

FEBRUARY 2022 GROUP OF SESSIONS

Guide to the February 2022 group of sessions: A report from the General Synod Business Committee

Introduction

1. The Business Committee is charged under Standing Order 4 with settling the agenda for each group of sessions and determining the order in which business is to be taken. Subject to Standing Order 1, it is also responsible for all matters relating to the sessional arrangements of the Synod (Standing Order 125).
2. This is the second meeting of the Synod in this new Quinquennium following the Inaugural Synod in November.
3. This report falls into four parts:
 - Part I comments on practical arrangements for the February group of sessions.
 - Part II comments on general categories of Synod business.
 - Part III comments on the shape of the agenda for the February group of sessions.
 - Part IV reports on other work and recent decisions of the Business Committee.

Part I: Practical Arrangements for the February group of sessions

Sessional Arrangements

4. The General Synod will be meeting at Church House, Westminster. However, at the request of the Presidents, some arrangements have been made for those for whom it is impossible to attend in person to participate remotely.
5. A full COVID-security and risk assessment will be carried out prior to the meeting and any necessary adaptations will be made to the building and to room arrangements throughout. Sanitizer points will be supplied throughout the building.
6. The Synod will be meeting in line with the Government guidelines that are in place at the time of the event. As these guidelines may be evolving, full details of any COVID safety requirements will be supplied in a Notice Paper and in pre-advice to Synod members. However, whatever the Government guidelines say at the time, members are requested to wear face coverings when in Church House, except when addressing Synod or eating or drinking.
7. Synod members are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test prior to participation at the Synod meeting and may make use on arrival (and during Synod) of the free COVID-testing centre in the Harvey Goodwin Suite for this purpose. Synod members are also invited to use a coloured lanyard which indicates their preference with regards to social distancing. The Business Committee would like to encourage Synod members to respect the preferences of those who are wearing red and amber lanyards. Following feedback from some members, members of Synod – whatever their choice of lanyard – are encouraged to think carefully about each others' needs, and about the public

health situation, which is of course much different from that prevailing in November last year.

8. For those members who prefer to sit at a distance from other members the proceedings in the Chamber will be livestreamed in the Hoare Memorial Hall and the Bishop Partridge Hall. It is also possible for Synod members to watch proceedings from the public gallery. Arrangements for voting are being finalised and separate information will be provided on this.
9. The Presidents, in consultation with the Business Committee have decided that there should be some 'hybrid' configuration, with some members participating online. The Business Committee has noted that operating in this way will require considerable additional resourcing to run both parts of the meeting as well as careful communications and training for members. This may be somewhat basic and run less smoothly compared with a wholly in-person meeting or wholly remote meeting but the Presidents felt that it was important for those who could not attend in person to be able to participate. Members are asked to accept that there may be some teething problems and to be understanding with staff as we all navigate how limited hybrid will operate.
10. Due to the reconfiguration of Church House, and the installation of the COVID-testing centre in the Harvey Goodwin Suite, there will be extremely limited availability of rooms in Church House for fringe meetings and displays. However, there are many venues in the close vicinity of Church House which may be hired for fringe meetings, including facilities at nearby Churches. A guide to these venues – with contact details for the venue organiser – has been issued separately so that those wishing to hold fringe meetings can find a suitable venue at a convenient distance from Church House.
11. The formal business of Synod will begin at 1.45 pm on Tuesday 8 February. The timings of the sessions are as follows:
 - 1.45 pm – 7.00 pm on Tuesday 8 February
 - 9.00 am – 12.30 pm and 1.45 pm – 7.00 pm on Wednesday 9 February
 - 9.00 am – 12.30 pm and 2.00 pm – 4.30 pm on Thursday 10 February
12. The House of Laity will be meeting from 4.40 pm – 6.00 pm on Thursday 10 February.
13. There will be a few hard copies of the Agenda available at the Synod help desk together with printed copies of the Order Papers for all members.

Synod Worship

14. The Chaplain to General Synod is the Revd Andrew Hammond. He would welcome the any suggestions from Synod members regarding Synod worship and is also keen to hear from any Synod members who wish to volunteer to lead or participate in Synod worship. Any members who would like to make suggestions or be involved in aspects of Synod worship at future groups of sessions should contact the Chaplain at synodchaplain@gmail.com.
15. The group of sessions will begin with an act of worship and there will be acts of worship throughout the group of sessions either in the Chamber or in Church

House Chapel. There will be a Synod Eucharist in the Assembly Hall from 9.00 am – 10.00 am on Wednesday 9 February; arrangements for this service will take full account of the public health situation on the day. The full details and timings of worship are listed at the start of the agenda.

