

# GENERAL SYNOD

February 2023

## QUESTIONS

of which notice has been given under Standing Orders 112–116.

The Business Committee has scheduled two hours for Questions at the February 2023 Group of Sessions of the General Synod. This is divided between 80 minutes on Monday 6 February and 40 minutes on Tuesday 7 February. Notice has been given of 206 questions, of which just under one third or 64 are questions of the House of Bishops relating to Living in Love and Faith and ancillary matters. The Business Committee has determined that the two questions sessions will take the following format. There are two Questions Notice Papers. This first Notice Paper contains all questions other than those relating to the Living in Love and Faith process. The second Notice Paper contains all questions to the House of Bishops on Living in Love and Faith. The first session for questions will begin at the start of the first Notice Paper and will continue until the time provided for in the agenda comes to an end. The second session will then begin at the start of the second Notice Paper and will continue until the time provided for in the agenda comes to an end.

The order in which questions are answered follows convention. The three bodies or individuals of whom questions were asked and who appeared at the bottom of the Notice Paper at the previous occasion questions were asked are taken first in this group of sessions. The remaining bodies and individuals follow in the same order as previously.

The previous occasion questions were asked was November 2022. This means questions to the Secretary General, the Clerk to the Synod and National Society Council will be taken first at this group of sessions.

### Notes for members on Supplementary Questions

*These notes have been included at the request of the Business Committee. They are intended to assist members by explaining the requirements of the Standing Orders relating to supplementary questions. The relevant Standing Orders are SO 113 and 115 and are available [here](#).*

1. A member may ask only one supplementary question in respect of each original question contained in this Notice Paper.
2. Unless the Chair specifically allows more, two is the maximum number of supplementary questions that may be asked in respect of each original question.
3. The member who asked the original question has priority in asking the first supplementary question if he or she wishes to ask one.
4. A supplementary question must be strictly relevant to the original question or the answer that has been given to that question. A supplementary question about a different matter is therefore out of order.
5. A supplementary question must not contain “argument or imputation”. A question will be taken to include argument if it clearly seeks to advance a particular case by the way in which the question is expressed. A question will be taken to include imputation if it expressly or impliedly includes an accusation of wrongdoing or other reprehensible behaviour.

6. A supplementary question must not ask for an expression of opinion, including on a question of law, or for the solution of a hypothetical problem. In other words, a question must be about, and be capable of being answered by reference to, factual matters.
7. The Chair is obliged to rule a question out of order if it does not comply with the requirements of SOs 113 and 115. Where that happens, given the number of questions to be answered, the Chair is unlikely to have time to give other than a very brief reason why a member's question is out of order. Under SO 15(2), the Chair's determination of a question of order, business or procedure is not open to debate or question.

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## SECRETARY GENERAL

### The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS) to ask the Secretary General:

**Q1** Thank you for your answer to my Q167 at the July 2022 Synod concerning the current ratio of women to men in senior roles in the NCIs, following a round of redundancies: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/QUESTIONS%20Notice%20Paper%20July%202022.pdf>

Would you please tell Synod the ratio of women to men on the Senior Management Group of the Archbishops' Council, as well as the ratio of lay to ordained and whether they are men or women?

*Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:*

**A** Of the 14 senior leaders who attend the Archbishops' Council Senior Management Group (SMG), three (21.4%) are female. Seven (50%) are ordained, all of whom are male.

### Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford) to ask the Secretary General:

**Q2** How many NDAs, compromise agreements including non-derogatory clauses, or similar contractual agreements that prevent people disclosing potential staff/management issues have been signed by people leaving the NCIs within the last 12 months?

*Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:*

**A** In 2022 there were 13 mutually agreed settlement agreements – the current term for what were called compromise agreements. The NCIs do not routinely use restrictive NDAs for employees. It follows, therefore, that there were none in 2022. All staff leaving under a settlement agreement are encouraged to have an exit interview to enable concerns to be raised.

**The Ven Fiona Gibson (Hereford) to ask the Secretary General:**

**Q3** The introduction of the Pathways system offers much to recruiters and applicants to posts, but it is inflexible and extremely difficult to navigate for all users. Now that it is well established, could feedback be sought from a range of users, and the system reviewed and adapted in the light of that feedback, in order to make for an even more useful and supportive resource for the church?

*Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:*

**A** The Pathways system now sits within the Data Services team. This team supports a number of systems that are used across the church. Last year a new Pathways Product Owner was employed on one-day-a-week secondment from a diocese. This role is specifically to gain feedback and steer developments to improve Pathways and to bring a stronger customer service approach to support. Engagement with a wide variety of users has begun. This has resulted in several minor developments and a new significant reporting development to have been developed and we have begun to roll these out. We would encourage and welcome anyone with ideas to contact the Director of Data Services who can signpost you to our steering and user groups – [fraser.mcnish@churchofengland.org](mailto:fraser.mcnish@churchofengland.org)

**The Revd Charlie Skrine (London) to ask the Secretary General:**

**Q4** Thank you for the publication of Statistics for Mission 2021 and for the team who produced it. The excellent report did not include a breakdown by Diocese of the age profile of the worshipping community. The figures for the whole Church of England in aggregate are included on p. 6. Please could you publish online and on the noticeboard the breakdown by Diocese of those aged 0-17, or 18-69, or over 70, ideally in a comparable format to that used in Table 4, p. 24 of Statistics for Mission 2019?

*Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:*

**A** Statistics for Mission 2021 reported comparative age profiles for the worshipping community of the whole Church of England in aggregate between 2019 and 2021. Diocesan-level data was not published due to data quality issues around extrapolating valid comparisons from partially complete datasets sourced from different sets of churches within each diocese for these two years. Revising the datasets around a matching set of churches providing valid returns in 2019 and 2021 years necessarily affects the comparative age profiling reported for both years. Statistics based on the revised datasets will be displayed on the notice board at Synod and added to the Synod website, but it should be noted that that the broad age profile percentages are a best estimate and apply to only a subset of the total worshipping community numbers reported for each diocese.

**Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford) to ask the Secretary General:**

**Q5** If he will estimate the actual savings made in each year since the start of COVID-19 for General Synod meeting in person and by hybrid and for all its Boards and Committees which now tend to meet alternately in person and online ,as concerns

- 1) The now normal non-printing of Board and Committee Papers;
- 2) The reduced staff time in the preparation dispatch of all papers, unless opting in for them;
- 3) The annual savings in postage costs to Synod - for Board and Committee papers;
- 4) The reduced 'notional' hire costs and use of Board and Committee Meeting rooms at Church House; and

5) The reduced provision of lunch and other refreshments during each meeting. And whether or not the savings have resulted in the reduction of staff being employed at Church House and the freeing of more office space for external letting, and if he is satisfied with the current arrangements from an accounting perspective.

*Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:*

**A** I am sorry that the information is not available in the format requested. The changes described have contributed towards savings across the NCIs of £2m a year through the Transforming Effectiveness programme which include savings from the NCIs occupying less office space in Church House. Postage and printing costs for the General Synod have been reduced from over £30,000 in 2019 to under £4,000 in 2022.

In 2018 and 2019 prior to the pandemic the total costs of the General Synod borne by the NCIs were around £460,000 a year. This represented the cost of a Group of Sessions in London and the residential Group of Sessions in York and excludes costs funded by dioceses.

During the pandemic operating the increased number of informal and formal meetings of the General Synod, many of which were fully virtual, cost the NCIs an average of £225,000 per year.

The 2022 Groups of Sessions cost the NCIs £650,000. This reflected costs at the start of a Synod cycle such as the costs of elections and inauguration costs not invoiced until 2022, the additional costs to facilitate hybrid meetings as well as wider inflationary effects.

## **CLERK TO THE SYNOD**

**The Revd Mark Miller (Durham) to ask the Clerk to the Synod:**

**Q** Why are papers and timetables not uploaded to the synod app at the same time as they are added to the Church of England website (or within hours) so as to enable efficient reading and notating of synod papers?

*Ms Jenny Jacobs to reply as Acting Clerk to the Synod:*

**A** We are very sorry that it took a week to have the papers available on the Synod App. This was due to a lack of resources and staff turnover.

We prioritised making the papers available on the website and sending email copies out to members.

There have been new staff appointments made, and it is hoped that updating the app will be more timely in future.

## **NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL**

**Dr Paul Buckingham (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:**

**Q7** From the three options available under the 2021 DBE Measure,  
- a company limited by guarantee or a charitable incorporated organisation  
- an unincorporated body  
- a committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance?

which dioceses have adopted which form of constitution, and from which constitutional position were these dioceses operating before the measure was enacted?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:*

- A** Following the revision of the DBE Measure, all 40 DBEs have certified Schemes as at the end of December 2022.
- 16 dioceses are incorporated under the 2021 Measure (previously 14 under the 1991 Measure)
  - 23 dioceses are statutory committees of the DBF under the 2021 Measure
  - One DBE remained unincorporated, and this DBE is compliant as it is registered at the Charity Commission.

A list of which DBE has taken which form is available on the Synod notice board.

**Ms Venessa Pedro Pinto (Leicester) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:**

- Q8** What national resources does the Church of England offer to nurture the faith development of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:*

- A** Some national resources were produced through the *Faith at Home* series to enable schools, churches and households to explore faith together but we generally do not produce national resources to nurture faith development of children and young people as that responsibility sits at parish and diocesan level.

**The Revd Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:**

- Q9** GS 2223 set out a vision for a Church of England that is younger and more diverse. The strategy suggests “a bolder commitment to Christian education and ministry with children, young people and students” (p6). In 2022, 38% of English 18-year-olds were in higher education, part of a total of 1.3million full-time UK undergraduates. University chaplaincies are the front line of the expression of Christ’s love to this student population. In what ways has specific work been undertaken or is planned to articulate how chaplaincies can be supported as a key part of this bolder commitment to ministry with students?

*(Source – Higher Education Student Numbers, House of Commons Library, 4 January 2023)*

*The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:*

- A** The vital role of chaplaincy in pastoral care, ministry and mission in Higher Education, Further Education and schools is fundamental to our quest to be a church which is younger and more diverse, as embodied in our commitment to a mixed ecology for that range of ministries. That commitment and the values on which it is founded is articulated in *Faith in Higher Education* (March 2020) and *Faith in Further Education* (2021) as a basis for engagement with institutions and their leaders and staff; as a resource for chaplains and to inform those who make policy. At a more practical level, advice and guidance is provided to dioceses and institutions on the recruitment and appointment of FE and HE chaplains; for governing bodies of church foundation universities and via reviews of chaplaincy provision. Given the significant variation in chaplaincy contexts, including their ecumenical and multi-faith nature, the Churches Higher Education Liaison Group (CHELG) provides an induction conference for those new in post and an annual Conference. A new Chaplains’ Network has recently come into being, facilitated by the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership.



**The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:**

**Q10** Analysis of Church of England schools in the Diocese of Chelmsford shows that every school is facing a substantive deficit budget. Our Interim Diocesan Director of Education recently reported to our Diocesan Board of Education that Chelmsford is not alone, as this situation is repeated across the Church of England's Diocesan Boards of Education. Given our schools are a vital missional provision to our communities in growing faith, what action is being taken to bring the significant budget pressures our schools are facing to the urgent attention of the Department of Education and relevant Ministers of State?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:*

**A** Budgetary pressures as a result of inflation and the energy crisis are common to all schools. We have raised this continually over recent months at ministerial and official level within the Department for Education. At the Church of England national education conference on 27<sup>th</sup> January, the Secretary of State for Education explained how the £2billion extra funding a year for education would meet some of those pressures, she also pointed out the excellent work Church of England schools are doing to form multi-academy trusts. Grouping schools together in this way provides added value educationally but will also help to ensure that our schools are better placed to meet the continuing financial pressures that they will face.

