

General Synod

Changes to the Membership of the Crown Nominations Commission for the See of Canterbury

Summary

1. In February 2022, Synod members took part in the consultation on changes to the membership of the Crown Nominations Commission for the See of Canterbury through a take note debate on the [consultation document](#). Synod members also were also able to send individual responses to the consultation, and a number of members sent those privately to the consultation email address. The consultation was launched on 14th January 2022 and ended on 31st March 2022. The Archbishops' Council, having analysed and digested the consultation responses, now brings final proposals for changes to the Standing Orders to the Synod.
2. In this group of sessions, Synod will debate the drafting amendments to Standing Orders (which will be detailed in a notice paper on the 60th Report of the Standing Orders Committee) which would implement the final proposals. Following discussions with the Standing Orders and Business Committees, there will first be debates on a series of proposals which underpin the proposed Standing Orders changes. It is hoped that this will provide members with a more readily accessible approach to exploring the detail of each proposed change, and for members of Synod to engage with the various elements of the final proposal before entering into debate and voting on technical legislative business. For those who were members of Synod in the last quinquennium, this is much like the process for the Implementation of 'Responsible Representation: A Review of the Electoral Processes to the Crown Nominations Commission' (GS 2022) in July 2021.
3. The series of proposals to be debated and presented in this paper are as follows:
That the necessary amendments be moved to the Standing Orders to:
 - a. reduce from six to three the number of members elected by the Diocese of Canterbury to the CNC for consideration of a vacancy in the See of Canterbury;
 - b. increase from one to five the number of representatives of other churches of the Anglican Communion who are members of the CNC for consideration of a vacancy in the See of Canterbury;
 - c. provide that one such representative is to be chosen by the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates Meeting of the Anglican Communion and the Anglican Consultative Council from each of the five regions of the Anglican Communion (the Europe region to include the provinces of the British Isles other than England);
 - d. provide that of those so chosen, at least one must be a primate, one a deacon or priest and one a lay person who is an actual communicant; and,
 - e. provide for vacancies in the See of Dover to be considered by the CNC as if it were a diocesan see.

Overview of the Paper

4. This paper is formed of the following sections:
 - a. Introduction;
 - b. Background;
 - c. A note on the current Canterbury CNC;
 - d. Final proposals;
 - e. Consultation analysis;
 - f. Analysis of the principal issues;
 - g. Individual elements of the final proposals from the Archbishops' Council;
and,
 - h. Conclusion.

William Nye
Secretary General, Archbishops' Council
June 2022

General Synod

Changes to the Membership of the Crown Nominations Commission for the See of Canterbury

Introduction

5. At the heart of these proposals on changes to the membership of the Crown Nominations Commission for the See of Canterbury is the desire to give an increased voice to the Anglican Communion as we seek to discern who God is calling to be any future Archbishop of Canterbury (ABC). The ABC is Primate of All England, Metropolitan of the Province of Canterbury, Diocesan Bishop of Canterbury, and an Instrument of Communion and the Focus for Unity for the other Instruments of Communion.

6. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the senior bishop in the Church of England, and is also first among equals (*primus inter pares*) among the Bishops and Primates of the 41 Provinces of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Like all bishops in the Church of England, which has a close historic link with the State, the Archbishop is formally appointed by Her Majesty the Queen, on the advice of the Prime Minister in the UK Government. In turn, in the case of diocesan bishops, the Prime Minister is advised by a body called the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC), which recommends candidates to the Prime Minister following a period of discernment. The CNC for Canterbury is based on the normal structure of a CNC for a diocesan bishop in the Church of England, but with some small differences. The legal provisions for CNCs are set out in the [Standing Orders](#) of the General Synod of the Church of England. This is because the CNC is a body of the General Synod tasked *to consider any vacancy in a diocesan bishopric and candidates for appointment to fill the vacancy*.

Background

7. In 2015 the Canterbury Diocesan Synod invited the Archbishops' Council to put forward proposals to change the composition of the CNC for the See of Canterbury; and to extend the role of the CNC to include nominations to the See of Dover. The context for this motion was reflection in the Diocese of Canterbury about the need to rebalance the composition of the Crown Nominations Commission to give more weight to a very significant part of the Archbishop of Canterbury's job which concerns his leadership of the Anglican Communion.

8. The Archbishops' Council addressed this issue in September 2018 following the conclusion of Professor Oliver O'Donovan's theological review into the workings of the Crown Nominations Commission. The Council discussed the issues raised and proposed that further consideration of this matter should be undertaken before being brought back to a future meeting. It was suggested that this should be brought back after the Lambeth Conference scheduled for 2020. But the Conference was postponed until 2022. With the encouragement of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, the Archbishops' Council considered this again in September 2021 and drew up a proposal on which to consult a

number of key partners.

