

GENERAL SYNOD

Summary of decisions by the House of Bishops and by its delegated committees

October 2020 – March 2021

1. This summary of decisions includes a summary of decisions made by the House and by committees delegated under its Standing Orders to handle business on its behalf.

THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS (HOB)

2. Due to the pandemic, the House of Bishops has increased the frequency of its meetings as from March 2020. All the meetings of the House recorded here were held remotely using Zoom software.
3. All the matters reported were taken in a Committee of the whole House under Standing Order 14.

House of Bishops 19 October 2020

4. Safeguarding: The House considered the report on “The Anglican Church” from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) which had been published on 6th October 2020.
 - The House voted to agree with the findings of the IICSA report and to endorse the actions arising from it.
 - The House voted to with the proposal that the Church should move towards establishing an independent safeguarding structure with a new trustee body responsible for safeguarding, to take responsibility from the Archbishops’ Council.
 - The House agreed to the establishment of an interim arrangement to be put in place for additional independent oversight of safeguarding, prior to the establishment of the new trustee body.
5. Emerging Church: The House voted to endorse the shared vision as set out by the Archbishop of York in his Vision and Strategy diagram.
6. Administration of Holy Communion: The House voted to approve the circulation of an opinion by the Legal Advisory Commission on “Holy Communion: Reception of the Elements” to those Bishops who were due to attend a Study Day on this matter later in the month.

House of Bishops 9 November 2020

7. The House to agreed to amend Standing Order 4 of the Standing Orders of the House to permit its meetings to be scheduled at a minimum of 24 hours’ notice, subject to the agreement of at least one of the Archbishops

House of Bishops 23 November 2020

8. The House unanimously approved the Religious Communities Regulations 2020.

Monday 14 – Tuesday 15 December 2020

9. The House approved two items using the Deemed Procedure:

- Approval of a change to the Shared Discernment Process HB(20)97
- Mutuality in Finances Subgroup Autumn Output Report HB(20)100

Tuesday 19 January 2021

10. The House discussed the administration of Holy Communion and voted to delegate further work on this matter to a working group.

11. The House voted to reconvene the Implementation and Dialogue Working Group on the Five Guiding Principles to consider further points raised in discussion.

Tuesday 9 February 2021

12. The House voted to endorse the on-going work on an independent structure for Safeguarding and agreed that an update on this work should be on the agenda for the Informal Meeting of Synod Members on 27th February.

13. The House voted on two proposals regarding Lay Ministry as follows:

- Agreement to the development of proposals for a new national framework for lay ministry;
- Agreement to the development of proposals for the simplification of the Canons on Lay Ministry.

Wednesday 17 March 2021

14. The House considered a number of reports from the Emerging Church workstreams. No formal decisions were made.

THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS STANDING COMMITTEE (HBSC)

House of Bishops Standing Committee Wednesday 4 November 2020

15. The Standing Committee agreed a number of items of business for the Agenda of the December meeting of the House of Bishops

16. Safeguarding: The Standing Committee endorsed the Church of England's response to the IICSA report on "the Anglican Church". The Standing Committee endorsed the plans by the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners' Board of Governors to fund an Interim Redress Scheme for Safeguarding survivors.

17. The Standing Committee agreed that the House of Bishops should in due course consider the matter of the reception of the Elements in Holy Communion once the working group had prepared its report. They agreed that a date in January 2021 originally allocated for a joint meeting with the Roman Catholic and Anglican Bishops should instead be used for a Study Day for Bishops who wished to discuss this item.

House of Bishops Standing Committee 10 March 2021

18. The Standing Committee approved a number of items for the Agenda of the March House of Bishops.

19. The Standing Committee approved a number of arrangements for future meetings of the House of Bishops including agreeing to continue with the pattern of the House meeting on a monthly basis by Zoom in 2021 – 2022.
20. The Standing Committee agreed some agenda items and arrangements for the September meeting of the College of Bishops, including agreeing that – subject to the Government’s Roadmap – the College of Bishops should meet residentially in Oxford in September 2020.
21. The Standing Committee agreed to request the Archbishops’ Council to consider bringing legislation to General Synod to give legislative force to the General Synod Code of Conduct.
22. The Standing Committee made a number of decisions regarding its own operation, including the shape of its future agendas and its membership.
23. The Standing Committee agreed that the Delegation Committee should be abolished and that the Standing Committee should itself take on its duties on an interim basis pending wider governance reforms.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS DELEGATION COMMITTEE (HBDC)

House of Bishops Delegation Committee, 5 November 2020

24. The Delegation Committee met for an Extraordinary Meeting to consider the outputs of the Study Day on the administration of Holy Communion which had taken place on 21 October.
25. The Committee requested the Chair of the Liturgical Commission to prepare a paper for the November House of Bishops to report matters arising and to request a January meeting of the House to consider more fully the materials arising from the Study Day.

DEVELOPMENT AND APPOINTMENTS GROUP (DAG)

Development and Appointments Group (DAG) 21 January 2021

26. DAG agreed to set up a working group to explore actions to be taken to help increase the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic clergy serving as Archdeacons.
27. DAG agreed that the generic “main responsibilities” section of Deans’ role profiles should be updated in light of the Cathedrals Measure. DAG asked the Deans of Coventry and Durham to take this work forward with the College of Deans on behalf of DAG and changes will be agreed by the College of Deans, and DAG on behalf of the House of Bishops.
28. DAG agreed that the appointments processes for Deans and Residentiary Canons also needed to be updated to reflect the Cathedrals Measure. DAG will consider this further at its meeting in May 2021.
29. It was agreed that as the Emerging Church work develops, consideration to be given in ongoing leadership programmes to the skills that will be required from those bishops who will be involved ministering in a changed church over the longer term.

William Nye
Secretary to The House of Bishops
March 2021