Private Members' Motions and Diocesan Synod Motions

16. There are four Private Members' Motions ('PMMs') on Special Agenda III. In determining the order in which PMMs are to be debated, the Business Committee has regard to the number of names supporting a debate on the motion. Members can add their names to those supporting a debate on a PMM by signing the relevant list. These lists may be signed electronically by emailing synod.pmms@churchofengland.org.
17. It is also possible for members to sign PMMs at a group of sessions by adding their signatures to the forms available at the Information Desk or via the Synod App.
18. Unlike PMMs, Diocesan Synod Motions ('DSMs') which have not been debated are carried over into the new quinquennium. There are currently 13 DSMs from the previous quinquennium listed in Special Agenda IV. Two of these, the DSMs from Canterbury and from Durham have been scheduled time on the agenda.

Part II: General Categories of Synod Business

19. When constructing agendas, the Business Committee seeks to view the agenda as a whole and to ensure that it covers a balance of subjects. Synod business tends to fall into four main categories as follows, although inevitably, some of the subjects which come under these areas may overlap.

Standing items

20. This includes items such as the debate on the Business Committee Report and Synod Question Time.

Legislative business

21. Full details of the legislative business for a group of sessions are set out in Special Agenda I.

Ordering the life of the Church

22. Business which concerns the way we order our own life together.

The Church and the World

23. Business which debates current issues and takes account of the way in which the Church relates to our public context.

Part III: The Shape of the February Agenda

24. In order to facilitate a hybrid meeting of Synod, the Standing Orders made under Section 1 of the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020, which lapsed in 2021, will need to be revived. Members will be

invited to debate these. It is only if these are passed by Synod that the hybrid elements of the meeting can take place. If it is not passed, we will continue the meeting with those in the Chamber. For this reason, the Standing Order changes will be introduced as the first item on the Agenda.

Standing Items of Business

25. After the debate on the Standing Orders under Section 1 of the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020, the February group of sessions will begin with opening worship and the presentation of the Prolocutors of the Convocations and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity to the Presidents by their respective proposers and seconders. This will be followed by a **Presidential Address** by the Archbishop of Canterbury.
26. There will be the usual debate on the **Report from the Business Committee**, which offers Synod members the opportunity to comment on the agenda or on the content of the Report. There will be a short item to enable Synod to agree the dates for its meetings in 2024 – 2026.
27. The Business Committee has given serious reflection to the handling of **Synod Question Time** having received substantial feedback from Synod members on how they experienced Synod Question Time at the Inaugural Group of Sessions. This feedback may be categorised as follows:
 - Concerns that there was insufficient time allocated on the Agenda to enable a reasonable number of Questions to be answered;
 - Concerns about the number of Supplementary Questions asked by individual members and a number of requests that there should be a limit on the number of Supplementary Questions which an individual member should be permitted to ask;
 - Concerns about the tone and atmosphere of Synod Question Time, with some members feeling that the attitude towards those answering questions was very aggressive and disrespectful, and that this lent a hostile and unpleasant tone to the whole item;
 - Queries regarding how the National Church Institutions might be held to account by Synod and suggestions that there might be other modes of doing this, including Select Committee style ‘hearings’ or other in-person engagement;
28. After consideration, the Business Committee offers the following response to these concerns. We have allowed **1 hour 30 minutes** for Synod Question Time on Tuesday 8 February and **a further hour** on Wednesday 9 February. This has been done in order to enable more questions to be reached and further opportunities for supplementary questions than at previous groups of sessions.
29. Given that this meeting will be held in a hybrid format, in order to enable the Chair to run the item more smoothly and to take Supplementary Questions in a more orderly manner, all members (whether attending in person or remotely) will be asked to submit their request to put a Supplementary Question by 4pm on Friday 4 February, using the Request to Speak Inbox or via the Synod App. Further details will be circulated in advance of the meeting. Members are not

required to state the matter of their Supplementary Question in advance. The Chair of the Questions Item will prepare a Questioners' List in advance.