9. A consultation began in January 2022 and ended on 31st March 2022. The proposals in the consultation were as follows:
 - a. A decrease in Diocese of Canterbury representatives from six to three;
 - b. An increase in Anglican Communion representatives from one to five;
 - c. That the Anglican Communion representatives should be based on the Anglican Communion regions other than the four provinces of the British Isles; and,
 - d. That the Anglican Communion representatives should be a mixture of Primates, clergy and laity.
10. The Archbishops' Council analysed and discussed the consultation responses in May and agreed to bring forward a set of amended proposals to the Synod for consideration. There is more detail on the consultation analysis in a later section.

A Note on the Current Canterbury CNC

11. [Standing Orders 136 – 141](#) of the General Synod outline the functions and membership of the CNC and include specific rules around archiepiscopal vacancies. It is worth setting out here the current membership of the Canterbury CNC.
12. The current composition of the Canterbury CNC is:
 - a. six central members elected by the General Synod (as usual for a diocesan see);
 - b. six Canterbury members (elected by and from its Vacancy in See Committee – as usual for other dioceses);
 - c. two bishops (including the Archbishop of York if he or she is not a candidate for the see and wishes to be a member);
 - d. one person appointed by the Prime Minister to chair the Commission (who must be an actual communicant lay member of the Church of England); and,
 - e. one member representing the Anglican Communion, drawn from the Primates Meeting of the Communion (elected by the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council).
13. Position (d) is specific to the CNCs for the See of Canterbury and the See of York; (e) only applies to the Canterbury CNC. The other fourteen members (a-c) are (allowing for the special role of the Archbishop of York) essentially the same as in CNCs for other sees.
14. There are also three non-voting members. The Prime Minister's and Archbishops' Secretaries for Appointments attend as usual. For Canterbury the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion also joins the CNC but does not vote.
15. Thus, the voting membership of the CNC for Canterbury comprises:
 - f. **nine** representatives of the national interests of the Church of England;

- g. **six** representatives of the Diocese of Canterbury; and,
- h. **one** representative for the Anglican Communion.
(In 2012 the representative for the Anglican Communion was the Primate of Wales, Archbishop Barry Morgan.)

16. This is a total of 16 voting members.

Final Proposals

17. The Archbishops' Council took on board the various comments from the consultation feedback and therefore agreed the following proposals which will form the basis of the Synod motions:

18. That the necessary amendments be moved to the Standing Orders to:
- a. reduce from six to three the number of members elected by the Diocese of Canterbury to the CNC for consideration of a vacancy in the See of Canterbury;
 - b. increase from one to five the number of representatives of other churches of the Anglican Communion who are members of the CNC for consideration of a vacancy in the See of Canterbury;
 - c. provide that one such representative is to be chosen by the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates Meeting of the Anglican Communion and the Anglican Consultative Council from each of the five regions of the Anglican Communion (**the Europe region to include the provinces of the British Isles other than England**);
 - d. provide that of those so chosen, at least one must be a primate, one a deacon or priest and one a lay person who is an actual communicant; and,
 - e. **provide for vacancies in the See of Dover to be considered by the CNC as if it were a diocesan see.**

19. Members will note that there are two significant changes to the original proposals (in bold for reference). First, that the regional representation of the Anglican Communion should include the provinces of the British Isles other than England in the Europe region. Secondly, that a change to the Standing Orders should be made so that the See of Dover would be considered by the CNC as if it were a diocesan see. Both of these changes featured highly in the consultation feedback and the Archbishops' Council agreed that these would strengthen the final proposals.

Consultation Analysis

20. The consultation received a relatively small number of responses (85 in total), so not too much can be read into statistical analysis of the responses. They came mainly from individuals and some groups. However, there were significant responses from some of the key partners outlined in the consultation document. This included the Diocese of Canterbury and the Anglican Communion, as well as some bodies of the Church of England. Just under half of the responses were from General Synod members. Also included in the analysis for the Council were

the speeches and voting numbers from the take note debate at the February 2022 Synod.

