:

A Based on most recent EPC assessments, 30.2% of CHARM Rental properties had an EPC rating of C or better. This proportion should increase as the benefit of subsequent energy efficiency improvements are captured when the next EPC is completed. (The cyclical programme was temporarily paused due to Covid). 99% of flats in the Board's Supported Housing schemes are EPC C or better.

For context, c39% of domestic EPC ratings for England and Wales are C or higher.

Following the February 2020 resolution, the Board commissioned Net Zero feasibility studies for CHARM and Supported Housing. This has identified further interventions which will be integrated into the Board's property care programme. The studies also illustrated the very significant challenge of affordably moving beyond gas heating without giving rise to fuel poverty. The demise of the Green Homes Grant further highlights the urgent need for public policy action in this area.

Dr John Appleby (Newcastle) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q96 Given that the BT Pension Scheme and Aviva have set net zero targets for their investments of 2035 and 2040 respectively, have the NIBs considered bringing forward their net zero target date to sooner than 2050?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Pensions Board:

A The NIBs will be presenting an update on Climate Change to General Synod in July, that will further detail progress made in delivering on our commitments.

The Pensions Board has been instrumental in developing the first global Net Zero Investment Framework (NZIF) that was launched last month. This Framework provides a credible and transparent basis for the Pensions Board to deliver on its net zero commitment by 2050 or sooner. In accordance with the NZIF and the Asset Owners Alliance commitment we made last year, we will be publishing our interim targets later in 2021.

As we do this it will help inform our roadmap of decarbonisation and the feasibility of reducing emissions more rapidly whilst continuing to fulfil each of the NIBs' various fiduciary duties.

The Ven Elizabeth Snowden (Chelmsford) to ask the Pensions Board:

Q97 What level of investments were held by the Church of England Pensions Board in oil and gas companies at the end of 2020?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Pensions Board:

A As of the 31st December 2020 the Church of England Pensions Board had £8.9 million invested in oil and gas companies, which represented 0.3% of the Board's investments. This is a 77% reduction in our holdings relative to December 2019, when our oil and gas holdings totalled £39 million.

The Board's investments in oil and gas were considerably reduced following the implementation of the FTSE TPI Climate Transition Index in 2020. This is a new Index that we have instigated, which provides an independent and rigorous way to differentiate between companies that are beginning to transition in line with the Goals of the Paris Agreement and those that are not.

The Board's approach to engagement with the oil and gas sector is detailed in our recently published Stewardship Report.

The Revd Canon Mark Bratton (Coventry) to ask the Pensions Board:

Q98 What steps are the NIBs taking to ensure that carbon offsetting is not used by oil and gas companies as a substitute for reducing fossil fuel production and the associated carbon/greenhouse gas emissions?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Pensions Board:

A The role of offsetting is an active part of engagements undertaken by the Pensions Board with oil and gas companies through global engagement initiatives such as Climate Action 100+ (CA100+).
Whilst there is a need for a rapid transition of the global economy from dependence on oil and gas, different transition paths are emerging among oil and gas companies. Questions remain over the exact role off-setting should play in these paths.
The NIBs are actively involved in working with investors internationally to have credible standards for any intended use of off-sets, as well as independent academically rigorous tools to assess individual company plans against those standards.
We continue to drive understanding and progress on these issues through activities such as the Transition Pathway Initiative and will be providing regular updates through our stewardship reporting.

The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q99 Have the NIBs raised concerns with Shell about its plans to increase gas production by more than 20% in the next few years and, if so, what response did they receive?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Pensions Board:

A Yes, we have. The Pensions Board continues to lead global engagement with Royal Dutch Shell on behalf of Climate Action 100+ (CA100+) and have been in extensive discussions with Shell about their transition plans and the role of gas within the plan.
The company has pointed out that in all future energy scenarios, including the most ambitious, there remains oil and gas albeit with declining trajectories. They have stated that their transition plan and anticipated role for gas is consistent with their targets.
Our engagement continues to focus on ensuring credible targets that are aligned to the Goals of the Paris Agreement and a corresponding strategy consistent with those targets.

Mrs Kathy Winrow (Oxford) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q100 Have the NIBs calculated the total land and other offsetting requirements/plans of Shell and all the companies with net zero ambitions, bearing in mind the limited capacity of the biosphere to absorb carbon admissions? Have the NIBs considered the associated human rights impact on indigenous communities?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Pensions Board:

A We are mindful that good quality credible off-sets have a potentially important role to play in the transition. We are not, as a fund, in a position to calculate all off-setting land needs of all companies; however, we are working with international investors to understand this requirement and how this relates to the oil and gas sector.

The Board continues to discuss with Shell the scale and feasibility of the projected land needed for off-setting part of its customers' emissions based on the energy purchased (including from UK petrol stations). We are also working across the investment industry and with the oil and gas sector to develop standards for the use of off-sets.

We take the issue of associated human rights considerations in indigenous communities very seriously. Examples of our action are set out in our Stewardship Report 2020 available to download here [PB Stewardship Report 2020 FINAL.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#).