

GENERAL SYNOD
FEBRUARY 2022 GROUP OF SESSIONS
BUSINESS DONE AT 12.30 P.M.
ON WEDNESDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2022

HOLY COMMUNION

The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY presided at a celebration of Holy Communion.

VARIATION IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

Under Standing Order 9(1)(a), the order of business for the sitting on Tuesday 9 February was varied by the Chair with the general consent of the Synod so that Item 500A would be taken not later than 12 p.m and if not completed by the end of the morning sitting, resumed as the first item of business at the afternoon sitting.

SAFEGUARDING (GS 2244)

9 A presentation was given under Standing Order 107.

22 The motion

‘That this Synod expresses its disapproval of the Safeguarding report GS2244 for the following reasons:

- a. The report persists in referring to “Vulnerable” persons – a terminology which has been deemed to be derogatory and restrictive to the understanding of its applicability – which was replaced by the term “Adults At Risk of Abuse or Neglect” under the Care Act 2014 in recognition of the dynamic nature of the Risk of Abuse in relation to individuals.
- b. The report makes no reference to the creation of Key Performance Indicators for the operation of the National Safeguarding Team (NST) in order to address the very many real and valid concerns that have been raised about its focus, effectiveness and method of operating. For a Team comprising 26.5 FTE’s which includes consultants, the absence of such Key Performance Indicators represents a substantial weakness in the management of a resource which represents a considerable ongoing financial commitment.
- c. It does not provide any detail which would enable the Synod to form a view about the NST’s effectiveness in making the Church of England a safe place for its entire worshipping community and for those who work for it in a remunerated or voluntary basis.
- d. The report shows a praiseworthy focus on sexual and spiritual abuse, but it makes no mention of bullying in the Church which is widely acknowledged to be a serious issue within churches, nor does it propose how and how bullying can be addressed.

- e. It demonstrates a piece-meal approach to safeguarding development by the NST rather than the wholesale reform that is needed.
- f. The report does not address the concerns raised in paragraph 8(f) of the first report of the Independent Safeguarding Board, which is attached as an appendix to GS 2244 – concerns that have been raised both privately and publicly with and about the NST by many people over recent years.
- g. Given that the ISB report states in its paragraph 6 that “It [The Board] does not have powers to sanction, direct, regulate, inspect or insist” there is no provision within the safeguarding arrangements for any independent external scrutiny with powers to intervene in cases where negligence, misconduct or performance failures are alleged or identified; nor does it indicate how the NST and the national safeguarding functions of the Church of England can intervene in cases where bishops and dioceses are not following good safeguarding practice or following the codes of practice or guidance.

This Synod therefore calls for a full independent assessment of the work and performance reporting of the NST and the myriad national safeguarding bodies of the Church of England; for this evaluation to be published in full; and for a debate on its contents at a future Group of Sessions to enable the Synod to be fully engaged in the decisions about the future direction and shape of the Church of England’s safeguarding work.’

was moved.

The motion

‘That the Synod do pass to the Next Business.’

was carried following a counted vote of the whole Synod. The voting was as follows:

IN FAVOUR	236
AGAINST	75

22 abstentions were recorded.

SPECIAL AGENDA I:

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

FACULTY JURISDICTION (AMENDMENT) RULES 2022 (GS 2245)

Rules under section 83 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018 for approval

500A The motion

‘That the Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2022 be considered.’

was moved.

The Chair adjourned the sitting at 12.30 p.m.