30. The Business Committee will be considering the handling of Question Time and the Standing Orders relating to it at its forthcoming meetings. The Business Committee invites Synod members to remember that the General Synod is a Christian body and encourages them to engage in all business in a spirit of generous enquiry. The Business Committee would like to ask Synod members voluntarily to **limit to two** the number of Supplementary Questions that they ask in one Question Time session, in order to allow other members to ask questions and to enable more questions to be reached.
31. The Business Committee will reflect further with the Officers and others regarding other means for Synod members to scrutinise and engage with work at national level. The Business Committee invites Synod members to start this conversation by attending the Zoom **feedback session** on Thursday 24 February (see below for details). Suggestions may also be sent via the Clerk email at clerk@churchofengland.org

Legislative Business in February

32. The General Synod's main role as set out in its constitution is to make legislation. Synodical legislation takes the form of Measures and Canons ('primary legislation') and orders, regulations and other instruments ('secondary' or 'subordinate legislation'). The Synod also makes provision for matters concerning the Church of England by means of Acts of Synod and other instruments where provision having the force of law is not required.
33. The legislative business at this group of sessions consists of
 - **The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules (Amendment) Rules 2022** which make amendments to the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules with a view to reducing carbon emissions.

Ordering the Life of the Church

34. There will be an item on the Report of the Clergy Remuneration Review. This item has been scheduled by the Business Committee because it was requested to do so by the House of Clergy Standing Committee. The report considers the findings of a survey of over 3,000 stipendiary, self-supporting and retired clergy and a separate survey of diocesan secretaries/senior leadership teams. The report was published in July 2021 and circulated to members of the previous Synod for information as a GS Misc paper at the July 2021 General Synod. Synod will now have an opportunity to consider and debate the report.
35. There will be a motion confirming the appointment of the Chair of the Appointments Committee and a motion approving the appointment of the Chair of the Dioceses Commission.
36. There will be a joint Motion from the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners on the process regarding the handling of the report of the Governance Review Group. This report was presented to Synod in November by the Bishop of Leeds. This motion asks Synod to note the work of the National Church Institutions in analysing the recommendations of the report, looks ahead

to possible legislation being brought to Synod in due course, and commits to regular engagement with Synod on this work going forward.

37. There will be a take note debate on the proposed changes to the membership of the Crown Nominations Commission for the See of Canterbury. This forms part of the wider consultation and is a chance for General Synod to discuss the proposed changes set out in the consultation document. It is not a final debate on changes to the Standing Orders, rather it is a first opportunity for the Synod to discuss the proposal and issues set out in the consultation document. This debate will enable Synod members, and the Archbishops' Council, to hear a range of views about the proposals as they consider the issues, and ahead of their sending in their own individual responses to the consultation.
38. There will be an update item on Safeguarding which has been brought by the National Safeguarding Team and the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding.
39. The Presidents have requested that there should be time for group work during the group of sessions. The Business Committee hopes to find ways to allow those joining the Group of Sessions remotely to participate in the group work. Details on the practicalities of these will be circulated on a Notice Paper. The group work will cover the following areas:
 - Vision and Strategy to enable Synod members to develop thinking and input into the Emerging Church of England set of initiatives which are shaping the Church of the future.
 - Diversity, difference and disagreement: resources for effecting culture change. This will be an opportunity for Synod members to engage with different resources produced by the Church, including the Difference Course sponsored by the Archbishops which seeks to encourage reconciliation and conversations across boundaries and the Pastoral Principles.

The Church and the World

40. There will be a presentation on the work of the newly-established Archbishops' Commission on Racial Justice, introduced by Lord Boateng, the Chair of the Commission. The Commission will engage with Synod on a regular basis during this Quinquennium as it carries out its work. There will then be a Take Note debate on a report from the Archbishops' Council on racial justice issues more broadly, including an opportunity to comment on the report published last year by the Archbishops' Task Force on Racial Justice, "From Lament to Action".
41. There will be a Presentation followed by a take note debate on the ongoing work on lay engagement under the title of "Setting God's People Free". This will be an opportunity for Synod to take note of the progress on implementing the recommendations set out in the original report in GS 2056 and how this work is now being drawn into the framework of the Archbishops' Vision and Strategy initiative.
42. Synod will also be debating the Diocesan Synod Motion from Durham on "Challenging Slavery and Human Trafficking". The Business Committee decided to schedule the Lichfield DSM on the "Persecuted Church' at this group of sessions due to the urgency of the matters it covers and the projected meeting of the Lambeth Conference in 2022.

43. The Canterbury Diocesan Synod Motion on the “Review of Qualifications for PCC Membership and Entry on the Church Electoral Roll” has been included as contingency business. If it is not taken this February, it will be scheduled on the agenda for July.

Part IV: Other Work of the Business Committee

Business Committee Feedback Session

44. The Business Committee will be hosting a Feedback Meeting on Zoom on Thursday 24 February from 5.30 pm – 7.00 pm. This meeting will be an opportunity for Synod members to meet the new Business Committee and to have an open discussion on how they are experiencing the life of General Synod and how they might like Synod to evolve in the future. Details will be circulated after the group of sessions.