**The Revd Shaun Morris (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:**

**Q11** UK Equality Law is rapidly evolving as legal challenges are brought before the courts. Some of these challenges relate to the treatment of gender confused children. Given that Headteachers need a legal clear framework in an increasingly litigious situation combined with good pastoral guidance: What recent legal scrutiny has been given to Valuing All God's Children (2019) to ensure that it is not now offering illegal advice to schools; and what legal and synodical scrutiny will be sought for any revision proposed by the new Pastoral Consultative Group?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:*

**A** Chapter 4 of Valuing All God's Children sets out the legal framework with reference to equality law and other legislation which sets the context for schools. It was written and updated with advice from the Legal Office. The government will publish updated guidance on the subject soon and Valuing All God's Children will be updated as appropriate in the light of that guidance and in conjunction with advice from our own Legal Office.

**Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:**

**Q12** Bearing in mind the increasing body of evidence that gender distress may be a response to a range of developmental, social and psychological factors, and of the risks associated with early social transition of children, will the new Valuing All God's Children guidance exclude reference to the concept of a "trans child"?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:*

**A** Valuing All God's Children does not use the term 'trans child'. It refers to trans people, trans pupils and trans parents. Trans is used as an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. We recognise that this is a deeply contested area and welcome the government's intention to issue new guidance for schools on this subject in the light of developing evidence and research. Valuing All God's Children will be updated as appropriate in the light of that guidance.

## CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL

### **The Revd Roger Driver (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:**

**Q13** It was reported back in October 2019 that the Church of England had entered into a 'Memorandum of Understanding' with a company called Cornerstone to assist churches hosting a cell mast within their buildings. Following Parliamentary approval of the new Electronic Communications Code, what support and assistance is available to parishes wishing to pursue this opportunity and how can it be accessed?

*The Venerable Robert Cooper to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:*

**A** Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) have been signed with Cornerstone (Vodafone & O2) and more recently with MBNL (EE & Three), providing a consensual arrangement which complies with Faculty Jurisdiction and the Electronic Communications Code. The agreed MoU rates of rent are higher than the low rents available under the Code. Parishes with suitable buildings can register their interest on the [Parish Buying Website](#) but should be aware that mobile phone companies ultimately decide where to place their infrastructure.

### **The Revd Roger Driver (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:**

**Q14** How many churches across the Church of England currently host a telecommunications cell mast in their building, and could the information be presented in a table giving numbers per diocese?

*The Venerable Robert Cooper to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:*

**A** The information requested is not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost. We estimate that around 300 churches have telecommunications infrastructure in their towers, including a small number with a more compact technology suitable for deployment in rural not-spots.

## MINISTRY COUNCIL

### **Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q15** The aggregate number of Stipendiary Clergy reported by dioceses has declined from 7,235 in 2019 to 7,063 in 2021. What steps are in place to reverse this long-term trend of decline, and actually increase the number, as is so badly needed?

*The Bishop of Chester to answer as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** Data compiled by the NCI's shows that in 2019 there was a total of 7,700 stipendiary clergy in the Church of England where in 2021 there were 7,570. 2021 saw the highest number of ordinations to stipendiary ministry for a generation (390) thanks to the hard work of local clergy and diocesan vocations teams in supporting people to consider their ministerial vocation and through the application of funds from the Church Commissioners to the Strategic Ministry Fund to support dioceses with the cost of increased numbers of curates. In recent years this number of ordinations would have been sufficient to see growth in the overall cohort. In the unique circumstances of 2021, more ministers than usual left ministry for a range of reasons. Looking to the future, significantly increased

national funding will be distributed through the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Fund to dioceses in order to help the Church meet the outcomes of its Vision and Strategy for the 2020s. This includes provision to support an increased number of stipendiary clergy posts.

**The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q16** In the light of the fact that Canon C4.3 is currently being cited in at least one Diocese to block access to ordination training for some disabled, potential candidates, can the process for amending this Canon proceed as a matter of urgency?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** We are committed to enabling those with disabilities to access the discernment process and training for ordained ministry. The National Diverse Vocations Officer is undertaking research in this area.

The Legal Office have advised that Canon C 4.3 should already be interpreted in a way that does not result in candidates who are disabled being automatically excluded. There are many clergy with disabilities who exercise an effective and fruitful ministry. Canon C 4.3 would exclude a person from ordination only if that person was not able to do things essential for a priest or deacon to do. The facts of each case have to be considered, including what, if any, reasonable adjustments can be made. But the Ministry Council will nevertheless consider whether any amendment to Canon 4.3 is needed.

**Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q17** To what extent have the Ministry Council explored centralised training provision, perhaps an IME 'zero', for those 'further back' in the discernment process that might cohere with the training undertaken at a TEI for IME 1 later?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** Dioceses currently foster vocations, enable discernment and prepare candidates for further learning in a range of ways. This allows them to take a contextual approach and, if they wish, to work differently with different candidates according to the particular needs of each. The Council has considered whether a more common approach would be desirable, whether centralised provision (which would of course require additional funding) or perhaps more plausibly a framework to shape or inform diocesan provision, though it has yet to be convinced diocese would prefer greater national direction. However, we are currently working with a group of dioceses considering a common approach to a year of discipleship and vocational development.

**The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q18** What plans are in place to develop a common syllabus/national framework for ordination training with clearly defined common outcomes at the point of ordination?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** The Formation Framework sets out common expectations for training and the requirements to be met at the point of diaconal ordination (for candidates to be priests, distinctive deacons, and specifically pioneering priests). Ministry Council and its Quality and Formation Panel oversee validation and quality assurance

work. This ensures that pathways offered by TEIs are shaped to enable candidates to develop appropriately in accordance with those expectations. The Council will be reviewing whether (and, if so, what kind of) greater commonality between pathways would be beneficial and possible given the diversity of prior experience, church tradition, and culture amongst candidates and in the church.

**The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q19** Dioceses adopt very different approaches towards the training of curates in IME2. This despite the existence of a national formational qualities 'grid' for ordained priestly ministry. What steps are the Ministry Council taking to monitor IME2 training across dioceses and what indicators will the Ministry Council use to measure the success or otherwise of diocesan IME2 programmes and indeed of the new formation framework for IME2?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** Each diocese is responsible for ensuring that it appropriately trains and assesses its curates within the national framework. Each year dioceses are asked to complete an Annual Self Evaluation of their IME2, and the Quality and Formation Panel receives a summary of key points these raise.

When dioceses have made application to the Strategic Ministry Board for funding additional curacies, the Board gives attention to the evidence provided of the quality of the IME2 programme. Its recommendations have included encouraging dioceses to give greater attention to their own evaluation processes, for example by surveying those who did IME2 once they are in their next post. Ultimately, the success of an IME2 programme is how well it equips the curate to begin their next post under Common Tenure (or, on occasion, establishes that the curate should not proceed to a next post).

**Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q20** What guidance is provided to diocesan authorities (that could be published more widely) to equip them in authorising external training providers?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** We do not believe that there is any formal guidance provided, at least within areas overseen by the Ministry Council. Dioceses may discuss particular proposals for training with staff from appropriate teams within the NCIs leading to *ad hoc* guidance being provided.

**The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:**

**Q21** Overseas Permission to Officiate (OPTO) covers liturgical ministry in the Church of England by bishops and clergy visiting from other Anglican Communion provinces. But are overseas Anglican bishops and clergy required to seek permission from the Church of England before ministering in an ecumenical context in England, outside the Church of England?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:*

**A** We have consulted the Legal Office who have advised that OPTO is not required for overseas clergy to participate in non-liturgical contexts (such as speaking at a conference) or to officiate in a Church other than the Church of England.

Section 4 of the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988 envisages that Churches that are in communion with the Church of England (i.e.

overseas Churches in the Anglican Communion) might also have their own separate ecumenical arrangements with Churches in England other than the Church of England and that their clergy might exercise ministry in those other Churches. Aside from the legal position, however, a bishop of another Church in the Anglican Communion should, as a matter of courtesy, be in touch with the relevant Archbishop even if the activity he or she is proposing to undertake is not subject to the requirement for OPTO.

## **REMUNERATION & CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE**

### **Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:**

**Q22** Thanking the Bishop of Hereford for his answer to written question 11 in November, please could the Remunerations Committee provide similar estimates of median stipend and mean stipend received by female clergy, compared to the median stipend and mean stipend received by male clergy for the years, 2007, 2012, and 2017?

*The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:*

**A** The information requested is not easily available and I am afraid cannot be obtained within the time available to answer this question.

However, once staff have had sufficient time to carry out a further analysis of the available payroll data, we shall be very happy to share the results with you.

I am also pleased to say that RACSC intends to publish data on the clergy gender pay gap in the next edition of the Central Stipends Authority's annual report to the General Synod, which will be published in February 2024.

### **Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell and Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:**

**Q23** Data in the Central Stipends Authority's recent report (GS Misc 1330) indicates that the National Minimum Stipend and the National Stipend Benchmark will lag nearly 7% behind CPIH inflation in the three year period ending in the year from April 2023 to March 2024. Noting the CSA's statement (in paragraph 55 of GS Misc 1330)\* that 'an increase in line with the current high levels of inflation was not considered to be affordable within a single year'; and the 'aspiration' at the end of paragraph 55 'to seek to maintain the value of the stipend against inflation over the medium term as far as possible'; what is the expected length of the 'medium term', and how does it relate to the 'three yearly reviews' in the CSA's policy\* on setting the levels of NMS and NSB?

\* The CSA's policy is quoted in paragraph 55 of GS Misc 1330 as follows: 'that the NMS should in future, on average, increase in line with inflation, as measured by CPIH, subject to three yearly reviews and the need to review this position if high levels of inflation establish themselves.'

*The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:*

**A** Although recent increases in stipend recommendations have not been in line with inflation, it remains the aspiration of the Archbishops' Council as the Central Stipends Authority (CSA) that the NMS should increase in line with inflation as measured by CPIH over the medium term. We remain concerned about the impact of high inflation on clergy wellbeing and hope that increases below inflation will be compensated for by increases above inflation in later years. However this

depends on a range of economic, financial and other factors especially giving levels. In view of this, I am not able to provide a precise answer as to how long the 'medium term' will be. The three yearly reviews will ensure not only that progress is monitored and assessed but also whether the aspiration remains affordable.

**Miss Debbie Buggs (London) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:**

**Q24** What is the maximum and the median pension currently paid to priests, archdeacons, and bishops respectively on retirement, and what are the respective requirements in terms of years of service in each order or ministry/role in order to qualify for the maximum pension?

*The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:*

**A** The details of maximum pension and accrual rates are published on the Church of England Website (pages 10 - 11 of the [CEFPS member's guide](#)). This information is also available on the Notice Board.

Clergy pensions are calculated with reference to the National Minimum Stipend, with a multiplier for senior clergy posts (again, available on page 10 of the [CEFPS member's guide](#)).

Over time, Synod has made a number of changes to the benefit structure within the pension scheme. A cleric retiring today is likely to have a mix of benefits (e.g. some pension accrued under the pre-2011 rate; some at the post 2011 rate). Their exact pension will also depend on what choices they make around maximising their lump sum, when they come to take their pension.

It has not been possible to calculate the median pension in the time available.

## **MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

**Mrs Michaela Suckling (Sheffield) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:**

**Q25** Consumer prices rose by more than 10% last year. People on low incomes were greatly affected by this, as food, energy and rent take up so much of their income. The Government's special help to the most vulnerable, particularly with energy costs, is most welcome, as is the uprating of benefits by 10.1%. But this uprating will not take place till April. It is not surprising that the Trussell Trust food banks have been reporting their busiest months on record. The Trust reports that 'an emergency food bank parcel is being given out every 13 seconds.' This is deeply disturbing in one of the wealthiest nations in the world. Has the House of Bishops had discussions with HM Government about reforming the social security system to provide consistent and adequate support to the vulnerable?

*Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:*

**A** The Bishops in the House of Lords, supported by Parliamentary Unit and the Public Policy Team of Faith and Public Life, have regularly engaged HM Government on issues with the social security system, particularly for the most vulnerable at this time.

The Bishop of Durham has been leading this, asking HM Government directly what assessment they have made of the adequacy of the current levels of benefits given the increased cost of living. HM Government replied that it has provided

decisive action through the Energy Price Guarantee for all households providing £26bn in cost-of-living support for 2023/24 inclusive of Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable, such as those on means-tested benefits, pensioners and those on disability benefits. However, it has not committed to assessing if these one-off provisions are adequate given the ongoing cost of living crisis.

**Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:**

**Q26** Has the Council taken the opportunity to consider and respond to the Report issued by CIVITAS in November 2022 on the Reform of the Marriage Allowance as one way of reversing the ongoing decline of marriage rates in the UK, especially amongst couples on lower incomes? If so, where can the response be found and has it been sent both to His Majesty's Government and to the Lords Spiritual? If not, may I encourage the Council to do so at the earliest opportunity and to circulate its comments to members of General Synod?

*Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:*

**A** Thank you for this question. We were not aware of this particular report and will look at it with interest. Without wanting to pre-empt the result of that study, I would caution that the decline in marriage rates is known to be a highly complex matter that runs much deeper than economic factors. There have been previous proposals to reform the Marriage Tax Allowance structures with a view to encouraging marriage, but this objective has not been explicitly regarded as an aim of taxation policy by government. We shall look at the report and if it makes recommendations to which the Church of England can usefully and constructively contribute, we shall do so, preferably through the parliamentary opportunities offered by the Lords Spiritual.

## **BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**The Revd Martin Thorpe (Liverpool) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q27** Please could the Business Committee consider holding a group of sessions of General Synod in the November 2023 window, either virtually or in person, to deal with the backlog of business, not least the raft of Diocesan motions which are mostly perpetually carried over?

*Canon Robert Hammond to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:*

**A** The Business Committee monitors the amount of business in the forward look, including legislation, finance, Private Members and Diocesan Synod motions and strives to settle a balanced agenda. In July 2022, the Business Committee reintroduced some evening sessions to enable some DSMs and PMMs be debated. and may consider this again in July this year.

There is currently no plan to hold a group of sessions in November 2023. Members will be informed as soon as possible should that change.

**Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q28** There is an ongoing level of concern about which members are called (or not called) to speak in Synod debates. A former member of the panel of chairs has publicly published the following, with regard to members of General Synod with whom they disagree: *'When I was a Synod Chair I tried only to call them to speak at the end of a debate with a two-minute speech limit!'*. What measures are there

in place to monitor the conduct of chairs of debates with regard to the balance of who they call to speak, and when, and how would chairs be called to account for biased chairing of this nature, which could bring the office into disrepute?

*Canon Robert Hammond to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:*

**A** The Chaining of Synod is undertaken by an independent panel appointed by the Presidents who are not accountable to the Business Committee. However, the Business Committee recently met with members of the Panel of Chairs to share the feedback from Synod members which included who is called to speak in debates. It was a useful meeting, and one which those attending agreed to repeat after the February group of sessions. I invited the Panel of Chairs to reflect on the feedback Synod members provide.

It should be remembered that the Chairs are independent and are responsible for “regulating the proceedings and maintaining order, doing whatever is necessary for that purpose” (SO(15(1b))).

**The Revd Jo Winn-Smith (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q29** Following the success of the Pastoral Principles, how does the Committee plan to address good conduct in General Synod and public life by members of General Synod, for example, activity on social media like Twitter, particularly for lay members for whom there is no equivalent of either the CDM or the new complaints procedure?

*Canon Robert Hammond to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:*

**A** The Business Committee is looking at additional guidance for Synod members on this, and it is hoped that this will be in place by July. We will look at the Pastoral Principles and other material to see if there are things that we can bring into the guidance.

Along with the [Code of Conduct](#) which all members should be aware of, we have published a notice paper: [Notice Paper 7: Order and Decorum](#) which sets out the Standing Orders around behaviour in the Chamber.

I would like to implore members to remember that we are a Christian body, and we should treat each other with respect and love, both inside and outside the Chamber.

**Mrs Gill Frigerio (Coventry) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q30** Will the Business Committee undertake to take all necessary steps, including if needed the introduction of legislation, to ensure that any member of Synod engaging in hate speech on social media during or between sessions can be removed from the Synod, or subject to a vote of no confidence by their electorate?

*Canon Robert Hammond to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:*

**A** The Business Committee condemns any use of hate speech on Social Media and continues to ask synod members to be mindful of how their words will be interpreted both within and outside the Church. There is currently a [code of conduct](#) for Synod members and I would like to draw Synod’s attention to this as well as [Notice Paper 7: Order and Decorum](#).

The Business Committee has discussed the issues raised in the question and has decided not to pursue a mandatory code of conduct. The committee is advised that a mandatory code would not only need Primary Legislation via a Measure and



an Amending Canon, but would also require significant resource to implement and monitor. However, the Committee is looking at additional guidance and hopes to have this in place by July.

**Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:**

**Q31** General Synod Committees are now holding many of their meetings during the year online rather than in person. Has the Business Committee conducted any research into the impact of this and whether, as a result of meetings being held online, members are still fully involved in the substance of the meetings and that the relevant Officers are still being properly held to account?

*Canon Robert Hammond to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:*

**A** The Business Committee has not conducted any research on this.

However, speaking for the Business Committee alone, the ability to easily have shorter, focussed meetings in addition to the longer face to face meetings has led to increased engagement and more agile decision making which I believe had resulted in better committee process and procedures.

## **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

**Ms Fiona MacMillan (London) to ask the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee:**

**Q32** GS 2177 Standing Order made under section 1 of the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020 states that:

4. A person is to be regarded as present at sessions of the Synod at any given time if the person is at that time able to hear and be heard, and where practicable see and be seen, by the other persons present and by members of the press and public.

Would the Standing Orders Committee consider amending the wording so as not to inadvertently exclude those who are Deaf or blind?

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones to reply as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee:*

**A** When drafting the Special Standing Orders, the wording of the text was based on secular legislation already in place to enable local authorities, among others, to meet during the pandemic. The view had been taken on that legislation that express provision was not required to cover those who have difficulty seeing or hearing, as it went without saying that whatever needed to be done for them would be done. It was felt unhelpful for Synod to take a significantly different drafting approach.

The references to seeing and hearing necessarily include whatever it is that a person who has difficulty seeing or hearing requires to enable full participation. The references are, in effect, given a special meaning for that purpose by necessary implication.

## **CLERGY DISCIPLINE COMMISSION**

**Mr Charles Houston (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the Clergy Discipline**

**Commission:**

**Q33** Please can you provide the figures for formal cases of discipline involving allegations of safeguarding or related issues brought under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 relating to all clergy and those brought against laity for the past five years?

*The Bishop of Liverpool to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline*

*Commission:*

**A** The Clergy Discipline Commission is a statutory body constituted under section 3 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. Accordingly, it has no role in relation to the discipline of the laity and does not have access to any data in that regard.

The Commission does not collect data to enable it to determine how many allegations of misconduct brought under the CDM 2003 involve “safeguarding or related issues”, which is too broad a term. Since 2019 the Commission has collected data for the number of allegations involving misconduct towards vulnerable adult or misconduct of sexual nature towards a child. For the period 2019 - 2021 the total number of allegations of misconduct brought under the CDM 2003 against all clergy involving misconduct towards vulnerable adult was 24 and the total number involving misconduct of sexual nature towards a child was 26.

**Miss Debbie Buggs (London) to ask the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission:**

**Q34** How many allegations under the Clergy Discipline Measure have been brought against clergy, archdeacons, and bishops over the last five years, and how many in each category have been dismissed and how many upheld?

*The Bishop of Liverpool to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline*

*Commission:*

**A** The Clergy Discipline Commission collects data each year on the number of allegations of misconduct brought against clergy and the manner of the disposal. This is published via its annual report to General Synod. The Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 distinguishes between allegations brought against deacons or priests and bishops or archbishops. The Commission does not separately collect the number of allegations brought against archdeacons. The figures for the period 2017 – 2021 are posted on the notice board.

**Miss Rosemary Wilson (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission:**

**Q35** Please can you set out the Church of England disciplinary structures that exist for bringing formal complaints against bishops that involve matters of doctrine, ritual or ceremony and also formal complaints that do not involve those three areas.

*The Bishop of Liverpool to answer on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline*

*Commission*

**A** Formal complaints alleging the commission of an offence against the laws ecclesiastical involving matters of doctrine, ritual or ceremonial fall under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963.

Formal allegations of misconduct that allege an act or omission other than one relating to matters involving doctrine, ritual or ceremonial fall under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003.

The Clergy Discipline Commission has no role in relation to matters falling under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963.

**Mr Timothy Hamilton (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission:**

**Q36** Given both research and anecdotal evidence of the way in which some clergy are treated in relation to handling CDMs and 'out of process' complaints within dioceses, could the Church of England provide better HR training for Archdeacons and other senior clergy - and clearer information both about rights and processes for clergy in their care?

*The Bishop of Liverpool to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission*

**A** The Clergy Discipline Commission commends paragraph 7 of the Code of Practice issued under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 which states that:

*It is imperative that those involved in administering the Measure are properly trained. Each diocese should ensure that bishops, archdeacons, Diocesan safeguarding advisors (including assistants) and any other appropriate person receives the necessary training in order to carry out their functions under Measure.*

The Commission encourages all dioceses to ensure that those involved in any discipline work are up to date with training.

In respect of clearer information, the Commission will soon be re-issuing in a revised form information leaflets for both those who may wish to bring an allegation of misconduct and respondent clergy, detailing in an accessible manner the processes involved in clergy discipline.

## **DIOCESES COMMISSION**

**Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds) to ask the Chair of the Dioceses Commission:**

**Q37** If they would update the Synod of the progress of phase 2 of the bishops and their ministry consultation relating to the management and operation of diocesan structures and bishops' offices which was mentioned in the 2022 annual report.

*Dame Caroline Spelman to reply as Chair of the Dioceses Commission:*

**A** Following phase one led by the Bishop to the Archbishops in 2021, the Dioceses Commission began the second phase of the listening exercise in November and December 2022, contacting the same groups who responded to the first phase. The deadline for responses closed in January and staff are in the process of analysing these. The Commission will reflect on the responses at its March 2023 meeting, the themes arising, and will decide whether it would like to make any comments or recommendations to the Archbishops in light of the responses.

## **FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION**

**The Revd Lindsay Llewellyn-MacDuff (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission:**

**Q38** Could the Faith and Order Commission confirm that the Church of England still teaches that the sacramental authority of a priest flows from their Diocesan or other ordinary?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission:*

**A** The Church of England does not use the phrase 'sacramental authority', but distinguishes between sacramental validity, which flows from the validity of

ordination by a bishop, and the authority to minister, granted by the diocesan bishop or ordinary.

The relationship between bishop and incumbent through the oaths taken at licensing is explored further in the FAOC publication *To Proclaim Afresh*.

## LEGAL ADVISORY COMMISSION

**The Ven Fiona Gibson (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the Legal Advisory Committee:**

**Q39** In respect of open churchyard maintenance, thirty-two PCCs in the Diocese of Hereford lost in total some £14,800 in a year from parish council grants due to advice from the National Association of Local Councils that such grants contravene s.8(1)(i) of the Local Government Act 1894 ('Additional Powers of parish councils'). Can the Commission please add to their helpful online opinion about the provisions of s.214(6) of the Local Government Act 1972 an opinion about the operation of section 8(1)(i) of 1894 Act?

