

Report of Proceedings 2021

General Synod April Group of Sessions

Friday 23 April 2021 – Saturday 24 April 2021

Virtual Meeting

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Full Synod: First Day

Friday 23 April 2021

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* took the Chair at 12.30 pm.

The Chair: A very warm welcome to the Synod today. Good afternoon wherever you are and whatever you are doing. I can see a very few of you on a screen in front of me and to my right. Thank you for taking the trouble and the time to join us today; it is deeply appreciated.

On the platform I am accompanied by William Nye to my right, at a suitably safe distance, and Alexander McGregor to my left, at an equally safe distance. I would like now to invite Charlotte Cook to introduce the opening worship, please.

WORSHIP

Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio) led the Synod in an act of worship.

ITEM 1

INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOMES

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed, Charlotte. I now invite the proctors to introduce the newly elected Prolocutor of the Convocation of York to the Archbishop of York. The proctors proposed and seconded her nomination in the recent election to fill the casual vacancy created by the retirement of the Revd Canon Christopher Newlands. I invite the proctors to carry on.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): Archbishops, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you the Revd Canon Joyce Jones as the new Prolocutor for the Province of York.

Joyce was ordained deacon in 1997 and priest in 1998 after training on the Northern Ordination Course. After serving a curacy at All Saints' Church, Pontefract, she became priest in charge and then vicar of a group of rural parishes including Shepley, Shelley, Cumberworth, Denby and Denby Dale. Over 20 years she has seen those parishes safely through several phases of pastoral reorganisation.

I am going to hand over now to my sister in Christ from the Diocese of Leeds, the Ven. Dr Anne Dawtry.

Ven. Dr Anne Dawtry (Leeds): When Joyce recently moved to her current post as

associate priest at High Hoyland, Clayton West and Scissett and Skelmanthorpe, Joyce left her former parishes slimmer, fitter and more fit for purpose for mission and ministry in the 21st century. Joyce has also served as area dean of the deanery of Kirkburton in the Diocese of Leeds, and, as such, has been a wise guide and mentor to many clergy, as well as a training incumbent.

Although a self-supporting minister, Joyce has worked tirelessly for nearly 25 years in full-time ministry. She has been a member of General Synod since 2010 and also a member of the Business Committee, so she understands well the workings of Synod.

Last but not least, Joyce is wife to Mark, the mother of three daughters and also a proud grandmother. Joyce, we wish you very well in your term of office as Prolocutor. Archbishop, we commend her to you now.

The Chair: I call upon the Archbishop of York to respond, please.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): I was being prevented from unmuting myself. I thought the Lord was trying to silence me. I am delighted that Joyce has been elected. I do not have any formal words in front me, you will be relieved to hear, so in very un-synodical language can I say: every blessing upon you, Joyce. We look forward very much to working with you and receiving your wisdom, your prayerfulness and your great experience of ministry into the work of this Synod and for the whole Church of England.

The Chair: Thank you, Stephen, for that deeply formal and --- no, I think I will just stop there.

I would like to welcome a new member as follows: the Revd Esther Prior, Diocese of Guildford, replacing the Ven. Paul Bryer. I also welcome Canon Robert Hammond, newly elected Chair of the Business Committee, and Ms Stephanie Maurel, newly appointed chief executive of the Corporation of Church House. Shall we all wave vaguely at our cameras as a sign of intense enthusiasm and welcome? You are very welcome indeed. That concludes our introductions and welcomes. Accordingly, I now hand over to Andrew Nunn, who is chairing the next item of business, while I run away in order to get behind another camera in order to speak on the next item of business.

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 12.45 pm.

ITEM 28

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. We now take Item 28. This is an additional item which has been included on the agenda at the direction of the Presidents as an opportunity for us to express our support for the Queen and our appreciation of the Duke of Edinburgh following his death. Archbishop, over to you.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby: This is obviously an extremely sad item to bring to the Synod. All of us, I suspect, watching the funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh last Saturday were struck by the image of Her Majesty the Queen sitting by herself and alone, bowed in deep and profound prayer. The example of Her Majesty through this period of bereavement has been extraordinary and the service was remarkable. It had been put together by the Duke of Edinburgh himself, together with the Rt Revd David Connor, the Dean of Windsor, and it showed extraordinary liturgical skill and music that will live in my mind for the rest of my life, I am sure.

At its heart was a deep expression of the Duke of Edinburgh's profound personal faith, his deep reading and thoughtfulness, which all who met him from the Bishops, particularly when preaching at Sandringham, will remember very clearly indeed. He was someone who listened carefully to sermons, questioned the preacher intensely and had read widely.

The example of His Royal Highness through his life, in war and in peace, has been one that should genuinely reach out to all of us. So much has been said about him that I want to just take an extra step forward and look forward. Her Majesty the Queen is now without her beloved husband of 73 years, and in this loyal address we are, with inadequate words, seeking to commit ourselves to continue to pray for her, to show our love and appreciation of her love for God, and her love of the Church, of which she has been the head for almost 70 years, which she has supported at every Synod with speeches that have been eloquent, witty and perfectly delivered.

I do not want to use up much more time than that, except I want to take to some words from a poem by not a normally fashionable poet, Rudyard Kipling, *Recessional*. "The tumult and the shouting dies; The Captains and the Kings depart: Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice, An humble and a contrite heart. Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, Lest we forget - lest we forget!"

Indeed, the busyness and the turmoil of the week of mourning and the funeral have passed, the captains and the kings have gone, but in Her Majesty, and in our memory of His Royal Highness, there remains that call to a humble and a contrite heart, and I therefore propose the motion standing on the Order Sheet, adding only the words, "God save the Queen. Long live the Queen".

The Chair. Thank you, Archbishop. We now move to the debate on this motion. Members are invited to raise a hand; you will remember how to do that. If you are wishing to speak, there is a speech limit initially of five minutes. I call the Prolocutor Simon Butler.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): The clergy of the Church of England are privileged to come close to those experiencing grief in many circumstances. In the nearly 1,500 funerals I have taken in my ministry, it has been an honour to offer the comfort of the love of God in Christ, and the hope that we have in Him, to countless grieving families. It is our particular calling to hold such people in our prayers, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.

As clergy across the land have prayed the Daily Office and offered the Eucharist with and for the people of God over the past fortnight, Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family have joined the names of many others making the journey of grief. Our Intercession list, like many others, is a mix of the prominent and the obscure. Holding the Sovereign in prayer alongside ordinary men and women of my parish is a reminder that even those whom the Book of Common Prayer calls “Christian kings, princes and governors” share in the reality of returning to dust.

But we are not those who mourn without hope, and for even the most ardent Republican among our number in this Synod, we can but admire the sense of faith and trust in Christ that both Her Majesty and the late Duke of Edinburgh have shown in their lives and, in the Queen’s case, in her grief. As we have prayed in our churches and at our altars we have a strong sense of assurance in Christ that the Duke is held safe in the hands of God even as we have commended him to divine mercy.

One thing that perhaps clergy can appreciate, which many others will perhaps be less aware of, is the way in which we, as public figures, carry the hopes, fears and projections of those around us. We can be put on pedestals not of our own choosing and have to face the challenges when life and experience expose us to comment, suspicion or the many other things that people around us feel free to comment on because of our public role. And if that is true for the parish priest or the minister in secular employment, how much more that must be for true for the Duke of Edinburgh or members of the Royal family. I am therefore particularly thankful that Prince Philip inhabited his role with great humanity as well as royal dignity, resisting the temptation to stand on status and privilege, but to be at heart a decent, compassionate man of duty and service; a rounded human being.

Our prayers for the Queen will continue as she now reigns and serves without her beloved consort. May she and her family be sustained by God’s love in these difficult

months ahead, and may we pray, “Rest eternal grant unto him, oh Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him”. Amen.

The Chair. I call Liz Paver on behalf of the House of Laity. Liz, you also have five minutes.

Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield): His Royal Highness the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh was undoubtedly the most revered Anglican layman of his time, totally committed to lay discipleship, as evidenced through his role as patron of the Central Readers’ Council.

Over the past 14 days, it has been our privilege to discover and be amazed by so many aspects of Prince Philip’s life and work unknown to most. A man of faith, vision and challenge, who some 50 years ago, whilst addressing the Church of Scotland’s General Assembly, and reflecting upon the previous 30 years of change throughout the world, remarked that, “... I am convinced that a sane future depends upon the Christian spirit entering into the lives and decisions of men and women, and particularly of the scientists, and the technologists, and the engineers, whose daily work is shaping the new world.”

He concluded by saying, “I find it almost impossible to believe that anyone of intelligence and understanding and with a sense of compassion and responsibility can find a convincing reason to reject the Christian idea as it is outlined in this glorious paraphrase of some of the writings of St. Paul. ‘Go forth into the world in peace, be of good courage, hold fast that which is good, render no man evil for evil, strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the afflicted, honour all men, love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit’.” This was surely His Royal Highness the Prince Philip’s mantra for life.

Prince Philip will have visited every one of the dioceses of the Church of England represented in the General Synod here today, along with most of the churches and provinces of the Anglican Communion worldwide, visiting industrial and commercial sites, schools, universities, research institutions, hospitals, leisure centres and playing fields, and on Maundy Thursdays, the cathedrals.

Those who met him invariably spoke of his in-depth knowledge and real interest in and questioning of their situations, sometimes accompanied by a mischievous aside to help those nervous in the royal presence to relax. Among the millions of young people who have experienced and achieved the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award at all levels many have stated that it has literally changed their lives.

As we attended Prince Philip’s most moving funeral service last Saturday, albeit virtually, the meticulous planning and adherence to Covid regulations were a stark

reminder that here was a man of true faith surrounded by only a limited number of his loving family, just as it had been for so many lay people at the funeral of their family members over the past year.

On behalf of all the members of the House of Laity, may I assure Her Most Gracious Majesty, the Queen Elizabeth, our Supreme Governor, of our continuing prayers for her and her whole family, and for His Royal Highness the Prince Philip as he experiences his new life in Christ upon another shore.

I wholeheartedly support this motion.

The Chair: Thank you. I am now to going to reduce the speech limit to just two minutes and call first of all Gavin Oldham followed by Rachel Jepson.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): I am very grateful to the Archbishops for bringing this motion to the Synod. I would just like to add that, as the Duke of Cambridge said, the Queen and Prince Philip are part of an extraordinary generation, born following the ashes of the First World War. They not only survived yet another World War just 20 years on, but also have had to absorb a massive change in the pace of life, in society, in technology and in culture. What they have coped with we can only imagine.

The Duke of Edinburgh showed in abundance his capacity to move with that massive change, especially so far as young people are concerned. His award scheme and his close involvement with the young people concerned spoke of a real determination to help huge numbers to achieve their potential in life, through a combination of self-discovery, collaboration, an appreciation for diversity and the natural world, empathy and caring, service and compassion. Every family can speak of their own appreciation of this extraordinary generation, but we have indeed been blessed to have had the witness of the Duke of Edinburgh to help guide us through the years ahead. Thank you.

Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham): I was keen to take this opportunity to share publicly the debt of gratitude I owe personally to Prince Philip. I am most thankful for the huge influence he has had on shaping my life, and the endeavours which have formed and continue to form my life experience since being a teenager.

As a 14-year-old girl I was given the opportunity through school to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. The bronze medal took me to the Malvern Hills and fostered a lively spirit of adventure within me. I learned self-reliance and developed courage and determination. At age 15, the silver medal gave me my first taste of teaching, which developed into my commitment to choose teaching as a career. At age 17, the gold medal took me to the Lake District, taught me to knit and practise yoga. I participated in my first Cathedral Camp at Exeter, where I developed leadership skills as

well as management and team-building skills, and went on to lead a dozen Cathedral Camps.

The scheme has provided endless stories to share which I will always hold dear, like the time we were stampeded by sheep in the Lake District. It provided the opportunity for me to meet people from other walks of life and to develop close friendships that still hold dear today. I was selected to represent England in Malta, alongside other international gold award holders, and also went on a special expedition to Hong Kong and China, as back in 1987 China was interested in starting the award scheme. The person I am today rests firmly on the foundation of these experiences and continues to inform my life choices.

So, thank you Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh for your spirit of adventure and life-long commitment and service, especially in setting up the awards scheme which bears your name.

I therefore wholeheartedly support this motion.

The Chair: There is no one else indicating a desire to contribute to the debate, so I now invite the Archbishop to respond to what we have heard. Archbishop, you have up to two minutes if you need that.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): Thank you so much to those who have contributed: to Rachel, among the millions who have experienced the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme; to Gavin, to Liz, to Simon, those were heartfelt and beautiful tributes.

I particularly picked up on Simon's comments about funerals as one of the great privileges of ministry, and the way in which that funeral, for many people, enabled them to grieve more fully than they had been able to during the lockdown. And to Liz's comments about the unknown work and, particularly, that beautiful quotation about the Christian spirit in the lives of scientists and people specialising in technology and other disciplines like that.

Having heard those comments, I formally propose the motion on the Notice Paper.

The Chair: Thank you, Archbishop. I am now going to put Item 28 to the vote using the Crystal Interactive platform. Just to remind you of the words of the Motion: "That this Synod request that the Presidents convey to Her Majesty the heartfelt sympathy of the Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the General Synod of the Church of England on the death of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, assuring Her

Majesty of the honour in which his memory will be held by them and of their prayers for Her Majesty and all the Royal Family.”

If Members are content to accept the motion, they should select “for” and if they are not content, they should select “against”, and Members are able to abstain by selecting “abstain”. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 28. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 277 voting in favour, none against, with one recorded abstention.

ITEM 29

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Chair: We now move to Item 29 which is the Presidential Address. I invite the Archbishop of York to give this Presidential Address.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): When George Floyd was murdered last year his last words were: “I can’t breathe”.

Those words echoed around the world, summing up so many people’s experience of not having the space to be themselves, of being second-class citizens in someone else’s world. This is the antithesis of the belonging and the new humanity we have in Christ that the Christian faith declares. It is, therefore, a Gospel imperative for the Church of Jesus Christ to oppose racism in all its forms, to prophetically call for racial justice, and to challenge the white hegemony which so often still controls the narratives of the world.

Racism is a sin. Like all sin it must be confronted with a call to repentance and with the healing, reconciling promise of the Gospel.

Therefore, it was sobering and shameful for the Church of England to be confronted by the *Panorama* documentary last Monday evening with its own institutional racism and a number of shockingly specific instances where sisters and brothers in Christ have experienced racism in the Church of England.

I was interviewed as part of that programme. I also speak as a member of CMEAC, the Committee for Minority Ethnic Concerns, where I have been privileged to work for the past eight years.

There are things I said to the *Panorama* team which I wish had been included in the documentary, not least the clear condemnation of racism that I hope you are hearing clearly now. Nevertheless, I want to thank those who participated in the programme for their honesty and clarity. With Archbishop Justin, I want to emphasise our immediate response to the programme, which is that non-disclosure agreements should not be used except in the most exceptional of circumstances, and then only to protect the victim, not the reputation of the institution. We are sorry that this has not always been the case, and there are other things raised in the programme which are being followed up.

The Anti-Racism Taskforce we set up last autumn also published its inspiring, challenging report on Stephen Lawrence Day this week. It identifies five areas where urgent action is needed, namely: participation, including appointments and shortlists for appointments; education; training and mentoring; work with young people; governance and structures.

We now set about this work and there are some immediate things, such as this Synod being encouraged to co-opt more ethnic minority members; establishing a Racial Justice Commission to look at our working practices, and to hold the two of us to account; replacing CMEAC with a new standing committee of the Archbishops' Council to oversee the work of the Racial Justice Directorate; and including ethnic minority clergy participant observers in the House of Bishops.

In due course there will be a presentation and a discussion at this Synod. But, after Monday evening, we could not let this group of sessions pass without acknowledging the scale of the challenge and the call to action.

There is racism in the Church of England and it must be confronted. But no longer by words. We have to do something. We have to become the change we long to see.

Both the Taskforce and the Commission are now mandated to help us implement 'significant cultural and structural change'. It has our support. As Arun Arora has said: "Apologies and lament must now be accompanied by swift actions leading to real change". As Graham Tomlin pointed out yesterday in a blog *Grace and Race* (which I recommend), "It is the Gospel, not a secular agenda that drives the Church's vision for racial justice so that the Church genuinely reflects and demonstrates the varied and multi-faceted wisdom and grace of God in Jesus Christ".

I say this to you as a white man who has been on a long journey of learning and still has, I am sure, a long way to go. But let me finish with a little story that radicalised me. Before I went to ordination training I worked at St Christopher's Hospice in South

London for a year. I was a ward orderly. I was the only white man on a team of amazing black women. We became good friends. They taught me a great deal. It was the early 1980s, the time of the Brixton riots, happening only a couple of miles down the road.

One of the women I worked with, Grace, was my partner on the Monday after the weekend riots. One by one, throughout the day, a succession of white men stopped her in the corridor and made the same demeaning joke, asking her whether she had been throwing bricks or smashing up bus shelters at the weekend. Each time, she would patiently smile at their inappropriate joke. But in the afternoon, when a senior consultant made the joke for the umpteenth time, she snapped. She told this so-called senior man what she thought of his derisive humour. She stomped off. He turned to me and said - and I quote - "What is it with these people, can't they take a joke?"

I took a deep breath; the deep breath that I can make as a privileged white man even though I was in a very low position compared to him, and I told him that I had been working with Grace all day and I had been given the tiniest glimpse of the persistent, degrading drip drip of demeaning racism and how I was surprised she had not snapped earlier and that he owed her an apology.

The Church of England owes some of our sisters and brothers in Christ a much greater apology than this; and for much greater wrongs. But, most of all, we owe it to the nation we serve and to the God we love, that in this watershed moment - the week also when George Floyd's killer was brought to justice - we will now commit ourselves to change.

For my own failings and shortcomings in this I am truly sorry. But let me remind Synod: one of our named strategic objectives is to be a diverse church. I am determined to do what I can to make this happen because it is a Gospel issue and I am a Gospel Archbishop. Because it is the theological vision of our belonging to one another in Christ that drives our mission. Because we all need to breathe. And because our facing this issue of racial justice is itself a movement of the Spirit breathing God's life of unity and glorious God-given diversity into God's Church". See," says the Lord, "I am making all things new".

The Chair: Thank you, Archbishop, for that Presidential Address. I know that we are under time constraints here, but I think following that we need to keep a moment of silence as we hold everything we have heard before God, seeking God's guidance, strength and blessing. Let us pray.

The Chair led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Chair: We now move to the next Item of business and Rachel Jepson will be taking the Chair.

THE CHAIR *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 1.19 pm.

The Chair: Good afternoon, everyone, especially if you are tuning in for the first time. It is nice to see a sea of familiar smiling faces even though it is via a screen. Welcome to you all, wherever you are tuning in, to our next formal piece of business for this remote group of sessions.

A reminder about logistics, first of all. Please will members take a moment to ensure that you have renamed yourself according to the protocol we have used for previous remote meetings of Synod. So, number, first of all, including the leading zeros, followed by a space, then the letter of the House to which you belong - Bishop, Clergy or Laity - followed by a space, lastly your first and last name. As you can imagine, that greatly assists the team working together here at Church House. Thank you.

I would like to remind members if you wish to speak on this item you will need to use the raised hand icon on Zoom. Also, should you wish to raise a point of order at any time, please a message to "point of order" using the chat box on Zoom. Consequently, that will alert me as Chair to the fact that there is a request for a point of order. I have every confidence that you will kindly bear with us over any technical challenges we may face during the course of this group of sessions. We appreciate your patience.

Members, I am conscious, as I am sure that you are too, that we have reached a significant moment in the life the General Synod as it is the first time the Chair of the Business Committee is a member of House of Laity. So congratulations Canon Robert Hammond on your election.

Members will be aware of the major responsibility and the workload which the role entails. Please be assured, Robert, that members will be praying for you as well as your fellow Committee members as you work together, especially through these extra-challenging times. We pray for you all to have strength and discernment as you serve General Synod and the wider Church of England.

It is timely too that we offer our sincere gratitude to Revd Canon Sue Booy for all her hard work, guidance and leadership during her tenure as the previous Chair of the Business Committee. Thank you, Sue. Members will note that there will be further thanks to Sue on Saturday afternoon.

ITEM 2

REPORT BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (GS 2196)

The Chair: So without further ado, we now come to debate Item 2 on the agenda, the Report by the Business Committee. For this item members may like to have GS 2196 to hand. If you are hoping to speak in the debate please note that the speech limit will be three minutes from the outset.

I call upon the Chair of the Business Committee Canon Robert Hammond to speak to and to move Item 2. You have up to 10 minutes.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): Thank you for those very kind words.

I am delighted to be presenting this Report as I think the first Lay Chair of the Business Committee. I would like to thank Synod for your faith in me and for electing me to this role.

First of all, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, the Revd Canon Sue Booy, who I know is widely respected by many members. As Chair of the Business Committee, Sue has steered Synod through some intense and busy times over the last eight years. Her warmth, impartiality and careful judgment has been valued by all of us on Synod. She will be a very hard act to follow, but I hope to be able to serve Synod as well as she has in this role.

I also want to congratulate Revd Canon Joyce Jones (currently Business Committee Vice-Chair) on her election as Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of York. We will miss you on the Business Committee, Joyce.

This is the second time that we have met using the provisions from the Remote Meetings Measure, passed by Synod in September 2020. I accept that this is a more challenging way of meeting, but it is not currently possible for us to meet in person, and I appreciate your understanding and forbearance with these remote sessions. Do remember to consult both your practical and voting guidebooks for further details on how this meeting will be run, and to contact support@churchofengland.org if you have any questions. Do not worry, Synod staff will circulate that email in the Zoom chat very shortly. It is also a good idea to keep an eye on the Synod app and Synod website and your emails for Order Papers and additional Notice Papers.

We have a full agenda for the next two days, and, in planning the agenda, the Business Committee has endeavoured to provide sufficient screen breaks between items. As with the November Group of Sessions, members of the Panel of Chairs will be present

in Church House, alongside key members of staff to deliver the meeting. All in Church House will be complying with Covid guidelines, including social distancing, wearing face masks and appropriate cleaning. I would like to thank both the Synod staff and the staff of the Corporation for their support with this, and for facilitating this meeting.

We have some exciting items being presented during this Group of Sessions, including a debate on freedom of religious belief later this afternoon, and tomorrow we will be invited to engage with the Report from the Crown Nominations Commission Elections Review Group. There also will be an update on the work by the National Safeguarding Team in response to the Report by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

We have a number of legislative items to engage with. We will be undertaking the Revision Stage, Final Drafting and Final Approval stage for the Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure. The second Legislative Reform Order will be debated later this afternoon, and we will be asked to approve the Clergy Discipline Rules tomorrow.

Following feedback from the meeting in November, we will be handling Question Time in a different way in order to make this item - which is very challenging to chair online - run more smoothly. Members were invited to submit requests to speak by 10 am this morning, and the Chair has used those requests to put together a list of those wishing to ask supplementary questions. This reflects the process used in the House of Lords, and means that for this item members do not need to raise their hands to speak; the Synod Support staff will unmute those on the list and they will be invited to speak automatically.

The Business Committee is also considering how to enable members to demonstrate their support for Private Members' Motions more effectively during this time of remote meetings. It will be looking at closing Private Members' Motions for signature a week before the Business Committee meets and then reopening the Private Members' Motions for signature after the Business Committee meeting has taken place. We will keep you updated on that.

I wanted to take this opportunity to update Synod on the forward plans for the July Group of Sessions. As you will be aware, this meeting is due to take place after the end of all legal limits on social contact, if the Government roadmap continues as planned. The Business Committee will be meeting in May to set the agenda for July, and the proposal will be that there will be a physical meeting at the University of York in July with any necessary safety requirements built in. However, as you will appreciate, this is contingent and dependent on the national situation at the time. Synod support will be contacting you after this group of sessions to understand what the staff and York University can do to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members. The Business

Committee will keep the situation under review and will inform you as soon as we can if plans need to change.

Finally, I do want to say something following the BBC *Panorama* programme on Monday evening “Is the Church racist?” As the Archbishop of York has just said, the Anti-Racism Taskforce Report was published yesterday and Synod members will want to read it carefully and prayerfully and reflect on it. You will see from the forward look on page 8 of the Business Committee Report this will be an important item for the July Synod.

I am looking forward to a stimulating virtual meeting over the next two days.

Thank you, I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The Chair: Thank you, Robert. When making a speech in this debate please remember to address your comments to the shape and content of the agenda rather than mini-debates on substantive items. Item 2 is now open for debate. Please note that the speech limit is three minutes. Please remember to indicate that you wish to speak by raising the blue hand.

Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford): I congratulate Robert Hammond on his appointment. Yesterday, the House of Commons received a report from the Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill which incorporates the Armed Forces Covenant. It took oral evidence from a number of expert witnesses, including myself, on the perceived impact on public bodies, including local authorities, schools, health authorities and dioceses which have signed the Armed Forces Covenant, once the Bill is enshrined in law on receiving Royal Assent this summer.

All such bodies, including the Church of England, 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, school admissions, transport, SEN, healthcare, housing services (including social/affordable housing) and homelessness, and we will need to respond urgently to this.

To advise members of Synod, we last debated the Armed Forces Covenant on 14 July 2014. The motion was approved by 393 votes for and two against. After having debated the Armed Forces Covenant in General Synod, and after being appointed the Armed Forces Champion for the Church of England, we then had both Archbishops, Justin and Sentamu, signing the Armed Forces Covenant with the Armed Forces Minister at Lambeth Palace.

In February 2021, in Synod I asked when we might have a debate in Synod to celebrate

the successful partnership with the NHS in fighting Covid-19, which to date has involved over 17,000 regular and reservist Service personnel. Some 1.5 million Covid-19 tests have been undertaken by the military, including sending up to 2,000 Service personnel to Liverpool, driving ambulances, running temporary mortuaries, delivering oxygen cylinders, testing at Dover Docks, Army medics seconded to hospitals and PPE being delivered, sometimes as many as 20 million items on any particular day, supporting the NHS.

I think that by having a debate now will give us an opportunity to review progress to date with the operation of the Armed Forces Covenant. We need to review what we have been doing so far. I invite the Chairman of the Business Committee to find time for an urgent debate to show best practice and our response to the Bill, if not now then at the latest at the summer group of sessions. Tri-Service personnel have done their very best for us in these great hours of need during the pandemic. It is now time for us to have the opportunity to thank them, and to ensure that no member of the Armed Forces is disadvantaged because of their service in and to the nation. We need to ensure our response and to show our support for the Armed Forces Covenant, and that it is up-to-date, effective and recognisable in all our dioceses. We can also share best practice and be an exemplar. They are the best and they deserve our support now.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): May I congratulate Canon Hammond on his election. I hope that his term is a start to tackling the indifference shown to lay people in the church. I am speaking to page 5 of the Report in respect of accessibility. We are currently in Autism Acceptance Month, but it does not always feel the Church is very accepting of disabled people. There are too many examples - far too many - of where disabled or BAME people are excluded from the Church, from leadership and vocations. Discrimination is often embedded in our working practices, for example, sending out the answers to Questions on a Wednesday to be read by 10 am on a Friday, or how we conduct our business with endless paperwork, or how we have conversations.

I found the answer to question 70 particularly upsetting and hurtful, and it goes to the Accessibility Report. It sends a message that if you are not physically present you are not valued by the Church because you are not able to participate in this body. While many may return to normal, do not leave others behind. If somebody has cancer they would be advised not to attend in July. If somebody, like myself, has ME and I cannot manage after a year of being shut in my house to attend for an entire week, it would be nice to be able to participate in other ways. It leaves me asking: have we learnt anything in this pandemic about inclusion and the things that are possible? I do not believe that bespoke video conferencing software is needed. We could simply suspend the Standing Orders and allow people to speak on the big screen via Zoom, or pair voting members informally so that votes are counted proportionately.

Over the last 10 years I have experienced a lot of discrimination as a disabled person, including being told to keep my disability secret if I ever wanted to explore a vocation or hold a leadership role in the Church. I have heard jokes about disabled people or BAME people. There are many other things that have happened that I saw in the *Panorama* programme and really resonated with me.

We have a culture problem and we need to change. I would ask that after the elections new members are given equality and diversity training, that we adopt a social model not just a medical model of disability, that there is a clear complaints procedure for equalities issues, and all members sign a Code of Practice upon election.

Finally, I would ask that we have a needs assessment of every member of Synod to ensure that every single person can overcome any difficulties they may have to be a full participant of this august body. I thank you, Chair. I am thankful for the work that has happened, but we have a long way to go, and we must not leave people behind.

Mrs Angela Scott (Rochester): A very similar question to the previous speaker. If the July Synod is able to take place in York, will it be possible to enable those who feel uncomfortable being in this large public arena so soon after the relaxation of lockdown to attend virtually?

Revd Andrew Moughtin-Mumby (Southwark): My congratulations to Robert as well. I want to say that yes, we will talk about the Taskforce's very helpful Report on anti-racism in July, but it seems to me that the issues and examples of racial abuse raised on Monday evening in the *Panorama* programme demand our urgent attention in their own right, not just the acknowledgement we have had at this Synod. Jesus said to his disciples, "It will not be so among you", and yet we again have missed the point. We the Church have missed the point in that the question of racial justice, as Archbishop Stephen said, is a Gospel imperative: a central issue, not an add-on. My worry is that if we do not have enough time to discuss these alarming revelations at this Synod we will lose credibility in the eyes of people within the Church and without the Church when we try to discuss the other matters on our agenda.

Can I ask in this regard and other regards for more plain speaking? Can we please let our yes be our yes and our no be no? Let us say what we mean, and when we say action, let us be clear about what we mean.

We have just heard an important discussion on the question of discrimination. It seems to me that this question of racial discrimination is something that we need to take very seriously as a safeguarding matter. We need to take it really seriously in that when people are discriminated against, we are failing in that Gospel imperative.

I want to speak plainly by saying that, to me, it seems we have allowed ourselves to walk into an overall culture of discrimination in the Church. It is my belief that discrimination is discrimination, whether it is against women, black and brown people, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, differently abled people, whoever. Discrimination anywhere in our Church can so easily lead to discrimination everywhere. We need to all be equally passionate about this question and equally horrified by Monday's revelations, so I would ask please if we could have some time to address those as an urgent matter.

Revd Brunel James (Leeds): In terms of our agenda as a Synod, we need every member of this Synod and every person in a position of authority in the Church of England to take hold of this issue and take responsibility for delivering change. We must not be passive and leave it to others, and especially we must not leave it to global heritage members of this Synod or of our Church.

What the Church needs to understand is that, starting with the Windrush generation 70 years ago, the Church has consistently rejected entire people groups from participating in its life. We cannot gloss over this fact and we cannot expect people to forget what has happened, and goes on happening, and move to other business. Part of what is not provided for in the Report and that we need to have on our agenda is some kind of truth and reconciliation process particularly focused on the dioceses that rejected the Windrush generation 70 years ago and have gone on rejecting subsequent waves of newcomers to Britain. Without this we cannot build trust and build confidence in the community and amongst the communities that we ought to be serving and reaching.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Please may I first explain my unusual background? It is not a row of books. I am actually in a hospital ward at the moment waiting for heart surgery. First of all, can I add my congratulations to Robert for his election as Chair of the Business Committee, and wish him well over the next months, and probably years.

I wanted in a short speech to address two matters, first Questions, and, secondly, Private Members' Motions. First of all, I am pleased to hear of the new arrangements hopefully to allow for a more efficient Questions session later this afternoon, but I am concerned as to how many of the 100 questions we will get through in just 60 minutes, a time that has been shortened by the additional items on the agenda. That is no criticism of those items being inserted. I remind Members that back in November we only got through 40 questions in 90 minutes. I would invite Robert to consider whether it may be possible to extend the session this evening to allow more questions to be reached if, as I suspect will be the case, we do not get through all of them in the one hour allowed.

May I then turn to the question of Private Members' Motions? First of all, I am pleased

to hear the news that the moratorium for signing PMMs electronically will be restricted to just one week before the meeting of the Business Committee.

Secondly, can I refer members to page 8 of the Business Committee Report which sets out the forecast business for the July Synod at York? Members will note that no Private Member's Motion is listed there as forecast business. If you look at the agenda you will see that there are in fact three PMMs, including my one about the Five Guiding Principles, which have reached the 100 signatures qualifying for a debate. My motion was tabled as long ago as March 2017. It is very much a live issue. There have been two recent determinations of the independent adjudicator on parish issues relating to the Five Guiding Principles. There are two other motions, as I say, which have been in the agenda for some while now. My motion was actually on the forecast business back in February of last year for debate in July 2020. Of course, that did not take place. Can I please ask Robert, when you respond to this debate, to give some indication as to whether those motions, which otherwise will lapse when Synod is dissolved, will in fact be included on the agenda in York?

A final point, may I respond to a point that was made by Angela Scott and the question about hybrid meetings in York. In fact, contrary to what is stated in the answer to question number 70, the temporary Standing Orders have been drafted in such a way that a Synod can have a hybrid group of sessions, and the relevant document is the supporting paper that accompanied the temporary Standing Orders.

The Chair: Thank you, David. Time is getting really tight folks, so I am going to ask Rogers Govender to speak and that will be the last speech for this debate.

Dean of Manchester (Very Revd Rogers Govender): Just a very quick comment really to support Father Andrew's comments regarding the Archbishop's Presidential Address, which was an excellent passionate address, so thank you to Archbishop Stephen.

I have to say that I was a little bit flummoxed, as it were, at the end of an excellent speech by the Archbishop that we were simply invited to pray. Of course, prayer is very needed in this area of work, as in all of our work. However, it did remind me of experiences in places like Africa in days of old when missionaries came to Africa and very often the talk was the missionaries had the Bible and the Africans had the land and the missionary would say, "Let us pray", and when we opened our eyes after the prayer, the missionaries had the land and we had the Bible. Prayer can very easily seem like it is ending a debate to a very important conversation that is needed. I want to support Father Andrew's proposal that in the Synod we do not lose the momentum of the mood and all that is going on around the anti-racism work, and that we have some time to discuss and debate it and pass comment. Waiting for July might just lose the momentum a little bit for us as a Church.

The Chair: Under Standing Order 31 I wish to move a motion for closure on this debate. I will put that motion to the Synod by ordering a vote. This is a counted vote for the whole Synod on the motion for closure on Item 2. Voting will take place using the Crystal Interactive platform.

There is a point of order.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): I had wanted clarification on exactly what we were voting for because my concern is there will not be responses to discussions we have had about very important issues. Will there be an opportunity for Canon Hammond to respond? If not, can we move to suspend Standing Orders in order to have a response to some very important issues that have just been raised?

The Chair: Thank you, Sam. I think this is a good moment to explain to members that what will happen during this group of sessions is that when we come to a motion for closure on an item we need to use the Crystal Interactive system, which means we have a count of the whole Synod, and I will read out the results, or whoever is chairing for that particular debate will read out the results, and then we will wrap up the debate in the usual way. In a moment Robert will have a chance to respond and he will have up to five minutes. Hopefully, Sam, that covers the point that you have just raised and reminds us all where we are going over these couple of days.

The motion was put and carried, 270 voting in favour, one against, with no recorded abstentions.

The Chair: I invite Robert Hammond to respond to the debate, please. You have up to five minutes.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): Thank you for those members who spoke. First of all, thank you very much everybody who wished me best wishes for this role. That is very kind of you.

Canon Peter Bruinvels, yes, if the Business Committee is asked to schedule a debate we would of course look at that, and that would probably come from the MPA. As always, if the Business Committee is asked to schedule it is our role to schedule the business in front of us.

Sam, you raised a lot of very important points and, forgive me, I am not going to reply to them all individually now because there were a lot and they were all really important. But please submit those comments through to the Business Committee via the clerk and we will consider them all.

Angela Scott, at the moment under the current IT ability we are not able to have a hybrid meeting and attend virtually in York. We do not have the IT capacity or capability for that. If going forward we need to develop that then we will have to look at that, but at the moment we cannot.

To Fr Andrew Moughton-Mumby and also to Brunel James, I agree with what you say about discrimination. I am sure Synod will be equally enraged about the issues that came out of the *Panorama* programme. We have indicated that time will be available in York and I think it is down to members to keep these issues in their minds during this Synod, and in all the debates during this Synod as well.

To David Lamming, yes, Questions are always a challenge. As you noted, we are trying to do things differently, and hopefully better, this time. As regards to extending the time for Questions, the Chair of Questions will have heard what you have said.

The business forecasts are not set in stone, they are potential forecasts. It depends what other business we have to address there and how other bits of legislation perhaps have progressed. The Business Committee has heard you and when we come to formulate the July group of sessions we will look at all the available items for business and schedule that accordingly.

Finally, to the Dean of Manchester, I am not going to disagree with what you say: prayer is the start as well as the end. With that, thank you.

The Chair: We move to vote on Item 2, the Report by the Business Committee. I put Item 2 to the Synod by ordering a vote of the whole Synod. Voting will take place using the Crystal Interactive platform.

The motion was put and carried, 278 voting in favour, one against, with 13 abstentions.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your contributions. That concludes this item of business. Legislative business on safeguarding will follow in a moment.

THE CHAIR *Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 1.15 pm.

SPECIAL AGENDA I

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

DRAFT SAFEGUARDING (CODE OF PRACTICE) MEASURE (GS 2182)

The Chair. Good afternoon, members of Synod. We now come to the Revision stage for the Draft Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure. In addition to Order Paper I, on which the motions appear, members will need the draft Measure GS 2182 and the Explanatory Notes GS 2182X. The only amendments of which due notice has been given are amendments proposed by the Steering Committee. I draw your attention to the note from the Steering Committee, GS Misc 2871, where the Committee set out their responses that were raised in the First Consideration debate last November and the thinking behind the amendments they are now proposing.

As all the amendments are being proposed by the Steering Committee, the 40-member rule will not come into operation. After the Chair of the Steering Committee has spoken to an amendment it will be immediately open for debate. After any debate it will be put to the vote.

ITEM 505

The Chair. We begin with clause 1. I call upon the Dean of the Arches and Auditor as Chair of the Steering Committee to move the amendment at Item 505. She has up to five minutes.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): Good afternoon, members of Synod. The importance and urgency of this Measure, and of this debate that we are now embarking on, is underlined by the fact that we have moved directly from First Consideration last November to the stage of Revision in full Synod. This sends a strong and important signal of the Church's determination to implement the recommendations of the IICSA Reports. Accordingly, the Steering Committee has reflected very carefully on the points raised by members at First Consideration last November, and we have proposed amendments in response.

There was broad support within Synod for the Measure in November 2020, with concerns expressed falling essentially under three headings: first, a desire for the Measure to play as full a part as possible in embedding good safeguarding into the Church's culture so that we can indeed become a safer church; secondly, a concern about the scope of the draft Measure given the binding nature of the Code and the hosting of responsibility for approving the Code with the House of Bishops, in short, the issue of democratic accountability; and, thirdly, a question about the enforceability of the requirements of the Code against lay people in the list of persons proposed to be bound within the new section 5A(2). The Steering Committee amendments are proposed in response to these concerns.