21. The Archbishops' Council has brought these final proposals, which have been amended following the consultation responses, to General Synod because the consultation received agreement in the majority on each of the proposals set out. The Archbishops' Council made changes to the proposals as outlined in paragraph 15 above because of the indication from other responses that they too would agree with the proposals if these changes were made; that is that the Europe regional representative could include the other three provinces of the British Isles and the See of Dover was considered by a CNC.
22. It is worth noting that the most positive response to the consultation elements was around the decrease in diocesan representatives on the CNC. Most considered this a matter for Canterbury Diocese and that, since it was the Diocese which originally requested this, it should simply be implemented.
23. Of the key partners asked to consider the proposals, there was overwhelming support and agreement from official representatives of the Anglican Communion and the Diocese of Canterbury. In the Anglican Communion there were formal response from the Primates Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council Standing Committee (ACC), as well as the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order. In the Diocese of Canterbury, there were formal responses from the Diocesan Synod as well as the Archbishop's Council for Canterbury Diocese. (Members should note the difference between the 'Archbishops' Council', which is a national body, and the Canterbury 'Archbishop's Council', which is the same as the Bishop's Council in other dioceses.)
24. The Primates' Meeting voted in favour of the proposals with an overwhelming majority and the ACC Standing Committee also voted in the majority. The only concern raised by representatives of the Anglican Communion was about the lack of inclusion of the other three provinces of the British Isles in the Europe region.
25. The Diocesan Synod in Canterbury voted with an overwhelming majority in favour of a decrease in the number of diocesan representatives, adding the comment, *'it was our original proposal'*; there were 64 people in favour with no votes against and 4 people undecided. It also voted in favour of the increase of Anglican Communion representatives on the Canterbury CNC, with very few votes against the proposal, therefore confirming the original intention of their request to the Archbishops' Council in 2015; there were 58 votes for this proposal with 4 against and 8 undecided. The Archbishop's Council (Canterbury Diocese) also agreed with the Diocesan Synod Motion and further unanimously passed the motion: *"In the light of the Canterbury Diocesan Synod Motion of Nov 2015 we would like to bring forward the changes needed to the General Synod's Standing Orders to*

enable any vacancy in the See of Dover to be treated as a Diocesan See vacancy.”

26. The Archbishops’ Council is aware that, for some, there has been hesitation to commit one way or another to agreement on these proposed changes pending the response from Anglican Communion partners and the Diocese of Canterbury. As can be seen from the responses, these changes would be met with enthusiasm and gratitude from the official representatives of Anglican Communion and from the Diocese of Canterbury.
27. Members will recall the take note debate in February 2022 on the consultation document. The Synod heard 12 speeches during the debate. 7 members encouraged the Synod to ‘take note’ and 3 encouraged the Synod not to take note, while 1 declared an abstention and another did not indicate a voting preference. However, the figures do not tell the whole story as a number of speeches, whether or not they encouraged the Synod to vote for or against taking note, did not explicitly agree with the proposals and therefore the numbers do not simply indicate support for the proposals.
28. The Synod did vote to ‘take note’ with a majority as below.

	IN FAVOUR	AGAINST
BISHOPS	26	0
CLERGY	102	27
LAITY	112	43

29. The Council does not assume that these voting numbers would mean that the Synod would vote in favour of the final proposals but it does indicate that the Synod was happy to continue the conversation around these proposals, to hear from key partners and to consider further the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Diocese of Canterbury, the Church of England and in the Anglican Communion.

Analysis of the principal issues

30. The reason the Council is bringing these changes forward is because the Diocese of Canterbury requested in 2015 (before the appointment of the current Bishop of Dover) that the Council look into decreasing the diocesan representation and allow the See of Dover to be considered by a CNC. The Diocese also suggested that these changes would allow for more representation for the Anglican Communion in the discernment of future Archbishops of Canterbury. But we know that making these changes has practical, political, and theological considerations.
31. We know that the Archbishop of Canterbury has many roles in the Church of England and in the Anglican Communion. It is worth recalling that the role profile

drawn up by the Canterbury CNC in 2012 suggested that 20% of the job would relate to Anglican Communion responsibilities. Archbishop Justin considers this to be an underestimate and suggests that 25% may be more accurate, plus time for pastoral care and support. He also suggests that only about 5% of his time is spent on diocesan work.