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor) to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission:*

**A** *The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals* (December 2017) recommended:

"Clarification on this point should be given, whether by repealing section 8 of the 1894 Act, or by the issue of guidance. This should clarify that local authorities can invest in church buildings in accordance with Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972."

The Government has indicated its support for this recommendation but has not yet found an opportunity to implement it. The Cathedral and Church Buildings Division regularly seek updates from the Government on progress. The Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission has agreed that this matter be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Commission on 8 March.

## LITURGICAL COMMISSION

**The Revd Joanna Stobart (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:**

**Q40** Please could the Liturgical Commission provide an update on the steps being taken to develop more inclusive language in our authorized liturgy and to provide more options for those who wish to use authorized liturgy and speak of God in a non-gendered way, particularly in authorized absolutions where many of the prayers offered for use refer to God using male pronouns?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:*

**A** We have been exploring the use of gendered language in relation to God for several years, in collaboration with the Faith and Order Commission. After some dialogue between the two Commissions in this area, a new joint project on gendered language will begin this spring.

In common with other potential changes to authorized liturgical provision, changing the wording and number of authorized forms of absolution would require a full Synodical process for approval.

**The Revd Carol Bates (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:**

**Q41** Has the Commission considered providing resources for a New Year's Eve Watch Night service, noting the scarce resources currently available for this, and the importance and popularity of these amongst many in the Afro-Caribbean community?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:*

**A** Thank you for this helpful suggestion. As part of our ongoing partnership with the Racial Justice Commission we are exploring ways in which the worship of the Church of England can draw inspiration from a wide variety of cultural influences.

**The Revd Stuart Craddock (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:**

**Q42** Has the Liturgical Commission produced, or does it plan to produce guidelines for parishes using *Common Worship* that reflect the new understandings of the importance of local adaptation and how to make our worship accessible for all?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:*

**A** The Commission has produced or sponsored a number of publications which encourage ministers to plan worship that reflects local contexts and the need for accessibility to all. Among them are the well-known practical guides entitled *Using Common Worship*, which include imaginative suggestions for a variety of local situations, as well as our recent edited volume *God in Fragments: worshipping with those living with dementia* (CHP, 2020), and the resource volume *Patterns for Baptism* (CHP, 2022). Bearing in mind the motion passed by the Synod last July affirming disabled people in the life of the Church, the Commission also stands ready to listen to and to work with others who are interested in this area.

**The Revd Dr Michael Brydon (Sodor & Man) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:**

**Q43** In 1953 the Church of England prepared for the Coronation by offering teaching and instruction on the Rite, as well as liturgical resources to ensure it was surrounded by prayer. What plan is there to release appropriate teaching and liturgical resources in 2023?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:*

**A** We look forward to releasing in due course a variety of resources for worship and prayer which will be aimed at parishes, cathedrals, schools, and individuals to help prepare them for the Coronation.

**The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:**

**Q44** What resources are being prepared to explain to congregations, schools and the wider community the Christian meaning and significance of the various parts of the Coronation service on 6 May, especially the symbolism of regalia, anointing, and the presentation of a bible?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:*

**A** We can look forward to many people in England and around the world exploring for the first time the rich symbolism of the rite of coronation, and participating in the worship of God which is the setting for the coronation of the King. There are wonderful opportunities for churches to become involved in the coronation weekend. The Liturgical Commission has played its own part in providing resources for reflection on the Christian elements of the rite of coronation which will be released in due course.

## ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

### **Mr John Brydon (Norwich) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q45** For the most recent financial period available, please can you provide the proportion of costs for the newly established Office of the Archbishops' paid by Lambeth Palace, Bishopthorpe and any other NCI, and the basis on which those splits were determined?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as President of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Office of the Archbishops is funded by the Church Commissioners as part of their support for the mission and ministry of the archbishops and bishops.

The Office of the Archbishops was created by merging existing budgets, adjusted for some movement of posts to and from the Archbishops' Council. The new arrangements have not resulted in additional National Church expenditure. This was part of the Transforming Effectiveness Programme which resulted in savings amounting to £2m p.a. across the National Church Institutions.

### **Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q46** The Archbishop of York's reply to Q32 in November 2022 confirms that General Synod has neither approved nor agreed to Vision & Strategy. Will the Archbishops' Council kindly request the Business Committee to furnish General Synod with the opportunity to debate, and vote explicitly on, Vision & Strategy?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as joint President of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** My reply to Q31, also in November 2022, confirms that General Synod has been closely involved throughout the process of the Vision & Strategy. There have been various discussions in Synod meetings to inform this work as well as voting at the last Synod to align resources to the Vision and Strategy. Most importantly the whole Vision and Strategy builds on numerous Synod resolutions, which were listed in the Annex of the Questions Notice Paper from November 2022 suggesting a direction of travel for the Church of England in its dioceses and parishes.

In answer to a question in July 2022, I said, 'I believe our energy needs now to be focussed on discussing, discerning and deciding how we turn this into actions which enable us to become a people shaped by Jesus, activated for his mission and sent out to be his witnesses.' I see this happening in very creative ways across parishes and dioceses and don't believe it needs to belong to any one group or body. Simply this is a vision that has emerged from the Church at every level to enable the Church to witness to Jesus and see the transformation of our nation.

As part of the consultative process, the bishops have now agreed and shared the vision for the 2020s. Of course, Synod members can bring forward their own strategic ideas – as they often do – either through private members' motions, or Diocesan Synod motions. And this is exactly how the central ideas of the vision and strategy, namely, chaplaincy, mixed ecology, growing younger, and more diverse, found their way into it in the first place.

### **The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q47** What is the policy/practice of the National Church Institutions with regard to 'Maxwellisation'?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The National Church Institutions consider in the case of any appropriate report which may be published whether the duty to undertake a representations process— often known as “Maxwellisation”— applies as a matter of either law or good practice and, if they consider that it does, they undertake the process in the most appropriate way in the circumstances of the case.

**The Revd Robert Thompson (London) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q48** What is (i) the cost to date, and (ii) the estimated final cost of, respectively, the Makin review into John Smyth and the Humphrey Review into Trevor Devamanikkam?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** There is always a financial cost associated with any Independent Review, however this must be balanced with establishing the truth and listening to the voices of victims and survivors, and learning from and improving safeguarding provisions as a result of recommendations. These two reviews have cost approximately £354,000 to date.

**Miss Debbie Woods (Chester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q49** In December 2020, the Archbishops' Council agreed to set up an independent safeguarding board as a distinct legal entity. Has that happened, and if not, why not, and what plans are in place to overcome any obstacles to its swift implementation?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The proposal accepted in 2020 was to set up an interim Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB Phase 1) which would take on some aspects of independent oversight which could be achieved more readily, whilst working to bring forward clearly argued proposals for a long-term solution to the need for independent oversight of safeguarding (ISB Phase 2). ISB Phase 1 was structured to be as independent as possible commensurate with the fact that the Archbishops' Council was creating and paying for it, and the members of the ISB act as independent contractors. It is likely that proposals for Phase 2 may envisage an arms-length body with separate legal personality. Although, the financial relationship would still entail some enforceable obligations. Work to engage the three ISB members was completed by January 2022, and there was no expectation that the ISB Phase 1 would have reached the point of making firm proposals for Phase 2 by this point. As members will know, other matters have affected the ability of the ISB to deliver its objectives recently, but if those matters can be resolved proposals for Phase 2 could still be put forward on the expected timetable.

**The Revd Vincent Whitworth (Manchester) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q50** The Church of England fee for a crematorium-only funeral has increased by £21 in 2023. How are increases in church fees decided and calculated each year and is any consideration given to the impact such fee increases have on our missional role through the occasional offices?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The framework for parochial fees in 2020-24 was agreed by the General Synod in 2019. This required parochial fees to be increased from 1 January every year in line with the annual increase in the CPI inflation index for the twelve months to the previous August, rounded up to the nearest pound.

Key reasons for the Council recommending a revision to this practice which the Synod will consider on Wednesday (see GS2288 and GS2288X) were the potential missional impact and the cost of living crisis.

**Dr Rosalind Clarke (Lichfield) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q51** In the Church of England Fees Table for 2023, wedding fees have gone up by a total of £52, church funerals by £41 and funerals at the crematorium by £21. That is an average increase of 10.8% in fees. During a cost of living crisis, did the Archbishops' Council consider whether such an increase remains appropriate or whether it would be a place in which the church could show more generosity to those who are already struggling to make ends meet?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** Yes.

The framework for parochial fees in 2020-24 was agreed by the General Synod in 2019. This required parochial fees to be increased from 1 January every year in line with the annual increase in the CPI inflation index for the twelve months to the previous August, rounded up to the nearest pound.

With CPI for the twelve months to August 2022 being 9.9%, the Council considered the resulting increase in 2023 to be too high. So it has proposed a Parochial Fees (Amendment) Order (see GS 2288) which will cap increases for the remainder of 2023 and 2024 at 5% above the previous year's level, rounded up to the nearest pound. As set out in GS 2288X, if the Synod approves the draft Amendment Order, lower fees will come into effect once the Amendment Order has been laid before Parliament.

**Mr Tony Allwood (St Edmundsbury Ipswich) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q52** In view of the increasing difficulties and charges being made by banks, what actions has the National Church taken to assist parishes with their banking?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The National Church Finance Team has contacted senior staff in several banks aiming to help parishes navigate the more frequent and more extensive checks that are now necessary for anti-money-laundering purposes. This has resulted in one of the banks producing specific guidance around these processes for church charities including Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) and for bank staff dealing with them.

PCCs which have never had an annual income of £100,000 or more have a temporary exception from registering with the Charity Commission which lasts until the end of March 2031. This often causes difficulty in providing evidence of their charitable status. The 'A Church Near You' website now provides a document setting this out for relevant PCCs which can be accessed by the administrator for each church.

I regret that many banks are increasing charges for charities as a commercial decision.



We are aware that one diocese has negotiated a banking arrangement which its parishes can use, but the bank has been unwilling to extend this to other dioceses. We will continue to work with Parish Buying and third sector organisations with similar challenges to see if there is more we can do to assist parishes with their banking.

**Dr Ian Johnson (Portsmouth) to ask the Church Commissioners**

**Q53** My parish buys its gas through Parish Buying. The support given by the Church Commissioners and distributed promptly by my diocese is much appreciated. The fact is that it falls far short of the increases being faced. It is estimated that my parish's gas bill will be three times last year's, but it appears not to be a beneficiary of the Government's support scheme. Can an explanation please be given as to why this is the case, and any discussions that have taken place be set out, or if discussions have not taken place, can a commitment be given to speak with TotalEnergy and/or the Government on this matter?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** Parishes in Parish Buying's energy basket do not qualify for the government's Energy Relief Scheme for non-domestic customers as the price of electricity and gas in the basket is below the minimum threshold at which government support is offered. Parish Buying buys the energy for the energy basket in advance, so was able to offer a lower unit price to its thousands of members than the government guaranteed level.

The £15m energy costs grant announced by the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners last year offered some support to parishes towards increased energy costs, along with guidance and advice on how parishes can reduce their energy consumption.

We are also seeking guidance on whether parishes qualify for the government's scheme for energy and trade intensive industries in 2023/2024 that was announced recently. But, depending on the details of support from April 2023 which have yet to be announced and market pricing, it is possible that the energy basket prices will again be too low for participants to qualify for support from the government's Energy Bill Relief Scheme.

**The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q54** During the July 2022 Group of Sessions, the Vice-Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee offered to examine the research and claims of Save the Parish (StP) in relation to sizeable central funds StP believes are available to the Church of England for distribution to parishes. Has the Council had the opportunity to examine this research and its claims and, if so, what conclusions has it reached about the financial analysis they contain?