Please note that because we are considering amendments here to other Measures, all of the drafting can look a bit complicated on the papers, and it is very helpful to look at Annex B and Annex C to paper GS Misc 1271. They are composite versions very helpfully prepared by the officers of the Legal Office to whom I and the whole Steering Committee are immensely grateful for their hard work and support.

Turning specifically now to Item 505, the first amendment - and if you want to see this in context then the best place to look at it is in Annex B to GS Misc 1271 - you will see on page 12 there under subsection (3) that there is some striking through of former words as we saw the words in November and some bold text which reflects the amendments which the Steering Committee now proposes. That is the form for the whole of this Annex B and Annex C.

The new bold text clarifies the relationship of the mandatory Code and the guidance which will also be issued to assist people in complying with the requirements of the Code. The amendment in the bold text makes it clear that the Code will impose requirements on the relevant people in order to discharge our commitment to respond promptly and positively to IICSA, but it also makes clear that guidance can also be given in order to help all that list of people, (a) to (n), to achieve compliance, as will be their legal duty, with the requirements of the Code. So this one, I think and hope, is a simple one. That concludes all I want to say about it, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Item 505 is open for debate. There will be a speech limit of five minutes from the outset. I see that there is no one who wishes to speak on Item 505, so we can move to a vote. This will be a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 505. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 278 voting in favour, none against, with two recorded abstentions.

ITEM 506

The Chair: We now move to Item 506. I will ask the Dean of the Arches to move that item.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): Item 506 is a very minor drafting amendment which has been introduced for clarity. It reflects the fact that the Code will comprise a number of different codes dealing with different matters, in fact, rather like the Bible being comprised of many different books. Although legal provision applies to relate singular and plural to mean one another, we nevertheless

wanted to make this absolutely clear. The amendment puts it beyond doubt that the obligation to comply with the Code extends to each and every one of the codes on the different aspects of safeguarding practice.

The Chair: Item 506 is open for debate. The speech limit remains at five minutes. I see that no one wants to speak so we will move to vote on Item 506. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 506. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 274 voting in favour, none against, with one recorded abstention.

ITEM 507

The Chair: We therefore move to Item 507. I call upon the Dean of the Arches to move Item 507.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): Item 507 responds to a suggestion that was made last November from the remote floor of Synod that the list of relevant persons under subsection (2) of the new section 5A, so the list of people who would be bound to comply with the requirements, should be capable of being amended by Order rather than by Measure.

The thinking behind that, and the Steering Committee found this thinking powerful and right, is to enable the Church to remain nimble in this absolutely critical area of our life and at a time when we know there is great organisational change likely to be happening in the Church, and we heard a great deal about that at Synod in November. Marrying those two things together, combining the importance of being able to respond appropriately in contemporary ways as a Church overall with ensuring that our safeguarding practice keeps in step with any new organisational arrangements that we might have, this amendment ensures that the Archbishops' Council by order may amend. This is secondary legislation, and so it does not have to wait for Synod and have to go through synodical process.

As we change in ways that we do not yet know what they might look like, we need to be ready to be able to adapt our safeguarding law and practice to meet our new organisational structures and posts that might come on board. That is what this proposed amendment seeks to achieve.

The Chair: Item 507 is open to debate. I see that there is no one wishing to speak, so I

order a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 507. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 276 voting in favour, two against, with one recorded abstention.

ITEM 508

The Chair: We move to Item 508. I call upon the Dean of the Arches to move it.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): Item 508 is one part of the response which the Steering Committee makes via its proposed amendments to the concern about accountability in the preparation of the Code. Item 508 really needs to be considered together with Item 509, although for voting purposes we are taking them one by one. Item 509 we will come to next and is the amendment which provides for synodical scrutiny of the Code. I am sure members will appreciate from their reading that these two, if you like, are a pair, forming a coherent response to the concern about accountability.

Clause 5B, Code of Practice: consultation, is the frontloaded part of the response. It requires the House of Bishops to satisfy itself that appropriate consultation has been carried out. Then it lists particular groups of people about whom the House of Bishops must be satisfied that there has been appropriate consultation. Therefore, subsection (2) requires that when the House of Bishops are considering the adequacy of consultation they must specifically and particularly consider whether it would be appropriate to consult the classes of people listed there at (a) to (d).

Members will note, and I hope agree, that it is entirely as it should be that the first group of people are those who have suffered harm owing to the Church's failures in the past. That is the first and I would suggest right and entirely appropriate group of people with whom there needs to be consultation.

At (b) the president or deputy president of tribunals - those officers have been named here because that takes account of their responsibilities under statute and their consequent experience and expertise in the topic of the discipline of clergy, which has an obvious connection with the topic of safeguarding. Then finally under (c) and (d) is the point responding specifically to the democratic accountability point because the House of Bishops is specifically required to assess the extent to which it would be appropriate to consult the Standing Committees of the other two Houses of General Synod.

Again, what we are looking to achieve here is something which is not unwieldy but which proportionately hears the voices with important things to say and points to make about the draft Code, looking here to respond to points made last November, especially about the role of Synod in the process and this scheme of legislation.

With that, and by way of introduction, I hope that that makes clear our thinking and that members of Synod will recognise and endorse the steps being proposed there with regard to what I have called the frontloaded end of this piece of work. We will come to consider the other end, the scrutiny, under the next proposed amendment.

The Chair: Item 508 is now open for debate. I can see that there is no one wishing to speak so we now move to a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 508. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 281 voting in favour, none against, with one recorded abstention.

ITEM 509

The Chair: I now call upon the Dean of the Arches to move Item 509.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): I have already trailed this one to some extent. It is the other half of the response which the Steering Committee proposes to the democratic involvement point, which I indicated at the beginning was one of the main messages that we took from the First Consideration debate last November. This amendment, after much very careful deliberation in committee, is proposed as a way of satisfying the desire for synodical involvement without miring the production of the Code in unnecessary process. What we were looking to do here was to strike a proportionate balance, recognising the great importance of both principles, the principle of being nimble, modern and responsive in terms of safeguarding matters, the absolute existential need for that, on the one hand, and recognising the synodical characteristics and role and character of our Church and the very great democratic importance of that.

What is proposed here is that there be provision for scrutiny by Synod along similar lines to other existing legislation. The Code will be published on the website and a copy of it sent to each member of General Synod. We know that members of General Synod will then conscientiously and carefully consider that, having regard to those two extremely important principles which I have just referred to, and conscientiously decide

whether the Code needs to be called into General Synod or whether it can proceed immediately to come into effect.

As I have said, this is an amendment which looks to strike a proportionate balance between those two very important considerations which might, to some extent, operate in tension because, of course, as Synod is not able to meet every day of the week calling matters into Synod inevitably brings delay. But I am sure from the votes that have already been coming through from Synod in this debate that there is a huge commitment to doing safeguarding well, to learning from our mistakes, putting things right and keeping up to date.

This is put forward as a way of meeting the concerns very properly - and temperately - expressed last November with a proportionate and temperate response, which we commend to Synod and hope that it will find acceptance.

The Chair: Item 509 is now open for debate. I can see that there is no one wishing to speak on Item 509. We can move to a counted vote of the whole Synod on this item. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform. Sorry, Tim Hind.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells): I just want to query one thing that the Dean of the Arches has just said, and that is about the commitment of Synod. I am a little concerned that we have 483 members of Synod and only about 280 here are present and voting. I am sure she is right that we are a conscientious bunch, but I do not think that comment is justified in terms of this meeting that we are having at the moment.

The Chair: John Freeman.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): I have had no end of trouble with the Crystal Interactive voting. I note that in all the motions this morning the amount of people down as not having voted has varied between 22% and 28%. I would have supported all the motions, but this system does not work and I have been unable to. I would like the Secretariat of the Synod to note that I would have voted in favour and something has to be done for those having trouble with the system.

The Chair: John, thank you. I am aware that Synod staff have been working with you on this matter. That is not really relevant to the amendment, Item 509.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): I just wanted to respond to Tim Hind's point. Yes, we are not all present but, then again, we seldom are when we meet in person. To get nearly 300 people voting when we meet in person is normally regarded as quite a good turnout. The truth about this matter is that it is uncontroversial and the nature of debate is that people participate and turn up in much greater numbers when things are

controversial. We are all as one on this issue, I believe, and that reflects why perhaps some people may have chosen to enjoy the sunshine. It does not diminish the Synod's commitment to taking safeguarding very seriously.

Can I also say though that I am puzzled we are using the Crystal voting system most of the time when it is so much quicker to do most of these uncontroversial votes by Zoom.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Apologies, I was not looking at the correct place on my screen to see who wanted to speak, but I can see that there is no one else wanting to speak on Item 509, so we can move to a vote and this will be a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 509. Rightly or wrongly, it has been decided that this voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 282 voting in favour, none against, with two recorded abstentions.

ITEM 510

The Chair: I now call upon the Dean of the Arches to move Item 510.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): Item 510 deals with an amendment which again responds to some points which were made last November. If we have a look at the list of relevant persons in new section 5A(2), letters (a) to (n), we will see that the list there includes four categories of clergy all of whom are subject to the Clergy Discipline Measure, so that is (a) to (d). Then in (e) are readers and licensed lay workers who are subject to legal duties and enforcement under Canons, and various bodies which are subject to a variety of legislation, including charity law, obligations to the Charity Commission and other forms of legislation.

That leaves paragraph (f) churchwardens, in respect of whom it was necessary to ensure that the important new requirement to comply with the Code would be enforceable. This was an important point made in the November debate. The Scrutiny Committee, aided as ever by the Legal Office, turned to the Churchwardens Measure of 2001, which already includes a discretionary power for a bishop to suspend a churchwarden for reasons connected with safeguarding, and therefore the proposal of the Steering Committee is to make a short amendment to the Churchwardens Measure, to extend the discretionary power of the bishop so as to include the failure to comply with a requirement imposed by the Code. That will become a ground for potential suspension in the discretion of the bishop having, amongst other things, taken the advice of the diocesan safeguarding adviser and such other persons as the bishop considers appropriate. That obligation to consult the DSA and others is all there already

in the legislation. It is a very short and simple insertion which is proposed. If members want to look at Annex C, paper GS Misc 1271, then it is very easy to see how the new provision slots in to the existing discretionary power of the bishop. I am stressing the discretionary nature of the power. It is a power, not a duty to suspend.

It may, I believe, be suggested, possibly from a rather novel venue in Ipswich General Hospital, that there should be similar amendments made to the Clergy Discipline Measure with regard to clergy, but the view of the Committee is that there is no need for this. The Clergy Discipline Measure also gives bishops a discretionary power to suspend where a complaint under CDM warrants investigation. That is sufficient because, as we know, failure to comply with one or more requirements of the Code potentially will be a disciplinary matter. The relevant diocesan bishop can, where appropriate, having consulted the diocesan safeguarding adviser ---

The Chair: Dean, could you finish, please.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): --- as appropriate, will have the power to suspend. We consider that our amendment is proportionate, necessary and adequate.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Item 510 is now open for debate. I am going to reduce the speech limit to three minutes.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): As Morag has just anticipated, while welcoming this amendment that she has proposed to add a sub-paragraph (c) to section 6A(1) of the Churchwardens Measure, what we now have is a disconnect between these provisions and those in 36.1 and 37.1 of the Churchwardens Measure.

Section 36.1 deals with discretionary suspension of priests and deacons by the bishop. Section 37.1 deals with discretionary suspension of bishops by the Archbishop. If everybody looks at page 15 of Annex C of paper GS Misc 1271, what we see in the existing section 6A(1)(a) of the Churchwardens Measure is replicated in the first reason for suspension under the CDM. What is in section 6A(1)(b), i.e., "... the bishop is satisfied, on the basis of information provided by a local authority or the police, that a churchwarden represents a significant risk of harm", is replicated in the 2016 Measure which amended the CDM of 2003. And, indeed, the equivalent to section 6A(1)(b) in 37.1 is the basis upon which the Archbishop of Canterbury suspended the Bishop of Lincoln back in May 2019, happily a suspension which came to an end earlier this year.

I am suggesting, and it cannot be done now because there is no formal amendment proposed before Synod this afternoon. I have to acknowledge that I missed my timing on that. Morag has indicated where I am at the moment, which has created certain difficulties, but in order that there is parity between clergy and laity that we do not have a provision which appears to discriminate against the clergy, I would invite the Steering Committee to consider introducing an equivalent amendment to provide in sections 36.1 and 37.1 of the Clergy Discipline Measure a provision for discretionary suspension on the same grounds as we have a section 6A(1)(c) proposed of the Churchwardens Measure.

Ven. Luke Miller (London): I was just going to ask the Dean to clarify that in the list of those who are relevant persons under (n) where it mentions a person who works on any basis in the diocese or parish, does that “any basis” include somebody who is a volunteer? In setting this legislation up, are we wrapping in those many of whom give huge amounts of time, energy and effort to our churches and upon whom we depend but who work as volunteers rather than as people who are employed?

The Bishop in Europe (Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes): I want to warmly welcome this amendment. In the Diocese in Europe we have for a long time struggled to persuade, cajole and impress upon churchwardens the importance of compliance with safeguarding legislation, knowing that we have very little power actually to compel them to do so. This has become a major source of concern which is well addressed, I believe, by this provision. I am very grateful to the Steering Committee for putting this forward. Thank you very much.

Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds): I welcome this as well as all the other amendments that have come in since November. Two things. I agree very strongly with Luke Miller’s point, which I think needs addressing.

My other point is in paragraph 22 of GS Misc 1271, it talks about PCCs, DBFs, DBEs and other bodies which are already under charity law. Could the Dean of the Arches say a bit more about how it is envisaged that action can be taken under charity law for alleged non-compliance? I find it quite hard to imagine how that would work. It sounds immensely complicated, and I wonder if we could have a bit more clarity about that, please.

The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Julian Henderson): I am supportive of this amendment, but I am concerned about the disconnect, as was mentioned by David Lamming, in provision for lay and ordained. The only route at present that is open if a clergyperson is considered to be a threat to the safety of children and vulnerable adults at the church is through the CDM, but, more often than not, the concern does not reach the threshold for the CDM to progress. Yes, there would need to be a right to appeal,

but currently it is possible for a person who is considered by the diocesan safeguarding adviser or by the LADO, or by the police, to be a safeguarding risk to continue in ministry, and for the diocese to have no authority to protect children and vulnerable adults. There needs to be something added in order for there to be some teeth in the way in which we are able to make our churches a safe place. There is no point in having a policy about protection if it cannot be implemented, and that is where we are at present.

The Chair. Thank you. I see no one else wishing to speak. Therefore, we move to a vote on Item 510. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 274 voting in favour, one against, with 11 recorded abstentions.

The Chair. We have a point of order from Luke Miller.

Ven. Luke Miller (London): I just want to ask on a point of order, and I recognise the point has been made slightly earlier, but I would like to ask again. It seems to me to be completely upside down that we ask for points of clarification and then vote on the amendment before those clarifications have been answered and, therefore, it becomes an uncertainty in one's mind whether or not or how one should vote. I would ask whether it is possible for that procedure to be reconsidered.

The Chair. I think on the procedure in legislative business there is no requirement on the mover of the amendment to come back and respond to the points of order. If they wish to do so then they can put their blue hand up to speak.

ITEM 511

The Chair. Synod, we are due a screen break in two minutes, and if we can do 511 before we adjourn that would be great. Let us see how we go. I call upon the Dean of the Arches to move Item 511.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): I will deal with Item 511 and then the advice I am receiving on the responses I wish to make out of courtesy to those who spoke and asked questions before, if I might be permitted very briefly to make those responses, I am being advised this is the correct moment to do so.

Item 511 is the stand as part motion on clause 1, so now is the right moment to respond to the points which were made previously. Obviously, in view of the voting on all of the

amendments and the expressions of support for the principle, I do move that this Measure go forward with the amendments.

As I say, out of courtesy, I would like to respond to members who have raised questions. Archdeacon Luke Miller's question, does the list include volunteers, is it intended to include volunteers? Yes, it does. Certainly, IICSA was profoundly concerned that volunteers should be brought under the proper purview of safeguarding. I see the Archdeacon nodding and I am glad that that answer has pleased him. Indeed, wearing a different hat, yesterday I spent a long time in the National Safeguarding Steering Group looking at some of the draft guidance that is coming forward covering volunteers, and that is being dealt with very well indeed by the National Safeguarding Team.

With regard to action concerning all the various bodies who are covered by charity law, the Charity Commissioners have powers, and indeed duties if matters are brought to their attention, of investigation and powers to remove trustees from office in the event that serious matters are found.

The Charity Commission has publicly stated that it is very committed to good safeguarding, that it takes that extremely seriously, both as a moral principle but also, of course, in terms of the good and proper running and the potential financial liabilities that charitable organisations can get themselves into if they do not do safeguarding well.

On Bishop Julian's point, and I am sympathetic to the practical difficulties which it may be that Bishop Julian has in mind but did not articulate in detail, quite properly, with all due respect that is not really a point with regard to the Code. We have now had the voting on the point which Mr Lamming put before Synod.

Those are my responses, with my thanks to everybody for their courtesy in the way in which they have contributed to this debate.

The Chair: Item 511 is now open for debate. I can see no one wishes to speak, so I am going to put Item 511, "That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Measure" to a counted vote of the whole Synod. Voting will take place on the Crystal voting system.

The motion was put and carried, 290 voting in favour, none against, with one recorded abstention.

The Chair: That completes consideration of clause 1. We now arrive at a screen break. I am going to adjourn this sitting of Synod for 20 minutes. We will resume again at 3.25.

The Chair: Welcome back, members of Synod. I call upon the Chair of the Business Committee to make a speech.

VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): I feel I am earning my money even on my first day. May I suggest under Standing Order 9 that you direct a variation in the order of business so that all the items relating to the 57th Report of the Standing Orders Committee (GS 2198) be omitted from this agenda. That would be on the basis that there will not be time to deal with these matters adequately, and it would therefore make sense to consider them in July.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That has my consent, but it requires the consent of Synod. Therefore, I am going to order a counted vote of the whole of Synod on this motion for the variation of business. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 207 voting in favour, 10 against, with 17 recorded abstentions.

The Chair: Consent has therefore been given to the variation of business.

Now we resume debate on the Draft Safeguarding (Code of Practice). I now call upon the Dean of the Arches to move Item 512, which relates to clause 2.

ITEM 512

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): I have been unmuted. Do you want me to speak very briefly to Item 512?

The Chair: Yes, please.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): I can deal with Item 512 very quickly because, as is clear from page 14 of the GS Misc 1271 paper, they are tiny consequential amendments which simply insert the necessary consequential amendments into the changes to the Churchwardens Measure 2001. There is no further point of principle involved here.

The Chair: Item 512 is now open for debate. I can see there is no one wishing to speak, so we can put Item 512 to the vote. This will be a counted vote of the whole Synod. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 263 voting in favour, one against, with two recorded abstentions.

ITEM 513

The Chair: We now move to item 513, “That clause 2, as amended, stand part of the Measure”. I ask the Dean of the Arches to speak to 513.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): Again, very short in view of the indications given by Synod in relation to these amendments. I move in favour of this.

The Chair: Item 513 is open for debate. I see that there is no one wishing to speak, so we can put Item 513 to the vote. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 513. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 272 voting in favour, none against, with three recorded abstentions.

The Chair: Therefore clause 2, as amended, stands part of the Measure.

ITEM 514

The Chair: There are no amendments for clause 3, so I call upon the Dean of the Arches to move Item 514.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): As you said, there are no amendments. This deals with the technical matters: short title, commencement and jurisdictional extent of the Measure. Given the overwhelming support of Synod for the principle of this Measure, I move that clause 3 stand as part of it.

The Chair: Item 514 is now open for debate. I see that there is no one wishing to speak on Item 514, so we may move to a vote. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 514. Voting will take place on the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 288 voting in favour, none against, with two recorded abstentions.

ITEM 515

The Chair: So now we move to Item 515, “That the Long Title stand part of the Measure”. I call upon the Dean of the Arches to move it.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): This must be uncontroversial, and, accordingly, I move Item 515.

The Chair: Item 515 is now open for debate. I can see that no one wishes to speak, so we may move to a vote. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 515. The voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 294 voting in favour, none against, with two recorded abstentions.

The Chair: That completes the Revision stage for the draft Measure. The Final Drafting and Final Approval stages are on the agenda for tomorrow morning’s sitting.

May I take this opportunity of sending our love and best wishes to David Lamming. We are impressed that your commitment and dedication to General Synod is such that even though you are in hospital you should be in attendance, and we wish you a speedy recovery. Please remain logged on for a debate on international religious freedom.

THE CHAIR *Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 3.49 pm.

ITEM 3

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (GS 2197)

The Chair: Synod, we now move to Item 3 on the agenda, for which members will need GS 2197 and the Notice Paper. I invite the Bishop of Leeds to speak to this motion. He has up to 10 minutes.

The Bishop of Leeds (Rt Revd Nicholas Baines): Synod, if human rights mean anything then the freedom to choose our religion or belief, the freedom to change our religion or belief and the freedom to have no religion or stated belief at all is a right we all have by virtue of being human. It is both an essential element of human dignity, a dignity which as Christians we hold to be God given and rooted in the cultural mandate of Genesis 1, and of secure thriving societies.

No country can fulfil its potential if its people are denied the freedom to hold, to change and to profess their innermost beliefs.

This freedom is a right we must cherish and safeguard. It is fundamental to what forms identity and meaning. It contributes to societal flourishing and is integral to solving many of the major problems facing our world today.

All individuals are entitled to follow what their conscience dictates free from fear, coercion and repercussion.

It does not matter if you are a Uyghur in China, a Bahai in Iran, a Jehovah's Witness in Russia, a humanist in Saudi Arabia, a Jew in Europe, or a Christian in Pakistan. We are all born free and equal in terms of human dignity and rights.

Whenever and wherever this right is infringed, human dignity and flourishing are diminished.

Inevitably, the Church's attention is instinctively drawn to the plight and challenges facing Christians, whether that be in the Middle East, especially in Syria, Egypt and Iraq, or in Nigeria. But, as we know, infringement of this right is not confined to one geographical region or community.

Violations take place across all continents, in many forms. Christians, as made clear in the parable of the Good Samaritan, cannot escape the call of Christ to assist all those in need, regardless of their religion or ethnic group.

To only stand up for the rights of Christians, to remain silent when others are suffering, is an act of self-harm, too.

It undermines the universality of this right and reinforces the sceptic's perception that freedom of religion or belief is a product of the West, rooted in a particular understanding of religion and state. Indeed, if freedom of religion and belief are compromised, then other human rights are not far behind; these are a touchstone for other precious freedoms.

We might well learn from history. As Martin Niemöller, the Lutheran pastor imprisoned in Nazi Germany during the war, noted, "If I remain silent when others are taken then who will speak up when they come for me?"

To remain silent, whether out of prejudice or fear, is to be complicit in the suffering of others. As Niemöller acknowledged, such silence is a sin of which we should repent. However, we should notice his Stuttgart Confession did not go down well in the early post-war years in Germany itself.

Synod, attempts to quantify and qualify religious freedom violations in different countries are not straightforward.

But, the evidence paints a depressing picture. Government restrictions on freedom of religion or belief and societal hostility to minority religious and belief groups are at a 20-year high.

Violations are increasing and intensifying, involving not just intolerance and exclusion but active discrimination. The most severe violations include systemic, organised violence aimed at driving away or subjugating particular religious or belief communities and individuals.

In its ultimate form this can culminate in genocide, a phenomenon that has sadly been seen with increasing frequency, whether that of Christians and Yazidis at the hands of ISIS in Iraq, Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar or Uyghurs in China.

In today's interconnected age it is no longer possible to claim ignorance of these terrible events. To quote William Wilberforce, "You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know."

Synod, this debate provides us with an opportunity to affirm our commitment to defending freedom of religion or belief wherever it is threatened. It gives us space to reflect on new and emerging trends in this field, and to take stock of our own efforts.

Of particular note here is the FoRB Leadership Network - a three-year project involving MPA which is funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to the sum of £5.6 million. That the Church is involved in such a high-profile international consortium reflects the quality of work undertaken nationally and internationally by MPA over previous years.

The experience and credibility that has been accrued in this area now sees the Church involved in various working groups set up to advise the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance - a group of over 40 like-minded countries established in 2020 to improve co-operation and co-ordination in this area.

The Church's involvement in externally funded projects like FoRB Leadership Network and its advisory work with the International Alliance is work that can only be done nationally.

Another significant recent development is, of course, the Independent Review commissioned by the then Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, and chaired by the Bishop

of Truro. We owe Bishop Philip a huge debt for the skill with which he undertook this role.

It is now nearly two years since Bishop of Truro delivered his final Report with its 22 recommendations. The Government are to be applauded for accepting these recommendations in full - and often repeating that commitment. Some progress has been made, but, sadly, their full implementation remains a distant prospect.

To take just one of these recommendations, if we are to reverse the tide of religious discrimination and repression, the training provided to our diplomats needs to change. Religious freedom modules need to be included in mandatory human rights courses organised by the Diplomatic Academy. Foreign policy officials need to be trained in religious literacy to enable them actively to collaborate with faith and belief leaders abroad in order to encourage more home-grown initiatives in support of religious liberty.

The Government have provided strong rhetorical support for freedom of religion or belief and there are signs that this support is being converted into practical action, but this remains unfinished business.

There is a risk that as the Government reconfigure Britain's foreign and development policy in light of Brexit and the global health pandemic, that the defence of this right will be neglected.

The Government's decision to temporarily reduce the aid budget from 0.7% GNI to 0.5% GNI indicates the hollowness of manifesto commitments and the uncertainty of existing funding commitments.

It is not enough for freedom of religion or belief to be referenced in the Government's integrated review. Important though this flourish is, we need the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to set out an integrated, flexible and comprehensive strategy aimed at promoting this freedom and reversing the rising tide of religious intolerance.

We know that the Government face immense challenges going forward, and that difficult decisions will need to be made. They need our support in this endeavour. But we must ensure that, as the Government seek to attract foreign investment and secure new trade deals, the values agenda that has underpinned British foreign policy for the last 25 years is not lost.

In this respect, their decision to oppose the Genocide Amendment to the Trade Bill currently before Parliament is a missed opportunity. It signals - intentionally or not - that trade trumps human rights.

The Report before you proposes ways in which the Church can assist the Government to stay true to its commitments and to keep this issue squarely on the political agenda. It suggests ways in which we can mobilise our resources to engage in collaborative partnerships, grassroots empowerment, and policy campaigns.

We need to be engaging the Church at all its levels in efforts to press for the release of particular individuals imprisoned for their faith, such as Patriarch Abune Antonios, the Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church who has been under house arrest since 2007.

We need to look again at how we might use our companion links to address in particular countries of concern those less visible systemic factors including discriminatory legislation, hate speech, and bias in educational curriculums all of which are the building blocks that deny religious freedom. This can be very effective, as my own experience of advocacy in Sudan demonstrates.

As the Report and motion make clear, much of this work can be done by using resources that will be produced by the FoRB Leadership Network over the next three years.

Synod, despite its import, I say in closing that this is a debate that needs to be conducted with humility. Humility, because the Church has not had an uncomplicated relationship with religious freedom. The bloody history of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation is evidence of that. While religious beliefs can be a motivating force for reconciliation, tolerance and compassion, they can also support exclusionary and discriminatory practices.

It is with this history in mind, I invite Synod to take the opportunity to affirm the Church of England's support for freedom of religion or belief.

The Chair. Thank you. Synod, we have one amendment for consideration. Before opening that for consideration, I wish to invite Ecumenical Representative Archbishop Angaelos to address you. Archbishop, you have up to five minutes.

Archbishop Angaelos (Ecumenical Representatives): Sisters and brothers, Christ is risen, and while one part of the body of Christ has celebrated the resurrection of our Lord, another part, including my own Church, prepares to go into Palm Sunday. Of course, this time is pivotal and is core, and, as Christians, two things automatically come to mind. The first is this is a celebration of hope in the risen Lord and His victory; to liberate us and set us free. Secondly, it is a time that we have seen historically where Christian communities come under attack during these most festive times.

The cross is still being carried by sisters and brothers around the world. Just last week I announced the execution of a 62-year-old Coptic Christian, Nabil Habashy Salama, executed by ISIS in North Sinai for building a church. Two days ago we commemorated the second anniversary of the bombing of the churches in Sri Lanka. Yesterday we commemorated eight years since the Archbishops of the Syriac Orthodox and Greek Orthodox Churches in Aleppo were abducted in Syria.

Today, we see the ongoing suffering of Christians in the Tigray area of Ethiopia and, as Bishop Nick mentioned, the continued house arrest of Abune Antonios, the ecumenical Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church.

Tomorrow I will be in Coventry Cathedral with my brother Bishop Hovakim Manukyan of the Armenian Church to look at the suffering of their communities. We have ongoing infringements in Nigeria, Pakistan, China, North Korea and over 120 countries.

Whether we look at what St Cyril of Alexandria said that “the son is himself an advocate both in name and in reality”, or Nelson Mandela, who said, “We are called to be sacrificial”, the purpose of freedom is to create it for others. What is evident is we are called to action.

I would like to pay tribute to Bishop Philip Mounstephen, the Bishop of Truro, for his review, which confirmed what we have always known, that there is systemic persecution of Christians, but of course it is seen within the context of persecution of other communities: the Rohingya, the Uyghurs, the Bahais.

While our freedom is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 18, those rights are given to us by God, and we, as the Church, must continue to be custodians of those rights; custodians of this truth of the sanctity of life. Luke 4:18 speaks about our Lord being the chief advocate.

In that spirit, I was humbled to be in a room in December 2018 with the then Foreign Secretary, his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, friends from CSW, Open Doors, Aid to the Church in Need, where the review was announced.

We understand the concept of fullness of time. The fullness of time was a serving Foreign Secretary making representations to a Prime Minister, who then approached the Archbishop of Canterbury, who approached a Bishop of the Church of England, who then took on this feat and was supported by NGOs and advocates. And this is all working together. We work together along with the Bishop of Truro through Refcemi, which is our advocacy organisation, to look at how we can understand and recognise the phenomenon of Christian persecution.

As the Church of England continues to be the Church for England, it realises that it represents much more than these boundaries, and people here are represented abroad. For that reason and, as I discussed with my ecumenical colleagues earlier today, we ask you to recognise this, and we commend this to you so that in this time at this moment when we are called we stand for those less fortunate than us and we place ourselves at their service.

The Chair: Archbishop, thank you. Synod, we are going to turn to the amendment on this motion proposed by Ms Jayne Ozanne. Ms Ozanne, you have up to five minutes to speak to your amendment.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): Madam Chair, I would like to make it clear that I am fully supportive of this motion and recognise the importance of us all giving it a full and resounding endorsement today. I myself have witnessed first-hand the horrific persecution of Christian minorities when I had the privilege of working alongside Canon Andrew White in the Middle East and Baroness Caroline Cox, notably in Burma and Ngorno-Karabagh. The bravery of the Christians I met there and their unswerving loyalty to their faith, often at great personal cost, is a deep challenge to so many of us in the West.

That said, I am proposing my short but I believe vital amendment for three reasons. First, because I believe that it accurately reflects key elements of the Report which otherwise would go unrecognised and unnoted in the main motion. Whilst religion has an enormous propensity for good, it is sadly also true to say that it has and does still cause much suffering and harm. For instance, paragraph 20 cites the Archbishop's international reconciliation team's work "in challenging the theological justifications for religiously motivated violence". Appendix 1 goes into this in far more detail, specifically in paragraph 8, where it rightly asserts, "Alienation from freedom of religion or belief has been strengthened by the move from some conservative religious actors to see freedom of religion or belief as a means to protect patriarchal and discriminatory traditions".

Sadly, it is always the most vulnerable who suffer. For instance, it is estimated that around 200 million women and girls currently alive have experienced female genital mutilation. Tragically, untold numbers have died in the process.

This leads me to my second reason. I am convinced that the reason for the reluctance that the Report notes from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is because it is all too aware of the significant persecution of minorities - women, children and, yes, LGBTQI people - because of religious belief.

Freedom of religion or belief is seen as what the Report calls a “problematic” right. I believe therefore the best way of addressing this concern is to name it, as my amendment suggests, and recognise explicitly that the right to freedom of religion or belief only exists up until the point that it causes no harm. It is only when we name and own the harm that has been done, often in the name of Christianity, that I believe we then have the right to tell others what to do. That is why I believe the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office were pleased to fund the launch of the Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives last December, which brought together hundreds of senior religious leaders from around the world who wished to recognise the harm that religion has caused and continues to cause, as President Mary McAleese so powerfully stated in our video of the declaration.

Synod will not need reminding that there are still 71 countries where it is illegal to be LGBT, and that there are 11 countries, including Nigeria, which still have the death penalty based on religious reasoning for consensual LGBT acts.

My third, and arguably most important reason is the freedom to manifest one’s religion or belief is not an absolute right. It must be held in tension with all other human rights. Specifically, it cannot be used to cause individuals harm or undermine their rights to life, health, equal dignity and freedom from ill-treatment.

I am deeply privileged to be currently working with the UN rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, who last week spoke at a cross-party briefing that I organised. At this briefing Dr Ahmed Shaheed made it quite clear, “It is regularly necessary for Governments to restrict the manifestation of religion or belief by some individuals to protect those in their jurisdiction from harm. This includes gender practices that are religious in nature to some but simultaneously abuse the rights of women, girls and LGBT persons”.

In closing, I would like to quote again directly from GS 2197: “Every day people across the world are facing discrimination, persecution or even death because of their beliefs.” That is undoubtedly and tragically true. However, I am asking Synod to support my amendment as it is also true that every day certain minorities across the world are facing discrimination, persecution or even death because of other people’s harmful beliefs.

The Chair: I call upon the Bishop of Leeds to respond to Ms Ozanne.

The Bishop of Leeds (Rt Revd Nicholas Baines): Thank you. I am grateful to Jayne for raising this and for her speech, with which I agree almost entirely. However, I am going to resist the amendment. There are two reasons why. One is - and I am serious about this - I am not sure the amendment means what it is supposed to. I think what she

means is up until the point that it causes harm, not the negative. I do not think it makes semantic sense or sits well with paragraph (b). The main reason though is that freedom of religion and belief does not protect religious practices that violate other people's rights and freedoms. I think to put other rights and freedoms in contradiction or in tension with freedom of religion and belief is to go down an ally we do not wish to. We want to ensure that freedom of religion and belief encompasses and creates the space, as Archbishop Angaelos said, to provide freedom for others. I resist it on those grounds.

The Chair: Thank you. Synod members, because the amendment is resisted by the Bishop of Leeds, you now need to indicate whether you wish to have a debate on this item. In order to do this you need not use Crystal Interactive, for a change. You will need to indicate using the green tick which can be found alongside the blue hand. If you wish to indicate that you would like a debate on this item, more than 25 members will need to select the green tick. Would you do that now, please?

There are more than 25 members, which means we will now open a debate on the amendment. Please would members limit their speeches on this to the amendment itself, rather than the whole motion. The speech limit will be three minutes from henceforth, and I would like to call first Clive Scowen.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): I agree with what Bishop Nick said in resisting this amendment and wish to speak against it. My main additional reason for wanting to do that is that I think this amendment, even if it were correctly drafted, makes the assumption that there is some objective way of measuring harm. The truth of the matter is that the issue of whether the exercise of religious freedom causes harm is utterly subjective. Many people in this country with no religion probably think, and do think, that any religion is harmful. Adherents to a particular faith or other belief will probably consider that other faiths or other beliefs are, to some degree, harmful. This utterly subjective and undefined term, if it were introduced as a qualification to the right to religious freedom, would render Article 18 and this motion both meaningless and nugatory.

Of course, as Bishop Nick said and as Jayne suggested, these rights are not unqualified. Every right in either the Universal Declaration or the European Convention on Human Rights has to be read with all the others. Often the two have to be balanced against each other, and the courts frequently have to do that, but they do not use concepts like "harm", which particularly in a religious context, as I say, are utterly subjective. I believe that this motion in itself, by referencing Article 18, also implicitly acknowledges the need to balance Article 18 rights against all the other rights, and therefore does not need to be qualified further. I would strongly resist this amendment.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester): I speak in order to oppose the proposed amendment to the International Freedoms Report, which suggests that words be inserted to the effect that Article 18 should be affirmed up until the point that it causes no harm, or harm, or any harm. To this end, it is important to first identify the substantive background of the Report, which recognises the findings of the Bishop of Truro that, in fact, it is Christians who are the most persecuted religious group in the world - and Archbishop Angaelos in his address to us powerfully portrayed that reality - and that this persecution reaches the level of genocide in some parts of the world.

The proposed amendment seems to be an attempt to politicise a document which is meant to inspire hope and courage among the persecuted by trying to further an agenda relating to the concept of so-called spiritual abuse, a topic which Jayne Ozanne has been very vocal about in the past.

Moreover, the amendment seems misplaced in its understanding of international law. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is aspirational in nature. It strains reason to put limiting amendments on text that is meant to be aspirational. Given the dire situation that is facing countless brothers and sisters in Christ, this Report should be as aspirational as possible. It should provide a clear and unifying message, as it has done to government so courageously, to the persecuted that we are here to help, that our Government is here to help, that this Church is here help, and that we are united in so doing. To tell a believer who is suffering displacement, torture or risk of death at every turn by living out their faith in Christ that their religious freedom should be affirmed up until a non-defined, subjective and arbitrary point is both demoralising and counterintuitive. It is nothing short of an ideological imposition.

We should not be sending mixed and confusing messages to the persecuted Church, or suggesting that their faith is anything but valuable and valued. "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Christ's message is the one that we should be reinforcing today and should not be subject to limitation. I therefore call on members of this Synod to reject the proposed amendment.

The Chair: I call Tim Hind followed by Jenny Humphreys.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells): I want to agree with Jayne absolutely in what she said, but also agree with what Bishop Nick has just said in terms of the fact that perhaps it is a misworded amendment. I think we also need to recognise that this comes on the same day as Archbishop Stephen Cottrell has told us how we need to apologise for the racism within our own community.

What worries me more than anything is that although we recognise, or we think we

recognise the persecution of other faiths elsewhere in the world, and we also recognise that Christians are persecuted, one of the sad things is some of the Christians who are persecuted are being persecuted by Christians, and we need to root that out of our society as well.

Canon Jenny Humphreys (Bath & Wells): I would like to support the amendment. However you look at the wording, I think that could be taken either way. I agree with what Jayne has said. There are groups and individuals who carry out terrorist acts in the name of religion. It is not just Islamic terrorists. There are right-wing Christian terrorists in the United States, for example, who will carry out dangerous acts or acts of oppression in the name of religion. I think there needs to be something that calls this out to say that religion can be a force for harm, and I think we do need to acknowledge that.

The Chair: After Mike Todd I call Wyn Beynon, after which I intend to propose a motion for closure on the debate on this amendment.

