

Update from Elections Review Group

Introduction

1. The Elections Review Group was constituted over the summer of 2022 and it has met three times so far, on 19th October, 17th November and 12th January.
2. It is a sub-committee of the Business Committee and it reports regularly back to the BC.
3. The terms of reference and membership can be found in Annex One for ease of reference.

Detail

4. The first task of the Group was to set out its initial work plan. Its primary focus is to review the conduct of the General Synod Elections in 2021, and it is hoped that the Business Committee will be able to report its findings to the July 2023 group of sessions.
5. To support this work, the Group sought feedback from members, registrars and diocesan secretaries. The findings were shared with Civica Election Services who delivered the 2021 elections. The Group was able to meet with Civica to discuss the feedback in detail and to consider potential amendments to processes for 2026.
6. This led to some helpful suggestions about improvements that can be made to all aspects of the election process, these included:
 - A national timetable for all dioceses to follow
 - One central contract with Civica Elections Services
 - More videos and how to guides for using the system
 - Review of the Rules so they are written from an online perspective rather than paper
 - All results to be available on the Church of England website
 - Dioceses to keep the election statements of elected candidates on their websites
7. Further work will be done on the process, including ongoing engagement with Civica. The outcomes will be shared with the Business Committee in due course.
8. Alongside this primary focus, the Group will also consider other issues related to elections and the Church Representation Rules. This includes:
 - Consideration of M28(2) and reserved business
 - Consideration of the electoral roll and PCC Membership issues relating to Chaplaincies within Diocese in Europe
 - Review of the elections to the Crown Nominations Commission
 - Review of qualifications for Electoral Roll and PCC membership
 - Issues relating to disqualification from serving on PCCs
9. The ERG has already begun consideration of issues relating to eligibility for elections at APCMs. This builds on the debate at the July 2022 group of sessions during the Canterbury DSM ([GS 2254A](#) and [GS 2254B](#)). The issues being discussed relate to whether a close relative should be prevented from nominating a candidate for certain elections by parishioners and whether to have a mechanism in Church elections for “reopening of nominations” where the election is not contested and voters are not content with the candidate(s).
10. It is hoped that the outcomes of these discussions will be included in the report to the July 2023 group of sessions.

Clive Scowen, Chair
January 2023

Elections Review Group

Terms of Reference

Functions

1. The Elections Review Group is a sub-committee of the General Synod Business Committee which has responsibility, to:
 - a) Review the process for the 2021 General Synod elections, including engagement with stakeholders such as dioceses and Synod members and Civica
 - b) Put forward proposals for amendments to the election rules for the next General Synod elections
 - c) Act as steering committee for amendments to the Church Representation Rules, and other rules pertaining to the election of members of the General Synod
 - d) Advise the Business Committee on any other changes related to elections.
 - e) Produce a report to the Business Committee for consideration by General Synod.
 - f) Consider submissions made by former synod member Michael Stallybrass and bring forward such proposals as it considers appropriate to amend the Church Representation Rules relating to proceedings of parochial church councils
 - g) Undertake such other tasks as Business Committee may from time to time assign to it.

Membership

2. The Elections Review Group will be constituted as follows:
 - a) Three members of the Business Committee appointed by that committee, one of whom shall be appointed by the committee as Chair
 - b) Three other members of General Synod appointed by the Appointments Committee
 - c) One representative from Diocesan Secretaries appointed by the Appointments Committee
 - d) One external member with experience of elections appointed by the Appointments Committee

Members will be appointed for the term of the quinquennium. Additional members may be co-opted by the Group with the consent of the Business Committee.

3. Business and procedure

- a) The Group shall report to each meeting of the Business Committee and provide regular updates to General Synod.
- b) The Group may meet in person or remotely.
- c) The Group shall have power to regulate its own business and procedure.
- d) All decisions shall be made by a majority of members present and voting shall be by show of hands.

ELECTIONS REVIEW GROUP

List of members

From the Business Committee:

- Mr Clive Scowen, Chair (London)
- Fr Paul Cartwright (Leeds)
- Mr Nic Tall (Bath & Wells)

Appointed by the Appointments Committee:

- Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)
- Ms Catherine Stephenson (Leeds)
- Mr Peter Warry, Diocesan Secretary (York)