*Mrs Maureen Cole to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** I think that the specific comment referred to in the question was made during the First Consideration debate on the draft Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure when the Save the Parish estimate that diocesan glebe was worth £9 billion was mentioned. This was an overestimate. According to diocesan annual reports, at the end of 2020 dioceses' investment property (most but not all will be glebe) was valued at £663 million. In addition dioceses held other investments

valued at £1,142 million, the majority of which is held in the Diocesan Stipends Fund capital account. All these assets are revalued regularly in accordance with the relevant accounting standards.

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council's Finance Committee, the Secretary General and members of the Finance Team had a constructive meeting with several members of Save the Parish to discuss Church finances in September. The information above was shared at this meeting and several other financial measures and interpretations were clarified.

**Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q55** A total of only seven dioceses currently use Total Return Accounting. What advice or guidance has the Archbishops' Council issued in relation to the account practices of dioceses?

*Mrs Maureen Cole to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure 2016 gave Diocesan Boards of Finance the power to make a resolution under section 104A of the Charities Act 2011 to adopt total return accounting for their Diocesan Stipends Fund (DSF), having taken appropriate professional advice. This approach enables a diocese, subject to certain safeguards, to treat some of the capital appreciation on investments as income.

Before the Measure was brought into force, the National Church Finance Team prepared guidance which was sent to all dioceses and is available on the Diocesan Finance Portal. From time to time diocesan staff contact a member of the Finance Team and / or staff in dioceses which have adopted the total return approach for the DSF for discussions on this issue and the guidance. We have also periodically engaged with dioceses on this subject at the Inter Diocesan Finance Forum (attended by Diocesan Secretaries, Diocesan Finance Leads and DBF Chairs), Finance Leads conferences, diocesan finance seminars and introductory meetings with new diocesan senior finance staff.

Our understanding is that at least 13 dioceses now use this approach for their DSF.

**Professor Helen King (Oxford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q56** Has the Independent Safeguarding Board been subject to scrutiny by the Audit Committee of the Archbishops' Council in relation to its formation and operation and, if so, with what outcome?

*Mrs Maureen Cole to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB) has not been subject to an internal audit of its operation or formulation. The Archbishops' Council receives regular updates on safeguarding matters, including with regard to the work of the ISB.

**Mrs Jane Rosam (Rochester) to ask the Archbishops Council:**

**Q57** When instructing professional advisors, does the Archbishops Council require periodic substantial disclosure of the complaints records, both internal and/or externally recorded with the appropriate professional regulators, in order to monitor the continuing suitability of such parties to act for the Established Church as its lawyers, accountants, and PR advisors?

*Mrs Maureen Cole to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Archbishops' Council is always alert to ensure the suitability of its external professional providers. When it runs a procurement exercise the Council takes into account that NCI procurement activity should "safeguard the technical, reputational and commercial interests of the NCIs". The Council recognises that professional advisers are often subject to strict regulatory oversight from regulators which publish details of disciplinary sanctions. In addition, where possible the Council seeks to rely on standard commercial terms which require suppliers to comply with all appropriate regulations and industry codes of practice; and the Council seeks to negotiate the best terms which are possible in all the circumstances.

**Mr Richard Brown (Chelmsford) to ask the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q58** Given that the Legislative Committee on the Ecclesiastical Property Measure in 2013 reported that regulations made would enable updating for inflation, and that it is over seven years since "The Ecclesiastical Property (Exceptions from Requirement for Consent to Dealings) Order 2015" was made, what plans are there to review and increase the £250,000 limit referred to in the order?

*Mrs Maureen Cole to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The intention was – and still is – to review the limit referred to in the Order from time to time. Staff in the National Church Finance Team carried out a very limited initial consultation with several diocesan officers on the matter last year and intend to carry out a wider consultation when other priorities allow prior to making a recommendation on any change to the Archbishops' Council.

**Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q59** It was recently reported that Christopher Peak, registrar to the diocese of Gloucester from 1985-2012, removed his name from the solicitors roll following a finding against him by the Solicitors Regulation Authority for failure to recognise a conflict of interest in his advice to the Bishop and the Diocese in regard to then Bishop Peter Ball. Recognising that it is obviously convenient to use 'retained' lawyers across the spectrum of advice and representation needed, has the Archbishops' Council considered giving advice to NCIs, and importantly to dioceses, regarding the avoidance of conflict of interests? If not, will the Council do so?

*Mrs Maureen Cole to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** It would not be appropriate for the Archbishops' Council to give advice to dioceses on this matter. Solicitors are a regulated profession whose Code of Conduct (at this [link](#)) imposes clear requirements as to the duty not to act for a client in situations of conflicts of interest, and the Solicitors Regulation Authority has the power to investigate and discipline any breach.

**The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q60** Why do the Statistics for Mission published by the Archbishops' Council for 2020 and 2021 not show the number of confirmations in each diocese (as in previous years)?

*Mr Matthew Frost to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The reason for not reporting the data is due to the COVID pandemic. The decision not to publish this data was taken due to low return rates caused by minimal resources being available to collect the data across Dioceses, and also considering the restrictions impacting on holding confirmation services during this period.

**The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q61** Will the Archbishops' Council publish the confirmation figures for 2020 and 2021?

*Mr Matthew Frost to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The collection of the 2022 confirmation data is underway. An assessment will be made when producing the 2022 Statistics for Mission Report to establish if the minimal data for 2020 and 2021 can bring value to the report.

**Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q62** When will the Ministry Statistics, compiled by the Research and Statistics Department and due in summer 2022, be published?

*Mr Matthew Frost to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** Due to a significant restructure in the Data Services team as part of Transforming Effectiveness along with the resignation of a key member of staff and a significant focus of effort by the team on the new People System, it was not possible to produce a published report in 2022. The data in 2022 was collected and can, therefore be included in future trend reporting. It has also been possible to provide some information to the Ministry team. The new People System will enable: more automated reporting, greater clarity, and more timely insight.

**Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q 63** What is the current plan, with dates, for extending the National Register of Clergy so as to include Readers and other lay ministers?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** Significant challenges must be addressed in identifying, categorising and unifying lay data across the Church for this work to proceed. The Lay Ministry Data Project Report outlines the challenges and makes recommendations. The report can be obtained from <https://tinyurl.com/yckvhux7>. We currently do not have specific plans to start this work. The current focus of the People and Payroll System project team is on the payroll aspects of the solution and ensuring that we have a smooth go-live of this functionality given the importance of ensuring that the data is right. Once this is live and embedded and we have clarity on what is needed then we can consider further developments.

**Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q64** Since July 2022, what progress has been made with identifying the substantial resources needed to (A) enable the employment on a sustainable basis of the significant numbers of new children's, youth and family workers needed to deliver the first of the 'six bold outcomes' and (B) to establish the necessary training courses and 'career pathways'?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The scale of leaders needed to support the first bold outcome is around 30,000 new leaders of mission and ministry with children, families, and young people. Whilst this seems a significant number, this translates to two per church by 2030. Approximately 10% are expected to be employed on a sustainable basis, the remainder will be volunteers. Dioceses are encouraged to include youth's, children, and families workers within a long-term people plan, supported by Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment. A project dedicated to the recruitment of these 30,000 new leaders has been created. This is sponsored by Bishop Martyn Snow and seeks to ensure there is a pipeline of people for this critical work. Staff in the education and growing faith, vision and strategy, and ministry development teams are working together on this. Externally, they are working with local practitioners, TEIs, parachurch organisations, experts, and diocesan representatives to nurture this vocation, provide training for volunteers and employed leaders and build career pathways.

**The Revd Canon Andy Salmon (Manchester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q65** Many of our churches are serving very diverse communities and many churches have increasing numbers of people in their congregation for whom English is not their first language. In our church we have several different first languages and a significant number of Hongkongers, some of whom speak very good English but some don't. Are there any plans to produce materials in different languages to support clergy in such situations? Useful material could include such things as guides to church, baptism, marriage, prayer, joining the PCC. Material in printed form or available as pdf could be useful.

*The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** We are committed to supporting clergy who are ministering to increasingly diverse congregations. Official translations of some *Common Worship* materials are available in several languages including Farsi, with other informal translations in circulation. Whilst these resources represent the extent of our provision in official translation, this will be an area for consideration by the recently established Racial Justice Unit, which began its work in December 2022.

**Mrs Sue Slater (Lincoln) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q66** What are the Terms of Reference agreed by the Archbishops' Council for the sub-committee on same-sex marriage and local ecumenical partnerships?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Archbishops' Council received guidance from the House of Bishops which suggested that the sub-committee of the Council on same-sex marriage and local ecumenical partnerships should, with the diocesan bishop, "assess the pastoral and relational dynamics and demands of the specific situation" when considering applications made by local ecumenical partnerships for consent to use the building for same-sex marriage. This was agreed by the Council.

The sub-committee has not yet met, and has not yet received any applications. The sub-committee will agree formal terms of reference at its first meeting.

**Mr Matt Orr (Bath & Wells) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q67** What does it mean to say the Council “engaged” with the younger element of the Vision and Strategy, in Section 11 of GS Misc 1333, and what specific work is being done to ensure that it holds prominence in future agendas of the Council?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** At its December meeting the Archbishops' Council discussed the plans to achieve its first objective – that of doubling the number of children and young active disciples in the Church of England by 2030. It heard an assessment of the current position and took stock of the action under way to support achievement of the objective. It recognised its own role in maintaining the focus on this issue over the coming years that, given its importance to the mission of the Church, asked the Secretariat to develop proposals for how to embed this in future agendas – including that there should be a specific item on younger people at all forthcoming meetings. It is considering further options including how to bring the voices of younger people into its discussions.

**Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q68** What assessment has been made of the cost saving of encouraging NCI staff to work from home and if this will reduce the financial burden on parishes and diocese. Has there been an assessment of any knock on effects such as staff morale and welfare?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The adoption of hybrid working post-pandemic has enabled more roles to be offered on a national basis (i.e. not required to be in London) and a near 50% reduction in office space leased by the NCIs at Church House, Westminster, targeting savings of around £1m p.a. This also released space for the Corporation of Church House to let to other tenants, bringing in income to support its charitable donations to Archbishops' Council, further benefitting the whole Church economy.

Recent staff survey responses demonstrate the positive impact of hybrid working:

- 84% report their teams have effectively adapted.
- Staff working partially remotely responded over 10% more favourably than primarily office-based staff to questions about work life balance and wellbeing.
- When asked to describe the one best thing about working for the NCIs 'our culture (i.e. values, flexible working) was the second most prevalent theme.

**The Revd Marcus Walker (London) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q69** How much has been spent on developing and implementing the Vision and Strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s, including (but not limited to) the costs for recruiting and employing the strategy company, running the consultation process, staff costs working on the development of the strategy, cost of staff implementing the vision and strategy.

*Mrs Alison Coulter to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** In 2020, the total cost was under £20,000. No strategy company was recruited and employed. Facilitation and graphical recording for two conferences and a small number of focus groups were paid for. Employees of the NCIs supported the Archbishop of York and short-term groups across the church. The ability to do this online reflected the ceasing of some activity during the pandemic, therefore was not specifically costed.

In 2021 the total cost was £20,400 on communications and engagement including films, sign interpreters for webinars and a theological working group. One existing member of staff was backfilled so they could work part-time on Vision and Strategy. One independent consultant was contracted for 18 days between May to July 2021 to facilitate a small group consolidating the Vision and Strategy outcomes to inform proposals for the 2023-2025 triennium.

From 2022 it is impossible to isolate Vision and Strategy implementation costs. Work was consolidated within the priorities of the NCIs with the adoption of the bold outcomes as Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners objectives. Costs of the Council teams, costing £2m per annum less than previously due to Transforming Effectiveness, were reflected in budgets agreed by General Synod.