32. It is worth also reflecting on the role of the Archbishop of York. The role specification for the Archbishop of York (ABY), as Primate of England, includes responsibility for sharing with the Archbishop of Canterbury in leadership and oversight, and for bringing life to the ongoing renewal and reform of the Church of England. An increased importance was placed on this at the last appointment of the ABY within the role specification given the Archbishop of Canterbury's increasing responsibility in the Anglican Communion. In practice, this can be seen in the ABY's lead role in the new Vision and Strategy for the Church of England and in other ways in which Archbishop Justin and Stephen share this national ministry.
33. It is also important to recognise that many of the national church responsibilities of the Archbishop of Canterbury are also closely bound in with Communion responsibilities, as is his public voice. Current issues of global concern, for example, the environmental crisis, migration, health-related matters such as HIV or Covid, call for a Communion-wide response and engagement. Even more so, emergency responses to persecution and the murder of Anglicans in countries in turmoil, close links to the FCDO on areas like the Eastern DRC, and responses to natural disasters and to the sufferings of Bishops in places without medical or logistical support are all routine matters of daily involvement. This is demanding in terms of time, energy and resources. The Communion-wide role of the Archbishop can help facilitate learning from churches whose life is vibrant and growing and renders the Church of England more aware of its Catholicity.
34. There is thus a close link between the Archbishop's Communion role, his role in the national life of the United Kingdom, and his ability to speak on matters of public interest both nationally and globally. This link both strengthens the role of the worldwide Communion, and also its significance for the Church of England. These considerations alone suggest that the balance of representatives on the CNC does not reflect the current nature of the role.
35. See for example "[*Towards a Symphony of Instruments*](#)", a working paper prepared by the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order, particularly section 3 from which the following quotation is taken:

It is clear from the history of the century and a half that has passed since the first Lambeth Conference, and from the formal statements that the Anglican Communion has produced since then, that the Archbishop of Canterbury has had and continues to have a pivotal role with regard to the identity, unity, and coherence of the Anglican Communion—all matters that are currently of great importance and urgency for Anglicans. It puts the archbishop's Communion role in perspective when we call to mind that the archbishop is prayed for in

Anglican celebrations of the liturgy around the world. (p56)

36. Changing the composition of the CNC recognises the importance of the Communion in the ABC's complex set of roles and seeks to work with them as partners by listening more carefully and inviting them into the discernment process. As already noted, the principle that there is a place for the Anglican Communion voice on the CNC is already established. These changes allow for a bigger representation and a more diverse set of voices from the Communion.
37. Some responses to the consultation suggested that the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury should be reviewed first before any changes are made. Others questioned whether there was certainty that the Communion wants the ABC to maintain the current roles and wondered if the Church of England was merely assuming it knew what the Communion valued. These are important questions which merit careful attention and which may well evolve over the next few decades. For now, though, we note:
- a. First, a conversation or review of the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury happens regularly at each vacancy, just as other diocesan sees are reviewed, and a role description put together. Changes made to the membership of the CNC do not prevent this from taking place.
 - b. Secondly, as the consultation response from the official representatives of the Anglican Communion shows, the role of the ABC is still very much valued and seen as integral to the flourishing of the Anglican Church around the world. To quote further from "[*Towards a Symphony of Instruments*](#)", '[The role of *primus inter pares*]...is a ministry that is not hierarchical and unaccountable, but constitutional and accessible and that knows its limits, but also one that is aware of its potential for good in terms of the unity and mission of the Church of Jesus Christ.' (p59)
 - c. Thirdly, we note that it is not for one member of the Communion (in our case the Church of England) to review unilaterally, the role of the *primus inter pares*. If such a review were to take place it would rightly belong to the whole Communion.
38. The Church is called to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic. The call to be one is perhaps one of the most difficult calls the Church faces. We are called to embody the radical breaking down of barriers that Jesus modelled in his ministry; in our time noting particularly barriers of race, culture, prejudice, and other aspects of human identity. The call to be one is a call to treat every human being as made in the image of God, and to do so through our structures as well as relationships. Present arrangements on the CNC for Canterbury do not encourage such unity. This proposed change is offered as an opportunity for unity and increased openness to our sisters and brothers in the Communion and in the Church of God.
39. It is important, however, to be realistic about what this step involves. As noted in the consultation document, some will see an increased number of Anglican

Communion representatives as a useful step, others will not view it as radical enough. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the See of Canterbury is (primarily) a part of the Church of England which has worked hard in developing, with the State and the Crown, this process for all CNCs. A form of the CNC process is required to meet the needs of the Church of England and of the State, and future appointments must be consistent with the law of the land.

40. More analysis can be found in the [consultation document](#) brought to the February Synod.

Individual Elements of the Final Proposals

41. Let us now look at the individual elements of the proposals, the changes made and what they would mean.

A decrease in Diocese of Canterbury representatives from six to three

42. It is now well documented that this proposal comes from a request from the Diocese of Canterbury. The Archbishops' Council understands that behind this request is the recognition from the Diocese that six diocesan members is disproportionate given the weight of time the Archbishop spends on diocesan matters. This request goes hand in hand with the request for a CNC process for the See of Dover. More on this below.

43. This change would set the Canterbury CNC apart from other diocesan see CNCs. However, if changed in conjunction with the further proposals below, it would recognise the difference between the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury and other diocesan bishops, and ultimately be more representative of the areas of ministry of the ABC.