Dr Mike Todd (Truro): I have every sympathy for the issues that the proposer of the amendment is seeking to draw attention to, but the term “harm” is so subjective that we know from history, and indeed through to today, a claim of harm, or the view that a particular religion or indeed religion as a whole is creating harm, has been used as the basis of oppression. I would not want this construct to justify oppressing religions further than they are already today. Indeed, the proposer of the amendment has herself done a lot of tremendously good work in terms of drawing attention to the harm which our own religion at times has done. The previous speaker but one spoke in terms that I found very difficult, but she, too, has drawn attention from time to time to her view that harm is being done in the name of religion. It seems to me that the unintended consequences of this amendment will be greater than the benefits that it would bring.

Revd Wyn Beynon (Worcester): There is absolutely nothing subjective about female genital mutilation. There is absolutely nothing subjective about catastrophic mental damage done to people. I am absolutely astonished that we should try to side-line this with the idea that religious harm is subjective. It is nothing of the sort. We must make this clear. I understand there might be a bit of a problem with the wording, but the intention at this point is clear: there is harm done by religious people in the name of religion.

I am also astonished that there are those who just want to talk about Christians. We are talking about religious freedom, not Christian freedom. Whether or not Christians are the most oppressed religion is not really the point. We should look at every individual as God’s child, it does not matter what the religion is. To suggest that it is not objective is quite astonishing, and I really do wish to support Jayne’s amendment.

The Chair: Synod, I now wish to test your mind on a motion for closure on the debate on the amendment. I will put that to the vote using the Crystal Interactive platform.

The motion was put and carried, 230 voting in favour, 45 against, with 11 recorded abstentions.

The Chair: We now put the amendment to the vote. I will take Jayne Ozanne's point of order.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): I have no way of making chats or of being unmuted. I wanted to ask if we had a count whether I had to request for it to be a count of the whole Synod so I could understand what the breakdown was. I think you need to look at how people raise points of order when they are not able to do so in the chat and you will not unmute them.

The Chair: Because we are using the Crystal voting platform, it is a count of the full Synod, and I can announce the results of the vote.

The motion was put and lost, 89 voting in favour, 188 against, with 30 recorded abstentions.

The Chair: We now return to opening the debate on the main motion unamended. The speech limit will be three minutes from the outset and I call the Bishop of Coventry followed by Prudence Dailey.

The Bishop of Coventry (Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth): I am very grateful to speak earlier if the debate - I had expected to speak a little bit later - because there is a particular matter that I want to draw Synod's attention to. It is about an aspect of religious freedom that is often overlooked and that is the close relationship between religious identity and the buildings, objects, artifacts and cultural history that preserve that identity and allow it to be freely practised.

There is a particular case in point that should be a matter of our attention and action, and of the Government's. Ngorno-Karabagh, already mentioned by Jayne Ozanne, is an enclave of land in the South Caucasus whose status Armenia and Azerbaijan have long disputed and twice fought over, most recently in a brutal conflict in 2020. Armenians lost control over half of the land to Azerbaijan. Despite the presence of Russian peacekeepers, Armenians fear to return. In the meantime, there is clear evidence that the religious and cultural heritage of the Armenian Church is being erased, either through physical destruction or through a process of reclassification that denies their Armenian heritage and assigns them to other religious groups in the region.

Just last month the BBC reported the complete destruction of an Armenian church in Jabrayil following the town's return to Azerbaijan control. Nothing remains of the church, echoing the destruction of Julfa Cemetery in Naxcivan following the first Ngorno-Karabagh war.

The destruction of religious sites and everything that goes with them amounts to an attack on the religious identity of those who have practised their faith through them over centuries. Some have described it as a form of cultural genocide; the eradication of a cultural heritage because of its association with an ethnic group. Ethnicity and religion are not always easily separated.

In erasing culture, the freedom to practise religion freely and fully is itself removed. More worrying still, cultural cleansing of a place's past is one small step from the ethnic cleansing of an area's present. Armenians know too well about the reality of ethnic cleansing. As we have heard, tomorrow I will welcome beloved Archbishop Angaelos and Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of the UK and Ireland, to a shared service in Coventry Cathedral to commemorate the victims of the 1915 genocide.

As well as looking back to the past and the shadow cast by those events on international relationships for over a century, our thoughts will focus on the present sufferings of Armenians. Among our prayers will be that the ancient Christian heritage of the region will be preserved, not only so that religious freedom is respected, but so that reconciliation between two peoples is given the chance to rise from the ashes of the conflict.

I commend the Bishop of Truro for his excellent Report, which draws attention to some of these matters. And I thank the Bishop of Leeds for his own work, and for his motion, which I wholeheartedly support.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): The Bishop of Leeds is quite right to point out that the abrogation of religious freedom is far from something that just happens in faraway parts of the world. As Christianity has become a minority religion in the West, Christians are increasingly finding themselves squeezed in countries you would not previously have thought of in this context.

For example, in Norway there has been a well-publicised scandal of child welfare services being accused of taking children away from their parents and having them adopted without their parents' consent, for the flimsiest of reasons. And it has been credibly asserted that there has been religious discrimination involved, such as the Pentecostal Christian family whose children were taken away because their school

principal believed that their religious teaching “created a disability in the children”, and the principal proceeded to bring a complaint against the parents.

Then there is the serving Finnish MP Päivi Räsänen, who is the wife of a pastor. She is currently under investigation by the police and was interrogated for several hours over a booklet that she wrote more than 16 years previously for a Christian foundation on human sexuality. Then here in the UK, there is the Catholic midwifery student, Julia Rynkiewicz, whose pro-life views led to her being suspended from her midwifery studies at Nottingham University. She was subjected to a four-month fitness to practise investigation simply because of her pro-life advocacy. There are many more such incidents.

While these incidents quite clearly do not rise to the level of religious persecution of the kind that is experienced by the Uyghurs, or the Rohingyas or the Christian victims of Boko Haram, I do not think we should pretend that these things do not matter.

I venture to suggest that not long ago it was understood that matters of conscience needed to be respected, whether that related to abortion, or even to religious pacifists such as the Quakers, who were conscientious objectors and did not want to fight in wars. There is now a gradual chipping away of that principle. In our concern for the more blatant threats to religious freedom, let us not take our eye off the ball in relation to what is happening close to home. I am very pleased to support this motion.

The Chair: After the Bishop of Truro I am going to test your mind, Synod, on another motion for closure because our time is almost up. You have three minutes.

The Bishop of Truro (Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen): I speak today to honour the memory of Nabil Habashy Salama recently martyred in Sinai, mentioned earlier by Archbishop Angaelos. Synod, remember that his name is but one amongst countless others. Unlike him, they are unknown by name to us but each one is named and known and loved by our God.

I am genuinely thankful to God for what the independent review, of which I was privileged to chair, achieved. I do not say it lightly: I believe it truly was the work of the Holy Spirit that put this issue on the political agenda in a way that it simply was not before such that the implementation of its recommendations has become government policy.

In saying that, I absolutely acknowledge my team. I was hugely indebted to many others, particularly my friend and brother His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, who have campaigned tirelessly, and often thanklessly, on this issue for many years, and have a much more long-standing commitment to it than do I.

I am thankful to God for the positive reception of the review, but I am not in any sense complacent. Chairing its work awakened me to the deep seriousness of this issue.

In the final Report I stated that there are currently two major obstacles to human flourishing and harmonious communities facing in the world today. One is climate change and the other is the systematic and widespread denial of freedom of religion or belief. You can see why it is so serious when you look at its main drivers. Authoritarian totalitarian regimes are intolerant both of dissent and of minorities. Aggressive, militant nationalism insists on uniformity. Religious fundamentalism in many different forms often manifests in violence. Each and all of these phenomena are on the rise in the world today and are often found in toxic combination. Please do not think that this is disconnected from the vital issue of racism the Archbishop of York spoke so powerfully about earlier on. It directly intersects with it.

A controversial aspect of the work of the review that has been referred to is its focus on Christian persecution. Nonetheless, its recommendations are clearly and deliberately framed in terms of freedom of religion or belief for all, without fear or favour, and that includes the right not to believe. The recommendations were framed in those terms both to ensure political traction but also as a fundamental matter of Christian principle. It would simply not be right to seek to privilege one group over another. As I say, the recommendations do now have significant traction, and for that I am truly thankful.

It is also important to say that there is a sunset clause in the recommendations calling for the review of them all after three years, so the clock is ticking.

But, Synod, all of this presents a real challenge to us. A challenge not to be laggards but to be leaders in this cause. We must do more than pass a motion. Two centuries ago we dragged our feet over the cause of abolition. With one or two notable exceptions, abolition was much more of a Quaker cause than an Anglican one. We must not repeat that mistake but articulate an ambition to lead in this cause, using our role as the established Church, maximising the opportunities the Communion gives us as well as using our rich and valuable ecumenical links. I long to see our various initiatives as a Church better co-ordinated and our corporate energies given to this task. Please, let us pass this resolution unanimously, but let us recognise too that this only a milestone and so much more remains to be done.

The Chair: Thank you. I wish to propose a motion for closure on this item in order to give the Bishop of Leeds time to respond to this important debate. I also just want to note that on your point of order, Jayne, about the frustrations of this system, I have been reassured that the breakdown of Houses will be apparent on all voting in the published voting records after Synod, so you will be able to see the record. With that in mind, I put before you a motion for closure on this item using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 285 voting in favour, two against, with no recorded abstentions.

The Chair: That now brings us to the response to the debate by the Bishop of Leeds. You have up to five minutes.

The Bishop of Leeds (Rt Revd Nicholas Baines): I am grateful to all who have participated in the debate, including for the amendment. Archbishop Angaelos represents in his person some of the realities of Christian and religious persecution across the world, and I think his quotation that the purpose of freedom is to create it for others is one that needs to be heard within this debate. We are custodians of rights given by God.

That is picked up by the Bishop of Coventry in that religious identity is represented in stuff, in buildings and objects, and therefore we have to pay attention to when such things are destroyed, even when perhaps the individuals and people are not in the same way.

Prudence Dailey, you called for humility in our speech and said that we start with ourselves when we are considering the behaviours of others around the world. As I said in my speech, humility has to be the start and end point of our advocacy. I am grateful to the Bishop of Truro particularly for pointing out strongly that this stuff intersects with racism. We do not stick these things in separate compartments and there is much more to be done.

I want to go back to thank again Jayne Ozanne for her intervention and just to say that the first resource provided by the FoRB Leadership Network will be a paper produced by the Danish Institute for Human Rights on FoRB and gender, and we can make that available. We need to call upon the Government not just for an FCDO response and approach but a whole government response, because much of what we have talked about, not least by the Bishop of Coventry, involves the DCMS. I think we are asking the Government to join up in making progress on this.

I am grateful to the speakers and the questions raised as well as the points made, and I am pleased to move the motion.

The Chair: I am now going to put Item 3 to the vote using the Crystal Interactive platform.

The motion was put and carried, 303 voting in favour, none against, with three recorded abstentions.

The Chair: That concludes this item.

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 4.52 pm.

ITEM 502

DRAFT LEGISLATIVE REFORM (CHURCH OF ENGLAND PENSIONS) ORDER 2021 (GS 2193A)

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. We now move to Item 502. You will remember there has been a variation from the order of business for this afternoon. This is the Draft Legislative Reform (Church of England Pensions) Order 2021. Members will need the draft Order GS 2193A, the Explanatory Notes GS 2193XX and the Report of the Scrutiny Committee, GS 2193Y.

I invite the Prolocutor of the Convocation of Canterbury to move Item 502, “That the draft Legislative Reform (Church of England Pensions) Order 2021 be approved”. He has up to 10 minutes to address us. I think the Prolocutor needs unmuting, if that is possible.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): You might regret that. Members of Synod, the Legislative Reform Committee of the Archbishops’ Council is bringing forward today a Legislative Reform Order concerning aspects of the governance of the Church of England Pensions Board. This is the first of two orders that we are bringing on governance matters this year. A second will be brought to the July Synod concerning the governance of the Church Commissioners.

The aim of the Order before you today is to simplify the way in which the Pensions Board is governed bringing some aspects of it into line with best practice. It should be stressed that, perhaps more than any other body in the Church of England, the Pensions Board is heavily regulated. As well as this Synod and the Charity Commissioners, the Pensions Regulator also exercises a regulatory function over its work. The aim of this Order is not to reduce accountability, which is simply not possible given the number of bodies who keep an eye on the work of the Board, but to improve efficiency and therefore to reduce burdens, as the Report of the Scrutiny Committee recommends. The Order also tidies up some anomalies which could not be dealt with when the Pensions Board legislation was consolidated in 2018.

This Order seeks to amend the Church of England Pensions Measure 2018 in several ways and it follows a well conducted and well responded to statutory consultation. The

great majority of respondents recognised the need for the reform which has resulted in the proposals in this Order.

The results of the consultation were reflected on by the Board and by the Legislative Reform Committee and amendments were made to accommodate some of the very helpful suggestions which arose from the consultation. At Scrutiny stage, the Scrutiny Committee also made some helpful amendments which are reflected in the Report from that Committee to the Synod.

So to the detail. The Order reduces the Board's trustee body to 12 members from 20. That is still in the top 10% of size of bodies in the charitable sector, and perhaps reflects the commitment of the Board to representation across the complexity of the Church's structure. It sets out the various ways that members of that body are elected or appointed, including, importantly, the way in which member-nominated trustees are elected. In the light of the consultation process the Board suggested various amendments to enhance the role of General Synod. For example, one of the clergy member-nominated trustees must now be a member of the House of Clergy. This was not the case before.

Similarly, a new consultatory role is given to the Prolocutors and the Chair of the Appointments Committee in relation to the appointment of one of the expert members appointed by the Archbishops. This mirrors the retained role already held by the Chair of the House of Laity and the Chair of the Appointments Committee in relation to a lay appointment. This is all reflected in the changes to legislation outlined in proposal one of GS 2193XX.

There have been a few occasions when trustees who have served on the Board have not fully understood what is asked of them before taking up their role. A certain level of technical knowledge and understanding needs to be appreciated for the Board to function as it should. Those seeking to stand as member-nominated trustees are going to be asked to do some homework in advance of their nomination, what you might call due diligence.

A group, including the Chair of the Appointments Committee, will set criteria which anyone wishing to stand for one of those trustee positions will need to evidence in advance of their nomination. While these have yet to be decided, the Board has indicated that it could include completion of some of the core units of an online course for pension trustees provided by the Pensions Regulator, which importantly set out what it is that a pension trustee does and what it is they are not to do. The Order reflects the importance of ensuring that as far as possible everybody understands the task of the Pensions Board. This is all reflected in the changes to legislation outlined in proposal two in GS 2193XX.

The Order also amends the term that members can serve. If passed, members will serve up to five-year terms with a maximum of 10 years' service. This is in accordance with best practice and term limits are common in all walks of life. It is also included in the corporate and charity governance codes. These are all reflected in the changes to legislation outlined in proposal three of GS 2193XX.

Financial reporting is an important element of the Board's work. The Board has agreed to lay its Report before Synod each year when the Order takes effect. It is currently published online, but the new arrangements will give members a signpost to the financial statements and make it easier for members to see. They will no longer have to second-guess when publication happens and go looking for it. Proposal five of the changes to legislation in GS 2193XX refers to that.

Finally, there are two elements of the Order which deal with redundant or outdated requirements and are elements of simplification. The article relating to the Clergy (Widow and Dependants) Fund relates to a redundant provision. The fund was transferred to the Clergy Pension Scheme and actually makes better provision for the security of that fund than existed before. That is all outlined in proposal four in the same document.

Finally, the Order removes the requirement for a diocese to have a widows and dependants committee. It has to be said it came as something of a surprise to several dioceses to learn that there was a statutory requirement to have such a committee. The reality is that in various places there are a number of different local arrangements made.

The Church, of course, takes its responsibility to widows, dependants and all its pensioners seriously. Indeed, this is an area where we believe that the Church's mission is enhanced by not being bound by formal prescriptive statute but giving local guidance and need its role.

The removal of this requirement was particularly welcomed by the Retired Clergy Association. That is all reflected in proposal six, as outlined in GS 2193XX.

Members of Synod, good governance, supported by a commitment to inclusion and diversity, is an important element of how the Church's mission is sustained: by good and effective and careful management and audit of people, processes and policy. This Legislative Reform Order seeks to ensure that our governance of the Pensions Board is as effective as possible, so the Church can ensure the way it supports the Board's dependants in the latter stages of their lives and ministry is as well managed as it can possibly be.

I move that the Draft Legislative Reform (Church of England Pensions) Order 2021 be approved.

The Chair. Thank you Simon. Before we get into the debate, I want to say that we will have a screen break, because I know you are probably desperate for a screen break, after we have dealt with this item of business.

The motion is open for debate and I am going to call Bill Seddon, first of all. Bill, you have up to five minutes, if you need that amount of time.

Mr Bill Seddon (St Albans): I must begin by declaring an interest as one of the three Pensions Board members elected by the House of Laity. I also have experience with Methodist Church pension schemes going back over 30 years, both as a professional fund manager and as a member-nominated trustee.

Over the time that I have been involved in acting for pension schemes, what is considered to be good governance has changed hugely. The proposals we are looking at today seek to ensure that the Church of England Pensions Board undertakes the best practice and has the appropriate mix of member involvement and professional expertise.

I will make three points. First, the current number of current board members makes for unwieldy meetings, where it can be difficult for all voices to be heard. With a membership of 20, plus executive officers and advisers, in excess of 30 people usually gather around the table. This can be somewhat intimidating, particularly for member-nominated directors who may not have professional pensions.

Secondly, whilst its membership will fall, the Board should become more directly representative of its members. However, at the same time we need to increase diversity. It will be important to use all aspects of the new appointment and election process for this to happen. It is all too easy for a board of well-qualified individuals to emerge but one lacking in breadth of knowledge and experience. We should practise what we preach.

Finally, it is important for those who put themselves forward for election to understand what will be required of them. No one expects them to be expert, but there is a legal requirement to be equipped to carry out the role within six months. To help trustees gain this minimum level of knowledge and understanding, the Pensions Regulator has developed a 12-module toolkit to demonstrate compliance. Achieving this is time consuming and by no means straightforward, but is hugely beneficial in preparing trustees for their role. The proposals before you today have the full backing of the

current Pensions Board, are in line with the Church's push for simplification, and I very much hope that you will join me in voting in favour of the motion.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury): I have taken an interest in the Legislative Reform Order from the outset. I am an elected member of the Scrutiny Committee. I do not think that if we thought it would ever be used to require prequalification for an elected member of General Synod to stand for election by General Synod, to represent General Synod, we would have agreed to it. I accept that we should have a substantive debate on this question, but we are denied that when this shortened procedure is used. Even more, I do not think that a shortened procedure of this kind should be used to undermine the electoral franchise, again of an elected member of General Synod to represent General Synod, by introducing a limit on the number of terms that a member can serve especially when prequalification is required. Yes, turnover is necessary but that can be secured through an appointed member, not an elected member. And yes, it has been used in relation to elections to the Archbishops' Council, for example, but not without a full debate.

The circumstances in which a Legislative Reform Order can be used where there is no chance for amendments or for a debate is when it would remove or reduce a burden, or the overall burdens resulting directly or indirectly for any person from ecclesiastical legislation. I do not think that elected members of General Synod should be regarded as administrative inconveniences or obstacles to efficiency, which is what is required to use this short route. The substantive points may well be made, but they should come in the ordinary legislative procedure where these things are properly debated and where amendments can be introduced.

Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln): The Scrutiny Committee met to consider reform of the Pensions Board and Church Commissioners. We are only considering the Pensions Board Measure and, as you have been told, the Commissioners legislation has been pushed back until the summer session.

The more controversial parts of the discussion in the Committee were the reforms to the committees that sought to reduce membership and impose term limits on members. Synod also elects some of those members. The issue that was controversial, and about which written submissions were received, (and they are at the back of GS 2193Y), was whether this fast-track process was appropriate for reforms to these representative bodies should the normative full legislative process be followed. Use of the LRO process is still in its infancy. It was used quite properly with the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, making some helpful amendments or adjustments to the timetable for filling a vacancy.

This is the second such occasion that it has been used. I think the principle that needs to be borne in mind here is in some ways constitutional. Which parts of our ecclesiastical legislation should be the subject of this fast-track reform procedure? Is General Synod comfortable allowing this process to make changes to representative bodies, especially those that have an elected component as well, or should it be done the traditional way? Synod has to be aware of and should hold in mind at this moment the part it plays by being prepared to lay down markers, should it wish to do so, about the types of legislation the Archbishops' Council, through its LRO Committee, proposes for reform. It is about shaping the relationship between the LRO Committee, the Scrutiny Committee and General Synod.

In a micro way that is what I mean by the issue having wider constitutional significance. It is through each body in that competitive process playing its part that the use of LROs can mature and establish a pattern to the approval process.

Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford): I declare an interest as a member of the Legislative Reform Committee and of the Scrutiny Committee for this Legislative Reform Order. I consider it a great privilege to work with the Legislative Reform Committee to try to identify and resolve issues within the workings of the Church that have come to make our operations more awkward than necessary or more awkward than ideal.

This LRO is a result of one of those issues. It enables the governance of the Pensions Board to be updated in line with best practice today, and, make no mistake, we need our governance practice within our Church that we love to be the best it can be. It is not easy. We are a complex organisation with several parts needing either representation or some form of input, but I do believe that this LRO achieves this well while producing an efficient trustee board which will have the skills to provide the necessary guidance to the Pensions Board.

The process involved in coming to a Legislative Reform Order requires extensive consultation. In this case there was significant engagement with this consultation and the views submitted were considered carefully, and resulted in changes to the proposed LRO. This shows that the process worked.

There were, perhaps inevitably, detailed points of disagreement in the Scrutiny Committee. The point about limiting the period any one member of a board can serve to 10 years seemed particularly controversial, and I have some sympathy. The older I get, the faster time flies by. It can seem counterproductive to deliberately lose experience and knowledge, but it is vital that space on the Board is made for new voices with current knowledge, skills and perspectives. And, as the past has carefully recorded, the positive effects of term limits outweigh the negatives.

There were alterations to this LRO made during the Scrutiny Committee. I emphasise again this is showing that this process works. There is perhaps more consultation in this process than in the full process, as we call it.

I beg you Synod to back this LRO because it just makes sense. It makes a lot of sense. It improves the framework in which our Church works and so facilitates the growth of the kingdom of our Lord which, although it does not always seem so, is what this is all about.

Mr Jon Walker (Leicester): I would first like to apologise if I cover old ground. I am a new member since November, so I may have missed some of the earlier discussion around this. On the other hand, I may bring some fresh eyes to it and it might look good in that way. I do not have a direct interest but I should declare an interest. In the last two or three years I have actually been on the picket line about pensions in a much more intransigent kind of dispute. I come with that background.

I really wanted to talk about the composition of the Board and a little bit about the Scrutiny Committee. I think the reduction of members, while it is treated lightly and some people thought members would be better represented, from 40% to a third - 33% - is retrograde. I think the large number of appointments directly to the Board by the Archbishops is retrograde. I believe that some of the Board members should be fully independent and therefore not appointed by the Archbishops. I think that is a retrograde step. Independence is important here. I was frankly shocked to see a recommendation for a quorum for a board of this nature of just four members. That struck me as very odd. I realise that the quorum for the previous Board was not high but we were certainly told that many people attended on every occasion in an earlier speech. I find one-third of the Board here is in danger of allowing a small group to make decisions.

I read with interest the work of the Scrutiny Committee. What struck me there was that there were at least three occasions when the Committee divided five/four. That troubles me because I think when we are taking legislation through like this, we need to be sure that there is a clear substantial majority. That is a very small majority. It could easily have been swayed by one person being absent, and it has just the whiff of things being driven through. That could be unfair, and I do not speak with a great amount of knowledge, but, just as a new person well outside the normal remit, there is something slightly funny afoot in terms of how this may be being pushed through in the Scrutiny Committee as well as here. I just have a degree of caution that I would bring to Synod on this occasion.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): The first thing I would like to do is to pay a great deal of respect to the previous speaker. Hooray for newcomers is what I say having listened to that. They are valuable very often, and I think that is one of the things that is taken into account with revisions to this Measure.

Trustees need time to do online learning. There is little I do not know about online learning because I wrote it when I was a director of the Pensions Regulator. It takes a good deal of time. I wonder whether there could be a gap between the election of new members and the time at which they take up their duties so that they have some months to do the online learning before they do that. You cannot ask all candidates to do it when large numbers of them will not be elected. That seems a bit tough.

The other thing I would like to say with regard to the length of service, I totally support 10 years as a maximum, but if you run it, say, with the election halfway through the quinquennium, and you need people to be from the General Synod, then at the end of the quinquennium somebody has to stand again for a new quinquennium in order to complete their period of service. I am speaking to you now because that happened to me with the CNC. There is a difficulty there. I do not quite know what the answer is but there really is a problem. Finally, I would like to say I had many years on the Pensions Board ---

The Chair: Sorry, April, we will have to stop you there, I am afraid. Fr Stephen Trott followed by Sam Margrave. Remember this is a two-minute speech limit at the moment.

Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough): Some of us are old enough to remember the Robert Maxwell and “Mirror” pension scandal, and we have been sensitive ever since to the way in which pensions boards are managed, and the way in which the interests of those whose pensions are concerned are represented. It seems to me to be entirely inappropriate for there to be a pre-selection process for those who wish to be candidates for such a board. There is the whole point of representation. Those of us who believe in democracy and representation are rather concerned that this shortened form of legislation should have been used to discuss this proposal for pre-selection of candidates and limitation of terms. It seems to me these are matters that should have been conducted by Measure to allow the Synod precisely to express its views on representation and to allow for full debate and amendments.

I am going to vote against this and I hope that others who share my concerns will do likewise.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): I believe that this is a misuse of simplification. We were told that simplification would not be used for such purposes, and I believe this is a

misuse of the legislation. The legislation was never envisaged for this purpose. For example, it is described as ensuring legislation was simplified as not understood, not to reorganise governance structures. Applied like this, where legislation could be used to make any change, the financial cost burden could be applied to anything. I am also concerned at use of the term “administrative inconvenience”. The consultation responses were also very limited and can hardly be reliable. I am really concerned at the reduction in representation and the disproportionate power being given to Archbishops or others.

We were promised that no controversial decisions or governance changes or doctrinal changes would be made while Synod could not meet physically. But they are. I do not understand why this has to come now. Smaller boards exist for a purpose: to manage non-executives by executives so that they can get their way. This puts too much power into too few hands, and we have seen the result of what that does in the Church. I will be voting against.

The Chair: Clive Mather, I am going to increase the speech limit to five minutes for your piece, and then I am going to test the mind of the Synod for a motion for closure of this particular part of the debate.

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio): *Ex officio* Church of England Pensions Board. I joined the Pensions Board two years ago and we have been working really hard to consolidate our reputation as a responsible investor, helping lead the international initiatives to address climate change, and to promote creation care, through our operations, our investments and our advocacy, and I think with great success. We have also been working to improve our effectiveness through simplification and cost reduction, and communication with the dioceses and members and employers and so on.

The fact is we need to do more on both. Our governance structure is unwieldy and it does not meet good practice. We confidently expect the regulator to require of us very soon the measures that we are putting before you. We find ourselves in the invidious position of lobbying and, indeed, voting against major corporations whose governance does not fulfil these basic requirements. The risk of hypocrisy is clear. We wish to make changes which we believe are appropriate, will save money, will increase our effectiveness, and will ensure that our reputation is intact.

I fully respect the views expressed in this Synod discussion today. I could go into all of them in great detail, but let me just try to make a couple of general points. This is not an issue about taking power away from members or about taking power away from Synod. Quite the opposite. We want to ensure that we have the best representation we can, but at the same time ensuring that those who come forward to do what is both

complex and vital work have the basic commitment in terms of time and knowledge to do so.

The other thing we want to do is to ensure that every penny we steward is put to the maximum advantage. The complexity we currently have costs time, effort and money. That is money we would like to redirect into pensions, housing and other retirement services.

The Board works hard on your behalf. The Board works very hard on the members' behalf. We believe we can do this better. We believe that what we are proposing will be the minimum the regulator will expect, even in the coming months; therefore, I commend this to you, Synod, for your approval.

The Chair: Thank you, Clive. I am now going to test the mind of Synod for the closure of this debate. This is the closure of the debate on the motion, not a vote on the motion itself. We will be running this on the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 232 voting in favour, 15 against, with seven recorded abstentions.

The Chair: I therefore call on Simon Butler to respond to the debate. Simon, you have up to five minutes to do so.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Before I respond to the particular issues, I think it is worth just reminding members of Synod about the work of the LRC and the Scrutiny Committee. A number of speakers have said this is not the right method; we thought we were being asked to do something different with LROs. It is true to say that we are still finding our way. The Legislative Reform Committee is finding its way. The Scrutiny Committee is most certainly finding its way. Perhaps the reason why some of the votes were close is because we are still settling down into an understanding of what we can do.

However, I want to push back quite firmly on this idea that this is not the right tool for this sort of thing. The detailed way the Legislative Reform Measure was set up gave a very clear set of criteria about what could be used and what could be done through it. When people say that it is not to be used for controversial or contentious matters, that is simply not true. The Legislative Reform Measure makes it clear what it is that can be considered, and the criteria for deciding whether something is controversial or not. When we go through the process, as we have done in great detail, both at the Legislative Reform Committee and the Scrutiny Committee, we take great care and there is definitely no sense of something funny afoot. If Mr Walker sat with us he would find out there are considerable numbers of arguments and very different views, and

there is certainly under my chairmanship, and I am sure under the chairmanship of Peter Collier, no desire to force through anything from any point of view. I want to push back against this idea.

To those who say this is not the right tool, you have the process of referring back matters to the Scrutiny Committee, and there is the option before Synod meets for you to do that. If you wish to make that proposal, please do take advantage of the power that you have.

Let me come to just one or two of the speeches: to thank Bill Seddon, who I work with in another capacity; Julie Dziel, who makes very good points; April Alexander and Clive Mather on some of the points around the way in which this is best practice, how we can increase inclusion and diversity, how we get good value out of newcomers.

Let me just respond to one or two other people. I think I need to slightly correct Debbie McIsaac's understanding of the role of a clergy member-nominated pension trustee. When you are elected to the Pensions Board, you are not there to represent the General Synod; you are there to represent the members of the pension scheme. That is why we need to ensure that there is a certain amount of skill and ability. In reality, of course, this is not onerous. April mentioned that she had written all this stuff. It is perhaps three/three and a half hours' work at the maximum for anybody. I think it is a relatively modest thing to expect people to complete a bit of pre-preparation. And it is a good way of discerning for themselves whether they are cut out to serve on the Board.

With that point made, that gets through to some of the other issues that were raised. These are not representatives of the General Synod but representatives of the pension scheme.

One of those questions was about how do you get independence, and are we not in danger of having so many people that we are giving the Archbishops great powers. I would refer you back to the Archbishop of York's Presidential Address earlier where there was clear recognition of the lack of diversity that we sometimes produce in the Church of England. Elections do not necessarily increase diversity. The Board has been particularly able to increase its diversity and its professional skills through its ability to make appointments. With an elections and appointments process it seems to me that there is a very good way of ensuring you get both people who are member-nominated trustees and people with the right skills for the job.

I was particularly grateful to Clive Mather at the end of his speech for mentioning the issue of stewardship. Efficiency and good governance and simplicity are all matters of using the resources that we have. Some may not agree that this is the right approach to take and you will know what to do when it comes to the vote. But we, on the

Legislative Reform Committee, commend this to you. We believe it is good governance, good simplification, good for the Church, and particularly for the members of our pension schemes.

The Chair. Thank you, Simon. I therefore put Item 502, the draft Legislative Reform (Church of England Pensions) Order 2021 to the vote. We will be using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 217 voting in favour, 45 against, with 29 recorded abstentions.

The Chair. The Legislative Reform (Church of England Pensions) Order 2021 may now be made by the Archbishops' Council and laid before both Houses of Parliament. Point of order, Debbie McIsaac.

Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury): There were three choices here: for, against or to refer it back. Those three options were not presented in the vote.

The Chair. I am told that is not a point of order. I am now going to adjourn this sitting. We are going to resume with questions at 5.50. We look forward to seeing you then.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker)* took the Chair at 5.49 pm.

ITEM 4 QUESTIONS

The Chair. Good evening, members of Synod. We now come to Item 4, Questions. One hundred questions have been submitted and as always it will be a challenge to get through all of them. Every member of Synod should have received the Questions Notice Paper containing the written answers to each question.

Question Time has proved a particularly challenging item of business to handle smoothly while Synod has been meeting remotely. For this group of sessions members have been encouraged to give notice in advance that they wish to ask a supplementary question. We are very grateful for the co-operation of members in doing just that. As always, supplementary questions must be a question and not a speech, and they must be relevant to the original question or to the answer given.

Supplementary questions seeking to elicit an expression of opinion are not allowed and will be out of order. In order to progress as far as possible by 7 o'clock, those asking

supplementaries are respectfully asked to keep them brief, and those responding are also invited to make their answers as concise as possible.

The Chair: Questions 1 to 9 are to the Archbishops' Council. Questions 1 to 3 to be answered by Canon John Spence.

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

1. *Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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 replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: It is true that 10 years ago dioceses were using 11 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.

Mr Gavin Oldham: Since there is no doubt that diocesan accounting systems are purely administrative, and given this Synod's decision four years ago that matters which are purely administrative are not subject to subsidiarity, will the Archbishops' Council now take the authority to require dioceses to implement a single common accounting system across the whole Church?

Canon Dr John Spence: Gavin, thank you for your persistence in this topic. You understand that I share an avid wish to commend dioceses for the increasing levels of co-operation that we are seeing. We are seeing much evidence of dioceses bringing their financial systems together in terms of transparency and consistency, which is making it much easier. We will not, at this stage, take authority over these independent charities, but we will, as you so clearly have desire, work with them to achieve a

commensurate solution which I hope, as you do Gavin, will lead to significant rationalisation.

2. *Mrs April Alexander (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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 replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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.

Mrs April Alexander: Last week the rector of St Helen's Bishopsgate pointed out that there are many churches in the ReNew network which are not part of the CofE and look to GAFCON for episcopal oversight, even if they are daughter churches of CofE parishes. Is there not a breakdown in the line of accountability in respect of these churches?

Canon Dr John Spence: Thank you, April. The mandate to the Strategy Investment Board is to produce projects and finance projects put forward by the dioceses. I think the question of the diocesan relationships of these churches is for another question.

3. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the Archbishops' Council: 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 replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council: 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.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): In relation to the discussion items that Canon Spence has denoted will come forward, as well as process, will more details for reasons of closure be given for us to have a full debate about the number of attendees on a Sunday that would make a church viable?

Canon Dr John Spence: It is for a diocese to understand what configuration of parish churches and other places of mission and worship best serve its goals to create a church which is present for all its community. That may involve different numbers in different places. A number of large attendees may create a viability, but a number of smaller ones are where geographic differences come into play. Ultimately, this has to be down to each diocese to determine what configuration of churches will best serve its mission to the people of England.

The Chair: Questions 4 to 7 to be answered by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich.

4. *Mrs Emma Gregory (Exeter)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council: 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 (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council: 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.

Revd Brunel James (Leeds): Are the Archbishops' Council aware that some theological college staff have gone on recording stating that they refuse to engage with black theology, and have erroneously linked its inclusion into the syllabus with a decline in the teaching of patristics, forgetting of course that many of the Church fathers hailed from Africa?

The Chair: I am advised that the question is out of order. Supplementary Sam Margrave.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): Has the Archbishops' Council considered the huge benefits of unconscious bias training and its potential to tackle racism within the Church of England?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: May I answer that question?

The Chair: Please do.

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: I apologise first of all for giving a rather woolly answer to Emma's original question. That is because we were waiting for the Report that was published yesterday. What has come through very clearly in that Report is that we have no intention of withdrawing from unconscious bias training. The Report recommends a three-stage approach with unconscious bias training - intercultural awareness training and anti-racism training - all of which needs to be supported in context, whether that is theological education institutions or dioceses or parishes or wherever, in environments where they are constantly reinforcing messages to encourage the cultural change, the change of hearts, minds and behaviour that this requires. So the answer is yes.

5. *Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In his book, "The Road to Growth", the Ven. 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 replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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 Clive Scowen (London): Does the Mission and Pastoral Measure permit the creation of a team ministry or other multiple parish benefice with the intention of suppressing or diluting the tradition of one or more of the parishes?

The Chair: Mr Scowen, I am advised that question is inviting an expression of opinion, so I am afraid is out of order.

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: I am very happy to give an opinion.

The Chair: Please do not encourage us to go down erroneous paths, Bishop.

Revd Charles Read (Norwich): Is the Archbishops' Council minded or planning to ask someone to undertake some work to see when forming a team ministry might be a good and helpful thing to do so that decisions on forming teams could be taken in an intelligent and advised way?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: To my knowledge no, but I will take that away as part of a process of looking at how we support a whole variety of development of teams. We are aware that that is not just formal team ministries but a whole variety of forms. I will take that away to see if we can engage with that, because it clearly makes sense to be able to do that.

6. *Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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 replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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.

7. *Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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 (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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 distinguish 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 4 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.

Revd Neil Patterson: Bishop, it is very good that only a very small number of couples come before bringing up this issue. What should archdeacons do if other people bring it to their attention that churches are systematically charging additional fees?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: Neil, I think the direction is very clear. If they charge those fees they have to indicate that they are optional. I do not think there is any equivocation about that. I think the important thing is for archdeacons and parish clergy and others to recognise that these are optional fees and should be presented as optional to the couples.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): Have the Life Events team been contacted in respect of funeral costs? Will you also issue guidance in this area of ministry in respect of fees?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: I am not aware of that contact specifically around fees so I shall follow that up, Sam.

The Chair: Question 8 to be answered by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

8. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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 (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as President of the Archbishops' Council: 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.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: I recognise that your new commissions, of which a new one on reimagining care was launched just a few days ago, are, according to your own website, independent of the CofE institutions with the freedom to say whatever they believe is necessary, which I must admit raises questions as to why other groups do not feel free to say what they think is necessary.

My question however is: who is therefore advising you about membership and chairs of such bodies, given that recent appointments you have made have caused significant concern and sent extremely worrying messages to the wider public, particularly the LGBT community, which we are not evidently allowed to ask you about because they are not synodical bodies?

The Archbishop of Canterbury: Thank you very much, Jayne. The way that these bodies are put together is an extensive process of consultation and on recent - I am sorry, I saw your lips move, but I could not read them.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: I did say extensive consultation with whom?

The Archbishop of Canterbury: I was just coming to that if you will give me a moment.

The Chair: Jayne, you have asked your question.

The Archbishop of Canterbury: Extensive consultation varies from commission to commission. The first thing is expertise in the area. We searched high and low in order to find the best people to chair them. Once we had the chairs, the whole point of these commissions is they are independent, and they can say uncomfortable things to the Church of England in its broadest sense, as for instance the *Coming Home* Report did as regards our policy on housing.

Once we have the chair there is then extensive consultation with the chair, and with other expert bodies, to ensure we have the right people and, depending on the subject, with others. For instance, with the Racial Justice Commission, the people who were and are involved in the consultation are the Racial Justice Task Group that has just reported. One of its terms of reference was to advise us on the membership of the Commission. When it comes, for instance, to the household and family one, we made sure that there was diversity of ethnicity, of disability, of gender and of human sexuality.

Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone (Oxford): My question specifically concerns one of the standing commissions, the Legal Advisory Commission, which undoubtedly has really great legal scholars. What attention is given to a proper theological grounding within that commission across the full range of Anglican traditions?

The Chair: Andrew, the commission to which you refer is not a commission of the Archbishops' Council so I am afraid that question is out of order.

Question 9 to be answered by Mr Mark Sheard.

9. *Mrs Rhian Parsons (Leicester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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 (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: 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.

The Chair: Questions 10 to 12 to be answered by the Bishop of Salisbury.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS

10. *The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What recommendations and resources are available to help local churches address the crisis in biodiversity?

The Bishop of Salisbury (Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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/expressions-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 advisers.

Synod members are encouraged to share these resources.

11. *The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

12. *Mrs Enid Barron (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mrs Enid Baron: I am grateful to the Bishop for a very encouraging reply and the mention of further development of the Energy Footprint Tool. My question is will the work on the Energy Footprint Tool continue to be a high priority, given particularly the need for measuring and monitoring in the light of the Church's commitment to become net zero by 2030? Will this continue to be of high priority?

The Bishop of Salisbury: Thank you, Enid. I am very grateful for the questions and for the focus on environmental issues at this Synod. The Energy Footprint Tool has got off to a flying start. We are really pleased with the way people have engaged with it. We need to gather good-quality information so that we can measure progress. Bev Botting has been part of the group that has engaged with this, and I am very grateful to her, and indeed, to Becky Clark and Cathedral and Church Buildings, to ensure this is going to continue to develop. Of course, the really key thing is to get every church using the Energy Footprint Tool. That is the most important thing of all.

The Chair: Questions 13 to 15 to be answered by the Archbishop of York.

13. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Chair of the House of the Bishops: 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.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): It mentioned that working class people have been considered as a group, but I wondered whether anybody from the House of Bishops has spoken to any working class people about their views.

The Archbishop of York: The short answer is a yes, and there is not really time for a longer answer.

14. *Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Chair of the House of the Bishops: 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.

Miss Prudence Dailey: In the same way that the Sewell Report carefully considered the evidence on whether institutional racism existed in different contexts, will the House similarly set out what it regards as the evidence in terms of data as well as anecdote for the assumption underlying the Taskforce's Report that the Church of England is institutionally racist so that people in the pews can form a view on whether that assumption is, in fact, justified?

The Archbishop of York: Again, the short answer is yes, but I think in this case because it is such a topical issue this week, and because we have not had an opportunity to discuss things at this Synod, perhaps I should, if you would bear with me, Chair, give a little example of the evidence Prudence is understandably enquiring about. First of all, there is the Minority Anglicanism project, a 42-diocese wide study, the interviews they did and quite a body of evidence that was put together. There is a very large body of black theological literature, lamentation literature like the "Ghost Ship", which narrates the racialised experiences of Anglican clergy and laity. And, of course, what I assume most of us saw, the documentaries like this week's *Panorama* programme. So, sadly, there is evidence that we must face up to, and we must, as the Report says, move from

lament to action. We must also understand that this is driven by the demands, the joys, the challenges of the Gospel.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): Prior to your discussions, have the House Bishops set aside time to watch the *Panorama* programme on racism together?

The Archbishop of York: No, we have not, Sam, not to watch it. I would be surprised if all of us have not seen it, and, as the Taskforce being launched yesterday shows, we are determined to take this seriously, and we recognise that what the Church of England and the nation requires is actions not words.

15. *Ms Josile Munro (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

The Chair: I wonder whether we might take the second supplementary on this question first.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): If *From Lament to Action* is not to meet the same fate as befell all its predecessor reports on this subject, it will require the degree of finance, staff and time commitment which the Archbishops' Council devoted to *Setting God's People Free*. Will the House and its Chairs use their authority to secure similar resources for the implementation of this report?

The Archbishop of York: It is certainly our intention to implement this report, and we will do what has to be done to make that happen, but, clearly, the detailed discussions about how we do that, when I say are yet to take place, are beginning to take place.

The Chair: Josile Munro, are you able to put your supplementary?

Ms Josile Munro: Thank you for your answer, Archbishop of York. My concern, as with

all these other reports, is how we are going to ensure there is action. My question is how will individual bodies and senior officials to account if they do not meet those actions within the time?

The Archbishop of York: Josile, I think what I say to you is, first of all, to reiterate my own determination. You will know that I have been a member of CMEAC myself for eight years. I share the deep frustration. I have been the author of some of the CMEAC reports that then did not get seen through in the way they should.

I would just say to the Synod I believe that one of the most essential tasks Synod performs, and we are doing it now through questions, and it is not always easy, not always comfortable, not always satisfactory, but a vital part of the Synod's role which is to hold the whole Church to account. I would encourage you to ensure that this stays on our agenda, that questions are asked, that we who are charged with responsibility for the oversight of the Church are asked to come back and say how things are going. I do not think I can say any more than that. I am determined that we make the changes that we need to make. Perhaps the last thing I would say is this is a shared responsibility, Synod. There are other areas which we also need to look at, so let us do this together in the spirit of Christian comradeship and fellowship and love, but let us be robust.

The Chair: Questions 16 and 17 to be answered by the Bishop of Gloucester.

16. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Rachel Treweek) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

- (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 Adrian Greenwood: Thank you, Bishop Rachel, for your answer and for your continuing inspirational work as lead Bishop for *Setting God's People Free*. Would you agree that the principles and workstreams of *Setting God's People Free* flow well into the strategic priority of the Emerging Church being a community of missionary disciples; of mobilising the million in everyday faith?

The Bishop of Gloucester: I think you might be asking me for an opinion, but I am going to say yes, and, following on from what Archbishop Stephen just said, what is really important as a Church is that we really understand the join-up across everything we are doing. These are not all different strands. How we live as missionary disciples is about setting God's people free in everyday faith. It is also about how we live, lament to action, and the more we can work together to understand it is all part of our vision and strategy, the better that will be.

17. *Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Rachel Treweek) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): I am grateful to the Bishop for encouraging the inclusion of lay personal theological reflections. The sequencing of scripture, tradition and reason in my question acknowledges that for many people unfamiliar with the Christian faith, the place of logic and reason within faith is essential. Would she acknowledge that lay people have a lot to contribute in this respect?

Bishop of Gloucester: Yes, I absolutely do.

The Chair: Question 18 to be answered by the Bishop of Sheffield.

18. *The Revd Canon Martyn Taylor (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Mutuality in Finances group has met eight 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 Chair: Questions 19 to 23 to be answered by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich.

19. *Revd Charles Read (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Revd Charles Read: First of all, thank you, Bishop Martin, for this really helpful reply which has already given reassurance to some of the ordinands and curates who talk to me about their anxieties from time to time. Towards the end of your answer you referred to the development of a national ministry plan. I just wondered, when it is formulated and collated, whether that would be made widely known or published in some way.

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: Thank you, Charles. Yes, we have been asking each diocese to try to work out some sort of projections in terms of their deployment. We have had responses from half of the dioceses. When we have collated all of that then we will be able to report back. I think it is really important that we understand across the Church what is going on in terms of deployment, both to know what challenges to address and what encouragement is already there.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): Will the House of Bishops commit to finding every person who has given up their job based on promises by the Church, paid employment for ordination, whether in the Church or outside?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: I think that is a very broad commitment. I would take some advice before I gave a definitive answer to it.

20. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 Clive Scowen: What is the timescale for the work to be undertaken by the Lay Ministries Advisory Group and the Central Readers' Council? When will their recommendations come back to the House of Bishops?

Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: You are sort of asking the wrong person. I will need to ask the Central Readers' Council and the Lay Ministries Advisory Group and I will find a response and get back to you.

21. *Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Yes, the House of Bishops agrees.

Mr Sam Margrave: Despite the answer, media reports show that Nick Howard was refused ordination for such beliefs. Will the House of Bishops look at this case to learn lessons, issue an apology to Nick and also apologise for wasting £40,000 on training costs?

The Chair: Sam, I regret that we are not able to address individual cases such as that and the question is therefore not in order.

Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool): Thank you, Bishop Martin, for your very clear answer to Sam's question. Are we to understand, therefore, that the House of Bishops also agrees that no Christian should be hindered from a vocation in which he commends that same belief to others?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: Yes.

22. *Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Rev Canon David Banting: Thank you for your attempt to offer an acceptable route for REACH South Africa clergy to find ministry posts in the Church of England, but there does seem to be some circularity or complexity in your answer, which I am asking would you be able to clarify. REACH South Africa is not in communion with the Church of England, but their orders are recognised and accepted. Their clergy have orders recognised and accepted like the Church of the Province but they will still possibly have to be referred to the national Ministry Team's Candidates' Panel which is itself subject to the Archbishops' Council policy, so they have to go backwards to something before their ordination. Can you clarify this so that this does not seem to be circular and slightly reluctant and complicated advice on an accepted route?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: David, thank you. One of the things you will appreciate about the Questions exercise is that people are put up to answer the questions who may know very little about the actual subject. Some of the subjects I do know about, but this one I know very little about. I will need to revert to Alex McGregor, who drafted me this answer. I will work with Alex to see if we can come up with what is to you a satisfactorily less circular.

23. *Revd Canon Jeffrey West* (Oxford) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Revd Canon Jeffrey West: I am very grateful to the Bishop for his helpful and encouraging reply, and I certainly have no personal axe to grind. I was lucky to have a bishop who was happy to appoint me to a licence half an hour from where I lived and I also served a five-year term as an area dean. One of the concerns that was brought out in the discussions document ---

The Chair: Could you come to a question please?

Revd Canon Jeffrey West: The question is could the bishops perhaps encourage area deans to treat all the licensed ministers within their deanery as full members of chapter, and indeed of the House of Clergy, and of their deanery synod? The attitude of some stipendiary clergy can be exclusive.

Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: I completely understand the question. I will take that back to encourage my fellow Bishops to make that encouragement.

Revd Charles Read (Norwich): It is very encouraging to see all the things that are happening. I am afraid my supplementary question is much the same as it was to question 19, namely, when you gather the information together, is there a plan to make the results of those researches more widely available so we can see what you found out?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich: Yes, and there is a good active SSM or SSOM network of officers and dioceses through whom we will do that, but we can make it more widely available too.

The Chair: Question 24 to be answered by the Bishop of Leeds.

24. *Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The 2020 US 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 (Rt Revd Nicholas Baines) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah: Thank you, Bishop, for explaining the Indian situation. However, it would be helpful to know the practical assistance that is being provided by the Link dioceses. The reason I am asking the question is that the Link dioceses have links with a particular diocese not the entire province, and there are more than 44 other provinces. Would it not make sense if the Church of England as a wider body has a toolkit that can provide practical guidance in situations that you have just explained?

The Bishop of Leeds: Thank you for the question. I think that assumes that there could be a mechanism for the Church as a whole to have an impact across the board, and that in itself is questionable. The best and most effective way of addressing these questions is where we already have links and where we have people on the ground. Link diocese is a bit of an interesting term. For example, my diocese is linked with the whole of Sudan, which is five dioceses, so the work we do in relation to this sort of issue and advocacy and human rights stuff is effective because we have that link across the ground, but I do not think it is possible to be uniform. I might just add that resources provided by the Freedom of Religion and Belief Leadership Network that I referred to in the debate earlier might help churches respond in particular ways, and is something we can build on in the future.

The Chair: Question 25 to be answered by Bishop of Durham.

25. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 Adrian Greenwood: Thank you, Bishop Paul, and I wish you well in your role as co-Chair of this important new commission. While I fully recognise the importance of not causing discouragement or being seen as judgemental, nevertheless, the Church believes and teaches that marriage is a gift of God and creation which is given, among other things, for the raising of children. Please will the Commission seek to find ways sensitively to amplify this good gift of God so that more couples will choose to accept this gift for the benefit of their children and families?

The Bishop of Durham: Thank you for your good wishes. The Commission will look very hard at all the evidence that is presented, not just around marriage but other partnerships as well, and we will reach the conclusions on the basis of scripture, of reason, of tradition, of the evidence that we are presented with. I cannot pre-empt what the Commission will decide. I am answering, of course, today on behalf of the House of Bishops but I also answer to some extent as co-Chair.

The Chair: Questions 26 to 29 to be answered by the Bishop of London.

26: *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 Clive Scowen: I am grateful for the information about how prayer is already being promoted around the Church and the dioceses, but will the House and its members now encourage specific and focused prayer for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church and the nation that will be bold and effective in proclaiming the good news of Jesus, and that women and men of every background throughout our nation will come to faith in Christ and become part of His Church?

The Bishop of London: Thank you, Clive, for your supplementary question. Of course, the heart of the vision that we are developing at the moment is to be Christ centred. It is a call to spiritual and theological renewal, and at the centre of that is prayer. Also, you will know that there are dioceses that also have prayer for renewal at the centre of their strategies. You will know in London that at the heart of Be There for Every Londoner is growing discipleship, and therefore prayer. Lichfield has at the centre of its renewal Bread of Life. Oxford, Emerging from Coronavirus, and Leicester, Reimagine: leading the Church out of Lockdown, all of those have at their heart prayer.

27. *Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mr Sam Margrave: Thank you for your answer, Bishop. On the basis that LLF is now a process in consultation, not just a teaching document, how can Christians respond to the consultation to ensure their views are heard about the House of Bishops?

The Bishop of London: Sam, thank you for your supplementary question. First and foremost, it is a teaching and listening document. My prayer and my hope has always been that together we will listen to each other, we will listen to God, and I believe the material does that. It is a very good piece of material. Obviously with any listening, if the House of Bishops is discerning and listening to God, and to each other and to the Church, there is a feedback mechanism in that. If you go to the LLF hub website you will see that already we are asking people to feed back comments in various ways, including a questionnaire, and we are going to develop that work as we go on. There is also a process that we will come out to the dioceses next year to begin to do some formal listening in that way. But very much at the heart of this is the material for us to learn and listen to each other, and that is certainly what we are encouraging people to do at the moment.

28. *Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Rev Neil Patterson: Bishop, thank you for the answer. What groups or organisations did the Next Steps Group consult with in order to determine who to invite to join the reference group?

The Bishop of London: First of all, the reference group is not a closed group at the moment, it is in formation because it is an ongoing work, so at the moment we have purely invited those people who had already been involved in sharing their lived experiences and stories in producing the LLF resources. We also asked the LLF advocates. That is where it is at the moment. It is a mix. We are looking for diversity of age, gender, geographical location, sexuality, relationship status, ethnicity, theological perspectives relating to questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. But, as I say, it is not a closed group at the moment. We will look to expand it in the same way as we are encouraging dioceses to have their own groups.

29. *Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 baptized 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 (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

The Chair: Questions 30 to 32 to be answered by the Bishop of Carlisle.

30. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd James Newcome) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 Andrea Minichiello-Williams: Will the House of Bishops defend the right of those who are heterosexually married to receive talking therapy, therapeutic counselling, pastoral support and prayer for unwanted same-sex attractions as they try to save their marriages?

The Bishop of Carlisle: Andrea, thank you very much for that question. I think one of the things that has always been stated is that appropriate help for people with uncertain feelings around sexuality, gender identity, whatever, can include prayer and counselling to assist individuals. I think it is interesting that the Government have also come up with a similar statement to make it clear that where people are looking for non-directive counselling and help and prayer it should be available, so the answer is yes.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): Thank you, Bishop James. I wonder if you are aware of the widely agreed definition proposed by Alicia Kearns MP to the Government last year, agreed by all the memorandum of understanding signatories, as well as the members of the Ban Conversion Therapy coalition, which I chair, which involves all the LGBT organisations, legal academics, survivor groups, and a range of senior faith leaders. It is based on the best international definitions from Queensland and Madrid and states that conversation therapy encompasses all medical, psychiatric, psychological, religious, cultural or any other intervention that seeks to erase, repress or change the sexual orientation or gender identity of a person, including aversion therapies or any other procedure which involves an attempt to convert, cure, cancel or suppress sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression, and therefore any form of prayer ---

The Chair: Jayne, I think this is turning into a speech, if you will forgive me. I think we have understood the point.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: I am stating the definition and I am wondering if the Bishop is aware of the very widely accepted definition.

The Bishop of Carlisle: Jayne, I am aware of the 2017 statement, which is slightly different from the 201415 one on which General Synod voted, but I am grateful to you for bringing that to my attention.

31. *Mrs Sarah Finch (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd James Newcome) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Thank you for your answer. Has the MPA Council submission been published and, if so, where can it be found?

The Bishop of Carlisle: That is an interesting question. I have a copy of it in front of me, so in that respect it has been published, and I could certainly let you have a copy of it if you would like it.

Mr David Lamming: Yes, please.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Just building on that, I wonder if the submission could now be made available to all members of General Synod via the website, email, or some means, so we can all see what has been said?

Bishop of Carlisle: It is kind of you, Clive. I will consult with MPA on that, and with Malcolm Brown.

32. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd James Newcome) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester): Since the start of the pandemic, an estimated 75,000 unborn babies have had their lives taken inside their mother's wombs in their homes using lethal abortion pills mailed by the abortion industry to mothers, often without clinical consultation to mothers who are often vulnerable, scared and panicked, and who have not had any proper clinical supervision or care. What can we do as we await the Government's response to save these mums and babies?

The Bishop of Carlisle: Thank you very much for the question. We made it clear in the MPA response to the Government's consultation the negative impact, some of which you have made very clear in your speech, Andrea. We have also made it clear that in our view the system that the Government introduced and said was temporary should

indeed be temporary. I think if people want to write to their MPs, for instance, reinforcing that position that would be a very good thing to do.

The Chair: Questions 33 to 36 to be answered by the Bishop to the Armed Forces.

33. *Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Tim Thornton) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

34. *Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Tim Thornton) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Bishop Tim, your answer refers to a court or tribunal, which I understand that would include a Bishop's Disciplinary Tribunal having jurisdiction to dismiss a complaint for abuse of process. It would clearly be desirable for such a power to be exercisable earlier in the disciplinary process in an appropriate case. As I am informed this will probably require primary legislation, i.e. a Measure, can you inform Synod of the likely timetable for the proposed CDM reform?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces: Thank you, David. I can tell Synod that I am intending to bring a paper to July Synod setting out a wider scope of what I believe may be necessary much more generally, in consultation not least with the Chair of Ministry Council relating to its role and understanding of ordained ministry and within that a

specific proposal about a new Measure to replace the Clergy Discipline Measure. That then will have to be taken through the synodical process, which will take the time it will take.

35. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Tim Thornton) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mrs Mary Durlacher: I am asking how many dioceses are operating these joint councils because I think most people do not know about them. Is there any uniformity or consistency from diocese to diocese as to what is involved?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces: Thank you, Mary. The word "consistency" is an interesting one to use in relation to the Church of England. I do not know is the honest answer to your question. There are a number of these around in different dioceses and, as the answer suggests, there are different ways of handling these matters which are open to different dioceses. I know of very good examples where matters are discussed openly, properly and there is proper consultation, and good agreement is drawn, even when parishes within such a council disagree about significant issues.

36. *Revd Charles Read (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Tim Thornton) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Revd Charles Read: Thank you, Bishop, for your reply. It is clear from your reply that the bishops are talking to each other about the culture of deference, but I wonder whether the bishops are talking to anybody who is not themselves a bishop about the culture of deference.

The Bishop to the Armed Forces: The answer does not quite say that. The answer says that the bishops are working on these matters and they are working on them with a range of people from a range of backgrounds. Whilst we might be tempted sometimes to desire only to talk to ourselves, I can assure you we are not. In particular around the culture questions we are working with a range of different groups of people.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): In response to the issue of culture mentioned a moment ago, has the House of Bishops considered a bishops' register of interests or the Church being subject to the Freedom of Information Act in relation to addressing deference highlighted by IICSA, and other concerns?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces: I am not aware that we have considered that as yet. I am aware we are very open to looking at ways in which we can try to keep looking at the issues that are difficult, or that get in the way, or that cause problems.

37. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mrs Mary Durlacher: In the search for an answer which is perhaps less circular and is more satisfactory, can you tell me how is the legislature to consider new laws if it is not made aware the LAC's understanding of the existing law?

The Chair: My apologies, before I cue in the Bishop of Lichfield, I should have prefaced your question by reminding Synod that questions 37 to 39 are to be answered by the Bishop of Lichfield.

The Bishop of Lichfield: Thank you, chair, for unmuting me. I am sorry, I missed the question, Mary, because I was trying to unmute myself. Could you repeat it briefly?

Mrs Mary Durlacher: In an attempt to get a less circular and more satisfactory answer, to quote one of your colleagues, how is the legislature to consider new laws if it is not made aware of the LAC's understanding of the existing law, which apparently that answer gives?

The Bishop of Lichfield: The House of Bishops is doing further work on this issue and will come back to General Synod with the results of that. If there was a desire to change the law that will then go through the normal synodical process.

Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone (Oxford): We are very much looking forward to that future work. Given the Church of England's commitment to transparency, and given that the House of Bishops is relying upon the LAC for their current policy in a matter of great importance in the parishes, why not simply publish the addendum? Why is it being hidden?

The Bishop of Lichfield: The advice provided to the House of Bishops was, as you say, an addendum to the existing LAC guidance of 2011, which remains the guidance which the House of Bishops is following. Only some guidance to the House, including guidance from the LAC, is published, and House of Bishops papers are not routinely shared with General Synod or circulated beyond their intended readership.

38. *Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mr David Lamming: Bishop, since the issue of the laity being denied communion of both kinds and the use of individual cups to distribute the consecrated wine are live issues requiring resolution now, with widely different practice at parish level, including in one benefice the priest while holding a wafer up to the camera informs the congregation ---

The Chair: David, can you come to a question, please?

Mr David Lamming: It has long been taught by the Church that gazing on the sacrament is as good as receiving it physically. When will the House of Bishops report on this issue? Putting it shortly, if not now, when?

The Bishop of Lichfield: I would not want to comment on individual cases, particularly not of the kind that you have described. We hope that the House of Bishops’ Working Group should be completed at the latest by the end of 2022. I would remind Synod though that there are at the moment two options for receiving Holy Communion, one in one kind only, but the Archbishops have also commended a method of almost simultaneous administration of bread and wine, so there is a way in which Communion can be received in both kinds according to our guidance at the moment.

39. *Christina Baron (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the House of Bishops: 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 Chair: Questions 40 to 55 to be answered by the Bishop of Huddersfield.

40. *Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What steps are being taken to work towards mandatory reporting of safeguarding issues and disclosures?

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

41. *Revd Canon Paul Cartwright (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

42 *Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Revd Canon Judith Maltby: Thank you for your answer, Jonathan. I was wondering given the high risk of poor practice in this area, and the erosion of trust of survivors that conflict of interest causes, could we have a timeline for this urgent work, please?

The Bishop of Huddersfield: Thank you very much, Judith. One of the things I want to stress is that as well as waiting for the work that is still to be done, preliminary action has been taken. National Core Groups now routinely start with a question about conflict of interest and members are expected to register that. So, even before the work is completed, some steps have been taken.

In terms of when the policy is going to come to the NSSG for approval, my understanding is we are working on these policies coming back in the autumn of this year. I will clarify that with colleagues and confirm to you what the timeline is in terms of bringing this back to the NSSG for approval.

43. *Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 Debrah McIsaac: Apologies, my broadband is unstable. I will pass.

Bishop of Huddersfield: Chair, Debbie had submitted her question in advance. I have it in front of me if you want me to answer it.

The Chair: I think the moment has passed, Bishop, thank you.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): Bishop, I remain puzzled by the resistance to the idea that a Core Group should secure all the relevant perspectives before formulating an inquiry. If I go to the doctor I expect them to get to all the symptoms on the table before they work out what they are going to do next. Can you name any other field of inquiry where an absence of data and perspective is regarded as advantageous?

The Chair: I think that might be an expression of opinion but you may, Bishop, wish to respond.

The Bishop of Huddersfield: It did sound like it was seeking for speculation, but if I can turn that back. I think it would be helpful to give a little bit more explanation about the way that Core Groups function. It is very difficult to be precise because contexts vary enormously, but the basic format is this. This is all dealt with under the current policy responding to concerns about church officers. There are two sections in there about the work of Core Groups, section 1.6 and 3.1. To give a typical example, if an allegation of concern is raised about a church officer there is a requirement to convene a Core Group within 48 hours. The guidance also makes it clear who should participate in that Core Group.

What then happens is an initial consideration is given to the allegation or concern that has been raised, and a decision is made as to whether that should be dismissed immediately or investigated further. If it is investigated further, then the practice now is that the chair of the Core Group would contact the respondent, details would be given of the allegation that has been made, the caseworker appointed would contact that respondent and arrange for a meeting. They are given information in advance about the allegations, and they are invited also to bring a representative with them if they wish to discuss those concerns. Only then, once that conversation has been had, is that information taken back to the Core Group and a further decision is made about what action should be taken from there.

44. *Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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: Given that, as you say, this is a major and detailed piecework please would consider Synod receiving an interim progress report, because if the draft is not available until the end of 2021 then it will be presented to an entirely new Synod?

The Bishop of Huddersfield: Thank you, Anne. Tomorrow, of course, we have a take note debate precisely where the NSSG and the NST are seeking to bring Synod up-to-date with ongoing work. That is part of our commitment to transparency in the work that we are doing. Obviously, there is a safeguarding item on every General Synod agenda, so it would be very sensible for us to bring back reports in due course. What we also do is that following every NSSG meeting an account of the business transacted is put on the Church of England website, and the NST itself publishes a regular newsletter about work that is being undertaken. We are very much committed to transparency and to providing information more generally, including to members of General Synod. I am very happy to look at how best to do that in respect of this particular piece of work.

45. *Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 Anne Foreman: Thank you again, Bishop Jonathan. Sadly, I have been made aware of situations where respondents have not been accorded full information. I wondered if you would consider the answer that you have given that to sort of correct or amend that. The other thing is who is it that decides whether there is risk to a victim or member of the public if information is disclosed, and are the reasons then given to the respondent?

The Chair: Anne, you have snuck in two questions there, but perhaps Bishop Jonathan would be pleased to address them.

The Bishop of Huddersfield: Anne, if you are aware of particular cases where you believe that the policies have not been correctly followed, I would encourage those people to ensure those are reported to the relevant people, either in the dioceses or the NST as appropriate, so that those concerns can be investigated. Certainly, I outlined earlier on what I believe is supposed to happen. If you think it has not happened please let the relevant people know about it.

With regard to publication of information, the NST - and I can only speak for that in this context - does not make information public about the cases it is involved with. If things are made public, or we are asked about them, then there may be a responsive statement about that.

Revd Michael Smith (Oxford): Whilst the practice guidance on responding to safeguarding concerns gives how to handle an anonymous complaint, it does not say anything about a situation where a diocese affords anonymity to a complainant. Can you signpost me to the framework where dioceses work out when to afford anonymity, and, more importantly, when not to afford a complainant anonymity, and if it has not been published already, can it be so?

The Bishop of Huddersfield: Anonymity on behalf of complainants is obviously both a

sensitive and a very important issue. I think you have asked some fairly technical and detailed questions there. I will refer those back to colleagues and ensure you are provided with an appropriate answer.

46 *Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

47. *Mrs April Alexander (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 thirtyone: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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

Mrs April Alexander: Many of these churches are not part of the CofE although their sponsoring parishes may be. Congregations may not be conscious of this distinction.

How can they be protected under CofE arrangements for safeguarding and how can they be made aware of the risks?

The Bishop of Huddersfield: Sorry, I think we lost the first part of your question before you were unmuted.

Mrs April Alexander: We know that many of those churches, which I have referred to in the question, are not part of the CofE, although their sponsoring parishes may be. Congregations may not be conscious of this distinction. How can they be protected under CofE arrangements for safeguarding, and how can they be made aware of the risks?

The Bishop of Huddersfield: I am not quite what you mean in that context by sponsoring parishes. Elsewhere in the questions we have dealt with the question of some of these proprietary chapels and other such bodies. You have got a relationship there between those churches and the dioceses within which they are set insofar as the bishop has a choice whether to offer a licence to the clergy in those parishes. On the ground you also, therefore, have a question about the relationship between the dioceses and those churches in terms of the expectations that those churches are following appropriate safeguarding guidance. It is slightly hypothetical as to how you would deal with those kinds of questions and making people aware of the expectations of the Church of England with regard to safeguarding. That is done by dioceses in a whole variety of ways.

The Chair: And in expectation this will be our last question, question 48 from Martin Sewell.

48. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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: I ask this on behalf of the Smyth victims. Keith Makin made a reference under paragraph 3.6 of his terms of reference in connection with Lord Carey, whose PTO was withdrawn three days later, yet they have seen people whose names have been put forward who held the Ruston Report from 40 years ago, and no action seems to have been taken against these people. They wonder how soon will it be before they see action taken on these cases.

The Bishop of Huddersfield: Again, part of this question refers to individual cases. The situation is that when information is brought to the attention of the NST and reviewers and terms of reference are required, if they come across information that raises a concern about a church office holder, they are required to forward that on to the NST. Each case is then investigated and looked at, and a decision is made as to what further action should be taken. All the cases are assessed against the same Code of Practice and the same guidance, but not all cases are the same.

The Makin review is an ongoing review, and a huge amount of information continues to come out. One of the judgments that has to be taken is at what point have we gathered sufficient information in order to be able to act. One of the benchmarks for that, and the line in the sand for that, is when the report is published. If information comes to light, it is passed on by the reviewer, whether it is the Makin review or others, to the NST. Every case is benchmarked against the same guidance. Different cases differ and therefore different actions are taken and when there are concerns, they are looked at.

Questions not reached during Synod.

49. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

50. Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Independent Lessons Learned Review conducted by safeguarding agency Thirtyone:eight in its report on Jonathan Fletcher and Emmanuel Church Wimbledon published on 23 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

51. Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Independent Lessons Learned Review conducted by safeguarding agency Thirtyone:eight in its report on Jonathan Fletcher and Emmanuel Church Wimbledon published on 23 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

52. *Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: All evidence received indicating abuse or failures in safeguarding practice will be addressed in accordance with the House of Bishops Practice Guidance.

53. *Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 do not 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.

54. *Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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.

55. *Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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 (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: 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

56. *Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS)* asked the Secretary General: 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 replied as Secretary General: 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.

57. *Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Secretary General: 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 replied as Secretary General: 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

58. *Mr Philip French (Rochester)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: 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 replied as Clerk to the Synod: 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 24 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.

59. *Revd Bill Braviner (Durham)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: 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 replied as Clerk to the Synod: 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.

60. *Mr John Freeman (Chester)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: 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 replied as Clerk to the Synod: 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.

61. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: 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 replied as Clerk to the Synod: 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

62. *Mrs Sarah Finch (London)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: 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 (Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied as Chair of the National Society Council: 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

63. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the Church Buildings Council: 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?

Revd Peter Kay (St Albans) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council: 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

64. *Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: 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 (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: 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.

65. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: 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 (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: 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

66. *Ms Josile Munro (London)* asked the Chair of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People: 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 (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Council for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People: 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

67. *Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: 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 (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: 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.

68. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: 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 (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: 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.

69. *Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham) asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:* 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 (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: 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 26 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

70. *Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford) asked the Chair of the Business Committee:* With National Lockdown not due to end until 21 June 2021 and a decision pending as to whether the York Group of Sessions should take place just under three 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 (Chelmsford) replied as Chair of the Business Committee: 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

71. *Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: 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?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: 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

72. *Christina Baron (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: What was the process by which the, subsequently withdrawn, “Advice for hosting a Maundy Thursday meal at home” was produced and signed off?

73. *Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Who authorized 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 (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission: 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 judgment) and other interfaith contacts to encourage mutual understanding.

74. *Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: 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 authorized these posts, and how is the risk of such posts causing offence or reputational damage managed?

The Bishop of Lichfield (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission: 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.

75. *Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: 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 (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission: 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

76. *Mrs Enid Barron (London)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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 27 May. 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.

77. *Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner. 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.

78. *Revd Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner. 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.

79. *Mr Bill Seddon (St Albans)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

80. *Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark)* asked the Church Commissioners: What are the Church Commissioners' plans to reduce the environmental impact of tenants' activities on the Commissioners' land?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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 two 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.

81. *Revd Canon Mark Bratton (Coventry)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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).

82. *Mr Bill Seddon (St Albans)* asked the Church Commissioners: What steps are the Church Commissioners taking to ensure they meet their 2025 GHG emissions reduction target?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

83. *Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: What 'climate hurdles', or criteria for disinvestment, have the National Investing Bodies set for oil and gas companies to meet in 2021 and 2022?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

84. *Dr John Appleby (Newcastle)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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 five 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.

85. *Ven. Elizabeth Snowden (Chelmsford)* asked the Church Commissioners: What level of investments were held by the Church Commissioners in oil and gas companies at the end of 2020?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

86. *Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TEIs)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

87. *Revd Canon Jeffrey West (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

88. *Miss Sophie Mitchell (Church of England Youth Council)* asked the Church Commissioners: Recent research conducted by Tearfund and Youthscape found that eight out of 10 young Christians in the UK think Christians should respond to climate change, and only one 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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 seven 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.

89. *Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

90. *Revd Canon Anne Brown (Truro)* asked the Church Commissioners: *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?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

91. *Mr Andrew Gray (Norwich)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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 (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

92. *Mr Andrew Gray (Norwich)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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 (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

93. *Mr Tom Hatton (Southwark)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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 (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner: 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.

94. *Mr Tom Hatton (Southwark)* asked the Church Commissioners: How much gross and net profit has “champing” [in CCT properties] made for each and every year it has been undertaken?

Dr Eve Poole (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner: 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

95. *Revd Andrew Lightbown (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: 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 (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: 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.

96. *Dr John Appleby (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: 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 (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: 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 road map of decarbonisation and the feasibility of reducing emissions more rapidly whilst continuing to fulfil each of the NIBs' various fiduciary duties.

97. *Ven. Elizabeth Snowden (Chelmsford)* asked the Pensions Board: 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 (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: As of 31 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.

98. *Revd Canon Mark Bratton (Coventry)* asked the Pensions Board: 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 (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: 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.

99. *Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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 (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: 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.

100. *Mrs Kathryn Winrow (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: 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 (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: 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 offsetting 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).

The Chair: Thank you. Members of Synod, we have reached 7 o'clock, indeed just a fraction after, so that brings this item to a conclusion. Many thanks to all those who have asked questions, and to all who have answered them. Apologies to those who did not get the opportunity this afternoon to put their supplementary. That concludes the business for today.

We will pause very briefly and then we will move into a time of evening prayer for today, for the Feast of St George. I will read and pray on behalf of us all parts of the Evening Prayer, and invite you to listen and to join in with your prayers. At the end of that I will invite the Archbishop of Canterbury to give us his blessing.

The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker) led the Synod in an act of worship.

Full Synod: Second Day Saturday 24 April 2021

The Community of St Anselm led the Synod in an act of worship.

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 9.30 am.

The Chair: Good morning, Synod. It is very good to be with you again and thanks to the Community of St Anselm for leading our morning prayer. They are obviously in a Covid secure bubble there in the Crypt Chapel at Lambeth Palace and it was lovely to be led by them in worship as we begin today.

Before we get on to the business before us on the agenda, I am going to call the Chair of the Business Committee to move a motion under Standing Order 39(1) to suspend a provision of the Standing Orders, and he has my permission to do that. Normally, in Standing Orders when such a motion is being proposed, the speech limit is two minutes, but, because you have not been given notice of this and because of the complexity of it, really, I am going to allow five minutes for the Chair of the Business Committee to speak now.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): Gosh, you are seeing more of me than I would have hoped. I am making a proposal which would introduce a slight change to the way that we are operating the votes at this group of sessions. I am proposing these changes because of feedback received from Synod members - social media is a poor replacement for the tearoom, I know - and the panel of Chairs yesterday and observations by members of the Business Committee. I hope that they will make today's business run a little bit more quickly and a little more smoothly.

You will have noticed that, yesterday, we were using the Crystal Interactive system - referred to by one speaker as *The Crystal Maze*, draw your own conclusions - for all votes, including procedural motions, such as motions for closure and other more simple votes which would have been taken by a show of hands were we sitting in a chamber. Whilst this has the advantage of rigor and makes it possible to record the names of everyone who voted and how they voted, it has the disadvantage of slowing things down.

Some of you pointed out that this has already made the complex experience of a remote Synod even more complex and difficult to follow. The Business Committee is keen to make remote meetings as easy to follow as possible in these rather difficult circumstances. We are learning as we are going along with remote meetings and the Business Committee is keen to respond to your concerns.

We are, therefore, proposing to use, as we did last November, simple votes - that is to say, Zoom polls - for the more straightforward items, such as motions for the closure and some other less crucial motions and amendments. Formal votes using the Crystal Interactive platform would still be used for the more important votes where we need

precise figures and voting lists that can be subsequently published, for example, where a counted vote by Houses is required by the Standing Orders.

There is a slight snag, however, because Standing Order 38(9) requires the Business Committee to ensure that, “where the voting on a question is conducted by electronic means, the names of the members voting in favour of the question, the names of the members voting against and the names of the members wishing to record an abstention from voting are made publicly available in such a manner as the Business Committee may determine”.

Unfortunately, we have discovered that it is not possible to extract this data from a Zoom poll in a reliable way and so before we can use Zoom polls for simple votes we need to deal with Standing Order 38(9). I am, therefore, asking you to agree that Standing Order 38(9) be suspended for the remainder of this group of sessions so that a Zoom poll can be used for simple votes at the discretion of the Chair.

I will, nevertheless, direct on behalf of the Business Committee that, where a formal vote is taken using the Crystal Interactive voting platform, the usual voting lists for counted votes are to be produced and published on the website. I, therefore, move that Standing Order 38(9) is suspended for the remainder of this group of sessions.

The Chair: Thank you, Robert, for that. We are not required to have a debate but, if anyone does wish to say anything, if you can indicate raising your hand in the way that we have been doing and I will call just a few people. There is going to be a two-minute speech limit and, really, we just need to be addressing the issue of the suspension of this particular Standing Order.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Just a quick question. One of the other problems we have had is that it is difficult to raise a point of order. If in this situation the Chair decides they want a simple vote by poll and somebody feels it is a more serious vote and wanted to raise a point of order, can the Chair of the Business Committee assure us that there will be more attention paid to that, otherwise it will go through and then people will regret that they have not been able to raise their point of order to make a case for it being a more serious vote than a simple one?

Revd Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle): Just two very brief points. First, to say that sometimes with Zoom polls I have noticed that I do not always get the poll popping up on my screen. I think it is just a slightly more fragile system. I support the motion, but could we ask that the Chairs take into account the slightly iffy nature of Zoom polls when they

are weighing up which votes to hold by Zoom rather than by *The Crystal Maze*. Secondly, to say that, when we have these sorts of votes, would it be possible to put the text of what we are voting on? When it is a new motion that has not appeared in the papers, would it be possible to put the text of the motion that we were voting on in the chat so that we can be really clear when we are voting?

Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds): I am in favour of using Zoom polls when appropriate, but it is also helpful if on screen we can be shown the percentage of people voting in different ways so that we can see whether a motion was carried enormously or very closely or by a narrow margin, which we can see when we vote with a show of hands in person.

The Chair: I am just going to ask Robert to respond to some of those specific questions if you would, Robert, please. If you can make it two minutes that would be fantastic.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): Yes. Points of order, the staff will monitor the chat that you have to use to raise a point of order very closely today and so, hopefully, we will not drop any of those. Stewart Fyfe, yes, it is a fragile system and that is why we are not using it for the formal votes, only for those less contentious as you say. The text of the motions, my understanding is that for a Zoom poll the text will appear on the screen.

Paul Ayers, yes, we plan for the results of those votes to be displayed on the screen. Bear with us just a little bit if we do not always get that right as we start, but we are trying to address all of those things and they have all been heard. As you can see, someone from the staff has just said that points of order should be sent to the "Points of Order Inbox" and how you do that I think has just popped up there.

As I said, I do appreciate your forbearance as we work in this slightly different way. I can assure you everybody here is doing their best and our best to make this work as quickly as we can. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Robert. When I put the motion to Synod, you need to be aware that the motion will be carried only if at least three-quarters of the members who are present and voting vote in favour of the motion. This is a three-quarter in favour motion that we are going to be voting on. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on the motion by the Chair of the Business Committee to suspend paragraph 9 of Standing Order 38 during the remainder of this group of sessions. Voting will take place using the Crystal Interactive platform.

The motion was put and carried, 270 voting in favour, four against, with two recorded abstentions.

The Chair: Even with my pathetic CSE maths, I can work out that we have achieved 75% or more. Therefore, Standing Order 38(9) is suspended for the remainder of this group of sessions. That means that some votes will, at the discretion of the Chair, be simple votes using Zoom polls. Thank you very much for that.

ITEM 503

SPECIAL AGENDA I

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules (GS 2199)

The Chair: We now move to legislative business and the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules 2021, Item 503, for which members will need GS 2199 and the Explanatory Notes, GS 2199x. First, I will ask the Revd Paul Benfield to move Item 503A, the preliminary motion, “That the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules be considered”. This will provide an opportunity to make general comments about the rules or to raise specific points which do not relate to the amendment on the Order Paper.

If the preliminary motion is carried, we will then move to the amendment. Members who wish to comment on the amendment should not do so on the preliminary motion but should reserve their comments for the debate on the amendment. I therefore call the Revd Paul Benfield to move Item 503A, “That the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules 2021 be considered”. Fr Paul, you may speak for up to ten minutes.

ITEM 503A

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): On 2 February 1932, Alan Don, then Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Gordon Lang, recorded in his diary the simple entry, “Church assembly not very invigorating”. I hope that I can invigorate members to take a keen interest in this item. Members will be aware that the Bishop at Lambeth is currently chairing a working group looking at the operation of clergy discipline. There have also been commitments given to IICSA in relation to certain aspects of how the Church approaches discipline.

Recently, a working group from the Ecclesiastical Law Society has produced a helpful report into the operation of the CDM. These rule amendments, which we are considering this morning, are separate to all of that work. In the fullness of time, a new Measure will come before Synod for consideration.

That new Measure will have its own procedural rules. In the interim period, it is, of course, important that the procedural aspects of clergy discipline work well, work efficiently and are fair to all those involved. An ordered Church must have rules that govern the way it deals with discipline and, where matters reach the ecclesiastical courts, how these are to operate.

The Clergy Discipline Rules 2005 have been in operation since the Clergy Discipline Measure itself came into force in 2006. They have been amended twice, once in 2013 and again in 2016. On both these occasions, they passed through Synod as deemed business without a debate. It is perhaps necessary, therefore, to provide a little background to their operation.

The rules provide the framework by which the CDM operates. They govern the procedure by which an allegation of misconduct is dealt with both within a diocese and before a tribunal or court. Typically, they are concerned with the manner by which allegations are made, how a respondent submits an answer, the time periods for doing so, how a bishop deals with a complaint and the procedure before a tribunal. They do not deal with appeals which have their own procedural rules.

The Rules Committee, chaired by the Dean of the Arches, is constituted under section 81 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018. Under section 83 of that Measure, the Committee may make rules for the carrying into effect of the provisions of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 and, in particular, the procedure and practice for determining allegations of misconduct. Behind these proposed amendments are four key principles: efficiency, clarity, active case management and vulnerable witnesses.

If I may deal briefly with each of these in turn. First, efficiency. The (Amendment) Rules address the issue of efficiency and with it the problem of delay in the following ways. Rule 2, "Provision of an email address". Complainants and respondents will be required to provide an email address if they have one. The previous year has shown us all the importance of facilitating electronic communication. Rule 8, "Online facility for processing allegations". Currently, all complaints, answers and applications must be made in paper form. These will continue to be available to those who wish to use them.

However, a new system is being developed for the submission of these forms online. These new rules facilitate the use of that system. Importantly, it will enable further detailed guidance to be available at each step for those submitting documents. Matters will be speeded up by the simultaneous delivery of complaints to the bishop and the registrar.

Secondly, clarity. In terms of clarity, Rule 3, “Timeline”. Complainants will be required to provide a timeline of the relevant events in chronological order. Rule 7, “Renaming ‘complaints’ as ‘allegations of misconduct’.” The CDM is a formal legal process for the determination of allegations of misconduct which are serious in nature. It is not a complaints procedure in the way one might complain about the gas bill.

The word “complaint” in the legal context has a specific meaning. Most commonly, it is a formal document whereby legal proceedings are started. That is the way it is used in the CDM. The use of the word in this way, however, has caused the subject matter of complaints to be widened to include areas which are not suitable for determination under the Measure. This amendment renames a “complaint” as an “allegation of misconduct” in order to more accurately describe the purpose of the Measure.

Rule 9, “Service of documents”. The rules provide strict time limits for when a party must provide or respond to a certain document. There is currently, however, no means of determining when a party receives a document for the purpose of starting the clock. The amendment here creates a provision for deemed service in order to provide that clarity. Rule 10, “Word and page limits”. Word and page limits have been introduced to ensure documents are precise and focused. Should a complex case demand it, these limits can be increased or removed.

Thirdly, active case management. The draft rules provide the President of the Tribunals with new powers in three areas which will provide for a more active approach to case management. This, in turn, will ensure that cases progress much more quickly than at present. Rule 4, “Limitation period”. Firstly, the President will have a power to provide written directions for the management of an application for permission to bring proceedings after the one year time limit has expired.

Rule 5, “Production of documents by a person not party to the proceedings”. The President will be able to order a non-party to the proceedings to provide material to the designated officer and respondent. It is a source of significant delay in current proceedings where outside bodies, such as the police, hold records relevant to a case but they are unwilling or unable to provide the material to the parties.

Rule 11, “Powers of the President”. It is proposed to give the President a power to make directions on her own initiative rather than simply in response to an application, appeal or request. Rule 12, “Amendments to allegations of misconduct”. There is a practice direction currently in operation which governs the way in which an allegation can be amended. Practice directions are normally temporary measures designed to plug a gap in the rules so that the practice direction has been codified into the rules.

Fourthly, vulnerable witnesses. Rule 6, “Cross-examination of witnesses”. Finally, in relation to vulnerable witnesses, the (Amendment) Rules bring on to a statutory footing the now very standard practice in the criminal and family courts of prohibiting a respondent who is without a lawyer from cross-examining a victim of sexual abuse, children and other vulnerable witnesses. Unless the respondent instructs a lawyer, one will be provided by the tribunal. I commend the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules to you and move the motion that they be considered.

The Chair: Thank you, Fr Paul. This item is, therefore open for debate. If you are wishing to speak, would you please indicate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): I would like to actually thank the Proctors and the Archbishops for their welcomes to me in this new post of Prolocutor in York and also for those who elected me. I would like today to welcome these changes to the rules and also the update to the Code of Practice pending a more thoroughgoing reform of the Clergy Discipline Measure. As we all know, justice delayed is justice denied and it is in everyone’s interests that these cases are dealt with speedily and effectively.

I also hope there will be transparency so that people are told what they are accused of as soon as possible in the interests of natural justice. I am encouraged by the words of the Bishop of Huddersfield in that respect about safeguarding cases. I welcome the separation of complaints from allegations of misconduct so that minor matters can be dealt with by mediation. Talking to one another is often the best thing to do to repair relationships. If that happens for minor cases and they get sorted out, it so often prevents things getting worse without being escalated.

I also welcome the provision in the Code of Practice that pastoral care must not only be offered but there must also be follow-up on whether it has been taken up. I know of cases, sadly, where there has been no pastoral care of the clergy involved, they have been effectively isolated from all their contacts and placed in a very difficult situation which can have an adverse effect on their mental health.

As Christians, all our processes must be carried out with care and humanity for all parties involved and I hope and pray that this will be the case. I hope these updates will not just stay on the page but will be carried out effectively so that misconduct is dealt with and the innocent are quickly vindicated and that all have the care and support they need.

Revd Simon Talbott (Ely): I am speaking to Synod today as convener of the CECA (Church of England Clergy Advocates) members in Synod. We have over 1,200 Church

of England clergy members at every level of responsibility and we have extensive experience of supporting clergy through the vagaries of the CDM process. I would like today, as an aside, to encourage every member of the House of Clergy to consider joining us: you never know when it might be happen to you and we also take lay Church employees as well. It is a matter in hand.

There is widespread agreement that CDM is not fit for purpose and in need of replacement. What is not clear, however, at this juncture is what the Review Group looking at it believes that this should be and the outline of its replacement. We will have to wait, I gather, until July to learn about that. The Sheldon Hub, working closely with CECA and others, have produced an extensive document charting the potential scope and purpose for any reforms.

It will be useful for us to know who will be steering CDM reform once the Bishop at Lambeth steps down. We ought to know who is charged with assessing this before we have any proposed changes laid before us. Meanwhile, friends, cases continue and the manifest shortcoming of the present system continues to cause harm both to clergy complained about but also to people with legitimate grievances and complaints, harm that is known to extend to people taking their own lives in despair at what a mishandled complaint has led them to do, sadly.

We can welcome an effort to mitigate some of that by a modest adjustment to the rules and the Code. But, friends, whatever we agree today we should all know that this is manifestly not enough. There is an element of despair lest this be presented as the answer or, rather, perhaps an initial tinkering around the edges of a broken system. I can certainly see how the proposed changes to the rules and conduct will be helpful and, broadly, I am sure that will be the case; rules around efficiency, clarity, case management and vulnerable witnesses. I would especially welcome clarity here and in the Code that this is about serious allegations of misconduct and not complaints, which can take many forms and not relate to misconduct at all.

Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds): The amendments that we have before us in GS 2199 provide welcome improvements in clarity, though I do accept a great deal of what we have just heard from the previous speaker. My point, by contrast, is a very small one but I think an important one because, when I went sideways in reading the papers to look at GS 2205, the consequential changes to the CDM Code of Practice, I was left with a question which in some ways is a question of detail but in another way is a question of substance.

There is still a reference in section 38 of GS 2205 to the need to have due regard, albeit with an explanation of its meaning. The IICSA Report has clearly recommended that

we avoid using this phrase, that it be discontinued and be replaced by one that is more explicit in its meaning as we know from GS 2182x, sections 2 and 3.

I am not asking to discuss GS 2205 here, but just to raise the general point: would it not be advisable in all of these revisions that we are undertaking to replace this phrase of “have due regard” altogether consistently across all our rules and guidance in conformity with the IICSA recommendation? We have here a document in GS 2205 which seems not to take that on board.

The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton): I thought it might be helpful, in the light of one or two speeches already made, if I did make a short contribution simply to say that the plan is very much for me to bring a report forward in July which will set out, I suppose, two things I would want to say which I hope will help members of Synod reflecting on this particular item of business.

First of all, I would want to support very much the amendment to the rules coming forward today and support very much the work of Edward Dobson, the relatively new still designated officer, and Morag Ellis in all that they are doing. Whatever new Measures we bring in, there will still need to be constantly updating of rules and looking at the Code of Practice. I think today is about that specific piece of work rather than the more general work that my group is looking at and other groups are looking at.

What I would say on the more general is that one of our underlying principles is that we bring about justice and justice for all concerned in all Measures that are brought forward. To that extent, the only point I would really want to make is that I think it is unhelpful that what I believe has happened is that far too much pressure has been brought on the Clergy Discipline Measure.

I can assure you that whatever we bring forward will not solve all the problems of the world by a new Measure to replace the existing Clergy Discipline Measure. What I would say is that what I will be doing, to trail my coat very briefly for July, is setting out that I strongly believe that we do not only need a new Measure to replace the Clergy Discipline Measure but we need to look again at the role, understanding and affirmation of clergy in a wide variety of ways, a new framing of the understanding of how clergy understand themselves.

Picking up what Simon Talbott was saying, I completely accept there is a wider scope and purpose behind all this so we take away the pressure of thinking about discipline and see how we can support the development of clergy right through the ministries in order that we do not focus on what people do wrong but we focus on how we can help each other be better ministers of the Gospel.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): Thank you to Fr Paul for introducing the rules and to the other speakers. I am the Chair of the Rules Committee which was charged with amending these rules and it might just help members of Synod to understand that the rationale behind this is, indeed, seeking to do as much as possible now under secondary legislation to make the system more agile and to minimise procedural stress for all concerned to speed up and encourage everybody involved to focus on the key points in any particular case. In other words, this amendment to the rules is looking for quick wins.

I hope that it will reassure members of Synod to know that the Committee was very much informed by the practical experiences of people involved in administering the system on the ground and especially contributions from the two provincial registrars, as they then were, including John Rees who has just retired and who I think we are honouring later on today, so lots of practical experience went into this.

I particularly want to commend the important protection for vulnerable witnesses which I see as part of our duty to respond well to survivors of abuse and also to the recommendations from IICSA. I also very much commend the change of nomenclature from complaints to underline what the clergy discipline system is for, as Bishop Tim has just been alluding to. I very much want to commend and support these changes in the rules and hope that Synod will agree.

Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I am very pleased that all the major players who are driving this are here to listen to what I have to say next. I am very concerned for justice for all but particularly for people who cannot read or write. What about people for whom English is not their first language? What about those with special educational needs? What about a large number of people in this country who are not confident in written English?

I would, therefore, ask that when final measures are brought forward that some work will be done on how we make provision for such people, because many of the people who are victims actually come from those categories. They are precisely chosen as victims because they cannot complain. I think this is one of those things that, unless we address it now in a realistic form, will come back to hurt us whatever form clergy discipline takes in the future.

The Chair: Simon Butler, and then I am going to be testing your mind, Synod, about the closure of this debate.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): I was not intending to have spoken in this debate, but Bishop Tim Thornton has helpfully reminded me to draw Synod's attention to GS Misc 1279. We do not always delve into the vagaries of GS Miscs when we read

our Synod papers, but this does make reference to wider work going on around clergy terms of service that sits under the wider legislative reform process that we envisage coming forward in the lifetime of the next Synod.

I do want to encourage Synod members to be active in working with us on this whole area of the role of clergy and not just in the disciplinary context which we are referring to today. Perhaps it is worth also saying - and I think it needs to be underlined again and again and many of those who are listening to this debate will be responsible in some way for the administration of the system of discipline - that we can have as wonderful effective and good rules as we could possibly imagine. Whether under the current CDM or the forthcoming Measure that we hope will arrive soon, they can be as good and as wonderful as they are, but if they are not used properly and if they are not used with humanity and care and diligence, if they are seen as process rather than people at the centre of them, they will always fall short of what we need. We have seen that and learnt that in safeguarding and, again and again, we need to remind ourselves of it in terms of clergy discipline as well.

The Chair: I now put the motion for closure to the vote.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: I, therefore, call upon the Revd Paul Benfield to reply to the debate. Fr, you have up to five minutes to respond.

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): Thank you to those who have spoken in the debate and thank you for the welcome that has been given to these amendments. We accept that this is not the panacea and this does not solve the problems with the Clergy Discipline Measure. Many of the comments made are directed to what people hope will happen in the future, but if I may just comment on one or two points raised.

First, Professor Joyce Hill raised a question about the Code of Practice which is not really a question for this debate. The Code of Practice will, in fact, be debated later this afternoon and, in any case, the Safeguarding Code of Practice Measure has not been passed yet and when it is passed by this body, it will then need to go to Parliament. If and when it is passed, the CDM Code of Practice will be updated but we cannot really update codes in anticipation of legislation which has not yet been passed.

To Bishop Tim Thornton, thank you very much for an update on where we are. To Jonathan Alderton-Ford, yes, you raise an important point and it is important that those making an allegation of misconduct within a diocese should be helped to do so where they need help. The Code of Practice says that the bishop should ensure that this help is in place and I urge all bishops and dioceses to make sure that it is in place. I am not

sure that it is in every diocese. To Simon Butler, yes, we all must engage to make this process work. With those points and thanks to all who have spoken, I commend the motion.

The Chair: I, therefore, put Item 503A, “That the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules 2021 be considered”, to the vote. This will be by the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 305 voting in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions.

ITEM 516

The Chair: We come now to the amendment at Item 516. The 40-member procedure applies. That means that the mover of an amendment will have not more than five minutes to speak to it. I will then call on the Revd Paul Benfield to speak for not more than five minutes in reply. If the amendment is not supported, it will lapse unless 40 members indicate by means of a green Zoom tick that they wish the debate to continue and the amendment to be voted on. I, therefore, call on David Lamming to move his amendment, Item 516. David, you can speak for up to five minutes.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Good morning, members of Synod, Mr Chairman. This is a very simple amendment and I understand that it is going to be accepted. It is an amendment to Rule 3, which at present, as framed in GS 2199, would provide for an additional set of words, effectively, in the complaint form, the words, “The relevant events in chronological sequence” for a timeline, or what I always used to call a chronology when I was in practice.

The reason for this is it is a very useful document for anyone considering a complaint or the response to a complaint or dealing with a case. It is a document which realistically and practically is best produced to sit alongside all the other documents in the case so that you can relate to them and look back at where they fit with the chronology. What my amendment does is to take the timeline out of the complaint form and make it a freestanding document. That has the advantage also that there will be no need to amend all the statutory forms.

Members of Synod, you will have seen from other amendments in these (Amendment) Rules that it is proposed to remove the option for parties to submit a document which is not a statutory form but a form to the equivalent effect. If that particular amendment is passed, namely that there must be a use of the statutory form not an equivalent document, all the forms would need to be amended under Rule 3 as it currently stands. Members of Synod, I hope that explains the reason for this amendment.

It is a practical move to assist not only those who are putting forward complaints or responding to them but also, of course, to make these rules a little less complicated in terms of the amendments they are effecting to the main rules of the Clergy Discipline Rules of 2005. I think that is all I need to say.

The Chair: Thank you, David, and for being so heroic doing this from your hospital bed. What the other people in the bay must be thinking you are getting up to, goodness only knows. I now call on the Revd Paul Benfield to respond to this amendment. Paul, you have up to five minutes.

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): This is a helpful amendment which I am very happy to accept. From my own practice at the bar, I agree with David that it is much more helpful to have a timeline in a separate document to which one can refer whilst looking at other papers, and so I do not think I need to say anything more other than to accept it and to wish David all the best in a speedy recovery.

The Chair: This item is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Ms Valerie Hallard (Carlisle): I just wanted to make a point which I was concerned about in support of this amendment. When the statement had been “must”, I was concerned that some victims of trauma are characteristically unable to produce such a document, that the narrative is difficult to record chronologically, and I think we need to use this amendment to ensure that those people are not disadvantaged.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): Just very briefly, I want to back up exactly what Valerie has said. It is very difficult - I speak as a victim - to be able to go back and try and think sometimes through the order of events. The word “must” must be removed. More importantly, I want to thank David. I think it is extraordinary the diligence that he serves the Synod with in going through this tooth and nail and from hospital speaking out. David, we owe you a huge grateful vote of thanks. I am sorry if people are being sarcastic or rude to you, I think at the moment we all respect you enormously and thank you for bringing this attention to us.

The Chair: I see no one else indicating. David, you have just raised your hand. Given what we have just said, do you want to have another word?

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Yes, Mr Chairman, really just to thank everybody who have expressed good wishes to me. I have had one or two messages and texts and particularly just now to thank Jayne Ozanne for her kind remarks. I have

to say I am in a room on my own now and so I have been able to take my headphones off. Just to explain, I am awaiting a transfer to Papworth for heart surgery in maybe a week's time, but that is why I am able to participate in Synod because I am feeling really well at the moment in hospital but just waiting for that transfer. I think that explains to everybody why I have been able to concentrate on Synod papers last week with really nothing else to do.

The Chair: Thank you, David and you are in our prayers as you approach that. I see no one else indicating, therefore I put item 516 to the vote. This is by the Crystal Platform.

The motion was put and carried, 300 voting in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions.

ITEM 503B

The Chair: I now call on the Revd Paul Benfield to move Item 503B, "That the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules 2021 [as amended] be approved". You have up to five minutes, Paul.

Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): I do not think it will take that amount of time. I might just say in relation to the last two comments about the chronology that it is not intended to be a comprehensive account but simply the key dates in order. There would, of course, be no penalty on survivors or others if they could not for good reason provide such a timeline. That said, I do not need to repeat what I have said earlier and so I move that the (Amendment) Rules be approved.

The Chair: This item is now open for debate. I see no one indicating, therefore I put Item 503B to the vote and this is by the Crystal platform.

The motion was put and carried, 306 voting in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions.

The Chair: Having been carried, therefore, the Rules will now be laid before both Houses of Parliament pursuant to the Statutory Instruments Act 1946. Thank you, Synod, this concludes that item of business and I will now hand the Chair to Rachel Jepson for the next item.

THE CHAIR. *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 10.28 am.

ITEM 5

APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PENSIONS BOARD (GS 2200)

The Chair: Good morning, members of Synod, ecumenical friends and anyone else tuning in. We come to Item 5 on the agenda, which is the appointment of Mr Clive Mather to serve as Chair of the Pensions Board for a second term. For this item, members will need GS 2200. Members of Synod, it has been brought to my attention that there is, in fact, an error in the agenda and on Order Paper II in relation to the wording for the motion set out at Item 5. Therefore, please note that the expiry note of the term of office should be Tuesday 30 April 2024 as set out in paragraph 7 of GS 2200, rather than Sunday 31 March 2024 as stated in the agenda and on Order Paper II.

I hope that that is clear. Therefore, the motion reads, “That the appointment of Mr Clive Mather as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board for a further term expiring on 30 April 2024 be approved”. I invite the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby to move Item 5. You may speak for up to ten minutes.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): The Church of England Pensions Measure amended yesterday by the Legislative Reform (Church of England Pensions) Order 2021, subject, of course, to parliamentary approval, provides for the Archbishop of York and I have to appoint a Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board with the approval of the General Synod.

One of the effects of the Legislative Reform Order is that a new board is put in place on 1 July 2021. In order that that board is not left without a Chair for those first few days in July before the next meeting of Synod, we are asking the Synod to approve the appointment of Clive Mather to continue in the role from 1 July 2021.

The General Synod approved Clive’s appointment at its February 2019 group of sessions following an extensive selection process chaired by the Bishop of Manchester. Following an extensive executive career, Clive Mather undertook several non-executive chair roles, including the Chair of Tearfund, the Garden Tomb Association and Chair of the Shell Pensions Trust, before joining the Pensions Board.

Since taking office, Clive has shown great, remarkable and imaginative commitment to the role. He has shaped the board’s strategy. He has led the board in its extraordinarily influential impact on worldwide ethical investment, working closely alongside the Church Commissioners. He has transformed its approach to its beneficiaries and he has led it through the legislative reform process that we considered and approved yesterday.

Archbishop Stephen and I commend unhesitatingly and with warmth the continuing appointment of Mr Mather as the Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board to the Synod and are deeply grateful to him for his willingness to continue with this work. Chair, I beg to move.

The Chair: Item 5 is now open for debate. I see that the Chair of the House of Laity, Jamie Harrison, wish to speak. I call you, Jamie, please.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): I think we were all so impressed yesterday by Clive's input to the pensions debate. I was struck by the fact that the Chair gave him five minutes after everyone else had two minutes, but we will not go there because he was worth the five minutes if not even more. I think it showed us the generosity of heart and spirit, of his clarity of thinking and the gentleness in which he took us through to a point I think that was really so helpful to take the Measure through.

I just want to reinforce what Archbishop Justin said, to refer back again to paragraph 5 of where Clive has been so effective across so many ventures in his life and so glad that he is willing to do this work, which is of such huge value not just to clergy in the Church but also those of us in the laity who are very concerned that our clergy friends and colleagues have a good outcome for their pensions and for their housing.

Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio): On your behalf, I chair the Joint Employment and Common Services board and the board of ChECS Limited. On both those boards, we have trustees from the Church Commissioners and from the Pensions Board and Clive is one of those representatives.

In addition to all that you have heard about his competence, I have come to greatly value his quiet challenge, his great statements of values, his continual concern for the welfare of our people and for the beneficiaries of the Pensions Board, as evidenced by the work he was very keen that we undertook around issues of unconscious bias in the context of race. Clive has greatly enhanced both the quality of our discussions and the grace of our conversations.

Quite apart from what he does for the Pensions Board, his contribution to our wider thinking is hugely appreciated. Please do not think that this is one chum talking for another from some cosy enclave. I can assure you that the challenge he gives me as Chair is, indeed, quite clear. It is the sort of challenge that makes you feel the need and want to change. I support this motion.

The Chair: I see no one indicating that they wish to speak, so we will move straight to the vote. I beg your pardon. I invite Archbishop Justin to reply to the debate. You have up to five minutes. Sorry about that, Archbishop.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): Oh, I really sympathise. I would have preferred the other way round but, thank you, Rachel. Just to say, John and Jamie have both added very warm commendations of Clive with which he will be deeply embarrassed because he is a very humble man and with which I entirely agree. I hope Synod will vote strongly for this. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Archbishop. We do now move to vote on Item 5, the appointment of Clive Mather as Chair of the Pensions Board. I put Item 5 to the Synod by ordering a vote. Thus, this is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 5. Voting will take place using the Crystal Interactive platform.

The motion was put and carried, 301 voting in favour, none against, with one recorded abstention.

The Chair: That concludes this item of business.

ITEM 6

APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE DIOCESES COMMISSION (GS 2201)

The Chair: We are now going to move straight on with Item 6 on our agenda, which is the appointment of Dame Caroline Spelman to serve as Chair of the Dioceses Commission until 30 April 2022. For this item members will need GS 2201. This time, I invite the Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell to move Item 6. He may speak for up to ten minutes.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Dear friends, Chairs of the Dioceses Commission are appointed by the Archbishops and it is a pleasure to propose the appointment which is listed at Item 6 on your agenda. The appointment comes at, I believe, something of a *kairos* moment for the Church of England as we begin to emerge from the Covid pandemic and reflect on recent months and together shape a new future for the challenges that face us.

I am in no doubt that the Dioceses Commission will have a really important part to play in this and it is, therefore, particularly timely to be proposing a new Chair today. Dame Caroline Spelman will be known to many of you as a distinguished parliamentarian, a

Government minister and, lately, as a Second Church Estates Commissioner, an office she relinquished only last year after standing down as a Member of Parliament. Her political skills, her understanding of the Church of England but, perhaps most importantly, her love and commitment to the Church of England and to the Gospel make her ideally suited to this role.

The motion before you today proposes that Dame Caroline be initially appointed for a term up until 30 April 2022. That is because that is all that is permitted by statute as all Commission appointments formally end on that date. This period, nevertheless, provides a valuable window of opportunity for Caroline, the Commission and others in the wider Church to help us chart a new route map that will guide us in the future, drawing on the other strategic initiatives, particularly the Vision and Strategy workstream, Transforming Effectiveness and the whole overall Emerging Church work.

I do hope that this will meet with enthusiastic approval. I am sure Dame Caroline is the right person at the right time to help us with these questions that we face. However, before formally proposing her, I think it is only right that we pay tribute to the tireless and faithful work of the previous Chair, Michael Clarke, who had to stand down on health grounds, and also to record our thanks to Fr Paul Benfield who has in this interim period been steering the commission with great wisdom and great faithfulness.

Therefore, Synod, I wish to formally propose that Dame Caroline Spelman be appointed as Chair of the Dioceses Commission until 30 April 2022.

The Chair: Thank you, Archbishop Stephen. Item 6 is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield): I want to support this motion most sincerely that Dame Caroline Spelman be appointed as the Chair of the Dioceses Commission. Members will recall, and the Archbishop has always drawn our attention to this, that Caroline was a very active member of this Synod in her role as the Second Estates Commissioner and she proved herself to be a real friend and champion of the Church and the Synod, both in Parliament and across the dioceses, where many have been grateful for her support and advice. I support this motion wholeheartedly and hope the Synod will benefit again by her work, as I am sure they will.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): I am a member of the Dioceses Commission. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Caroline Spelman in her appointment as Chair of the Dioceses Commission. I have worked with Caroline as a Church Commissioner and much appreciate her diligence and her sound judgment, which will be of great assistance to our work on the Dioceses Commission.

In his answer to my supplementary question on the multiplicity of diocesan accounting systems last night, John Spence pointed to the key underlying issue which makes it difficult for the Church to work more efficiently: the fact that each diocese is an independent charity in its own right. Yet we know that we must persist in seeking a more effective structure where administration no longer takes up so much of our time and resources and where the huge differences in diocesan wealth are addressed. It is for all these reasons that I look forward to Caroline Spelman joining our work in the Dioceses Commission and I warmly support her appointment.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells): It was as a very nervous newish member of General Synod some 20-odd years ago that I stood in front of the Archbishop of Canterbury and asked him a question about why he was asking us to rubber stamp the appointment of members to the Archbishops' Council. The reason why I asked the question was because I felt that there was no transparency in terms of the process by which these people were selected.

I am absolutely convinced that Caroline will do a brilliant job, and I am going to support this motion wholeheartedly, but I would like to ask that for the future appointments of this nature are fully documented in terms of the process by which the Archbishops came to their conclusion.

I would not necessarily have thought about this particularly, but yesterday we had the Archbishop of York talking passionately about transparency and racism and I just wanted to know whether or not during the process of discernment there were a number of candidates that had been proffered for the Archbishops to consider and how many of the UK ME community were involved in that shortlist.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford): Dame Caroline Spelman and myself have both been Commissioners together and parliamentary colleagues. I think it is an extremely good appointment. One of the things that MPs suffered from were boundary changes, Boundary Commissions, and obviously the Dioceses Commission does do that but has not been that active recently. Her confidence and the way in which she has always been discreet and confidential and actually almost serene in the way she has conducted some of our reports on the Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners does make her the ideal candidate.

I would, however, having read the last Report, urge her to look again at what happened with the Bishop of Ludlow who was also an archdeacon. It was a combined role of a bishop and an archdeacon and I well remember bringing this up when we had David

Hope and Rowan Williams. I did propose that this could be considered again because it can work very well and I would hope that might be something that she will look at with her fellow Commissioners.

I also pay tribute to Fr Paul for the Deputy Chairmanship that he has conducted so well and to Michael Clarke for what he did before. This is a good appointment. It is a very exciting time. Who knows what the future holds, whether there will be more dioceses combining, whether there be another large diocese such as we have had in Leeds, but I wish her well and I support.

The Bishop of Leeds (Rt Revd Nicholas Baines): I strongly support this appointment and look forward to working not as part of the Dioceses Commission but supporting the Commission, hoping that we might actually learn something from what the Commission has already done. The West Yorkshire Scheme began over ten years ago. The Diocese of Leeds is now seven years old and much can be learned from that experience that is not currently.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): It is good to be able to speak about something that is not legislative. I just wanted to say that I very strongly endorse the recommendation and the proposed appointment of Dame Caroline. I had the opportunity when serving as a member of the Revision Committee for the Legislative Reform Measure about three years ago now to experience Dame Caroline's wisdom and guidance when she attended a meeting of our Committee in her capacity as a member of the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament. I am sure that she will provide not only wisdom but that wealth of experience when she takes up, as I am sure she will, this new role as Chair of the Dioceses Commission and I wish her well.

The Chair: Charles, I will give you one minute. Okay, please. So if you could really keep your point as succinctly as possible that will be great.

Revd Charles Read (Norwich): Sorry to put my hand up so late. It will not take a minute to say that I want to support what Tim Hind said: a bad process can give a good result. I think this is a good result in terms of the person we are being invited to appoint. I think the process needs revision, it is not a good process.

The Chair: Thank you, Charles. I appreciate you keeping that comment brief. As I see no one else wishing to speak, I ask Archbishop Stephen to reply. You have up to five minutes.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Thank you very much and thank you to everyone who has spoken. Charles Read's and Tim Hind's comments about process, I am new to this game and so they are noted and we will look at that.

Nick, Bishop of Leeds, we do certainly need to learn from what has happened in Leeds and I think there has been a tendency for us to think, “Goodness me, that was difficult, let us not do that again”, rather than, “That was difficult, we have got so much to learn because we may need to do something like that again”.

I am sure Caroline Spelman's leadership will be such a positive one. As Peter Bruinvels put it so well, she is the ideal candidate. Thank you to Liz and others for their endorsement of her and their commitment to her. Just to briefly reflect on the helpful things Gavin Oldham was saying, as we move forward as a Church of England we must be led by our vision to be centred on Jesus Christ, shaped by the Five Marks of Mission, a Jesus-shaped Church.

The Transforming Effectiveness agenda is looking at how we can ensure as far as possible that our resources go to frontline mission by being as effective as we can. This will have implications for every part of Church life, including the number of bishops, the appointment of bishops, the type of bishops we have and, therefore, the dioceses themselves. I think we have the right person to work with us on making these decisions as we move forward. Several of you spoke as if Caroline had already been appointed and I sincerely hope that will shortly be the case.

The Chair: Thank you, Archbishop Stephen. We move to vote on Item 6, the appointment of Caroline Spelman as Chair of the Dioceses Commission. I put Item 6 to the Synod by ordering a counted vote of the whole Synod. Thus, this is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 6. Voting will take place using the Crystal Interactive platform.

The motion was put and carried, 302 voting in favour, none against, with four recorded abstentions.

The Chair: That concludes this item of business. We are now going to move straight on with Item 7 on our agenda before taking a break.

ITEM 7 FAREWELLS

The Chair: As just mentioned, we come to Item 7 on our agenda, fellow members of stood, Farewells. We bid farewell to Christopher Foster, the Bishop of Portsmouth, therefore I invite the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby to present the farewell. Thank you.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): Thank you, Rachel, for inviting me. Chris cannot be with us at this Synod as he is at his own farewell service in Portsmouth Cathedral. The photos are just wonderful, by the way. I have not seen them all, they keep catching my eye. They are just delightful.

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you, farewell and God bless to Chris and Sally. Chris served as a curate in Lichfield and as an incumbent and a chaplain in an Oxford college before he became Subdean of St Albans Abbey and then Bishop of Hertford and then moving to become Bishop of Portsmouth.

Prior to ordination, Chris was an economist and has always been a teacher. He is keen to communicate the Gospel and keen to help others develop in their own discipleship and thinking. I am sure it helps being a Bishop having been an economist as all the forecasts will be wrong and one of the most important phrases that can be used both by economists and bishops is, "It all depends on what you mean by it".

I might add that, as we well know, economists' other favourite phrase is "on the other hand", which is why Macmillan asked to only have one-handed economists appointed. Bishops need to be able to say "on the other hand" for they are, indeed, Anglicans and, therefore, walk in the middle of the road. In some ways, before we looked at the photograph, Chris might come across, therefore, as a bit of a traditional bishop - and, before that, priest - but, as we all know, looks can be deceptive and Chris is in many ways what you might call an early adopter.

My own experience is that in the House of Bishops and in many other places he has not spoken often but has always spoken wisely and one is extremely unwise to ignore what he said. He was an early adopter of smartphones and iPads, which led on one occasion when in a meeting of the House of Bishops a certain individual, who I shall regrettably leave as nameless, was pontificating at length, at which point a loud voice from Chris's pocket - you know, one of these automatic answering things - suddenly announced, "I'm sorry, I didn't understand that". I am sure the voice spoke for others in the room as well.

As a Bishop, he was a pioneer in appointing a clergy couple to an incumbency on a job share basis. This, I think, caused some controversy in the national Legal Office who disapproved of such practices at the time and who it could be said got their own back by promptly making Chris serve as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee for the next five years. He carried this out with his usual diligence and care and with great patience. He is always someone who takes care and prepares carefully for what he has to do.

He has been a life-long member of the Wine Society. The subscription was apparently given to him as an ordination gift. With his usual immaculate timing, the day before the start of the first lockdown an entire van load of boxes of wine was delivered to Bishopsgrove, though Chris assured his colleagues that they were not all for his personal consumption. We have not done an audit to see how many are left a year later.

As well as being very diligent, Chris is also well-known for pastoral care and for caring for all. One example of that is the way he has given time to the Isle of Wight during his tenure of the See of Portsmouth. From an Isle of Wight perspective, Chris was deeply committed to visiting and made hundreds of visits, spending a phenomenal amount of time on ferries, the FastCat and hovercraft and many hours waiting for them when they were delayed.

He was the complete expert at working every occasion, be it with over a thousand young people in the island's Church secondary school or any number of the smaller village schools, parish celebrations and meetings. I think his chaplain suggested at one point that if he was tempted to go on *Mastermind*, his specialist subject would be the timetables and workings of the Isle of Wight Ferry.

Chris and Sally - and I really do want to acknowledge Sally rather than just saying Chris and Sally as though it were all normal - are also famous and much loved for their hospitality which they demonstrate in Bishopsgrove. One sign of it is they have four dishwashers but only one kitchen. Chris has been keen to foster - I am sorry, but I could not help doing it just once - a concern for and passion for higher education and also for theological formation, having served on boards and committees for the University of Hertfordshire, the University of Portsmouth, Westcott House and Ripon College Cuddesdon.

He has led with distinction in the House of Lords for the Bishops and the Church on economic affairs and defence. He has built a wonderful relationship with the Royal Navy, as all Bishops of Portsmouth have to do. He has reached out to the community. He has most recently taken on co-Chairing the English and Welsh Anglican and Roman Catholic Committee and has done so again with his usual care and diligence, but also this springs from a deep concern for unity and a concern equally for ensuring the voice of the Church of England is heard loud and clear.

Most recently in the dioceses, Chris has been remarkable in leading new ways of bringing churches together and facing the dioceses with the challenges of recent times, pre-pandemic, and the consequences of decline in congregational numbers and the nature of society. I am extremely supportive of all that Chris has done in this regard. It has cost him enormously in effort and at times in morale.

I believe that the dioceses and the wider Church owes him a debt of gratitude for truly pioneering or seeking to pioneer extremely complicated matters relating to pastoral reorganisation from which, as in the last debate, Bishop Nick reminded us also about the creation of the Diocese of Leeds, as with what Chris has done, we need to learn lessons. It was imaginative and radical and I fear ran into problems it did not deserve.

Chris and Sally, I pray that you will enjoy your retirement. I know you have some irons in the fire. I am sometimes slightly anxious when bishops come to the end of their stipendiary service as to what they might do next, but I know in your case I do not need to worry. I also pray that you will have time to enjoy each other's company, to relish the opportunities for further service.