Establishment of the Elections Review Group

45. The Business Committee will establish the Elections Review Group at its March meeting. A major task for this group will be to review the process for the introduction of the new Synod Elections software and to make recommendations for how online elections might operate in the future. The Group will be chaired by a member of the Business Committee and will consist of members of General Synod as well as others. Synod members who would be interested in being part of this group should contact the Clerk to the Synod.

Synod App

46. There is an app available for use by members of Synod which provides access agendas and papers and which enables members to submit requests to speak amongst other things. The latest update of the Synod App included new functions such as text search, saving reading progress, annotation, account login and a web version of the App. The web version of the App which was introduced in November 2021 enables Synod members to access the App and its functions on any device with internet access.

Feedback on General Synod groups of sessions

47. The Business Committee has now put in place a regular process of requesting Synod members to complete a post Synod questionnaire to give their feedback on the most recent group of sessions. Synod members are encouraged to complete the Feedback Questionnaire following each group of sessions so that improvements can continue to be introduced. Each Business Committee report provides a short analysis of the main points raised in the Synod Feedback Questionnaire and indicates how the Business Committee is responding to this feedback. Unfortunately due to a technical issue, it has not been possible to produce the summary for this group of sessions.

Accessibility of Synod Meetings

48. Members are referred to the Business Committee’s statement on Accessibility (GS Misc 1201) which may be viewed in the Members’ Resources section of the

Synod web page at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/GS%20Misc%201201%20.pdf>.

49. The accessibility policy was last reviewed by the Business Committee in December 2020. Since then, the Accessible Synod Group is working on a range of improvements to accessibility and is introducing changes at each group of sessions.
50. The Business Committee will consider the learnings from the hybrid elements introduced at this group of sessions, and will look at further refinement based on the experience at future Synod meetings.

List of Speakers at General Synod meetings

51. In recent groups of sessions, the Business Committee has introduced the practice of publishing the list gathered of all those who spoke in debates and other items on the floor of Synod. This information is already public in the form of the Report of Proceedings and is used by the Panel of Chairs, the list just makes the information available in a more user-friendly form. Chairs are always encouraged to call a wide range of speakers in debates.

Record of Business Done

52. The Legal Office produces a formal record of business transacted at each group of sessions of the General Synod in the form of 'Business Done', which is published on the Synod page of the Church of England website.

Business Committee Policies

53. The Business Committee has a number of policies covering various aspects of Synod's activities which are reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. These and other guidance may be viewed on the Members' [resources section](#) on the Church of England website.
54. The [Guide to the General Synod](#) and the [Synod Members' Survival Guide](#) may be especially helpful as members prepare for the group of sessions.
55. Synod members are encouraged to be proactive in publicising the work of Synod, and social media is a great platform for this. The hashtag used on Twitter is #Synod. There are several social media channels which members have used in the past. However, members are reminded of the importance of being respectful to each other and that social media comments are seen by many both within and outside the Church.
56. Synod business is recorded and livestreamed on the Church of England YouTube channel, and occasionally broadcast on the BBC Parliament Channel as well. Members should consider this when participating in the chamber.

On behalf of the Business Committee, Robert Hammond
Chair of the Business Committee
January 2022

Membership of the Business Committee December 2022

Chair (elected by General Synod)

Canon Robert Hammond

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd Martin Gorick, Bishop of Dudley

Elected by the House of Clergy

Fr Paul Cartwright

Revd Mark Ireland

Revd Jody Stowell

Elected by the House of Laity

Mr Clive Scowen

Mrs Michelle Obende

Mr Nic Tall

Appointed by the Archbishops' Council

Mr Joseph Diwakar

The Secretary to the Committee is the Clerk to the Synod, Dr Jacqui Philips.

Forecast of future General Synod business

This contains potential items that are likely to come to a future group of sessions, it is not an exhaustive list as other items may be added and does not guarantee that an item will be scheduled.

July 2022

Legislative business

- Revised Mission and Pastoral Measure – First Consideration
- CBF Investment Fund – Measure authorising scheme of arrangement
- Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2022 (*deemed business*)
- Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2022 (*deemed business*)

Non-legislative business

- Update from the Environmental Working Group on progress to Net Zero
- Policy paper on Lay Ministry
- Policy paper on revision of Clergy Discipline Measure
- Amendments to CNC Standing Orders
- Canterbury DSM on the “Review of qualifications for PCC membership and entry on the church electoral roll” (if not taken in February)
- Engagement with “Living in Love and Faith” Next Steps

For and on behalf of the General Synod Business Committee
Canon Robert Hammond, Chair of the General Synod Business Committee
January 2022