## HOUSE OF BISHOPS

**Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q70** The Second Past Cases File Review uncovered 383 allegations of abuse that had been reported to the church and recorded, but not adequately dealt with. According to the report, 242 of the alleged abusers are clergy who are still alive, and more than 200 of the cases relate to allegations of physical and/or sexual abuse. In the seven months since the Past Cases Review was completed, how many of the cases have now been resolved? How many clergy have been suspended, and how many have been disciplined or removed from office?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The PCR2 national report was published on 5 October 2022. The independent reviewers across the 45 settings identified 383 new safeguarding cases ranging from the 1940's to the present day. The 242 cases against clergy included individuals who are now deceased. The newly identified cases are being managed by the local safeguarding leads with oversight from the local Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel or equivalent.

**Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q71** Could a full list of all recommendations made by independent reviewers under the PCR2 initiative be published (suitably redacted if necessary to ensure appropriate confidentiality of individual cases), so that we can see trends of safeguarding issues facing dioceses?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The 45 local PCR2 reports contained over 800 recommendations. All of these recommendations have been analysed and developed into the 26 national recommendations, with many being specific to local settings. Individual settings are responsible for developing action plans to deliver on their local recommendations. There are no plans to publish the 800 plus recommendations.

**The Revd Dr Brenda Wallace (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q72** The Past Cases Review 2 report, published by the Church of England in October 2022, highlights the particular challenge of unrecognised domestic abuse in clergy households. Recommendation 26 states: "All church bodies to raise awareness of domestic abuse, including the understanding of the harmful impact of domestic

abuse on children.” What moves are being taken to raise this awareness and to provide properly funded practical and emotional support to those who are suffering from church related abuse, particularly where clergy spouses have been abused either by their husband or the systems of the institution?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Domestic abuse is an issue of real concern within the Church, and the subject of a high percentage of safeguarding concerns and allegations reported to diocesan safeguarding teams. In response to the PCR2 recommendation, the National Safeguarding Steering Group has agreed to the establishment of a working group to develop recommendations and plans to build capacity in both our understanding and responding to domestic abuse within the Church. This work, as with our national campaign during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, will be undertaken in collaboration and partnership with survivors of domestic abuse, in addition to external partners such as the Mothers’ Union and “Restored”.

**Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q73** Members of Synod have been previously told that the Lessons Learnt Reviews into Trevor Devamanikkam and John Smyth would be published in autumn 2022, despite this, no such publication has taken place. When will these reviews be published?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** **Makin review into John Smyth**

On 9 January 2023 the review started consulting with victims in relation to factual accuracy of their contribution to the report. Once this is completed the representation process will commence, which relates to individuals and organisations who will be criticised in the report. Further announcements will be made regarding publication when these stages have been completed.

**Humphrey review into Trevor Devamanikkam**

The NST is currently conducting the representation process for those individuals who were criticised. Further announcements will be made regarding publication once this process has been completed.

**The Revd Mark Bennet (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q74** A number of safeguarding reports commissioned by the CofE remain delayed and outstanding. Can the Bishop provide a comprehensive list of these, with the dates they were originally due and the best projected dates of delivery, based upon current information?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** There are two ongoing independent learning lesson reviews commissioned by the NST.

**Makin review into John Smyth**

The review was formally announced in August 2019. The original terms of reference anticipated that the Review shall be completed within no more than nine months from commencement. On 9 January 2023 the review started consulting with victims in relation to factual accuracy of their contribution to the report. Once this is completed the representation process will commence, which relates to



individuals and organisations who will be criticised in the report. Further announcements will be made regarding publication when these stages have been completed.

### **Humphrey review into Trevor Devamanikkam**

Jane Humphrey's appointment was announced in November 2019; however the Review was formally announced in August 2019 but objections were received to the original reviewer and the process was therefore delayed.

The original intention was to complete and publish during 2020 however the process was seriously hampered by the Covid pandemic and due to concerns raised by a key person in the review. The ISB reviewed the process and recommended that the review proceed. The NST is currently conducting the representation process for those individuals who are criticised.

Learning Lessons Reviews are also commissioned in dioceses, including cathedrals, and the responsibilities and timeframe rests with them.

### **Mrs Kat D'Arcy-Cumber (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q75** Who is the point of contact for concerns about a Diocesan Safeguarding Team?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The diocese concerned should be approached. Exactly who should be approached might vary from diocese to diocese because of the different organisational and management structures. But a starting point might be the person responsible for the overall management of the team. In some cases this will be the diocesan secretary. Dioceses will also have complaints procedures if informal resolution is not possible.

### **Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q76** What should happen if a parish has a long-standing and ongoing vacancy for the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The guidance emphasises that the requirement is to have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), appointed by and working with the Incumbent and PCC. If there is a long-standing and ongoing vacancy for the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer, for instance in rural parishes or parishes held in plurality, the Incumbent and PCCs should consider joining together to share a PSO while remembering that legal responsibility will continue to rest with the individual parishes.

### **Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q77** What actions, if any, are being taken to make the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer more attractive, less onerous and easier to fill?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) play a vital role in keeping people safe. To support them, there is a Parish Safeguarding Officers' induction training module – this can be completed on-line but some dioceses deliver in-person. Data systems which allow tracking of key safeguarding activity/requirements, such as the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, have proven very helpful and supportive. Safeguarding guidance is now available on the Church's E-manual and the guidance on safer

recruitment and people management provides many templates which can be adopted easily. Individual dioceses are responsible for support and a range of approaches have been adopted by some e.g. PSO networking, development and information-giving sessions; one diocese is planning a PSO Thanksgiving Service at the cathedral. Building up relationships between the diocese safeguarding team and the PSOs will reduce a sense of isolation.

**The Revd Nicki Pennington (Carlisle) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q78** Given the critical role that parish clergy are required to fulfil in leading safeguarding in the parish, what consideration has been given to the provision of timely, professional support and supervision for clergy specific to the safeguarding role (separate from the Ministerial Development Review, which is facilitated by individuals who may or may not have a current understanding of the requirements, responsibilities, policy and practices of safeguarding in the parish)?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Support for clergy in respect of their safeguarding role is given through the provision of safeguarding training and access to safeguarding guidance. The NST is not aware of any formal arrangements for professional supervision in respect of safeguarding.

**Mr Clive Billenness (Europe) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q79** What steps are being taken in the UK and Europe to ensure that the Guidelines contained in the Anglican Safe Church Commission's publication "Guidelines to enhance the safety of all persons—especially children, young people and vulnerable adults—within the provinces of the Anglican Communion", which was unanimously adopted at the 2022 Lambeth Conference, are fully integrated into Safeguarding Protocols and Procedures?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Ensuring that the Church of England is a safe space for all, including children, young people and vulnerable adults, remains a priority at the heart of the Church's daily work. The Church of England has developed a range of policies, procedures and initiatives that align with the guidelines outlined by the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission. Some of these policies and procedures are currently under revision and will become Safeguarding Codes of Practice, which relevant Church Officers and Church Bodies will have a duty to comply with. This will further emphasise the centrality of safeguarding in the Church's work and will complement the ongoing efforts to improve the culture and practice within the Church.

**Professor Helen King (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q80** Can Synod members be updated on the progress with setting up a Survivors' Reference Group, as originally requested when Bishop Peter Hancock was Lead Bishop for Safeguarding?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The NST is working to develop and implement a survivor engagement strategy to ensure that the voices and experience of victims and survivors are central to all of its work. This includes appointment of a Partnership & Engagement Lead, who is

working with various groups and individual survivors, as not everyone wishes to participate as part of any one group or organisation.

Further information can be found on the NST website as follows:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/survivor-engagement>

**Mr Clive Billenness (Europe) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q81** Given that the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB) does not exist as a legal entity and cannot therefore enter into contracts, by what means (i.e. role or Church of England body) are goods and services authorised, commissioned and paid for on its behalf?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The ISB members decide in any case what services they wish to commission and from which source. As an example, the ISB has asked the Archbishops' Council to provide secure email accounts which it provides at the instruction of the ISB members and for which it makes no charge.

**Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q82** When the Independent Safeguarding Board was conceived by its designers what was the mechanism (if any) for that Board to be held effectively to account for its performance by a) Members of General Synod b) Members of Archbishops' Council c) The House of Bishops d) any other body? Please specify with reference to documentation capable of audit and verification.

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The ISB's design seeks to balance independence of action while ensuring that its members should fulfil their contractual duties to the Archbishops' Council. This does not, of course, prevent the ISB from reporting on its work to both Synod and House, as it has done on more than one occasion. The formal scrutiny of the ISB's work was embodied in a proposal for a review by the Archbishops' Council after two years and in the expectation that this initial version of the ISB (Phase 1) would bring forward proposals for Phase 2 after two years which, if accepted, would bring Phase 1 – that is, the ISB in its present form – to a close. This is documented in the initial proposal for the ISB accepted at a joint meeting of the Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops on 23 February 2021. The contracts with the individual ISB members provide a mechanism for dispute resolution which seeks to maintain the balance between oversight and independence of action.

**Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q83** Survivors of C of E abuse have circulated General Synod members with a briefing summarising their ongoing concerns. It contains the assertion that their confidentiality is "routinely breached" and that the ISB Chair remains "stood aside" for six months whilst multiple data breaches are being investigated by the Office of the Information Commissioner. How many data breaches by the ISB are being currently investigated?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The ICO will not inform the Archbishops' Council about investigations regarding any alleged data breach for which members of the Independent Safeguarding Board may be responsible. Accordingly, the Council is unable to confirm whether such investigations are underway, nor the number of such investigations.

**Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q84** At the beginning of November the Independent Safeguarding Board produced its first report and recommendations on the care of victims and survivors of church abuse. Can the House of Bishops please report to Synod which of these recommendations have been rejected and accepted together with what progress is being made on implementation?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The National Safeguarding Steering Group which acts on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops was due to consider the NST's response to the ISB's recommendations at its meeting on 31 January, after the deadline for answers to Synod questions. Once this has been approved by the National Safeguarding Steering Group it will be published and a report will be included in NST's regular update to the House of Bishops.

**The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q85** Will you please inform the General Synod, in round figures, the total costs to date, broken down by financial years, for the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB), which sums should include the creation, capital resourcing, day to day costs, administration, outsourced servicing including initial recruitment legal services and accountancy for creation and ongoing advice, together with emoluments for the members and staff (such costs to include recruitment, and legal costs both of establishing and advising the Board members)?

*The Bishop of Rochester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** In 2021 the costs of the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB) were £89,000. Unaudited 2022 expenditure was £472,000. The Archbishops' Council's 2023 budget approved by the General Synod last July included £465,000 for the ISB. Discussions with the ISB are underway to review the adequacy of the 2023 budget.

**The Ven Adrian Youings (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q86** At the General Synod in February 2022 members were told that the SCIE reports for Lambeth and Bishopthorpe would be published by Easter 2022. These have still not been published. Why has there been this delay and when can we expect publication? "

**Mrs Jane Rosam (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q87** At General Synod on February last year we were told that the SCIE report for Bishopthorpe Palace would be published by Easter 2022, with the report for Lambeth Palace due to follow afterwards. These have still not been published. Why is there a delay and when can we expect publication?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** With your permission Chair, I will answer questions 86 and 87 together.

The Bishopthorpe Palace SCIE Audit along with an action plan was published on 31 January 2023. A number of staff at Bishopthorpe have moved on since the audit, yet it was necessary for us to ensure they had seen the report from SCIE and had been afforded the opportunity to discuss this with the auditors where

further clarity was needed. This took longer than we anticipated, for which I apologise, by which time the auditors were immersed with the Lambeth Palace audit, which inevitably added further delay.

The team at Lambeth Palace are nearing the end of a similar process and will be publishing their SCIE report shortly. The independent audit of Lambeth Palace by SCIE was originally due to take place in March 2021, however, it was delayed owing to the challenges posed by COVID-19. The Lambeth Palace SCIE audit, as a direct consequence, did not in fact take place until March 2022.