My understanding, incidentally, is you could easily have a new career in setting and organising pub quizzes, not least on the Isle of Wight Ferry. And here is something that most people would not have imagined: I know you are an accomplished chimney sweep. You have your own brushes which you make sure you use regularly. I even know that once, when you were driving me somewhere, you went out of your way to collect the kitchen sink which accompanied us in the car.

As you move, you do indeed have everything including the kitchen sink with you at all times. May God continue to bless you both in all you do. Our prayer is for good health and good living to both you and Sally. Thank you so very, very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Archbishop Justin. We wish you well, Chris, along with Sally, in your retirement.

That concludes this item of business and now I am sure everyone is going to be pleased that we have got a scheduled screen break. We will adjourn for 15 minutes and then the Legislative Business, Draft Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure will follow starting at 11.25. Thank you very much. Enjoy your break.

THE CHAIR *Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 11.25 am.

ITEM 501

SPECIAL AGENDA I

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

DRAFT SAFEGUARDING (CODE OF PRACTICE) MEASURE (GS 2181A)

Draft Measure for Final Drafting and Final Approval

The Chair: Synod, welcome back. We now move to Final Approval of the Draft Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure. There is to be no Final Drafting stage, so we can go straight to Item 501. I call upon the Dean of the Arches to move Item 501, “That the Measure entitled, Safeguarding Code of Practice Measure, be finally approved”. She has up to ten minutes.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): Synod, this Measure, which we looked at in some detail yesterday, is short but profoundly important. As the policy and Explanatory Notes make clear, the Measure is an important part of the Church’s response to the 2019 IICSA Report on case studies relating to Peter Ball and the Diocese of Chichester.

We know that the sin, error and poor process revealed in that Report was not a one-off because we now have IICSA’s second Report, other shocking reports and Synod has heard directly for ourselves the powerful testimonies of some of those whom the Church has harmed at the November 2020 session. As Christians in the Church of England, we share a collective responsibility to do all that we can to amend the life of our Church.

The Bishop of Leeds yesterday quoted William Wilberforce in a different context and a different debate, but his words apply equally in this debate, “You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know”. What I draw from the First Consideration of this Measure in November and from yesterday’s debate is that Synod has not looked the other way and is, instead, ready to support this legislation which provides clarity and certainty about the obligations of those who seek to further the mission of the Church of England in a wide range of areas.

Clive Scowen summed this up yesterday when he said, “The truth is that this legislation is uncontroversial”. Whilst the signs are that Mr Scowen’s assessment of the mood of Synod is accurate, I would ask now that this is confirmed by a clear and strong vote to pass this Measure. As you all know, the message that we send to the wider Church and to the country whose people we seek to serve is important. The specific impetus for this Measure was the uncertainty, and specifically in the safeguarding context, of the phrase “due regard” in relation to the guidance.

In the sphere of safeguarding, there is no room for ifs and buts. We need clarity and rigour and that is what this Measure offers. The mechanism is simple: the House of Bishops is to be placed under a statutory duty to issue a Code of Practice which may impose requirements and an expanded list of persons and give guidance as to how to comply with those requirements for those people.

Compliance with requirements will, therefore, be a legal obligation placed upon all clergy along with a wide range of lay people working and volunteering in the Church.

The Steering Committee listened to the points made at First Consideration and proposed amendments to the Measure which were considered by Synod yesterday.

The most significant of these have improved the Measure by providing a proportionate way to ensure that the House of Bishops hears the relevant voices of survivors. The two other Houses of Synod and those with oversight of clergy discipline and democratic accountability is further assured by the ability of 25 members of General Synod to call for a debate on the Code.

Another important contribution from November's debate was the need to consider enforceability. The projected amendment to the Churchwardens Measure 2001 supplies that deficiency, complementing existing legal mechanisms in relation to other listed persons. Therefore, Synod has helped to shape this legislation. We have all worked together to form the Measure and I now ask that it be fully supported.

The Chair: The matter is now open for debate. As this is a Final Approval motion, there are no motions for the closure, the speech limit or next business allowed.

Canon Dr John Mason (Chester): I am very supportive of this Measure and, in particular, the extension to the range of relevant persons. In this respect, I would, however, like to build on the comments made by Luke Miller yesterday regarding section (n). He questioned whether it would be made clear in guidance that this would include volunteers. I am wondering more fundamentally whether any guidance can also make clear who exactly is "a person who works (on any basis) in a diocese or parish".

As every part of England is in some parish, on the face of it this would appear to cover everyone in the country whose work relates to safeguarding regardless of their connection to the Church. I assume what is intended is a person who works for rather than in a diocese or parish.

This means I am also unsure whether it covers persons employed or volunteering for not only a DBF or PCC but also any venture that might be fully or partly owned by a diocese or parish, which I assume it should. This Measure will be read and used by non-specialists and so the provision of appropriate accompanying explanation and clarity will be vital.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): I would like to make a point about the amount of time it has taken us to get here. Yesterday, the Dean of the Arches kindly reminded us there was urgency, it was time to get on with it, we should be nimble and quoted William Wilberforce, "You can't get away saying you didn't know".

I would like to remind you that David Warren and I were the lone voices in the wilderness when we had the debate on safeguarding after the Chichester Report. I commend that we have gone a long way and I am fully supportive of everything that has been done, but I am concerned about the time. Racism has now reared its ugly head amongst us and that is going to be a thing that we are going to face.

I hope we are not sitting here, or my successor probably, in six years' time still wringing our hands about racism. I trust and I hope the Dean of the Arches will remember urgency, being nimble and getting on with it and I fully support everything that has been done.

The Chair: I see no one else wishing to speak and so I call upon the Dean of the Arches to respond to the debate.

Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor): I thank both of the speakers for their contributions. I am very pleased to hear the urgency of this, duly noted and highlighted, from the virtual floor of Synod by John Freeman. Thank you for that. In response to John Mason, as we all know, the Measure provides for a great deal of careful work and thought to go into the Code, for consultation to inform the Code and, undoubtedly, the points which he makes can be taken up in the Code.

Just looking at this as a lawyer for the moment - and you will have to forgive me because that is what I am - I am quite satisfied and would seek to reassure Synod that the phrase "in a diocese or parish" or "at a cathedral", and those phrases which are qualified by "for the purposes of a mission initiative" as well as the context of this as a Church of England Measure, rather than a piece of general legislation in an act of Parliament, make it quite clear that the focus is upon Church work rather than other forms of safeguarding work.

It is properly precise, but I would also say that it is properly wide-ranging to make sure that we regulate ourselves properly in the way in which we have been held to account by IICSA and, indeed, by survivors' groups and voices. I would suggest that subparagraph (n) of clause 5A(2) is appropriately precise for legislation, but would very much endorse the desirability of the Code making it really clear what the parameters are and, I am grateful, I can see Mr Mason nodding there. That is one of the advantages of this format. Nobody has spoken against this as a principle.

Clive Scowen really did speak on behalf of Synod when he described this as uncontroversial yesterday. As we know, Clive Scowen is one of those people with a track record of scrutinising matters before Synod very carefully and diligently and so I would stress that considerable weight can be given to his analysis of the situation.

I ask, again, for a resounding vote of confidence for this from Synod so that it can go to Parliament with a resounding vote of confidence from Synod and, indeed, out into the Church and the wider world. Thank you very much, Mr Chairman, for your work too on chairing this debate.

The Chair: Members of Synod, the question is, “That the Measure entitled ‘Safeguarding Code of Practice Measure’ be finally approved”. In accordance with Standing Order 37, I order a formal counted vote by Houses. This will take place by the Crystal voting platform.

The vote on Item 501: In the House of Bishops, 29 in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 131 in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 146 in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions.

The Chair: The Final Approval motion has, therefore, been carried in all three Houses and the Safeguarding Code of Practice Measure now stands committed to the Legislative Committee. May I, on your behalf, Synod, thank the Dean for the good work she and others have done in bringing this to a conclusion so satisfactorily and well.

You will have noticed, Synod, that we are ahead of time and so, it might take a couple of minutes, I am calling the Chair of the Business Committee to move a variation in the order of business. If you just stay there and, hopefully, he will be with us very soon.

VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): I would like to propose a variation in the order of business under Standing Order 9(1)(a). As you said, we have been able to get through that business due to the efficiency of members very well and we have freed up some time in the agenda. Therefore, I propose, Chair, that we vary the order of business to bring forward Item 504, the Clergy Discipline Measure: Code of Practice, which, due to a request by a member, is no longer deemed.

The Chair: Synod, that has my consent but it requires your consent as well. I need you, through a Zoom poll, to give consent if you are in favour of bringing forward deemed business, which I may remind you was scheduled for later on this afternoon to now.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: Members of Synod, that has quite clearly been carried and so we now move to deemed business.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 11.44 am.

ITEM 504

CLERGY DISCIPLINE MEASURE 2003: CODE OF PRACTICE

The Chair: Good morning, Synod. We are now at Item 504, the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003: Code of Practice. For this, you will need GS 2205, Code of Practice under section 39 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 for approval. Pursuant to Standing Order 71(2), a member has given due notice of a wish to debate the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003: Code of Practice. I, therefore, call on Dr Jamie Harrison to move Item 504, “That the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003: Code of Practice be approved”. Dr Harrison has up to ten minutes.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): Madam Chair, thank you very much for asking me to speak as an appointed member of the Clergy Discipline Commission. As we noted earlier, where reference was made to the Commission and this particular Code of Practice, this is an extremely important document and I am grateful that it has been asked for debate that we might approve it. GS 2205 is the key document with the Explanatory Notes at GS 2205x, which are extremely helpful to guide us and so I am grateful for this work and this opportunity.

For the non-lawyer like myself, it is especially helpful to provide a step by step guide to the operation of the Measure and its Rules. Without it, navigating the legislation can be extremely difficult, a bit like me trying to put up an Ikea bookshelf without the instruction leaflet. The Clergy Discipline Commission is responsible for overseeing the operation of the CDM. Under section 39, it is the duty of the Commission to formulate guidance for the purposes of the CDM generally and, with the approval of the Dean of Arches, in order to promulgate the guidance in a Code of Practice.

The first Code was issued in 2006 and has been revised since in February 2011 and again in 2013 and 2016 and this is the latest revision. What it does not have is the force of law. It is a statutory Code and must be taken into account at all times. Compliance with the Code is considered to be best practice. Coming to the revisions of the Code, which we must, and these are helpfully highlighted in red in the report, I will tend to look at some of them but not all the revisions, you will be pleased to know.

I want to look at five areas to bring to your attention. The first is that of presentation. The Code has been reformatted in order to be much more user friendly. There are now included links to the key documents and materials that anyone involved in an allegation of misconduct should be familiar with. The Commission's hope is that navigating one's self around the Code will, therefore, be much easier.

Secondly, in terms of the rules, amendments. Synod this morning has passed the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Rules and the Code has been updated to take account of those changes. Thirdly, the Commission guidance has been incorporated. From time to time, the CDC issues statutory guidance on aspects of the CDM under section 3(3) of the Measure. That guidance is published separately but, where relevant, has now been incorporated into the Code.

In particular, members will note the guidance on the importance of confidentiality and privacy for all those involved in CDM proceedings. Fourthly, the procedures relate to the resolution of minor complaints. The CDM is for the resolution of allegations of misconduct which are serious in nature. It is not a complaints procedure. Bishops may, from time to time, receive complaints that are not sufficiently serious to warrant the use of a CDM but, nevertheless, the bishop is of the view disciplinary action needs to be taken.

The Bishop at Lambeth's Working Group on the Operation of Clergy Discipline is examining ways to ensure the proper triaging of all complaints into an appropriate track for their disposal and dealing with. While it is a matter for the bishops how they wish to deal with more minor complaints, the Code of Practice now proposes a procedure, formulated in conjunction with the Ecclesiastical Law Society, that the Commission commends for adoption.

Given some of the wider comments that I have been hearing about the nature of complaints, I just want to quote paragraph 13 to you on page 14 because I think it helps to clarify again for us the purpose here: "This Code of Practice gives guidance for the purposes of the Measure. The Measure is concerned with formal disciplinary proceedings which have been instituted in accordance with the law", and then added in red as new, "It is not a 'complaints procedure' and it deals only with allegations of misconduct which are serious in nature". If we look at the word "allegation", it occurs over 200 times in the text and reminds us every time that allegations are exactly that, they are allegations.

Finally, training and pastoral care. There is a re-emphasis on the importance of both training and pastoral care, something that Joyce Jones picked up this morning earlier. The Code makes clear that the responsibility to ensure these are properly provided for lies with the diocesan bishop.

Just as I finish, it is important to note that I and other colleagues are listening in and writing down all comments made in this debate. I note one from Joyce Hill this morning in relation to the words “due regard” which has been noted and, as we take things forward, I am sure will be incorporated in due course. I do commend the revisions to the Code of Practice to you and ask that the Code in its current new form be approved.

The Chair: Item 504 is now open for debate.

Revd Simon Talbott (Ely): Thank you, Chair, and I welcome the opportunity to speak and, indeed, I asked for this to be debated on the floor of Synod today. Picking up, again, the constituency of the Church of England Clergy Advocates and the Sheldon community, there is one element I think that we are very concerned about and it is the reference in the new paragraph 46 to the “Guidelines for Professional Conduct”.

These guidelines are our top end aspirations, and one might say pretty woolly at that, whereas complaints of misconduct should be dealing with the bottom end below which a clergyperson is not safe to practise. Most of the amendments to the Code are reasonable and the main problem was a lack of clear context towards replacement. We already covered that this morning.

There is one paragraph, in particular, that we would like to celebrate and well done to the drafters. That is paragraph 104: “Allegations based upon grievances, disagreements and/or minor acts or omissions, however genuine, are not of sufficient substance and should be dismissed”. That is a very welcome step to try to reduce the number of low level complaints that actually end up through the CDM progress.

Thank you to Dr Harrison for his presentation this morning and it has been good to be able to hear clergy colleagues, in particular, but also lay members who are concerned about the present CDM to look at the Code today.

His Honour Judge Peter Collier (ex officio): I declare an interest in that I chaired a working party of the Ecclesiastical Law Society in relation to the CDM and its need for revision and I very much favour all the amendments to the Code. In particular, the emphasis on the distinction between, on the one hand, serious misconduct and, on the other hand, less than serious misconduct and grievances. The practical attempts to direct the latter into another route is to be commended.

Currently, stage 1, as it is described in the Code, barely exists because there is no consistent way that dioceses deal with matters outside the Measure and the majority of dioceses do not have any such formalised route. In November 1996, when Synod was considering what might be called the White Paper for the current Measure, Synod asked

that just such a system as Appendix A be added to the draft Measure when it was brought forward. Unfortunately, that never happened and it is clear to me that many of the current problems with the Clergy Discipline Measure flow from those drafting the Measure not doing what Synod then asked.

But there are two things that need to happen now. First, Appendix A must be adopted by all dioceses and I would encourage all bishops to look to action it quickly. Any major revision of the Measure will inevitably take some time to take effect and this is a necessary step. Second, as has been mentioned several times, we await proposals for a new clergy misconduct Measure, as I would prefer to call it, but I must express a growing concern about the greater scope now being looked at that Bishop Tim referred to both last night and at greater length this morning.

Of course, there are wider issues about capability that must be addressed but, at the end of the day, we will need a misconduct Measure to deal with serious misconduct. There is talk of a White Paper. My understanding is a White Paper gives a clear indication of the proposed legislation and does not just float headlines and promises. Currently, I am afraid that it is unclear where those proposals are coming from, who is drafting them and who is agreeing them.

The issues that have to be resolved are clear and decisions must be made about what is going to be proposed. It is less than 11 weeks until, I hope, we will all be safely here in York. What is being put into the Code today needs legislation so that we can, in the future, direct the lesser cases into the lower track which, even under the Code, we cannot do and until we have legislation many of these issues will continue. I hope I am proved wrong, but I wait to see.

Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds): I broadly welcome this. There are many improvements in this Code of Practice and I am grateful to Simon Talbott for giving us the chance to debate it because there are two areas that I want to draw to Synod's attention and ask for further work. One is section 52, which says that the archdeacon should ordinarily "bring the case and not leave it to the private individual concerned to do so".

I have, unfortunately, had to do this a couple of times and the current form - I think it is form 3, is it - requires me to sign to say that the allegation is true. If I am not the person bringing the allegation but simply doing it on behalf of a private individual, how do you know that it is true? I think that needs a little bit more consideration. The second thing is in paragraph 113, the important issue of, "Help and advice for respondent clergy". This says that, "Every diocese must maintain a list of appropriate persons to offer practical help, advice and pastoral support, as well as identify where the respondent may obtain legal advice".

My question is who are these people? It is very easy to say that every diocese must do this, but who are they? Where are they to come from? It is not in anyone's job description and you are largely looking at volunteers. Rather worryingly, further down the paragraph, it says, "Deanery chapters are well placed to provide support and practical assistance for those clergy ... who are responding to an allegation of misconduct". When I read that, I thought, really, you want your colleagues in deanery chapter to know that an allegation of serious misconduct has been made? You want to tell them what it is? What expertise do you think that peer colleagues in deanery chapter have in helping you to obtain legal advice and giving pastoral support?

I think a lot more thought needs to be given to the practicalities of this. It is no good just batting it back to the dioceses and saying, "Well, dioceses need to sort this out", and so I would ask for further work on those things.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): It is a fairly simple point. On paragraph 81, I am looking at, "An allegation may also be made to the bishop of the diocese where the priest or deacon resided when the alleged misconduct occurred, unless similar proceedings are already under way elsewhere", and I am not altogether clear as to what that might mean.

Are we talking about proceedings that arise out of the same incident where it could be a duplication of process? Or if there is, for example, a suggestion of harassment, it may be harassment in a hospital or a prison and in a church. I just wonder how we work out when our Church proceedings will take priority, how is it going to be determined which set of proceedings take priority. I wonder if that could be clarified, please.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Canon David Felix (Chester): I declare an interest insofar as I was involved with the revision of the Code of Professional Conduct and also served on the Revision Committee for the Terms of Service legislation. Over the last ten years, we have had a plethora of legislation, Codes of Practice and guidelines in a number of areas of work which affect the way in which clergy operate, not just in terms of service and normal contractual employment, relationships between clergy and the Church, but also in the area of safeguarding. All of these are to be welcomed.

My concern is that there needs to be now some sort of preparation maybe of a handbook for clergy, where all this legislation, Codes of Practice and guidance are drawn together so that it is clear to the clergy exactly what is expected of them and how they must operate. At the moment, it is getting to seem to me a bit like a dog's dinner.

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford): Having listened to the comments, I think it is so helpful that we do have a chance to comment. This is a very important document and the comments have added to our understanding and the nuance and so, in future, please can we think hard before deeming them. It has been really beneficial.

Revd Canon Rosie Harper (Oxford): It is a very simple point, but I think it just needs to be delved into a little bit more and that is that, almost by default, almost automatically the archdeacon is the person who represents a complainant. I have been involved in various cases where this has been less than stellar because, very simply, it means that the complainant no longer has complete control over their own story and the information goes to the complainant via the archdeacon. The quality of that relationship can be great but sometimes it can be no so great. Particularly for people who have suffered from an abuse of power, to automatically allow the archdeacon to say, “Don’t worry, it’s all right, I’ll do it, I’ll sort it for you”, can be less than helpful and it leaves people feeling they have just lost control of their own story.

Revd Paul Cartwright (Leeds): I would just like to pick up on a point that was made by Archdeacon Paul Ayers from my diocese. I think he made some really good points. The interested party being the archdeacon creates a problem in that, quite often, the archdeacon is the pastor for the clergy as well and so the person who is actually the interested party is the person who may be actually laying the information in relation to the complaint.

I wonder if we could maybe have a little bit of joined-up thinking. Clergy now subscribe to the National Register and I wonder if we could maybe just amend that with a tick-box of peer supporters and we could maybe look at training some people up, be it via advocates, unions, or those who are just an interested party of supporting peers. Actually, we could maybe offer the chance for someone outside of the diocese to provide that support so it does not have to fall on the archdeacon’s shoulders who may be actually laying the information.

Dr John Appleby (Newcastle): It is a very simple point. In item 12 of the notes it refers to paragraphs 25 and 29 of the Code of Practice about a cleric who relinquishes their orders, and this covers somebody who relinquishes their orders after an allegation has been made. However, it does not make clear what happens to somebody who has completed their deed of relinquishment and the allegation is made after that. I think there is a little bit of clarification about what happens to an historical allegation in this case, if I have understood this correctly.

The Chair: I will next call Christopher Smith and then I will test the minds of the Synod on a motion for closure.

Revd Christopher Smith (London): Just a very small point, really, to pick up something that Simon Talbott said and perhaps respond to his point about paragraph 46, which is that my recollection from the decided cases is that those who sit in tribunals have been using the Professional Conduct Guidelines for some time and so, in a sense, I think paragraph 46 simply regularises that situation.

The Chair: I will now test the mind of Synod on a motion for closure and I will do this on a simple Zoom vote.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: I will call on Dr Harrison to reply to the debate and he has up to five minutes.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): Thank you, Madam Chair. What a rich conversation. Thank you to so many speakers. Particularly, Simon Talbott, who actually set this debate off, otherwise I think under Mary Durlacher's very helpful point there is a risk that Deemed Business is missed and we do not get this rich engagement with people and their comments.

To Simon and also to Christopher Smith, I think an issue around the convocations, of course, who are responsible and produced the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy. They are guidelines, but I think it is regularising what has already happened. As Christopher says, these are being used and guidance is guidance. It is there to be looked at and to be utilised. But I am pleased that Simon enjoyed paragraph 104 with its movement towards trying to reduce activity, particularly with lower level complaints.

I am grateful, as always, to Peter Collier really calling everyone to connect with Appendix A, but also questioning the scope of what he describes as the future clergy misconduct Measure will look like, picking up Bishop Tim's points earlier today. A number have commented on the role of archdeacons: Paul Ayers and Rosie Harper particularly, and Paul Cartwright. They are such a key person in this context. Of course, they can delegate responsibilities if they are concerned about being involved wearing two hats, as it were, supporting both sides of the conversation and also connecting I think with the whole area of peer support.

The question around the role of the deanery chapter, I think that is again what is the best supportive mechanism rather than going into the details. Certainly, when I was involved with doctors having difficulties professionally with trying to balance the professional input and just colleagues who could be there to support and at the end, of course, the bishops are responsible, but I take Paul Ayers's point about that and how

we manage to get the right people and perhaps Paul Cartwright's point around a list of peer supporters.

Martin Sewell asked a technical question. I have taken advice. It is a wonderful thing to have a WhatsApp connection with your lawyer at the other end. I think, Martin, it is suggesting that you cannot have two parallel processes in a CDM - in other words, not running two cases together within the CDM process, but I think it might be helpful for Edward or others to come back to you with more technical detail than I can offer.

David Felix, yes, I think you are right, it is very complicated. I sit on the National Safeguarding Steering Group as well as the Clergy Discipline Commission. There is so much coming through and a handbook might well be helpful. Whether it is a dog's dinner, we can discuss, but I do think there needs to be - as I think we are trying to do - greater connectivity, interconnection and join-up going back to comments earlier on the use of the words around "due regard".

John Appleby, I think if you go, I am told, back to the 1870 Clerical Disabilities Act or Disassociations Act, or whatever it was called, where clergy in 1870 were told they could not be clergy anymore, that still applies. In fact, the Measure does not apply to those who have already left orders. I think that is the case, but I am happy to be corrected by my legal friends.

I hope that covers most of the contributions, if not all, and I am very grateful for them. We have been noting them and we will come back to you if that is helpful in the future. I think the point here is that this is work that needs to continue with regular commitment to revise and amend the Code of Practice. I ask that you support this and endorse this version of the Code of Practice under the CDM.

The Chair: Thank you. I now put Item 504 to the vote. This will be a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 504. Voting will take place using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and carried, 285 voting in favour, none against, with six recorded abstentions.

The Chair: That completes this item of business and, indeed, this session. I conclude this session and we resume after lunch at 1.30.

THE CHAIR *Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 1.30 pm.

ITEM 8

RESPONSIBLE REPRESENTATION: A REVIEW OF THE ELECTION PROCESSES TO THE CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION (GS 2202)

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. I hope you have been sufficiently strengthened by a hearty lunch. We now move to Item 8 on your agenda for which you will need sight of GS 2202 and Order Paper III. There is considerable interest in speaking on this item and a number of votes which we will need to take as amendments have been tabled. Can I please invite members to observe some discipline in not re-rehearsing stuff that we have heard from other people? I am going to now invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to speak to and move Item 8. Aiden, you have up to 12 minutes, thank you.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): Chair, members of Synod, if during the July group of sessions, as you innocently make your way to the minister on a glorious Yorkshire Sunday morning, the Archbishop of Canterbury sidles up to you and encourages you to take on a modest task, make your escape is my advice. I failed to do that in July 2018 and now find myself here, two and a half years, many meetings, two fringe events, a Synod wide consultation and about 800 emails later. But I have had the huge privilege ---

The Chair: We would love to know what that privilege is, Aiden. I think it is worth giving him a moment to, hopefully, return to us. Synod, whilst we find out what the technical gremlins are busy at, I would just urge patience for a few moments longer. Synod, I understand that the tech gremlins have been wrestled back into submission, but Mr Sam Margrave has raised a point of order. Sam, let us hear your point of order, please, before we continue the item.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): Sorry, Chair, my point of order, actually, now you have wrestled the gremlins, is for after my speech, if possible, belatedly.

The Chair: Just one second, Sam. So you are not making a point of order, Sam?

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): I reserve my right to later on, if okay.

The Chair: Point of order withdrawn. Okay, thank you. Aiden, I invite you to speak to and move Item 8. I am aware that you did not know that you had frozen and so it may be advisable to start from the beginning of your speech, thank you, Aiden.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): Chair, I am very sorry. I am here in Church House, as you know, so reliant on things here. I am grateful to you for letting me start again. Chair, members of Synod, if during a July group of sessions, as you innocently

make your way to the minister on a glorious Yorkshire Sunday morning, the Archbishop of Canterbury sidles up to you and encourages you to take on a modest task, my advice is to make your escape.

I failed to do that in July 2018 and now find myself here, two and a half years, many meetings, two fringe events and a Synod-wide consultation later, not to mention 800 emails, but I have had the huge privilege of working with a wonderful group of colleagues whose wisdom and perspectives have illuminated their frank and gracious contributions. Together, we thank Professor Ian McLean, whose support as a consultant broadened our understanding of electoral theory and practice but also opened to us the practical and profound experience of a Quaker discernment.

In the busyness of our Synod business, we do well to remember our need to wait on God and the power and effect of prayerful silence. Our terms of reference were expanded so that, in addition to considering the process of election of diocesan representatives and central members to the CNC, we also looked at the question of declaration of interests. It became clear to us that our work in considering a broader theologically informed view of representation was not a separate task but a fundamental basis for everything else.

We considered various models of representation carefully and, as we set out in the Report, we strongly preferred that model which recognises that our identity is in Christ and that we find our common identity in our membership of the body of Christ. It thus follows that our responsibility as representatives is to that body. It also follows that all members of that body should be equally able to represent that body without distinction.

We would develop that preference simply by noting that those chosen as representatives must be a credible representation of the whole. They must carry the confidence of the body. They most obviously do that by demonstrating a breadth of understanding and perspectives and experiences and thinking, as well as a genuine care to engage constructively and honestly for the good of the whole body. As we undertook our work, we were very conscious that the Church has too often been rather better at proclaiming commitment to diversity, inclusion and genuine welcome than it has been at turning it into reality.

Synod, the responsibility is ours to do something about that. The group believes that a mere process review would be wholly inadequate. As we grappled with issues of trust, accountability and responsibility in the context of electoral processes, it became clear that only a fundamental change of culture could bring about the environment in which the model of representation we have identified might flourish.

How might we encourage and bring about that culture change? You will not be surprised to learn that we did not identify one simple solution, but we did return repeatedly to a number of key principles: that we must not only care more for the other than for ourself, but must live that out in our institutional life; that we must recognise that we always benefit from hearing different voices and perspectives and experiences and that ensuring the breadth of these is not just desirable but a necessity; that we need to distinguish true discernment from other forms of decision-making; and that we have a care for genuine openness, attentive listening and waiting on God.

Ultimately, we believe we need to find a fresh narrative to frame the vocation of an elector, the vocation of a candidate, the vocation of a representative, to reflect a renewed understanding of our behaviour as voters and candidates and elected representatives as a crucial part of our Christian calling; a narrative that recalls us not to a sense of exercising rights and powers but, rather, of our duty and obligation, our responsibility to the body and to the whole Church.

I am sorry there is not time to go through all 38 recommendations, but I offer some brief observations. To support the development of a greater sense of trust, we propose that the General Synod Code of Conduct is reviewed, though building trust is the responsibility of every one of us. We invite synodical bodies to consider how their processes and decision-making might more effectively be rooted in Christian discernment. An annual report from the CNC will provide a proper degree of accountability.

In relation to the election of central members, more information will be available about the role and a fringe meeting at the February Synod prior to July elections every five years would serve to engage and guide both electors and, we hope, a wider range of prospective candidates. A fuller, structured candidate statement and a gathering at the July Synod would facilitate engagement between candidates and electors.

Our inexperience has led us to propose a context of liturgical and prayerful discernment together for the elections. We are clear that the simplest and clearest way of enabling a greater breadth of experiences, perspectives and thinking amongst the elected central members is to increase the number of them. However, we accept that there should be no increase in the number of six central members engaged on any particular vacancy.

We considered many options and, ultimately, came back to an idea in the O'Donovan Report. We thus proposed that the Houses of Laity and Clergy together will vote for pairs of candidates with the top three ranked pairs of laity and the top three ranked pairs of clergy being elected. The pair will normally determine which of them will serve on a particular Commission. We believe that the reduced time commitment and increased flexibility also mean that a wider range of Synod members will be able to consider

standing, especially those whose family responsibilities or employment arrangements currently prevent that.

We also recommend that if the Archbishop in the Chair considers there is an important perspective missing from the Commission for a particular vacancy, then after consultation with both central and diocesan members an additional member may be co-opted. In the light of the submissions made to us about the significance of electoral mandate and accountability in the synodical context, we concluded this co-opted place should be non-voting, like the Prime Minister's and Archbishops' appointment secretaries.

Our recommendations in relation to the Vacancy in See Committee seek to give that body a fresh vitality it has perhaps not often had other than following the announcement of a vacancy. In the hope of engaging a wider range of people in its work, we propose that serious consideration be given by the Committee to questions of whether it fully reflects the diversity of the diocese, to inform both its work and any nominations by the Bishop's Council. We believe that by making the chair an ex officio member of the Bishop's Council and diocesan synod it will be more likely that a wider range of candidates will be considered for that role and we feel that the Chair will have greater freedom to be attentive to the work of the Committee and ask the difficult questions if she or he is not eligible for membership of the CNC.

Amongst other procedural changes, removing the restriction on members from proposing or seconding more than one candidate as a diocesan CNC rep will also, we believe, increase the diversity of candidates. Our work on declarations of interest was set in the context of our vision for a Synod where openness and frankness are expected and valued. We considered approaches in different spheres and concluded that the particular legal and fiduciary nature of trusteeships and directorships make it reasonable to require their inclusion in a synodical register.

But we were not persuaded that establishing a register listing synodical groups or other affiliations would do more than risk the very labelling and pigeonholing we wish to guard against. We were also mindful of the potential for innocent breaches and believe that a system built on trust and a wider culture of honest engagement with a simple reporting mechanism to Synod is the best option.

Chair, the group understands some members may have concerns or questions about some proposals. The advice we received is that the endorsement sought in the motion is a general endorsement. It does not suggest that those voting in favour agree with every detail. We thus welcome Dr Harrison's clarificatory amendment. Members will also realise that any matters of significance will come to Synod in the form of changes

to Standing Orders or Regulations and so the Synod will have an opportunity to engage with the detail of specific proposals at that stage, but only if the motion is passed today.

Chair, yesterday, the Archbishop of York spoke of the significance of our belonging to one another in Christ. That common membership, that common identity, is surely both an immeasurable joy and blessing and the most profound responsibility. In this Report, the group invites the Synod to rejoice in the diversity of the body of Christ in the fact that every one of us is fearfully and wonderfully made and to renew our commitment individually and collectively to be faithful in our responsibilities to each other especially in responsible representation. Chair, I move the motion at Item 8.

The Chair: A word about how we will take this Item with reference to diversity and ensuring representations throughout this item. Can I please request members to be trimming any speeches that you may have pre-made because I intend to call as many voices from Synod as I possibly can for this Item in the time that we have available. Just to get us going, we are going to take two speeches on this item before we then start taking the amendments in turn. I would like to begin by calling Brother Thomas Seville, followed by Abigail Ogier for her maiden speech. You both have three minutes, thank you.

Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities): I must declare an interest. I served on the body which produced *Discerning in Obedience* and which gives me a certain bias. I wish to thank those who have worked to produce this Report and, in particular, to the ability to maintain the theological standards which I hope were seen, rightly, in *Discerning in Obedience*.

I welcome in particular its attention to practicalities and I hope that in our engagement with those in the future, as they come to Synod, that we will give serious attention to the question of fundamental culture change which Aiden Hargreaves-Smith has referred to. Culture change is something which is very hard to make effective. One can agree with one's mind before one agrees with one's body and one's behaviour and they are usually much more difficult.

The Church of England's experience with safeguarding I think is good testimony to that. Despite a huge amount of goodwill, it has taken us many years to get to where we are now. I hope that with this, which is definitely a smaller area, we will do better. I want to speak on a question which I think can be summed up by the business of fear. Both reports have made reference to the question of parties and the danger of what *Discerning in Obedience* calls, "Entrenched attitudes and spoiling behaviour".

Nobody, of course, in this Synod would ever be guilty of entrenched attitudes and, even less, spoiling behaviour but, as we know, they will appear and many of the things that

we think are for the good of the Church will be seen by others as entrenched attitudes, and possibly rightly. Much of that comes from fear, fear that we are not going to be heard, fear that we have been marginalised and that the Church is going to suffer. That question of fear underlies the threat, the difficulty of a culture change in this area.

The Chair: Brother Thomas, I am afraid your three minutes are now up. Can I invite, please, Abigail Ogier to make her maiden speech, after which I would like to hear from Pete Broadbent before we then consider our first amendment.

Mrs Abigail Ogier (Manchester): I would like to speak in support of the motion to adopt the recommendations of this Report which, together with the previous *Discerning in Obedience* Report, I found very helpful reading in terms of reflecting not just on the matter under consideration here but also on our role at General Synod and throughout Church governance structures.

I think the proposed recommendations will help to improve representation, but there is a need here, and indeed in our wider discussions, to consider what barriers will still remain in achieving a representative mix of people both on the CNC and in Synod itself. However hard we work to consider and represent diverse perspectives, we need to be in contact with the full diversity of the Church to achieve this.

Since my election to Synod last October, I have detected a genuine wish to improve diversity on Synod, which is most welcome, but I wonder if we need to raise our awareness of the barriers that can prevent some from standing, whether for Synod or for subcommittees such as the Crown Nominations Committee, particularly barriers perhaps for lay members. I do not need to tell members that membership brings with it significant time demands in terms of attendance, preparation and reading.

We need to keep in mind that these will be more achievable for some than for others and that work and family commitments, particularly in the earlier years of adulthood, are likely to restrict the pool of candidates for Synod itself and even more so for demanding roles such as CNC membership. Even among people of working and child bearing age, there will be differential impacts of the demands depending on issues like how secure or otherwise their employment is, how much paid leave they are entitled to, what family support they have and even where they live geographically.

Of course, the inequalities in society make some groups more likely to face higher barriers than others. There are additional barriers, such as limited disposable income and concerns about travel and accommodation costs or physical access needs and concerns about whether or not these will be met. For others, there are barriers relating to whether we feel that Synod is for people like us, whether for reasons of individual

confidence, lack of visibility of people we can relate to, or because of historical harm done to a group to which we belong in the name of the Church.

Some of these barriers can be quite simply addressed. It would, for example, be helpful for clearer information to be given as a matter of course about issues such as repayment of out of pocket expenses, something that I had to explicitly ask before standing for Synod. I would also suggest a clear and proactive system for gathering information about physical access needs and then making sure those are met.

I also think mentoring of new members of Committees of Synod by longer standing members might be helpful. I personally have found it very helpful to meet with colleagues within my diocese ahead of meetings, on which note I would like to thank the other Manchester representatives for their support from all Houses. As we, I hope, move to implement the recommendations of this Report, we must work to address both real and perceived barriers to participation too.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): Chair, I have served on the Crown Nominations Commission three times as a diocesan representative for three different Bishops of London and so I have watched the development of all of this stuff over the years. I support the objectives of greater inclusion, particularly people of colour, of greater transparency about people and representatives and what they bring, and also the accountability questions about the register of interests.

But I cannot endorse the Report in the way in which we are being asked to do and I think we do need to change that and look again at it. Let me put down five questions that I think we need to ask about this report. The first is I suspect there is a skewed view of politics in this. I do not share the O'Donovan line which says that if you are all nicely talking together in a room politics is somehow not present anymore and I am suspicious of a report that puts "politics" into inverted commas, as it does at paragraph 18. Politics and power are given by God to be used for the benefit of all. You cannot excise politics from what goes on in discussions just by pretending that you are working towards a consensus.

Perhaps it is worth saying to Synod members, if you read Malcolm Brown's very helpful paper on theological reflection and the system of the C of E, you would find that really helpful in terms of understanding that. My first question is does the consensus building approach that O'Donovan advocates, which you have now written into this Report, actually have a value-free approach to things or is it a way of ensuring that what you get is the least worst possible candidate? If you take controversy out of the conversation, you do not necessarily get what you need.

Secondly, does the fiddling around with the CNC membership give you enough continuity and does it serve the clergy and laity members of the permanent members of the CNC, or will it, in fact, automatically put power back into the hands of the Archbishops and the secretaries? In other words, if you have got lots of people paired off together, are they actually going to be able to have a real understanding of things and the continuity you need over several CNCs to understand what is going on?

Thirdly, what sort of bishops are we looking for? Could a maverick bishop, for instance, ever be appointed under this? I declare an interest. Obviously, there is the sense in which I think being maverick is something which we do need to bring to bear from the point of view of saying people who are characters, people who are different, people who think outside the box, but who have the requisite gifts to be a bishop, may not survive through this kind of process.

Fourthly, does the desire to control the Vacancy in See Committee process effectively mute the voice of the diocese? In what kind of ways is all this fiddling going to help us with the diocese being able to advocate for what is required when it comes to CNC? Finally, are we reinforcing monepiscopacy in all this?

The danger of this process is that if you take less notice of what the diocese is saying and seek to exclude the diocesan voice in all this, you end up with the usual understanding of the heroic monepiscopal diocesan bishop riding in to change the diocese. Some dioceses may be basket cases and may need it but, no, let us think again about that.