An increase in Anglican Communion representatives from one to five

44. The decrease in diocesan representatives makes way for increased representation from the Anglican Communion. But, as members will note, the idea is not simply to remove three representatives from the Diocese and give them to the Anglican Communion, but to do this AND add an extra representative for the Anglican Communion, to total five. This increases the total number of CNC members for the See of Canterbury to 17 (where as it is 16 for other diocesan sees). This is proposed to allow for a diverse group of Anglican Communion representatives.

That the Anglican Communion representatives should come one from each of the five regions of the Anglican Communion (the Europe region to include the provinces of the British Isles other than England)

45. There are five established regions of the Anglican Communion: Americas; Middle East and Asia; Africa; Oceania; and Europe. Increasing the Anglican Communion representatives to five allows for there to be one representative from each of these regions. This gives a geographical spread of representatives and makes for a more diverse CNC. Of course, a CNC of 17 members will never achieve

diversity in all areas but proposals such as this, and below, do offer an opportunity for some further diversity and voices from different provinces.

46. As previously noted, the original proposal suggested that the other three provinces of the British Isles would not be included. Given the strength of feeling from the consultation and having given it more detailed thought, the Council agreed that this was an oversight and that the Europe region should include the provinces of the British Isles other than England.

That the Anglican Communion representatives should be a mixture of Primates, clergy and laity

47. Once more, this proposal aims to add another layer of diversity into the CNC. The current Canterbury CNC includes one Anglican Communion representative who is a Primate. The Council feels strongly that, as with CNCs in other dioceses and with other bodies and committees of the Church of England, a mixture of Primates, clergy and laity is important to provide breadth of opinion. There were a number of responses to the consultation which asked for the representatives to have the knowledge and expertise to represent the Communion in this area. This is not mutually exclusive with a mixture of representatives from different orders.

Provide for vacancies in the See of Dover to be considered by the CNC as if it were a diocesan see

48. As stated, this change, though not pivotal to the changes to the Canterbury CNC membership, is proposed here because it was requested by the Diocese of Canterbury in 2015 alongside the request to decrease its representatives on the Canterbury CNC. It acknowledges that the role of the Bishop of Dover is more akin to a diocesan bishop and requires the Diocese formally to use the CNC discernment process. In 2019, the Archbishop of Canterbury provided a CNC-style process for the vacancy in the See of Dover from which Rose Hudson-Wilkin was nominated Bishop of Dover. The Diocese, and the Archbishop, having used this style of process, agree that a formal CNC is key in discerning any future Bishop of Dover. The Archbishops' Council accepts that this goes hand in hand with the proposed change in the diocesan representation in the Canterbury CNC and advises that this change is made.

Conclusion

49. At the heart of these proposals is a desire to give an increased voice to the Anglican Communion as we discern who God is calling to be Archbishop of Canterbury. That person is called to be Primate of All England, Metropolitan of the Province of Canterbury, the Diocesan Bishop of Canterbury, and also to be an Instrument of Communion and the Focus for Unity for the other Instruments of Communion.
50. The changes proposed are based on an already agreed principle: that the Church of England and the Anglican Communion are connected in relation to this role,

and that the Anglican Communion has an important voice in the discernment of future Archbishops, given their role of first among equals (*primus inter pares*) of the Anglican Communion. What is proposed here does not fundamentally change the approach to discerning the calling of future Archbishops of Canterbury. Rather it builds on the principle of connection, already established in the Standing Orders, offering a greater role to our brothers and sisters in the Communion, while keeping to the structure of CNCs which the Church of England has developed.

51. Making these changes will not end any conversation on the Communion role of the Archbishop of Canterbury, either now or when any future vacancy arises. Though there may be variation from year to year in the amount of time that any incumbent of the role of Archbishop of Canterbury gives to the Communion, it is not for the Church of England to instruct the Communion on its polity. It is for the Communion, not for one province alone, to determine how the Archbishop of Canterbury's role fits into its structures.
52. Whatever may change in the future, it is clear that at this time the vast majority of the Communion welcomes the Archbishop of Canterbury as the president of the Lambeth Conference, the Primates' Meeting, and the Anglican Consultative Council. This is a gift which the Church of England can offer the Communion, for as long as the Communion finds it of value. It helps bond the Church of England and the Anglican Communion together, for the benefit for all parts of the Communion. It is right that we should reflect that in discerning who is called to be Archbishop. These proposals from the Archbishop's Council are intended to do just that – not as a final word, but as a small but important contribution to oneness with our sisters and brothers across the Anglican Church worldwide.

William Nye
Secretary General, Archbishops' Council
June 2022