The Chair: Bishop Pete, excuse me, maverick or not, I am afraid you are out of time. Point of order, David Banting.

Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford): I tried to pass this on to the Chairman informally. I do not know what the precise Standing Order Regulation for members' professional conduct is, but by reference in the previous speeches to the General Synod Code of Conduct could I make this request. In view of certain comments during Thursday's webinar on this item, may I ask the Chair of this item to request that all contributions to this debate remember the mutual commitment we have all made to the Five Guiding Principles and, in particular, to due respect to all and a commitment to enabling all to flourish within the life and structures of the Church of England.

The Chair: Duly noted, thank you. I am sure members are mindful of that and thank you for the reminder to us if we had forgotten.

ITEM 36

The Chair: We will now move to consideration of the first amendment. I invite Jamie Harrison to speak to and move Item 36. You have up to five minutes. Followed by a response from Aiden and the Commission, who will also have up to five minutes to respond.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): Thank you, Madam Chair, and I think I heard that you asked that I should move the amendment. My amendment seeks to do three things. First, it allows for a period of reception of this work, during which time Synod members can deliberate, reflect and seek counsel together, hence the word “receive” rather than the word “endorse”.

Secondly, it gives those Synod members who cannot endorse the recommendations in their entirety, either because they do not agree with one or more of them or perhaps like me do not fully understand the implications of the proposals, the ability in good conscience to support the motion going forward rather than to derail it at this stage.

Thirdly, by adding in the extra words at the end that I have added, a roadmap which relates on the face of the motion, which otherwise we do not have, a clear way forward to involve both the Legal Office and the Synod’s own Standing Orders Committee so that we can then come back to make decisions at future meetings of the Synod fully informed by them and with clear facts in front of us in relation to amendments to both the legislation and the Standing Orders.

Thank you to Aiden for his earlier comments on the amendment. It is intended absolutely to be friendly and, hopefully, to be facilitative. Equally, it does not seek to block or impede any of the further amendments on the Notice Paper. They are perfectly legitimate and will be debated fully, I know. In offering this way ahead, I hope to open up the conversation to enable more time for reflection and conversation together, but it does also give us clearly on the face of the motion a direction of travel which we cannot avoid. In view of that, Madam Chair, I beg to move the amendment standing in my name at Item 36.

The Chair: Thank you. Aiden to respond.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): Chair, as I indicated, we welcome Dr Harrison’s proposed amendment. In fact, this is what the group had expected would happen in any event and we are grateful to him for setting that out so that that is clear for members of Synod.

The Chair: This item is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Revd Preb. Simon Cawdell (Hereford): Chair, I wish to speak in favour of Jamie Harrison's amendment as I had been agonising somewhat over the recommendations in the Report as I support the broad direction of travel. As I had looked at the recommendations in greater depth and considered how some would work, I had been troubled that some seemed overly prescriptive and others might run clearly into the law of unintended consequences.

If I can give just a couple of examples to illustrate the point. Firstly, recommendations 9 and 10 in regards to the election of central members calling for an electorate across the Houses of Clergy and Laity but yet placing restraint to allow the first three pairs of clergy and laity to be elected rather than the first six pairs without constraint.

This is perverse. First, it means that you cannot have mixed pairs of clergy and laity which would be a logical extension of a joint electorate and, secondly, it means that the issue of leapfrogging which the Report touched upon does come into play and there is a possibility of a pair being overpromoted above the sixth pair that the electorate voted for.

If we are seeking to have trust in the process, this has the potential to do the opposite. If we want a joint electorate, we should just go for everything without constraint. In recommendation 11(vii), that concerns one of the pair resigning causing both to resign. That will have ramifications that are perverse as well.

Given that Synod has placed its trust in both members of the pairing to be elected, if both have to resign when one does, then under Synod's by-election rules during the first two years following an election the single now unpaired member would not be able to stand in the re-run election which would deny Synod, giving votes to someone that they had previously given their trust to and elected and after the two years have elapsed for the normal by-election rules they are not fought under STV votes but under a majoritarian vote which would mean that the balance of CNC could be changed in all sorts of ways. It would be much better if the remaining member could continue.

Miss Jane Patterson (Sheffield): Thank you to the CNC ERG and to Aiden, who has served this Synod, this Committee and numerous CNCs so well. I will declare my interest here. Elected by Synod in 2012 and 2017, I am now a veteran of more than 23 CNCs. I also have the dubious distinction of having had my 2017 election appealed by a former CNC colleague.

I have a few observations to make. The central purpose of the CNC is to nominate the name of a candidate for a vacant diocesan see to Her Majesty the Queen bearing in

mind the needs both of diocese and the national Church. If we aspire to an episcopate that reflects the whole C of E, surely the discerning or nominating body should do that too. Election of both central and diocesan members is, therefore, key.

It is also vital that members of each CNC serve together to achieve this goal. The evidence is that we can do that in 95% of vacancies. However, if we drill down further, there does seem to be an issue regarding mutual flourishing and, therefore, I would ask Synod today: are we prepared to use our vote for mutual flourishing? I have, will you?

As far as the recommendations are concerned, I think we need to look at the Five Guiding Principles, CNC pairings and the scope of monitoring and declarations of interest. In summary, I support this Report and this amendment as a helpful practical way ahead.

Revd Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle): I also welcome this amendment, allowing us joyously to receive this very careful Report but to give proper consideration to each of the recommendations. We have already rehearsed the fact that this is such an important issue.

There is a huge concern to make sure that we become a properly diverse Church, but I think there are some serious concerns over some of the recommendations that, in fact, to me seem to tend the other way. For example, the recommendation that members are elected across both Houses, clergy and lay, seems to me to diminish the distinctive voices of laity and clergy.

Dr Harrison's amendment gives us the chance to give this some really careful attention. It is clear that something must be done, but we must not fall into the old trap of thinking something must be done; this is something, therefore we should do it. Something must be done. This is a very good start. Let us receive it joyously and have the opportunity to really look into it item by item to ensure that we really do become a diverse Church and not one that simply gravitates towards the centre or allows the loudest voices to dominate.

The Chair: Paul, can I ask whether you are speaking in favour or against this amendment?

Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds): I think there are problems either way with the amendment or without.

The Chair: I am just wanting to know because we have heard a number in favour, so I would be willing to hear another speech on this item if it were against the amendment. I will propose a motion for closure after your speech.

Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds): I prefer the amendment to the original. Aiden says that endorsing or receiving the Report does not imply accepting all the recommendations, but he knows as well as I do that when later it comes to legislation we will be told, “You’ve already voted for this in principle and, therefore, we have to move in this direction”.

I think even Dr Harrison’s amendment could be misused in that way. He did say it gives us a direction of travel which we cannot avoid and seems to commit us irrevocably. It still seems that if we do not like all of the recommendations in the Report we have to vote against the whole thing and that seems to me very unfortunate but almost inevitable given what is in front of us.

The Chair: I would now like to test the mind of Synod for a motion for closure on this item.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: I now put this item to the vote using the Crystal voting platform. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 36.

The motion was put and carried, 302 voting in favour, nine against, with ten recorded abstentions.

ITEM 37

The Chair: We now move to Item 37 and I invite Joyce Hill to speak to and move Item 37. You have up to five minutes.

Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds): The amendment that I am proposing - which you have on your Order Paper III which was issued towards the end of the lunch break - relates to the election statement that CNC candidates need to produce. The Report itself itemises several topics that will need to be covered in that statement, but it does not recommend that candidates specify their position on the consecration of women bishops. My amendment seeks to ensure from the outset that this information is, indeed, noted as being requested to be provided.

I take the point that was made earlier on that, if you do not put in certain caveats, expectations and the rest in a document of this kind or a motion of this kind as you go along from the beginning, you get to a position where you cannot reintroduce it because it was not there at the beginning and so we need to get it into the beginning, I think.

Without the amendment, the Report's recommendations for what is included in the statement leave too much room for the fudge and wriggle that is not helpful to electors.

The amendment arises from an informal discussion earlier in the week including clergy and lay who shared a firm agreement that this is fundamental information which needs to be made clear to all electors and that the proper place for it is the statement itself rather than being simply a matter for discussion in some form of hustings or conversations, which I know are part of the recommendation.

I submit on my own behalf and on behalf of many others, as I well know, that the explicit provision of the information specified in the amendment is essential to the transparency and trust which must lie at the heart of how the CNC is constituted and how it conducts its business. It is a standard of transparency and trust that the Church requires the CNC to display and to be seen to display. I appreciate that many people will want many things to be made explicit in the election process to CNC, but I hope they will not vote against this amendment simply because it focuses on one central issue. Chair, I beg to move the amendment standing in my name at Item 37.

The Chair: Aiden, would you respond on behalf of the CNC as briefly as you feel able to. You have up to five minutes.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): To be clear, of course I am responding on behalf of the group. I did have the opportunity to discuss this. The whole group has considered this proposal - you will see the membership of the group in the Report - and the group has unanimously agreed to firmly resist this amendment. We hope that all candidates will engage frankly with electors, in particular in relation to the matters we have highlighted in recommendation 8(iv) and we believe the framework envisaged in that recommendation provides an opportunity for that. Any candidate may set out their personal position on a range of issues.

Our concern is that this amendment would introduce a specific question on one issue and that is an approach which would fundamentally go against the culture that the Report is trying to create. There is another risk that we could go on and on with specific questions *ad infinitum* and simply find ourselves ultimately having labelled all the candidates before the true discernment has started. There is a risk we also feel in the proposal that it may be perceived as assuming that those who in conscience and in theological grounds are unable to receive the ministry of a diocesan bishop who is a woman would undertake their responsibilities differently from those who are able to receive that ministry and rightly rejoice in it.

Surely, the question is about how any candidate will engage across the full breadth of the Church and that is what we would encourage all electors and all candidates to engage in. We resist this amendment, thank you.

The Chair: Members must now indicate whether you wish to debate this amendment using the green ticks. There needs to be more than 25 in order to open a debate on this amendment.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: That threshold has been reached. Item 37 is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich): I would urge Synod to resist this amendment. I think Aiden has probably said in some ways better than I can many of the reasons, but partly I think we just do not want to clutter up this motion with detail like this. Keep it simple. I am sure people who might stand for CNC have heard the concerns and would consider including such an item in their election address. But we must also remember the recommendation at 8(v) that members of Synod should be seeking out those who are standing and exploring their statements further and I think the place for discussions around an issue such as this is much more in conversation. You can explore the nuances. You can explore sort of how people might work it out if they were elected to CNC. You can do that in a context of friendship, of understanding one another, of listening well, rather than pigeonholing people based on a few sentences in an election address.

I am also unclear how this might work in terms of the proposal for pairing of candidates and I understand there is a desire that those pairs might be diverse. If this sort of idea is insisted upon, then you end up saying that you can be diverse in any way other than theological conviction around the ordained ministry of women. So, Synod, please resist this amendment.

Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter): I speak as a member of the group presenting this Report and as someone who has served on two different CNCs for two different dioceses and also as the elected Chair of the Exeter Vacancy in See Committee. I also speak as a long-time supporter of women's ordained ministry and I am very proud to have been involved in the Guildford Diocesan Synod motion that came to General Synod and pressed for the legislation to be brought forward to enable the episcopacy to be open to women.

I have asked questions concerning transparency and, as a group, transparency in promoting diversity has been central to our work. Section 3, paragraph 8 outlines the process by which Professor Hill's question can be addressed in the opportunities provided to explore the statements. Responsible representation needs responsible electors and, as electors, we can call out fudge when we see it and we can challenge statements that are worded in code.

Secondly, and more importantly, I think, the tone of Professor Hill's amendment seems to me to fly in the face of our understanding of discernment. Indeed, it undermines the spirit of discernment so clearly described in *Discerning in Obedience*, the springboard for our Report. Discernment is a gift, quite distinct from expressing preferences.

When considering who is to exercise discernment over God's anointing of a new bishop, the O'Donovan Report gives the answer: the whole Church. The whole Church includes those unable to accept the ordination of women. They have been assured of their place in the Church and we have committed ourselves to mutual flourishing with those holding different views.

Those of us preparing this Report have been thoughtful and prayerful in approaching our task. We are also a group of men and women who want thought and prayer to result in action, hence the implementation I outline. Members of Synod, central members of the CNC are charged with an awesome responsibility of discernment. The processes outlined in section 3 will serve to enable to make responsible choices. Professor Hill's amendment is unnecessary. Her concerns can be addressed else and I urge Synod to resist it.

Revd Tim Goode (Southwark): I am a member of Archbishops' Council. I have heard all that has been said but, actually, I do welcome this amendment and hope that it will be perceived as a step towards changing the culture by rebuilding trust and transparency and ensuring that members of the General Synod who are generous in putting themselves forward to serve on the CNC are fully abiding by the General Synod Code of Conduct and that we charged with electing the members of General Synod who will help make up the CNC hear directly of the vocations, gifts and opinions of the candidates, thus actually avoiding assumptions allowing for surprise, encouraging robust and honest conversations and mutual flourishing.

Unfortunately, in the past with the CNC, and especially with what happened in 2019, voting for secret ballots was to continue and I think that this amendment ensures openness of conversation and an ability not to hide. I think this amendment also has implications beyond this debate as surely it is through rebuilding trust and transparency in our processes and relationships that we will further a change of culture and regain the integrity needed as we seek to respond to the Archbishop of York's call to rid the

Church of the sin of institutional racism, for example, and play our part in challenging issues of injustice in the world and in the Church. Thus, I pray that this amendment will play a small but important part in rebuilding that trust and transparency and so I urge Synod to pass it.

Revd Wyn Beynon (Worcester): The Five Guiding Principles are actually the elephant in the room here. They are always put as being this wonderful thing that is sorted us out as a Church - and in one way they did - but the truth is the Five Guiding Principles are an untruth at the heart of our Church.

It is a way of getting around the fact that we are two very different Churches: Anglicanism has always coalesced around one understanding of ministry, not two. We are two Churches. It is important that people who stand for CNC are honest about absolutely everything, otherwise the distinction between discernment and choosing really does not mean anything at all. I support the amendment.

The Chair: I now put before you Synod a motion for closure to ensure sufficient time to debate the main motion after our next amendment.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: The motion for closure was carried and so I now put Item 37 to the vote using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and lost, 115 voting in favour, 195 against, with 14 recorded abstentions.

ITEM 38

The Chair: We now come to Item 38, our final amendment before returning to the main motion. I invite Christina Baron to speak to and move the amendment in her name, after which Aiden will be called to respond. You have up to five minutes but less would be much appreciated.

Christina Baron (Bath & Wells): I will do my best. I think the first thing to say is thank you very much, I know others have said it, but grateful thanks to Aiden and his group for their prayerful work which they have put into this. Nevertheless, I have proposed an amendment. The group suggests that O'Donovan suggested electing CNC members in pairs. Yes, it did, but O'Donovan suggested we elect a principal member of the CNC and an alternate who would serve if the principal could not.

There is a lot to be said for that and, fortunately, if my amendment is passed we can consider that proposal in November. A new quinquennium, we can discuss everything from scratch again if we wish. However, that is not the proposal that the group put forward and the proposal that they have put forward has a number of significant problems. One of them has already been mentioned. If one member of General Synod loses their seat - and that is a problem far more often for clergy because they move between dioceses - then the pair also goes.

Another problem is indicated by the fact that there is provision for if the pair cannot agree amongst themselves they are to draw lots. I know there is a biblical precedent, but if we are going to take the biblical precedent all the way perhaps we should draw lots amongst General Synod members who are willing to serve to select to CNC. The fact that it is possible to anticipate such disagreements that would have to be solved by drawing lots suggests to me that this is not a particularly good arrangement.

What is the problem to which election in pairs is meant to be the solution? That is not clear. The burden is said to be very great on CNC members. I have the enormous privilege of being a member of the CNC. Some years, there is quite a lot of work. Last year, we completed two nominations, two in the whole year. One of those we did entirely by Zoom. This year, we will do two and a half.

I am not convinced that that is a greater burden than, for example, being a member of the Archbishops' Council. There are demands placed upon a lot of us who contribute in different ways to the Church of England, but this particular proposal, the pairing proposal, is not an answer to any of those problems and it has one huge disadvantage. It means that members would only attend half the number of CNCs that they do now. That means last year I would have been part of one CNC. This year, I would be part of one and just possibly another. We had a question from Charles Read yesterday about deference: how do we get rid of the tendency to deference in the Church?

Well, I do not know the whole answer to that, but I will tell you a way not to do it is to have more meetings where the Archbishops and the appointments' secretaries are present and they have a great deal of experience and know exactly what is going on and you have got a rotating number of members elected to the CNC who are not able to be quite as experienced and quite as clued up about what is going on, however well the pairs liaise. It is just not going to be quite so good. You will end up with more members who are less confident and you will have more power, inevitably, in the hands of those who are always round the table.

I am not entirely clear what the problem is that this is meant to solve, but I think if it is enacted it will give rise to very many more problems. There are many other good

recommendations in the Report, but please throw out the idea of electing members in equal pairings.

The Chair: Point of order, Paul Ayers. Go ahead, Paul.

Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds): I apologise for speaking again. I am not receiving the Zoom polls and they are not showing on my screen and there may be others in that position - I do not know how many - and I wonder if we could revert to using the Crystal system until that technical problem is sorted out.

The Chair: We will look into it, thank you very much. Can I call on Aiden to respond to Christina Baron.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): Again, having had the benefit of being able to discuss this earlier with members of the group, the group has unanimously agreed firmly to resist this proposed amendment. We do see pairings as a key plank of our approach. I want to respond to a number of points that Mrs Barron has suggested, but the fact that there have only been a few vacancies recently is not necessarily always the case.

I can tell you during my time on the CNC there were some years where my entire annual leave was spent on that business. Anything that can broaden the number of people who can be involved helps with the diversity. The fact is that all of those who are elected will be central members and that theme of partnership is really important. They will all be involved or engaged. We see this as being a solution which may have imperfections, but I can assure you that we looked at a very many number of models and we felt that this was the best. I will leave it there.

The Chair: This now means that members need to indicate whether they wish to debate this item. Can you do so by using the green tick.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: I see there are more than 25 members wishing a debate on this item and so Item 38 is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of one minute.

Revd Canon Dr James Walters (Universities & TEIs): I am speaking against this amendment. I served on both the O'Donovan group that wrote *Discerning in Obedience* and which, as we heard, first proposed the idea of electing members in pairs, and then this Election Process Review Group which has developed that in conversation with

Professor O'Donovan, I should say, as our principal mechanism for expanding participation and diversity. That is the issue.

We have been asked what problem is this solving. It is needed to promote diversity first through bringing more voices to the table, which it will do by doubling the numbers. Second, it will halve the time commitment which, as we have heard, can be onerous and which Abigail Ogier very well made the point that that relates to diversity characteristics and their ability to participate. Third, we believe as a group that it introduces an electoral incentive to diversity because pairings that represent a broader range of diversity characteristics and/or theological positions have the potential to widen electoral appeal.

I believe Synod wants to see more ethnic and other minority groups serving on the CNC and will support pairings that reflect that and that will put the onus on white candidates to think about who they choose to partner with. This amendment to remove the pairs has been proposed with the best of intentions, I do not doubt, by voices among those currently serving as central members. I think we have to say that now is not the time for those who come to the fore in the current systems of representation to oppose measures designed to promote diversity. I think it is important that this is rejected.

Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans): I declare an interest as a current central member of the CNC. I am grateful to Christina Baron for bringing this amendment because it gives us a chance to focus on the important pairing proposal, but I believe we need to continue to explore it and not risk losing it at this early stage.

Pairing is a creative solution to meet the concerns identified by O'Donovan and in GS 2202. I believe it will deliver its much needed aims. It may need more development but we should not detach it at this stage. It is almost bound to deliver a more inclusive approach with different voices. The electorate is not stupid. It will see what is going on based on the identity of the candidate pair. It is the Biden-Harris strategy.

Christina has highlighted drawbacks, and experience might be one of them, but there are all ways around that. One of the pair might have previous CNC experience, for example. If it was simply to regard the second person as an alternate, then what we are then saying is the only problem is the time consuming nature of the role. The problem is much deeper than that. We need to work more on the current proposal but I urge Synod to reject the amendment.

Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS): I am also a member of the central CNC and have served alongside Jane Patterson. We were elected in 2012 and 2017. I support this amendment for the reasons that Christina has already given. I would like to emphasise particularly the culture of deference question. The first time you walk into

Lambeth Palace, it is a bit intimidating and it has taken me several years on the CNC to build up the sort of confidence you need to work effectively - or, at least, I hope effectively. The Archbishop has talked about wanting to rid us of a culture of deference. I am really worried about whether the pairing system would help us do it. That is my main concern.

The Chair: I now propose a motion for closure on this item using a Zoom poll. In reference to the earlier point of order, the motion has still been significantly carried so sufficient numbers are getting the Zoom poll as it should be for it to be effective in this case.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: The motion for closure is clearly carried. We now put Item 38 to the vote using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and lost, 98 voting in favour, 189 against, with 24 recorded abstentions.

ITEM 8

The Chair: Item 38 is lost. We resume the main motion, Item 8, which now stands as amended. Can I encourage those from under-represented groups or those who are generally shy to consider speaking? I wish to call a range of speakers, if possible.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of one minute.

Mr Martin Kingston (Gloucester): This is in connection with the declarations of interests, recommendations 37 and 38. I declare an interest as a member of the panel hearing the appeal into Jane Patterson's appeal to the CNC. The Report suggests that there is no need for anything other than basic trustee and directorship disclosure.

I want to suggest that something more is required. Although there are suggestions that a generalised requirement for disclosure is really too generalised to be effective, this is about trust and candidates should be encouraged to declare any interests which they believe might influence people's voting intentions.

It is not difficult or complex. It applies in many other areas of the law. You simply make a judgment and, when you make that judgment, you err on the side of caution: if you think something will affect someone's desire to vote for you then you declare it. Clearer guidance on that would be helpful. The Report's recommendations at paragraphs 37

and 38 I do not believe go far enough and critically they do not do what the Report seeks to, which is build trust by disclosure.

Dr Nick Land (York): I was Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee for York and was also an elected member from a diocese on CNC. I note that in 136 Part 4 it says, "It is important that the Chair [of the Vacancy in See Committee] is well connected into the ongoing life of the diocese", but then says that somehow, "It is important that the Chair of the Committee is able to hold the work and life of the Committee as objectively as possible" and, therefore, should not be able to stand for the Committee CNC.

I really do not understand why those two go together. Certainly, from my perspective, the fact that I might well face an election increases accountability. I do not understand why the fact that you will not face an election makes you somehow more accountable. Secondly, I think there is an unintended consequence because, automatically, suffragans are not eligible to stand for the Committee.

If we are looking for someone who is well linked into the life of the diocese and who cannot stand anyway, then is this unintended consequence going to mean that almost inevitably it will be suffragans that are Vacancy in See Chairs. Suffragans are fantastic women and men and are certainly going to do a fantastic job but I think there is an unintended consequence there.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): I welcome the amended motion. I do wish we would have passed Joyce Hill's because I think it speaks to the level of transparency that is needed. I recognise that the three key words in this debate have been trust, transparency and diversity. Arguably, diversity is not just about race. It is also about ability, it is about age and it is about sexuality and gender issues.

For those of us who choose to be open about our sexuality and gender, we immediately, I am afraid to say, do suffer a consequence. We do not get in the same boats as those who choose often to be hidden. I think we need to look at where we hold in respect people who are open.

There are three things briefly I wish the Report had gone on to do. I think instead of a thousand words, which are going to be heavy for us to read through a lot of, we should have had a questionnaire on question issues asking direct questions.

I think we should be declaring membership of Synod groups not just directorships and trustees. That means that we know. We are going to be looking at a new group of members next quinquennium and they will not know, as many of us do, the ways that people tend to fudge their questionnaires.

Very Revd Rogers Govender (Dean of Manchester): I want to support the motion with its set of recommendations simply because we know that from past experience the ability of the Synod to elect members of ethnic minorities to the CNCs has been very difficult for a variety of reasons. The very fact that the group have taken into account the BLM context and all that has been emerging over the past few weeks and months and even days is a sign of hope for me.

I would like to encourage the Synod to support the recommendations simply because there is a greater opportunity for diversity, certainly racial diversity, and I welcome that very warmly.

The Chair: I now put before you a motion for closure on this Item.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: The motion for closure has been clearly carried. Point of order, Sam Margrave.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): I wish to move that we adjourn this Item and it comes back to a future Synod meeting in July. The reason is because I am concerned about the institutional discrimination in the Report against disabled people. Page 22 says that only those present will be able to vote and it suggests that the Church only values those who are physically present. Paragraph 87 justifies this, and I would say can the Holy Spirit not visit us in our homes? Until the Church has implemented the Equality Act as if it applied, as was previously promised, I would ask the Report to come back in future.

The Chair: Sam, I think we have received your point of order. You are asking for an adjournment, is that right?

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): Yes, and I have just given the reasons for that.

The Chair: Thank you. I will just take a moment to consult and get back to you. Sam Margrave has moved the motion that the debate now be adjourned. In moving the motion, he has not yet specified a time for the resumption of the debate. Accordingly, if the motion for the adjournment of the debate is carried, the debate may be resumed only by the direction of the Business Committee. If the motion is lost, the motion for the adjournment of the debate may not be moved again except with the permission of the Chair.

I call on Mr Margrave as the mover of this motion for the adjournment of this debate to speak really briefly, if you could, to it. I will then see if there is anybody who wishes to challenge that in a very short debate.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): I did say that I would like it to come back in July. The reason I am asking for an adjournment is because, having gone through the Report, I am convinced that we as a Church have said we will act as if the Equality Act applies. There are a number of things in here, whether it is the requirement of a thousand words and not allowing an alternative, or whether it is saying that you have to be present and taking away the right to vote by post, these impact disabled people and they exclude people.

We cannot, on the one hand, laud Mr Lamming for participating and then take that right away from others who may find themselves in a similar situation. So I would like the Report to go away, to be reconsidered and then to come back because there is much in it that is good, but I am still concerned about the equality element of the Report and the message it sends out to the wider Church that unless you are physically present you are not valued.

The Chair: Thank you, Sam. Can I ask now if there is anybody who wishes to speak against this motion in Sam's name? We will then need to take a vote on this Item, as directed.

Revd Preb. Simon Cawdell (Hereford): Yes, I wholly oppose the motion for adjournment. The points that Sam makes can be entirely dealt with at the legislative stages and we just need to move on with this debate and vote now.

The Chair: I now put this point of order as this motion in Sam's name to adjourn this debate to the vote using the Crystal voting platform.

The motion was put and lost, 34 voting in favour, 266 against, with 12 recorded abstentions.

The Chair: Point of order, Ian Paul. Go ahead.

Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham): Will Synod accept a motion for closure on this motion so we move to a vote on the main motion as amended?

The Chair: Yes, thank you very much. I will now call on Aiden to respond to the debate on the main motion as amended for Item 8. Aiden, you have up to five minutes.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): Thank you, Chair, and thank you everyone who has contributed. I know I speak on behalf of the group in expressing our appreciation. Forgive me if I do not comment on every contributor. Fr Thomas, you started at such a good place and we want to emphasise how much we treasured the theological basis of

Discerning in Obedience which provided the foundation for our work. We believe that the best way to overcome the fear that you spoke of is by the honest engagement and the care for each other which we speak of in the Report.

Abigail Ogier, thank you for such an excellent maiden speech and for reminding us about the importance of being alive to the potential barriers to achieving the broadest range of representation. We hope the Report will contribute positively in that respect. The Bishop of Willesden, whose experience goes back 30 years, I think I want to say, Bishop, things have changed over those 30 years.

We do recognise the existence of politics, but we want politics to be put in its proper place and we think that the constructive engagement that we have talked about will help with that. We do not see a central power grab. In fact, we do think that you are more likely to get a maverick bishop if you have got a wider diversity of people around the table. I am afraid I did not catch your last question. The last words I heard were “basket cases”.

Prebendary Cawdell, you spoke of perverse outcomes and far be it from me to suggest that those occur in Synod. We did take advice and it was very clear that the wider electorate, we were advised, would produce greater diversity. It will be possible, of course, if this goes forward, for you to exchange with the detail in due course. Similarly, with recommendation 7, we would envisage the remaining member of a pair being able to stand in a subsequent election.

Jane Patterson, a veteran of 23 CNCs, I am tempted to say not quite as many as I did, but Jane thank you for your support and for your reference to mutual flourishing. We want flourishing across the board. We do not want mutual flourishing to be about one area of the Church’s life. A diversity and a care for each other should be about everything that we do. Stewart Fyfe, thank you for your points. Again, all I can do is to say that we looked at many systems for voting and for process. I can tell you lots about Condorcet’s method of election, but probably not now.

Paul Ayers, if we were to vote against reports, if we did not agree with every single word, I do wonder how many in my 21 years on Synod I would actually have gone with but, thank you, nevertheless, for your contribution. Martin Kingston, I think I would want to emphasise - you talked about declaration of interests - the importance that we were talking about a register. Of course, in candidate statements and more widely we encourage everybody to be open and to engage as voters, as electors, as candidates across all of the issues that may be relevant. What we did not think was that something more than a simple register would be a practical thing for the Synod at this stage.

Nick Land, I am sure you are an excellent Vacancy in See Committee Chair and, indeed, CNC elected member. Our point was not about making it more accountable, but actually freeing the Vacancy in See Committee Chair from thinking about electability, on the basis of some of what we had heard in feedback, in order to let the person in that role really ask the difficult questions. Jayne, thank you for your comments about transparency, trust and diversity. How we build trust, that is the key thing that we want to talk about. The Dean of Manchester, thank you for your warm welcome; I cannot think of a better way to have ended the debate.

Chair, as a Yorkshireman, I prefer to end with a cricketing reference, if only out of pride in a member of my family who played for Yorkshire and England, my cousin, Denise. But, earlier this week, referring to the volte face by six football clubs over joining a European Super League, a commentator said, "They had a change of heart and decided not to go with pure self-interest. They have come together for the good of the game".

Beloved sisters and brothers, how much more in this Synod and in the wider Church should heart speak to heart, self-interest be set aside and genuine coming together for the good of the game be our response?

The Chair: Thank you very much. I now order a counted vote on Item 8 as amended. We shall use the Crystal voting platform for this.

The motion was put and carried, 293 voting in favour, 18 against, with 16 recorded abstentions.

The Chair: That concludes this item and apologies for the later than, clearly necessary, screen break for many of us. We will adjourn this sitting for 15 minutes and return at 3.37.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker)* took the Chair at 3.37 pm.

The Chair: Members of Synod, welcome back. Before our next item, I am going to invite Canon Hammond, the Chair of the Business Committee, to address us.

VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): We are making good time at the moment, but to allow sufficient time for Item 10 I wish to propose a variation in the order of business

and propose that we take Item 9 after Item 10 and also that we change the rubric for Item 12, Prorogation, to “not later than 5.30”.

The Chair: Thank you, Canon Hammond. I hope that was clear to all members. The proposal is that we vary the order of business by taking Item 9 after Item 10 and moving the rubric at Item 12 to read “not later than 5.30 pm”. That all has my consent, but I need to put it to you and ask you to vote by Zoom poll.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

ITEM 10

SAFEGUARDING: NATIONAL PROJECTS AND WORKSTREAMS IN RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE OCTOBER 2020 INVESTIGATION REPORT

The Chair: We now move to Item 10. This is an Item relating to safeguarding and the Safeguarding: National Projects and Workstreams in Response to Recommendations Made in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse October 2020 Investigation Report. Members will need GS 2204. This will be a take note debate and, therefore, amendments are not in order.

As always with the matters under consideration in this item, members are invited to make their contributions when the time comes with appropriate care and sensitivity and speeches should please avoid making reference to specific cases and individuals. I now call upon the Bishop of Huddersfield to move the motion. Bishop Jonathan, you have up to ten minutes.

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs): Thank you for your introduction. I want to begin also by recognising that today’s debate will not be easy for some and especially for those victims and survivors who are watching and listening to what we say. I do hope we will bear all of them in mind both as we speak and in our prayers.

Synod, the paper you have in front of you, GS 2204, outlines the work that is being done in response to the recommendations of IICSA’s final Report into the Church of England published in October 2020. I should perhaps make it clear that it does not, therefore, cover other aspects of the work of the NST and NSSG. It is not an overall Report on our work.

The main purpose of this debate is to bring this information before Synod and to allow members to comment on the work that is currently underway and that is proposed. As you will see, the Report covers a wide range of topics reflecting the large number of workstreams arising from the IICSA recommendations.

These include the following principal areas of work. First, those related to our support for victims and survivors: the Interim Support Scheme for Survivors, the Redress Scheme for Victims and Survivors and the Safe Spaces Scheme. Secondly, those related to identifying and addressing past failures to influence and strengthen our safeguarding practice, including Learning Lessons Reviews and Past Cases Review 2.

Thirdly, major changes to policy and practice, including safeguarding learning, with new and significantly different programmes being introduced, and safeguarding policy development across a whole range of areas and the National Case Management System. Fourthly, changes to the structure and oversight of safeguarding across the Church, including IICSA recommendation 1 with the proposed change to having diocesan safeguarding officers, the piloting of a regional model and the introduction of national quality assurance of safeguarding, and also the creation of an independent safeguarding board to oversee the work of the National Safeguarding Team.

I hope that the Report demonstrates to Synod the seriousness of our commitment to introducing far-reaching change in the Church's safeguarding work in relation to addressing our past failures, to changing the way we do things for the better and to growing a safer and healthier culture across the whole Church. The presentation which we gave to the informal session of Synod in February outlined the structured programme approach which is being adopted to ensure the delivery of these goals.

Having said that, I am profoundly aware that none of this can take away the shame of our past failures and that what is underway and planned can never come quickly enough or go far enough, especially for the sake of victims and survivors. Bringing about change in an organisation as large and complex as the Church of England was never going to be easy. Added to that are the hugely challenging issues of unhealthy culture and appalling behaviour highlighted by recently published Reports which also have to be addressed.

What I can assure you, Synod, is my commitment and that of my colleagues to carrying through the programme of change that we have outlined to address as far as possible past wrongs and to help the Church of England to become a place of safety where children and adults alike are nurtured and enabled to flourish with the fullness of life that is God's intention for us all.

But, Synod, we can only do this with you and with your active help and support, not just here at Synod but out and about in our dioceses, cathedrals, parishes, schools and all the other Church-related organisations. That is why it was great to have a unanimous vote on the Safeguarding Code of Practice Measure earlier today. Thank you very much for your support in that. As we work through this programme of change, we are committed, first and foremost, to working in partnership with victims and survivors who can help shape what we are doing through their unique insight and experience.

The programme of change that I have outlined aims to do that at all levels from the Strategic Oversight Board down to each of the project workstreams. I want to pay tribute to them today for their courage, their persistence and their willingness to carry on engaging with us as well as challenging us. We also need you, bishops, clergy and laity, to work with us to bring about the kind of profound change that is required.

I am well aware that there has been a feeling that we have not always worked together as well as we could and, having in some ways turned from poacher to gamekeeper since I took up this role, I can certainly see that. Let me put on record my gratitude to our colleagues in the dioceses, cathedrals and parishes for the work they are doing in safeguarding, especially to our DSAs and CSAs, recognising their commitment and the cost of this work both in terms of time and resources.

On behalf of my colleagues in the NST and the National Safeguarding Steering Group, I would like to affirm our commitment to working alongside you in this programme of change and to say, in particular, that Zena Marshall and I are keen to find new ways of engaging with you over this and of assisting you in the vital and valued work that you are doing.

Synod, I am well aware of the deep frustration and, indeed, anger that there is over the Church's failures, not just in the past but in relation to the slowness and inadequacy of our actions in the present. We need to recognise that anger and frustration and, as far as possible, we need to challenge the energy and determination they bring so as to drive forward the huge change that is still needed across the life of the Church.

I look forward to hearing your comments in today's debate, which will themselves play an important part in helping shape our work in the months and years ahead. I hope that we will then commit ourselves to working wholeheartedly to fulfil the objectives that we have outlined in the Report. I pray, above all, that we will be able to journey forward together most of all for the sake of those whom we have failed so dreadfully in order to make the Church a place in which all are kept safe and can flourish in accordance with God's will and purpose.

The Chair: Bishop Jonathan, thank you very much. This item is now open for debate. If members would please indicate in the usual fashion. The speech limit initially is five minutes and I call the Bishop of London.

The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Sarah Mullally): I declare that I am a member of the National Safeguarding Steering Group and I want to start by thanking the National Safeguarding Team for all the work that they have done and are continuing to do. I would like to recognise the hard work of the diocesan safeguarding advisers and, again, pay tribute to the courage and the tenacity of survivors who continue rightly to hold us to account. But it continues to grieve me that, at times, we are still getting this wrong. Safeguarding from abuse and responding well to that abuse is grounded in the fundamental themes of Christian theology and thereby it should be woven into the Church.

I do believe that we have made progress but we still have ground to cover. I am encouraged that we are making progress on Safe Spaces and the Redress Scheme and I would commend to Synod the Learning Development Framework and the Core Learning Pathway. I was very encouraged at the last National Safeguarding Steering Group to hear about the very positive comments that are coming back from those who are undertaking the Senior Leadership Pathway. I know that some are concerned about the length of this Pathway, but it does deal with behaviours and culture change and that can never be quick.

It is to culture change that I want to address my final comments. Culture has been mentioned during this Synod on a number of occasions over the last two days. Culture is about the way we do things around here. Culture change does not happen unless it is owned by those who are part of the culture. Anything less would turn what are behaviours at the heart of Gospel into something that is seen as a bureaucratic checklist. We must create a culture which is open, transparent, accountable and, therefore, which is safe.

We have to recognise our own authority and power and how we can misuse this to become coercive, bullying and controlling. It is only when we do this that we are able to become a Church which is more racially just, which addresses homophobia and transphobia and sexism and can become a place where those of differing theological opinions can live together well in community and it is only then that our culture will become safer.

I would want to encourage the National Safeguarding Team, when undertaking the Lessons Learned Reviews, not to limit themselves to those issues narrowly defined as “safeguarding”, because we have to address the culture which can lead to safeguarding failures and we need to understand how to create healthy cultures. I would commend

again to Synod the Pastoral Principles for Living Well Together, which I believe, if lived, will contribute to creating a healthy culture.

Next month, a new Pastoral Principle course is being published. This course is for everyone across the whole Church and, whilst it is developed alongside the work of *Living in Love and Faith*, they go beyond *Living in Love and Faith*. The Church has to do some hard inner work which is required for culture change.

The Pastoral Principle course invites us as individuals, as Church communities and as an institution to begin to do the work of acknowledging and rooting out prejudice, oppressive silence, misuse of power, hypocrisy, ignorance and fear. It does this through Bible study reflection, discussion, practical exercises and, most importantly, prayer.

I do believe that engaging with the Pastoral Principles will take courage, but it is deep work and I believe it will enable us to do this which is absolutely vital for culture change to take hold. Finally, I continue to pray for those who have been abused and for a change in the way we do things around here.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Canon Peter Adams (St Albans): Bishop Jonathan, thank you and the NST for your Reports. I will be taking note, but my concern is for issues that do not show up in this and other Reports. Almost every Report and Lessons Learned Review we have had has addressed the need for culture change. It was the case in the Fletcher Review published by 31:8 just a few weeks ago. They made reference to the problems posed by leaders who acquire celebrity status and the cultures of bullying and abuse that often accompany these.

I want to suggest the House of Bishops give thought to how to tackle this culture change in great depth given that it clearly extends beyond the remit of the National Safeguarding Team. Aiden Hargreaves-Smith, in proposing the CNC motion earlier, called for the need for culture change in that sphere. He called for representatives on CNC to represent the whole Church. Bishop Sarah has just addressed this matter.

IICSA noted that partisan thinking amongst some in Synod has been significant in some of the culture that has allowed abuse and especially meant a lack of transparency. We desperately need that same change of culture to impact the safety of people in our Church. IICSA heard how it was at times suggested that it was not good for a partisan view and, more widely, the reputation of our faith to acknowledge abuse. Synod, I have heard that in our midst.

I note we are debating our response to IICSA. My reference to the Fletcher case is merely illustrative. The organisation of such groups often extends way beyond the governance structures of the C of E. Proprietary chapels and peculiars have allowed areas of grey. Bishop, in your response to my answer to question 51, you said, "My view would be that no bishop would grant PTO unless satisfied that the organisation has adopted and implemented safeguarding policies that comply with the C of E standards".

I truly welcome that. However, I would suggest the House of Bishops give thought to how the granting of licence to those involved, to proprietary chapels and peculiars might be placed within a framework of rules, ensuring that those celebrity of men like Fletcher be constrained by rules, not by evading by use of the very influence they excel in bringing to any relationship.

I suggest these irregular structures are being used by partisan networks. We need to recognise the various ways that networks are used to extend their reach. In today's very mobile culture, these extend beyond such chapels. The churches themselves are described as Anglican but not part of the C of E. They claim credibility by association of some within our structures. Are we willing to consider ways to bring these people to account? In doing so, we need to take account of the fact that we, as a wider Church, are so often left picking up the pieces and the chaos. I quote again by reference to Aiden's closing words, "Let us be sure that this is a vital issue that we address".

Mr James Cary (Bath & Wells): The Report GS 2204 condenses an awful lot of work into a very small number of pages. I have the honour of running a Pathfinders group of 11s to 14s in my church and will be taking them through 1 Chronicles 14 tomorrow afternoon. I also work with an organisation called Faith in Kids and I actually make podcasts for them. But I also have the honour of being a member of the National Safeguarding Steering Group as a representative of the Archbishops' Council.

For the last year, I have had a front row seat for this work that is going on, which is consistently excellent. A dedicated staff team are managing multiple projects at great speed which are trying to address the real deep pain and confusion of those who have been betrayed and deeply wounded by members of the Church of England who have been shamefully let down and ignored. The team are also managing schemes and producing toolkits and resources that are trying to prevent abuse from happening in the future.

As Bishops Jonathan and Sarah have already said, everyone in the NSSG and in the team are mindful that these policies and schemes will be in vain and children and vulnerable adults will be abused and exploited and manipulated and silenced if we do not take responsibility for this issue for ourselves now in our Sunday schools - in my

case tomorrow afternoon - Messy Churches, in our youth groups, PCCs, deaneries, cathedrals, institutions.

We do not need to wait for further works and schemes and toolkits or even a culture change when we have the words of Jesus in Matthew 18:6 who could not have put his care for children more starkly, saying, “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea”. This work is excellent. We should take note. We all know that this one is on us, where we are right now, but I still highly commend this Report.

The Chair: The Archbishop of Canterbury for five minutes and then Judith Maltby when the speech limit will return to three minutes.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Rt Revd & Most Hon Dr Justin Welby): Thank you very much, Bishop Jonathan. I shall try and be a little less, deference and all that kind of thing not being a virtue. I want to thank two groups. One is survivors who continue to fight against the intractable slowness of so much of the Church, different churches in so many ways, and to carry the burden of their pain. Every time they fight against it they carry the burden of their pain more deeply. Thank you that you continue to help us whatever the reason.

Secondly, to those who are working in the NST who receive extraordinary abuse from all kinds of quarters and for Bishop Jonathan of Huddersfield who has demonstrated again and again his determination to get this right and his predecessors. We owe them a great deal.

The culture of safeguarding is going to change very, very significantly over the next couple of years. First, there is going to be greater transparency. Secondly, there will be a commitment to justice for complainants and respondents. Thirdly, there will be the introduction of independence if this Synod supports it. Those are IICSA recommendations and they are essential, but independence of the safeguarding regulation does not mean “liberation” in some sense from responsibility for our own culture.

The independence system will work when the culture has changed so much that they have very little to do, and that is for us to change. There is deep resistance continuing within the culture of the Church. Its safeguarding is described as “wokeness”, as a burden, as a number of rules. We must continue to be clear about the need for transparency, justice for all and independence. I know that the NST and NSSG are committed.

Finally, I want to say that if this Synod thinks we are anywhere near the end of this, with great sadness I must say we are not. In the last week, eight, nine days, my colleagues and I have seen new examples of historic abuse which I will carry to my grave. They are appalling. They are being investigated. They have been fully reported. They will be declared in due course. I am not going to interfere by signalling what area they cover.

We need to realise we have a long way to go. We have got a long way to go in looking after everyone involved in this, in being a Church that stands for Jesus Christ. Let us persist with courage knowing that every step we take is a step in following our Lord and saviour who calls us to obedience.

Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS): Thank you, Archbishop, for what you just so passionately said and thank you, Bishop Jonathan, for having the toughest job in the Church of England in my opinion. I was on LLF and, in the course of this quinquennium, I put a number of questions in Synod about when we were going to do joined-up thinking between our attitudes towards LGBT people in the Church and safeguarding. I was repeatedly promised that we would do this at some time and I was sad not to see it in the workstreams here.

This point about the connectedness of these issues was made in IICSA and in the Gibb Report on Ball. I believe Lord Williams talked about it at IICSA, as did the Bishop of Chichester, and I think maybe even the Archbishop of Canterbury has talked about it as well. I was glad to hear Bishop Sarah making those connections. I raised it again as recently as November and apologise to Synod for being a broken record about this, but the Archbishop of York assured me that I should continue to be a broken record on this point and so, ever deferential to Archbishops, I am continuing to be a broken record on it.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): Notwithstanding that I seem to lack the clergy deference gene, I am very pleased to tell you that I wholly endorse everything that the preceding speakers, and not only the Archbishop and the Bishops, have been saying. This safeguarding area, which we are beginning to recognise, goes all the way across from racism to homophobia to disability exclusion, to sexual abuse victims, harassment, bullying, is all under the safeguarding umbrella, although each of them have to be looked at individually because they will have different ways that we will need to approach them.

We have got unanimity about how we are doing this within the General Synod. Our votes are going through solid and that is great and well done, everybody. What I would like to just bring into the conversation is this. You know that I have conversations with people outside the Church and sometimes in contradistinction to the Church talking to

victims, to clergy, who sometimes say they have been bullied by bishops and congregations.

I want to give a particular word of gratitude to some people in the conservative evangelical community who are dissident to us at times, sometimes outside the Church of England, and particularly Lee Furney, who if you are not following his soul-information blog I really do suggest you do so, because what we are getting there is real information about what has been going wrong in those places. What is developing - and this is a great thing to say - is an access of integrity that stretches from the queer to the Kolibo(?) and taking in all people in between them.

We are all working together around the Micah 6:8 principles of doing justice, loving justice, doing mercy, walking humbly with God. This is actually *Living in Love and Faith* and we are actually doing it, putting aside some differences, to work for the good and that is something that I think we should be ready to celebrate.

The only thing - there is always going to be a “but” - is we do need our transparency and accountability. We know that the Makin Report is going to be very expensive. We were not told the figure. We should be celebrating how much we are prepared to pay for this and, for what it is worth, I think it is going to be upwards of £600,000.

Revd Canon Rebecca Swyer (Chichester): My point is one that was actually raised in discussion with my own diocesan safeguarding officer concerning the ongoing work regarding IICSA recommendation 1 and independence. What has emerged from the NST and the national Church since the final IICSA Report has been a lot of statements about independence and claims that this is what IICSA recommended.

The main outcome of this, at this stage, appears to be the forthcoming formation of an independence scrutiny board for the NST. However, what the IICSA recommendation actually said was that diocesan safeguarding officers should be able to make certain key casework decisions independently from bishops, not that safeguarding as a whole should be done independently from the C of E, and, in fact, IICSA said precisely the opposite.

Probably at the moment there is very little indication of work done on drafting the necessary legislation to allow DSOs to act independently in the ways that recommendation 1 envisages. I just really wanted to ask the question: what work has actually been done since IICSA’s final Report six months ago to start drafting the legislative changes necessary for recommendation 1 that is so important to happen?

Revd Charles Read (Norwich): It is good to see so much good work going on, even if the sobering fact is that we have still got a long way to go. I am the safeguarding lead

in one of our TEIs, the Eastern Region Ministry Course, and I would like to offer a couple of reflections arising out of my role as a safeguarding lead. When we needed a new safeguarding lead we were in a staff meeting and the principal said, “We need somebody to volunteer to be the safeguarding lead”.

It is a bit like being in a PCC because we all looked at the floor and hoped somebody else would volunteer. I thought, well, there cannot be a lot of work involved in this because we are not a residential college and so we do not see students and children and we very seldom see vulnerable adults and so I volunteered to do it. You will not be surprised to know that no sooner had I volunteered to be the safeguarding lead than lots of safeguarding issues appeared out of nowhere.

The thing that caught me out was that a number of safeguarding issues arose out of things that students had written in assignments. These are often when they are reflecting on case studies in their own parish or church or chaplaincy. We have had to evolve a protocol for how we deal with these because they need to be referred back, of course, to the student’s diocese. My first bit of reflection is that safeguarding concerns crop up in places where you did not expect to find them. It is about this broader culture that Bishop Sarah alluded to and we must be careful we do not think that we can box safeguarding concerns in. They are spread in all sorts of places. I should perhaps have not been surprised to find them in students’ assignments and I have learnt pretty quick.

The second thing I would say is that I am very glad in the new leadership module that there is some attention to the theology underpinning safeguarding. I am sorry to have encountered people, including, sadly, other members of this Synod, who cannot see why we are dealing with theological issues in safeguarding, but we do because a lot of the problems we have had in safeguarding have been through a kind of faulty theology. Whether that is around the theology of leadership, as we have seen in the Fletcher and Smyth cases, or whether it is around people saying, “Well, we believe in forgiveness, don’t we, so perhaps we should, you know, extend forgiveness”.

It is how you theologically handle forgiveness while being responsible about safeguarding concerns. I am glad there is some theology in the leadership module and I think it works pretty well. But while my students on the ERMV enjoy engaging with the theology, when I was waxing lyrical about this in a deanery chapter recently, some of my colleagues who are incumbents said, “This theology is too abstruse for people in our parishes and our PCCs to engage with”. I am glad there is theology there. We need to give some thought as to how we can help people right across the Church of England engage with the theology underpinning safeguarding.

Ms Josile Munro (London): I welcome this Report and I welcome all the work and what the Archbishop of Canterbury has said and also Bishop Jonathan in his work. My key concern is around the Core Learning Pathways. They are on page 2 of the Report. It seems as though there are some gaps here in relation to the number of dioceses that are spoken to and, in particular, the leadership. One of the queries I have is the Leadership Pathway is the only one that is not being delivered nationally and I wondered if that cannot be done nationally to make sure that everyone gets it in an even way.

The other issue I am concerned with is the fact that I do not know what checks we are doing with regard to the basic awareness and foundations. People are doing it, but my understanding is that the dioceses cannot easily get back the results of these basic awareness and foundations and to find out who has done it, who has not done it, and so actually have a deeper dive into what is actually happening around these Learning Pathways.

My interest also is that I am trying to get on at my people on the parish to do it. I know that they find it easier to deal with the Core Pathways that are online because you can do it at any time, whereas it is much more difficult for the leadership because that is specific times and not everybody has got those sorts of times in their diaries. I just want to ask the question about how rigorous are we in terms of finding out what is happening with these Learning Pathways, who is taking it, who is not taking it, why do we have some gaps with the diocese and whether we should really be going towards a national training for all of that, which is available.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Ven. Gavin Kirk (Lincoln): I declare an interest as a member of the NSSG. I welcome GS 2204 and the progress it indicates, though, as with other items we have discussed in this group of sessions like racism and religious freedom, there is a long road ahead of us. I particularly welcome the move to diocesan safeguarding officers rather than advisers. In Lincoln, in fact, we have gone further and we have ensured that our DSO is an equal member of the Bishop's staff seeking to ensure that safeguarding is an essential component of all policy and decision-making. No compartmentalisation. I encourage other dioceses to think about this.

I also applaud the change of emphasis from the Training Pathways. Charles has spoken about the theological reflection, which is brilliant. Here, in Lincoln we require an archdeacon or other senior member of staff to be present in face to face C2 training in order to give weight and theological input.

I am thankful for the introduction of the National Case Management System, something which is long overdue. Some dioceses, I know, are still making to do with Word documents or, in our own case, a system designed for the administration of a primary school. This will help information to be more readily available to those who need it, particularly between dioceses and provinces. It will track how decisions are reached and why and it should help develop a consistency of approach in our safeguarding work. I think there is still work to be done on the independence of the oversight of our safeguarding work, but this represents a significant step forward and I encourage Synod enthusiastically to take note of this Report.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): As I read this Report, which I wholeheartedly support, it occurred to me that, in reference to a speech I gave earlier today about the need for policy and process to be accompanied by our personal commitment to change, we need to think alongside these institutional issues at our own behaviour and culture and I want to just say a few words about our own capacity to cause harm.

A few weeks ago, I was preparing for a service which was being live streamed and I found myself showing somebody how to use our live streaming camera. What actually happened was that I suddenly discovered that I was filming myself talking to this person and when I saw the playback I was appalled at the way I was speaking to this particular woman. That moment gave me an insight into my own behaviour that I was unconscious of. It seems to me that, as much as we can have policy and process and national strategy, at the same time we must continually be bearing down on our own behaviours and attitudes.

To that extent, I wonder whether we might like to think about that whole issue of our own response and our own personal response in a future penitential season? Might it be wise for the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book in the next couple of years to be on issues around harm and our own responsibility for it? Might it be good that we develop a season of penitence when we can set aside our concerns about good process and policy and focus on our own personal behaviours and attitudes? One thing and the other must go hand in hand in this, otherwise we will end up having very good processes and people who are unself-aware in the way they are implementing them.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): I had not intended to say anything in this debate and I am grateful for being called to speak. We have heard with shame the horrific stories of abuse within the Church and I join other members of Synod in welcoming long overdue steps that are being taken to address this, but I do believe it would not be fair on the victims and survivors if safeguarding itself fell victim to scope creep. The problem we have is that there is no clear definition of a vulnerable adult and this is something that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Above all, we must avoid the kind of mindset which regards all adults as vulnerable and every adult relationship within our Church as subject to safeguarding formalities. I am very concerned that safeguarding risks becoming a Trojan horse for a world view and perhaps rooted in critical theory that sees everything in terms of paradigms and divides humanity into the categories of oppressed and oppressors. If this is to be the case, it is important, I think, for Synod to know that this will not be uncontroversial.

Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn): Thank you very much, Bishop Jonathan, and the rest of your team, for your Report. I just want to make a very simple point in regard to my role as parish safeguarding officer of my own parish. I really commend the change of wording in paragraph 2 in GS 2204 with regard to the change from “safeguarding training” to “safeguarding learning”. I think this is really critical.

Much has been said this afternoon about how important what we are doing on the ground is. We can make reports, make speeches and do all the rest of it, but it is actually what is going on in the parish. I know in my own context, it is important for me to encourage people to do the training and for it not just to be seen as a tick-box exercise, “Oh, we’re okay now, Rosemary, we’ve done that for three years”. No, it has to be ongoing. The idea of continuous professional development, of course, is widely used in education and, as it says later on in the paragraph, it enables learning to be conscious and proactive rather than passive and reactive. Safeguarding is the ongoing responsibility of everybody.

Revd Andrew Lightbown (Oxford): I, like my colleague Judith Maltby, would like to sound a little bit like a broken record. I think it is right and fair that we do view these things holistically and not narrow definitions and so I would want to resist Prudence’s argument. We have spoken a lot about cultural change, but there seems to be a bit of a feeling that cultural change is just something that can happen in a bit of a vacuum. I, of course, want a Church where all may flourish and none need fear, but that does not happen culturally without doctrinal change and liturgical changes. Ecclesiology and culture flow from belief and doctrine and things we hold dear. We cannot view culture and doctrine and belief as separate things. Our culture will be decided on as we wrangle through these issues and I am just worried that we are actually trying to suggest that we can be cultural without being theological or being relatively theological.

Mrs Kathryn Winrow (Oxford): Just following on from Andrew and also the Bishop of London and Judith Maltby and the importance of joined-up thinking avoiding compartmentalisation and the link between safeguarding, LLF, Pastoral Principles. But I sit here thinking about all that we have discussed this Synod and many former Synods and I have never really heard the term EDI for equality, diversity and inclusion, which is commonplace in many organisations and certainly in education, which is my main place of work. I just want to put that to the table, as it were, to see if there is a broader

context for thinking about these things but, again, not just about policy and practice but actual action.

The Chair: Members of Synod, I would like to put to you now a motion for the closure of this debate and you should, therefore, in a moment see a Zoom poll with that question.

The motion was put and carried via a simple Zoom poll.

The Chair: I, therefore, invite the Bishop of Huddersfield to respond to the debate. Jonathan, you have up to five minutes.

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs): Thank you, colleagues, for an extremely lively and engaged debate. I really do appreciate everybody's contribution and their commitment to the importance of what we are talking about today. I will do my best to respond to the speakers. Forgive me if I do not cover everything.

Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for getting off to such a strong start around the theme of culture change, which was picked up on by several speakers, and your reference to the fact that that needs to be owned by all. I will refer to others commenting on that later. Culture change, towards the end it was said does not happen in a vacuum; it is about all of us engaging with that. Thank you for that challenge to the deep work that needs to be done and, again, holistically across a whole range of different areas. I think that has been clearly recognised. It has been a theme running through the whole of Synod.

Thank you to Peter Adams for your support, as always, and your recognition too that this is not just about the NST. This is about a whole wider range of issues, including the CNC Election Review Group Report discussion earlier on and the themes of diversity and culture in that context too. Thank you for your challenges about particular organisations and places. Those have been highlighted in recent Reports and we recognise those and are committed to following up on those. Thank you to James Cary for taking us back to parish life, which is at the heart of the Church of England, and your work with children and young people and your reference that we must all take responsibility in our own context and situation, and your reminder of our Lord's words in Matthew 18. You said at the end, "This is on us now".

Thank you, Archbishop Justin, for your remarks. Again, the theme of culture there, transparency, justice for complainants and respondents, justice for all and the introduction of independence but, nevertheless, we are still responsible for our own culture. Thank you to Judith Maltby. Judith, you are not a scratched record at all. You are quite right to hold us to account over these things. I am delighted that Bishop Sarah picked up on many of the themes that you said.

There is reference in the Report to the draft Policy on Safeguarding of Children and Young People and Adults. I can inform you that section 4.3 of that Report is on the theme of gender and identity and begins precisely with reference to the work of LLF. I would be delighted to see that taken further. I know from personal experience that the Adviser to the Lead Bishops for Safeguarding has been liaising with Eeva John over the last few weeks on my behalf in helping formulate responses to a number of questions over transgender issues, so I thoroughly recognise the importance of that and we would be delighted to take that further outside of today.

Thank you, Martin Sewell, for your comments. With regard to cost, I have consulted my colleagues and it is not policy for us to divulge costs for a number of reasons: one, because they often relate to contractual matters; two, because costs tend to be a headline figure which does not necessarily concern the wider context. We are very happy to consider discussion over that, but the short answer is the Church is committed to paying what it takes to do this job properly.

Thank you to Rebecca Swyer. With regard to the theme of independence, just to make it absolutely clear, we are not talking about hiving off the work of safeguarding into some independent body. This is about independent oversight that the Church remains fully engaged in, and must be fully engaged in, and responsible for the work of safeguarding. I am running out of time.

Thank you, Charles Read. Yes, we have got work going on on theology of safeguarding. We have got a group working with survivors at the moment. Josile, thank you for your challenge. It is not possible for the National Team to take on all the work of training, but it is really important that is rooted in dioceses. Do go back to your dioceses and, indeed, come back to us if there are issues about people slipping through the net. Thank you, Gavin Kirk and Simon Butler for your emphasis on the importance of personal response.

Prudence Dailey and Andrew Lightbown, clearly there are different sides of the coin going on there, but I think we all recognise the importance of the issues that have been raised. Kathy Winrow, equality, diversity and inclusion, that has been at the heart of this debate and, indeed, the heart of this whole Synod. Thank you, colleagues, very much indeed.

The importance is your support for the Report not only today but in how we take this forward on the ground ourselves in our parishes, dioceses and cathedrals and everywhere else. Thank you very much indeed for your support today.

The Chair: Bishop Jonathan, thank you. Before I put this Item to the vote, I am going to suggest members of Synod that we just spend a few moments in quiet together.

Synod, I am now going to put Item 10 to the vote using the Crystal Interactive platform.

The motion was put and carried, 295 voting in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions.

The Chair: Thank you, members of Synod. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 4.35 pm.

ITEM 9

GENERAL SYNOD ELECTIONS 2020: ALLOCATIONS OF SEATS AMENDMENT RESOLUTION (GS 2203)

The Chair: We now come to Item 9 on the agenda, the General Synod Elections 2020: Allocation of Seats Amendment Resolution. Members will need the paper GS 2203. I invite Canon Robert Hammond to introduce this item. He has up to ten minutes.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): In February 2020, General Synod agreed the allocation of seats to dioceses for the next quinquennium. The allocation of seats was based on the electorate as of 31 July 2019 using the data collected from and confirmed by diocesan secretaries.

However, since the February 2020 group of sessions, the Secretariat at Church House has been contacted by Lincoln Diocese to be told that the figures provided for the electorate in July 2019 were incorrect and that there was an overestimation of £4,618. This meant that the number on Lincoln's electoral rolls used for the allocation of the seats in the House of Laity was 23,618 but it should have been 19,000.

The staff has undertaken the calculations again using the correct figures for Lincoln Diocese and have found that there is a material difference in the allocation of seats for three dioceses. Lincoln should have been allocated three seats rather than five, Exeter should have been allocated five seats rather than four and London should have been allocated 12 seats rather than 11.

For this reason, we are presenting an Amendment Resolution to correct this issue and to ensure that the allocation of seats for the next quinquennium are proportional. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The Chair: This item, Item 9, is now open for debate. The speech limit is three minutes from the outset.

Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln): Speaking on behalf of the Diocese of Lincoln, I am grateful to the Business Committee for this opportunity to make this correction and offer the diocese's apologies for the error in the originally submitted electoral roll number. I have been assured that the necessary steps have been taken to guard against future recurrence. Under the Church Representation Rules, dioceses are required to submit their electoral roll numbers by 1 August in the year before quinquennial elections.

Those numbers are collated by dioceses from the parish returns for the APCMs which, in 2019, had to be held by 30 April. They should align with the numbers that are entered by parishes at the end of the year in their statistics for mission returns but, as it is a separate process, there are opportunities for error. In providing the data that lies behind Appendix A, nine dioceses availed themselves of the opportunity to include their mission initiative roll numbers.

Putting those nine aside and comparing the 2019 electoral roll numbers shown in the Appendix with those recorded for dioceses in the Research and Statistic Unit's 2019 Statistics for Mission Report shows some instances of significant difference: 5,600 for one diocese, 4,500 for another, 3,500 in yet another. Differences of that magnitude are material to determining the correct distribution of House of Laity elected positions, as was the case in Lincoln.

Rather than dioceses having to manually collate electoral roll numbers, could we not move to basing the elected position distribution purely on the numbers entered in the most recent set of annual statistics for mission returns? That will both ensure a consistent approach and relieve dioceses of a piece of administration. Looking beyond that, by the time we get to the next full renewal of electoral rolls in 2025, could we have a system by which electoral roll forms can be completed online and automatically collated?

Mr Philip French (Rochester): I am grateful to Canon Hammond for bringing this motion forward and I will certainly be voting in favour of it. I am also delighted to join in Synod's congratulations on his appointment as Chair of the Business Committee and our gratitude for the way in which he has already demonstrated the wisdom of that choice. This matter might be thought as mere administrative detail. Actually, it represents a failure of synodical government.

The Diocese of Lincoln submitted a seriously exaggerated return for the number of lay people on electoral rolls and Church House proved unable to detect the error involved. It may only have been the Coronavirus emergency that prevented the election of a disproportionate number of lay members for Lincoln in 2020. GS 2203 refers to Lincoln's electoral roll figure having been "over-estimated". The question of estimation

should not arise. Dioceses are required by Church Representation Rule 49(7) to collect parochial electoral roll numbers and certify the total, not to estimate.

It was good to hear from Nigel Bacon just now a suggestion as to how this process could be automated to make it more reliable. Also, was adequate diligence carried out at Church House? Over the five years from 2014, the overall electoral roll in the Southern Province declined by 11%. Lincoln first reported a 6% increase, now revised to a 15% decrease. Was that original figure questioned for verification?

Going forward, we need to know whether the Diocese of Lincoln was uniquely unfortunate at a particular time or whether we face a systemic risk. We need to understand what happened here, what lessons have been learned and how we can be assured it will not happen again, whether in Lincoln Diocese or elsewhere.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): May I add my congratulations to Robert on his election. Appendix A of GS 2203, as well as showing the plus ones and minus ones in the number of lay members to be elected to Synod, also shows more worryingly significant declines in the overall electoral rolls of dioceses of Church of England: 11% in the case of Canterbury Province and 17% in the York Province. Only three dioceses show an increase in electoral rolls: Coventry, Europe and Norwich.

Overall, the reduction totals very nearly 134,000 over the five year period but, because we are not reducing the overall size of Synod, all the dioceses gaining an extra member have, in fact, seen a reduction in their electoral roll. I sincerely hope that the new Synod to be elected on this basis will get to grips with the overall size of the Synod going forward as we seek to be simpler, humbler and bolder. It is noteworthy that 306 people voted for the Final Approval of the Safeguarding Code of Practice Measure and, secondly, that the new Synod will put at the centre of its work for the next five years the task of the renewal and growth of the Church for the task of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.

The Chair: Sorry, Mr Greenwood, I must ask you to be relevant to the motion, please.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): I have finished.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I can be quite short because some of the points that I wanted to make have been very well expressed by Philip French. My concern, looking at Appendix A, in particular in relation to Lincoln, even with its revised figure, is we have got a round number of 19,000 electoral roll numbers and, indeed, if one looks at that column there are one or two other dioceses where the figures would suggest an element of estimation.

I do want to ask that the Business Committee seriously look at how these numbers are gathered and for there to be proper scrutiny of the numbers and, indeed, to interrogate dioceses, perhaps through the diocesan secretaries, as to what extent parishes are complying with the requirements of the Church Representation Rules, first of all, of course, to revise their electoral rolls before the annual parochial meeting each year and, secondly, to return the numbers by 1 July to the diocesan secretaries so that they can be duly forwarded to the General Synod for the purpose of this allocation of seats every five years.

I think what this particular exercise has very starkly thrown up is the problem that we have got at the moment with producing accurate numbers and, as has been said by one speaker already, it is an issue of governance if you have got a situation where some dioceses are being either overrepresented or underrepresented because of inaccurate statistics.

The Chair: I see no one else indicating they wish to speak and so I invite Robert Hammond to respond to the debate.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): A few quick comments on what has been said. Nigel, the system in its current form relies on dioceses providing us with figures. Whether that is the best system is a very good question. At the beginning of each new Synod, it is the practice of the Business Committee to establish an Elections Review Group to review all matters arising from the most recent Synod elections and to make recommendations for improvements to the system. I think this is certainly a matter that the Business Committee could ask a new Elections Review Group to include as part of that work.

To Philip, first of all, thank you, yes, it has been an interesting Synod to cut my teeth on and I am sure the Clerk to the Synod will follow that up with the Diocese of Lincoln. Also, the rules do require staff to apply the figures provided by the dioceses and, as a matter of practice, the figures of some dioceses were queried and diocesan secretaries confirmed that the figures were correct. To Adrian, yes, and I think that is a role for the next Synod probably as part of the Elections Review Group. I think to David Lamming, yes, it is the Elections Review Group that would want to look at that as well. Thank you for those points that the Business Committee and the next Elections Review Group will certainly want to have a good look at.

The Chair: I am now going to put Item 9 to the vote using the Crystal Interactive platform.

The motion was put and carried, 256 voting in favour, one against, with four recorded abstentions.

The Chair: Item 9 is, therefore, carried. This item is now ended and we move directly on to Item 11, which is the farewells.

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 4.55 pm.

ITEM 11

FAREWELLS

The Chair: Synod, we move to Item 11 which is the farewells. First of all, I am going to invite William Nye to deliver thanks to the Revd Canon Sue Booy, the former Chair of the Business Committee.

Mr William Nye (Secretary General): Thank you, Chairman. Members of Synod, it is a pleasure and a privilege for me to offer some words of thanks to say farewell to Sue Booy as Chair of the Business Committee. I am speaking on behalf of all the staff of Synod, but I am confident that in this case I speak also on behalf of members as well. All of us in the community of Synod - presently virtual, but once and soon we hope in the future to be face to face - have benefited from working with Sue.

Her term as Chair has spanned a fascinating period for the Synod. Indeed, her term in office has been bookended by historic crises. She became Chair of the Business Committee in July 2013, a few months after the defeat of the original Women in the Episcopate Measure in November 2012. The passage of the new legislation required Synod to meet more frequently than at any time in its recent history and the Business Committee, led by Sue, was probably the hardest working Business Committee of recent times. Eight years later, Sue steps down having helped Synod adapt to the new world of virtual meetings during the pandemic.

Sue's calm leadership of the Business Committee, her warmth and even-handedness and human sympathy have ensured that the Committee has always stepped up to meet whatever challenges they might be facing. As well as ensuring that the Committee produced carefully crafted Synod agendas, Sue has worked diligently with support from staff on a modernisation programme to help make Synod run a little more efficiently, to update some of its policies, to move to the electronic distribution of papers, to introduce a new Synod app and to help us cope with Zoom.

Above all, she has always been the representative of and the voice of Synod members and also a source of encouragement and pastoral support for members and for staff alike. Sue remains with us for this group of sessions and also for the July Synod but

she is stepping down after July for the best of reasons: in order to spend more time with her new grandchild.

I know I speak for all the staff when I say that her collaborative and supportive style has made her a pleasure to work with. I would like to thank her for her outstanding contribution to the life of Synod. Thank you, Sue.

The Chair: I now invite the Archbishop of Canterbury to deliver a farewell for the Bishop of Bath & Wells, followed by a farewell for the Bishop of Salisbury.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Rt Revd & Most Hon Dr Justin Welby): Chair, point of order, can I do it the other way round or is that out of order?

The Chair: It is out of alphabetical order but I will give you permission, Archbishop.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Rt Revd & Most Hon Dr Justin Welby): It is in reverse alphabetical record.

The Chair: Very good.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Rt Revd & Most Hon Dr Justin Welby): Which, since my name begins with W, I feel strongly about. Well, thank you.

Really, these are two farewells, as all farewells, that I would prefer not to have given and I am going to do a third one completely out of order before even starting those two if the Chair does not stop me, which is completely out of order because he is not a member of the Synod.

But, very briefly, just to say thank you to John Rees who has retired this week on his 70th birthday this last week as Provincial Registrar. Apparently, we are not allowed to say thank you to him because he is not a member of Synod and so I will probably get into trouble, but he really has served us incredibly well over very, very many years - 22 I think. He has served a number of different Archbishops. He has endured the most terrible ill-health at one point and continued to work through it. He has picked up horrendous problems in the province and also right across the Anglican Communion.

From my first meeting with him when I first went into my office after the confirmation of election when he gave me a form, or a deed, and I said, "What's this?" He said, "It's the appointment of the new Bishop of Bermuda". So I said, "Do I appoint the Bishop of Bermuda?" To which he said, "Yes, you do indeed". I said, "Well, who is he?" He said, "Don't worry, it's all been done properly". So I started asking questions, and he said, "Just sign it". So I did, and he has been a very good bishop, but that was a novel

experience. John, I will not go on much longer, but to both of you thank you so very very much for all your work and we wish you a very happy and long retirement.

Returning briefly to the rules, Nick Holtam. Nick is retiring this July before the next meeting, wherever and however that will be, and so this will be his last meeting of General Synod before he moves on to Brighton and a new phase in his ministry and service. A bit of background. He had a curacy in London Diocese and then he went on to spend some time as a tutor at Lincoln Theological College before moving back to the Diocese of London where he served on the Isle of Dogs before his move to St Martin-in-the-Fields. From there, he became Bishop of Salisbury in 2011.

To go back to something that Bishop Pete Broadbent said earlier, could you have mavericks? Well, I would point at Nick and Helen. They have been mavericks, but they have been the kind of mavericks we really want, both of them. They have been forthright. They have been clear. They have been different. They have been challenging. They have not been remotely willing to let things go by just because everyone was nodding when they were half asleep and they have been passionate about the work that they have done. I do not know so much about Helen but Nick has done that right through his ministry.

He is never unwilling to say it as it is and he has had to face up to challenges as a result in many places where he has served as both priest and as bishop. In the Isle of Dogs, he had to face the challenge of the election of a BNP Councillor, Derek Beackon. On the Sunday after the election of Derek Beackon, Nick gave the congregation a sheet of paper at Christ Church on the Isle of Dogs and asked them to write down how they felt. The page was soon filled with words like “angry”, “tearful”, “ashamed”, “frightened” and “pissed off”. One elderly man, a member of the British Legion, left the Church in tears, and this is what he said, “I spent four years of my life fighting Nazis and now we have voted them in”. That is what he said to Nick.

This shows not only the way in which Nick recognised the need to stand up against such evil things, but also the caring and open way he wanted to ensure that all had a voice at such a difficult time. When I look back at how he has acted in the time I have known him, nearly ten years, he has consistently acted in that way. The public stand that Nick took as well as the pastoral care and attention he gave to all people in that case led to a recovery from that dark moment and they are examples of how he has lived out his ministry.

He went on to be Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields, that legendary church which had had a legendary history, and he oversaw a remarkable building project, £36 million of remarkable. Its transformation was extraordinary in many ways. It not only gave him a platform from which he could speak, but it gave a home and shelter to so many people

who were homeless and it restored the extraordinary reputation of St Martin's as a place that truly stood for the poor and the marginalised.

And so to Salisbury, and again to face crises, to speak out on issues, to lead the Church of England in its work on climate change and particularly to play a notable role at COP 21 in Paris, a pilgrimage to Paris and all kinds of other ways in which he spoke up for the Creation ecumenically and across the Church and across the world. He has led the way in speaking out and speaking up. The diocese has been well led and loved. He has had to deal with the only biological weapons attack to take place in this country. He has had to deal with a city and a diocese traumatised by that.

Nick and Helen, you will be much missed and we are sure that we will go on hearing your voices and you will go on ensuring that the voices of those who we forget but who are central in God's eyes are heard as well. He has also overseen the work of the ministry with the deaf and the disabled and has ensured that their voices have been audible to the Church even when the Church has been voluntarily deaf to them.

He has been a strong spokesperson in Parliament on environmental matters. As we prepare for COP 26 later this year, we will hear his voice at our shoulders calling the Church to be a partner, a prophet and a voice for the poor. The Church of England, Nick and Helen, is extraordinarily grateful to you, and I am as well. We look forward to your retirement being as effective as your ministry has been. Thank you to both of you.

Peter Hancock and Jane Hancock. Peter, there is a special sadness as we say farewell to you as Bishop of Bath & Wells. The last many months have been an extraordinarily challenging and difficult time as you have wrestled with extremes of illness and as you continue to do so together. Our prayers are with both of you most emphatically. It is very good that you have managed to be online to receive our affection and our prayers and I know the diocese is going to miss you dreadfully. Peter started his ordained life, not actually that far from where he is now, in Portsmouth Diocese and, after a brief trip to Salisbury, spent a long time in Portsmouth and served in various capacities - that is the Cathedral choir at the Palace.

He was most recently Archdeacon of the Meon. He became Bishop of Basingstoke before in 2014 becoming Bishop of Bath & Wells. I am told on the day you arrived in Wells, the removal people were still bringing in furniture and belongings and so tea and coffee were set up in the drawing room, along with a mixture of cakes so people could help themselves, and Juno, your golden retriever at the time, ran straight into the room and devoured a huge chocolate cake much to Jane's embarrassment. We too had Bramble at that time, who did exactly the same thing but he only ate the candles and simply trod on the cake.

You have lived in the most extraordinary place at Bath & Wells and you had to deal with the enormous challenges - there is Juno - that came when you arrived and the need to demonstrate the viability of that as a centre for the diocese, which you have done superbly. You have served God and the Church, I would not say just very well in your pastoral care and calm consideration, but with enormous courage.

You have had to put up with the providence that has led to your last year being one in which you have ministered through the example of illness, and so not in the way you would have hoped. But you have ministered with that example superbly and so has Jane and the love that has been demonstrated for you in the diocese and way beyond shows the way that your ministry has been appreciated.

The other great burden you have borne for your time in your Church has been that of safeguarding. I hardly know how to thank you for that. Earlier today, we heard from someone saying when the Archbishop of Canterbury sidles up to you - who was it who said that? Aiden - always say no. You hesitated too long and ended up doing safeguarding for the Church of England.

You oversaw the move from the extraordinary difficulties that Paul Butler had to face, and he himself had faced with such courage and determination and challenge to the Church, and you took them through the next stage through IICSA. We are so grateful for your work on that. I cannot begin to express our gratitude.

The thing that I remember about that is not just your energy and commitment, but what I remember most of all is your deep pastoral care for victims and survivors and your heartfelt love for them. You had to bring in procedures, guidance notes and legislation, but what you had to do most was continually remind us of the voice of survivors and how you did that so beautifully we cannot begin to describe.

I do not want to go on any more than that except to say that was not only in the diocese but up and down the length of the country. It was a heavy burden and we bless you for bearing it. At the same time, you gave attention and energy to the life of the diocese and built up the team around you. Your senior colleagues treasured your collegial style of leadership. Thank you for that.

I pray that you and Jane will continue on the path to healing and that you will continue in confidence in the God whom you have served and in the love that you receive from those around you, not least your wonderful family. Thank you, Peter, from me, an indescribable thank you, and from the Church of England thank you for all you have been and all you have given.

The Chair: Thank you, Archbishop. For Sue, John, Nick and Peter, Synod, we are invited to raise a thumb or use the “clap” icon to show our appreciation to all four of them. Thank you, members of Synod. That concludes that item of business.

ITEM 12

PROROGATION

The Chair: We now move to Item 12, the prorogation of this group of sessions.

The Archbishop of Canterbury prorogued the Synod.

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