Both the Palaces continue to work closely together on Safeguarding and will be sharing learnings from their respective reports to strengthen and improve safeguarding across the Palaces.

**The Revd Dr Michael Brydon (Sodor & Man) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q88** In 1953 the Coronation Rite was in the public domain six months in advance. If the Coronation Rite has not been published, by the start of Synod, when may we look forward to it being released?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** In 1953 there were almost 18 months between the death of the late King and the date of the Coronation. On this occasion there will have been roughly eight months. Six months' notice would have been very difficult. In addition, the Court of Claims has yet to consider a number of claims that would have an impact on some of the fine detail of the rite (although not on anything of any great significance).

The decision to publish involves the Church of England, DCMS, and above all the Royal Household. In brief, I don't know. I would like to record my thanks to the large number of people from the Liturgical Commission, the NCIs, Lambeth Palace, Westminster Abbey, musicians and the Bishops who are involved, for the vast amount of work put into the Coronation.

**Mr Benjamin John (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q89** What is the current policy, process or protocol regarding a Bishop who ceases to believe, teach, or uphold the doctrine of the Church of England on essential matters? If none, would the House of Bishops consider proposing formal processes for such a situation?

*The Archbishop of York to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The House of Bishops does not have an internal policy, process or protocol for such a situation. The Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963 apply to bishops, as with all other clergy, and it is for those processes to determine any such complaint that may be made.

**The Revd Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TEIs) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q90** Given the deteriorating situation in Israel and Palestine, what will the Church do and say in response to those who suffer ongoing physical and psychological oppression, and loss of land, in particular the Palestinian people?

*The Bishop of Southwark to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

- A** The Church as evident in the historic Catholic and Orthodox Churches as well as the Churches of the reformation minister in both Israel and Palestine. They contain amongst their members those who suffer dispossession and distress. The Church of England's historic work in the area has been via the Church Mission Society. It is in communion with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, currently under the oversight of Archbishop Hosam Naom. The Episcopal Diocese has recently entered a covenant with the Diocese of Southwark for mutual benefit. In parliament Bishops highlight the pressure on Palestinian land and people and the need for a two-state solution. I annually attend, as the only Anglican invitee, the Holy Land Coordination Group mandated by the Vatican as an international group of Roman Catholic Bishops to visit and support Christian communities in Israel, the Occupied Territories, Gaza and Jordan.

**The Revd Mike Tufnell (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

- Q91** What does our research evidence suggest about the impact of pooling parishes into multi-parish benefices on the potential for numerical church growth, and how are members of the House of Bishops taking that research into account in diocesan organisation and deployment plans?

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

- A** Three significant research reports are available on the Church of England website<sup>1</sup>, each building on the last. The final version 'Growing Deeper'<sup>2</sup> concludes that once rurality, population change and size of congregation are taken into account:

'There is no significant difference in church growth with different numbers of churches in a benefice'.

The report does note that an increase in clergy is linked with the likelihood of growth in attendance. These trends are correlations, and do not hold in every circumstance. Nonetheless, there has been significant investment in increasing clergy numbers by dioceses and the national church through funding for increasing vocations by 50%, IME 1 and curacies.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/church-growth-research-programme/findings-and-reports>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/going\\_deeper\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/going_deeper_final_0.pdf)

**Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

- Q92** The pessimistic results coming from the Chote Report on LinC and SDF support suggest that only 12074 new disciples out of an expected 89375 were recruited into SDF-funded resource churches in the period 2014-2021. Since the scheme will only run until 2027, the hope of achieving the target seems very remote. Is it not time for the Church to admit that the SDF scheme has been a failure, and that future monies be invested in more productive exercises like properly funding the traditional parishes?

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops*

**A** The question mischaracterises the figures of new disciples – it takes time (especially in light of a pandemic) to set up projects and grow faith and 70,000 of the new disciples figures are expected from projects started since 2018. The Independent Review’s report notes in Figure 6 that 70% of projects are on track to achieve their objectives, meeting the aims of the fund. I rejoice that there are new people coming to know Jesus through the inspiring work done in churches throughout this country.

The Chote report identified that both Lowest Income Communities Funding and Strategic Development Funding were essential for supporting and growing the ministry of many parishes. Indeed the report notes that over half of SDF is funding work with existing parishes.

SDF has now come to an end, and the Church is committed to learning from what has and hasn’t been effective. Improvements will continue to be made to these funding streams to ensure they have the most impact possible.

**Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q93** What plans are there to examine, document, and celebrate the role of Church of England and other British Christian leaders in the opposition to the slave trade?

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The fight for racial equality has not been an easy one. Activists for racial equality and racial justice in the Church have for centuries been organising and doing essential advocacy and educational work.

In more recent decades, exceptional women and men have stepped up and come forward to inspire, organise and support a movement that is transforming the face of Britain into a modern, diverse society that promotes inclusivity and protects the rights of all. Leaders today, Black, Brown, White and otherwise, continue the work of those who paved the way with their lives, work, and witness.

Active consideration is being given to the hosting of an event in October 2023, coinciding with Black History Month, to celebrate those pioneers not only of the abolition of the Slave Trade but of racial justice across the centuries from the Reverend Morgan Godwyn, Mary Prince, and Olaudah Equiano to Bishop Wilfred Wood, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin.

**Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q94** Following trends in church statistics provided in answers to previous GS questions, church attendance will be zero by 2045. At the same time there will be 10000 support staff (200 per Diocese), and half the current 7210 vicars (3607 - 80 per Diocese). What plans does the church have to avoid Net Zero in church attendance by 2045?

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The Vision and Strategy set out by the Archbishop of York, the finances for which were approved by Synod in July 2022; the ministry of all God’s people, lay and ordained, in parishes, chaplaincies, and other contexts; and the gifts and blessings of the Holy Spirit.

**The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q95** The Routemap to Net Zero Carbon sets many milestones for dioceses, but diocesan finances are extremely stretched. How is the national Church helping dioceses have the required capacity to meet these?

*The Bishop of Norwich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Diocesan Boards of Finance and Education have a vital role in achieving Net Zero Carbon, both with assets under their direct management (such as clergy housing, offices and transport) and also supporting their churches and schools.

Materials have been created to provide guidance and support for dioceses: [Reducing emissions from dioceses](#). The national webinar programme and training in Carbon Literacy are also available. A “Net Zero Carbon Resource Hub” has been created, where sample policies, role descriptions, and action plans are shared.

To support capacity-building in dioceses, the Net Zero Carbon Programme Board has already committed £6m of funding over the period 2023-2025, available to all dioceses, including “starter grants” of £15,000 to enable every diocese to create an NZC action plan. Much larger follow-on grants are available, with partnership applications from dioceses working in clusters (potentially with cathedrals and TEIs) encouraged, to enable small teams of shared specialists to be recruited.

Full details of how to apply have been sent to Diocesan Secretaries and DEOs.

In total, £190million of NZC funding will be available over the next three triennia, £30million of which is in 2023-25.

**Mr Charles Houston (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q96** If the church is to reach net zero by 2030, then as many buildings as possible which are in regular daytime use should have solar electric panels (PV) installed. In most dioceses, the obvious targets for installation are schools, offices and training establishments. I am told that it is not possible for church-run schools to enter into any leasehold agreement on their roofs or curtilage land which would allow them to enjoy “free” solar electricity, which, given the costs of installation, is the only feasible way for them to reach net zero by 2030. What is being done to address this?

*The Bishop of Norwich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** There are various model agreements for solar panels in schools. Each requires a cost incurred at some point even if provided by a not-for-profit company. Most church schools are held on historic educational endowments by trustees and the only asset is the site which is provided for the purposes of a Church of England school; therefore, trustees would need to take advice and have careful consideration of any arrangement which would fetter the site under a long-term agreement.

It is our understanding that rent schemes, such as the one described in this question, have largely disappeared as these were linked to the feed-in tariff. However, an alternative model is to provide solar panels with an agreement which



outlines that any electricity used within the school is purchased by the school through the panels, which is provided at a lower rate to alternative energy suppliers. It is not yet clear if in the context of schools this agreement can be dealt with via power purchase arrangements without a leasehold arrangement of physical space. Legal advice will be required in each context.

The Education Office is reviewing the solar panel packages available to church schools, following which further guidance will be provided.

**Professor Lynn Nichol (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q97** In the light of a recently published study by Cambridge University indicating that not eating meat on one day a week could 'bring about a major reduction in global carbon emissions', would the House of Bishops in line with the Church of England's commitment to Carbon Net Zero by 2030 commend to the Church and Nation the practice of committing to Meat-free Friday this Lent?

*The Bishop of Norwich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** I am very happy to commend the practice of having a meat-free Friday during Lent. It is, after all, entirely in line with the long-established Christian practice in many churches of avoiding meat on Fridays, and not only during Lent. And I am sure members can be more imaginative than the soggy fishfingers we used to get on Fridays for school dinners ! I propose that this proposal might be best promulgated through the Environmental Working Group which I chair, rather than the House of Bishops as such, since the EWG has good links to dioceses through the network of Diocesan Environmental Officers and can locate the proposal within the wider context of our multi-faceted strategy for reaching Net Zero Carbon.

**The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q98** Under the ARocha Eco Church Scheme how many Churches, Dioceses and other church buildings have achieved Gold, Silver and Bronze awards?

*The Bishop of Norwich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The A Rocha UK EcoChurch scheme is instrumental in helping the Church of England to deepen its understanding of and commitment to creation care. We are grateful to the team at A Rocha UK who administer the programme.

All 42 Dioceses have registered with the scheme. Of those, 17 have achieved the bronze award.

39 out of 43 cathedrals are registered, 15 have reached bronze, 11 silver and 2 gold.

4,040 CofE churches are registered with EcoChurch, including LEPs, roughly 25% of all churches. 1,147 have reached bronze, 397 silver and 23 gold. The target in the [Routemap to Net Zero Carbon](#) for 2026 is for 40% of all churches to be registered, and 30% to have gained an award.

22 Diocesan offices have registered, 8 have reached bronze and 4 silver. Additionally, Church House Westminster has achieved the bronze award.

5 TEIs have registered for the award, 3 have reached bronze and 1 silver.

**Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q99** Following the announcement this month of the appointment of a diocesan bishop who does not ordain women or take communion from them, what provision is being made for those who in conscience cannot receive the oversight of a diocesan bishop who does not fully accept equality of men and women in priestly ministry?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The House of Bishops' Declaration contains within it some general principles around reciprocity. These can be found in [GS Misc 1076](#), paragraphs 9 – 13. Paragraph 11 is particularly helpful in this instance: “*Now that the Church of England has admitted women to the episcopate there should within each diocese be at least one serving bishop, whether the diocesan or a suffragan, who ordains women to the priesthood. This has a bearing on the considerations that the Crown Nominations Commission and diocesan bishops will need to take into account when considering diocesan and suffragan appointments.*”

**Mrs Sandie Turner (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q100** Given the absence of centrally available data showing the number of complementarian senior appointments or the number of dioceses where requested extended episcopal oversight is declined, or the extent and nature of extended oversight extended by Diocesan bishops to the Bishop of Maidstone/ Ebbsfleet, to what extent can the effectiveness of mutual flourishing be measured and evaluated?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The work of Standing Commission on the House of Bishops' Declaration is “to support dioceses with the monitoring of the implementation of the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests”. Within its terms of reference is the aim “to consider how effectively the Declaration, including the Five Guiding Principles, is being promoted throughout the Church”. The terms of reference also commend that “The work of this body will be based upon careful engagement with people who embody a range of experiences and viewpoints within the Church of England.” This will be done alongside any data which are held in these areas. The Commission will consider what further data are needed to evaluate areas of Mutual Flourishing and engage with the retired Bishop of Maidstone and new Bishop of Ebbsfleet to see what data are available.

**Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q101** In view of the evidence from Chichester where a very low proportion of stipendiary priests are women, what steps are being taken to ensure that should the appointment of another male Diocesan Bishop who does not accept Communion from women priests take place, that appointment will not have a detrimental effect upon the flourishing of women in the Church of England?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The Crown Nominations Commission process, in nominating any person to a diocesan see, considers the flourishing of all people in the diocese. This includes conversations on Mutual Flourishing and whether the whole diocese is able to flourish under the care of a bishop who, for theological reasons, chooses not to ordain women to the priesthood. The House of Bishops does not consider that further steps are needed beyond that process. Any bishop-elect will want to consider how they themselves will ensure flourishing for all in the diocese as they prepare for their new ministry in that place.

**Mr Benjamin John (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q102** Has the House of Bishops considered what the bounds of an 'essential matter' is in respect of Canon B 5.3 and if so, what conclusion did they come to? If they have not, would they consider defining such bounds?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** In its section 'Common Prayer and the Law', the resource book *New Patterns for Worship* (2008 ed.) by the Liturgical Commission, citing the terms of Canon A 5, states that:

*In considering whether any rite is contrary to, or indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter, reference should be made to:*

- i. the Holy Scriptures;*
- ii. such teachings of the Fathers and the Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures;*
- iii. the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal;*
- iv. such forms of service, canons and regulations as have received the final approval of General Synod.*

**The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q103** The late Rt Revd Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town instructed that his body should not be buried or cremated but undergo Resomation (Alkaline Hydrolysis).

Bearing in mind the Church of England's care for the bereaved, as well as our commitment to net zero carbon together with the environmental costs of current and future means for the disposal of human remains, are there:

- a) Any theological objections to the use of Resomation;
- b) Any theological objections to the use of Human Composting;
- c) Any pastoral recommendations for the reverent care of human bodies regardless of the manner of their disposal?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** There has not been any formal theological consideration of either Resomation – whereby a body is dissolved over a matter of hours in a bath of lye or caustic soda and hot water, leaving bone residue behind that can be reduced to 'ashes', or Human Composting – where the natural decomposition process that takes place after burial is reduced to a matter of months using the body's naturally-occurring bacteria to turn it into soil.

The Liturgical Commission is currently working on a volume of resources that will encourage good practice in all aspects of funeral ministry.

As Canon Dotchin is the Synod's representative on the ecumenical Churches' Funerals Group, we would like to suggest that he might help to organise a small consultation including members of the Faith and Order and Liturgical Commissions to look at this question in more detail and with ecumenical input.

**The Revd Barney de Berry (Canterbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q104** Does the church have a settled and agreed theological definition of lust, where is that stated and what is it?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** There is no official definition of lust agreed formally by the Church of England.

The document *Issues in Human Sexuality* explored questions surrounding sexual morality but without explicitly mentioning 'lust'. The *Pilling Report* mentioned, but did not define, 'lust' as part of an exploration of Paul's teaching on sexual morality. 'Lust' is mentioned but not defined in the Living in Love and Faith resources (for example, in the LLF book, 'lust' is mentioned in relation to Sodom and Gomorrah, to David and Bathsheba, and to Jesus' teaching on divorce, though not strictly defined).

**Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q105** What steps is the House of Bishops taking to promote Biblical teaching and practice on 'holiness' and 'purity' in: a) churches; b) among clergy; c) in Synod; and d) among bishops, by both word and action?

*The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The LLF resources explore questions of holiness in some detail (esp. chapters 11, 12 and 14), and purity (chapter 11). The LLF resources are meant to be for church wide engagement at every level and we encourage their continued use. All clergy commit themselves to 'grow in holiness' in their ordination vows. Further thought will be given to this matter by the Pastoral Consultative Group and in the production of new guidance.

**Mrs Sarah Finch (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q106** How is the Church of England safeguarding vulnerable children and young people against the dangers of transgenderism, given their obvious immaturity in terms of mental, physical and psycho-sexual development?

*The Bishop of Durham to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The presumption about 'dangers' is not one which can be debated in the Questions format. However, I can confirm that safeguarding is of the utmost importance in churches and schools. Schools fulfil their responsibility in this area in partnership with children and their parents and in collaboration with other agencies in the light of government guidance and the law.

**Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q107** Which dioceses have the members of their DBF be their Diocesan Synod (Oxford is an example, I believe) and which have the members of their DBF be something else (Winchester DBF for example has its Bishop's Council as its members)?

*The Bishop of Oxford to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Over half of dioceses kindly responded within a very short time-window to being asked this question, and of those in over two-thirds the members of the DBF are the Diocesan Synod.

I can add that we find in Oxford it to work very well for the members of Diocesan Synod to form the members of the DBF and Bishop's Council its Directors.

**The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q108** What is the latest information on how many dioceses are planning to reduce their number of stipendiary clergy posts, by how much in each diocese, and in total across the Church and how does that compare with reductions over the last ten years? Further, has the House of Bishops considered what impact these reductions will have on the goals for numerical growth?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** We are grateful to the 25 dioceses who have recently shared their current projections with us on a confidential basis. Of those 25, 8 are planning small reductions, 8 are planning no change and 9 are planning to increase stipendiary clergy numbers – in three cases by more than 10%. On this basis, we have reasonable confidence that the number of stipendiary clergy overall will be maintained at around 7,500.

We are aware that in 2021, an above average number of clergy left stipendiary ministry (to chaplaincy, self-supporting ministry, retirement etc). Thankfully in that year there was also a very high number of ordinations and we are keen to encourage dioceses and individuals in identifying new ministerial vocations to equip the church for mission now and in future. Whilst we recognise the significant financial challenge facing us as a church, we welcome the start of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board which will distribute increased funding to support ministry across the Church.

A full table of recent changes in clergy numbers is available on the noticeboard. The total number of stipendiary clergy over the last ten years is as follows:

2012 – 8,300	2017 – 7,740
2013 – 8,120	2018 – 7,700
2014 – 7,970	2019 – 7,700
2015 – 8,000	2020 – 7,670
2016 – 7,790	2021 – 7,570

**The Revd Matt Beer (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q109** What role does a track record in effective leadership of a local church into growth play in the criteria for the appointment of archdeacons and suffragan bishops?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The recruitment process for archdeacons and suffragan bishops considers a wide range of criteria relating to the role, the context and any diocesan specific requirements. The previous ministerial experiences of candidates form a part of this discernment process.

The key criteria in role profiles for suffragan appointments are set after careful discernment on the part of the appointing diocesan bishop, supported by their advisory group, and these will vary depending on the context in which the appointment is being made. Along with other criteria, evidence of leadership in mission, evangelism and church growth are routinely assessed as part of the appointment processes for episcopal roles.

**Miss Jane Patterson (Sheffield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q110** Where is the membership of the Advisory Committees which advise diocesan bishops on the appointment of archdeacons and suffragans published?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** It is a matter for the appointing diocesan bishop to decide if/where to publish details of the membership of an Advisory Group for a suffragan appointment. Obvious places where this might happen include diocesan websites and candidate information packs, but no central record of the information requested is held.

There is no Advisory Committee for the appointment of Archdeacons and the process follows the principles of safer recruitment.

**The Revd Mark Lucas (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q111** Does the House of Bishops have any plans to revise their "Policy on Granting PTO" 2018 document, particularly section 2.11, bullet point 6 which reads: *PTO is held entirely at the bishop's discretion and may be withdrawn by the bishop at any time, and without any right of appeal*; which obscures the transparency of bishops and denies basic human rights to the one whose license is withdrawn?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** PTO is a more flexible framework for exercising ministry without the legal obligations and entitlements that come with holding office under licence. When granted by the bishop, it is subject to the agreement of the relevant incumbent. PTO is only issued for a fixed (potentially renewable) period aligned to the period of a DBS check. If a safeguarding risk is identified, PTO must be withdrawn, as there is no provision for suspension with PTO, even if it is restored later. PTO is granted on the basis that it will be used. This means that there can be difficult decisions to be made once clergy are too frail to preside at the Eucharist, or if other challenges arise, which need to be sensitively handled. The guidance already makes it clear that any withdrawal or non-renewal of PTO should be discussed with the cleric and their incumbent and that appropriate pastoral care should be provided and that PTO may be reoffered if circumstances change. Work has already started on updating the Policy on Granting PTO but this is mainly to take account of changes to safer recruitment guidance and safeguarding training.

**The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q112** In his answer to my question (Q26) about Canon C4 faculties at the July 2022 session of General Synod, the Bishop of Chester, replying on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops, said that faculties under Canon C4 were currently in the early stages of review and that the extent of the work had yet to be fully scoped. What is the latest situation on this please, and will the review include looking again at the 2010 House of Bishops guidelines on Canon C4 faculties, particularly the requirement that the current marriage needs to be at least three years old before a faculty application will normally be entertained?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Work has continued in scoping out the nature of this exercise and this now sits with the Office of the Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Consultation continues with legal colleagues and those who have experience of making applications in the dioceses. Changes being made in the draft Miscellaneous Provisions Measure, currently before the Synod, are designed to address some concerns previously raised about the inability for C4 applications

to be made during a vacancy in see and associated points. Decisions on the guidelines rest with the Archbishops and as part of the review will be invited to consider all aspects of the current guidance, including the criteria applied in determining applications. In the meantime, work is taking place to streamline the current process.

As part of this work, those who have views on the current regulations and guidelines are welcome to share them with the Office of the Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York at Lambeth Palace.

**The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q115** Could we please know when the House will be issuing formal guidance on the processes to be followed when a cleric is seeking to return to ministry after a period of prohibition?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The House of Bishops has invited the Clergy Discipline Commission to consider issuing a new code of practice on the procedures to assess the return to ministry of a cleric who has been subject to a period of prohibition imposed under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. The Commission has agreed to do that, and the House was consulted on a draft version of the new code in November 2022. The House understands that the code is almost complete and will be issued by the Commission at the earliest opportunity.

**Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q114** Clergy families are often badly damaged by the CDM process, being completely powerless and mostly ignored as it plays out. For example, families do not always receive a pastoral letter expressing concern from the bishop following dismissal of a case or its removal from the process. What recommended pastoral measures have bishops agreed to care for clergy families during and after CDMs and has this issue been discussed by the House? Are there any examples of good practice that can be shared with Synod?

*The Bishop of Worcester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The House of Bishops is very alive to the impact disciplinary proceedings have on all who are involved in the process, not least of all clergy and their families. The House has recently discussed the processes around pastoral support both in terms of the current CDM and also during a consultation on the proposed Clergy Conduct Measure. The House commends the current guidance issued by the Clergy Discipline Commission, and approved by Synod, in the Code of Practice at paragraph 138 that '*The bishop should be alert to the needs of the respondent and the respondent's close family for care and support. This may be needed, and should be made freely available, from the moment the respondent is notified and throughout the course of disciplinary proceedings, including after the proceedings have been concluded.*' The Code goes on to set out who and how that support might be given.

**Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q115** The *Talking Jesus* Report 2022 states that 24% of practising Christians (defined as those who worship regularly as part of a church community at least monthly and who read the Bible and pray at least weekly) identify reading the Bible as a key influence in them coming to faith, rising to 38% of 18-24-year-olds (pp.31-32 of the report). In the light of this, how does the House of Bishops plan to

encourage churches and individual Christians to make an invitation to read (or listen to) the Bible an integral part of their evangelism?

*The Bishop of Gloucester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** We are committed as a Church to enabling as many people as possible to read and reflect on the Bible as possible, recognising that this is vital for both evangelism and discipleship. The Daily Prayer app has now been downloaded more than five million times with 1.1 million total unique listeners, meaning that many more people now have the opportunity to access Scripture as part of the Office. The new Leading in Evangelism resource for church leaders is based very substantially on the Bible, with Dwelling in the Word a key part of each session. The Everyday Witness course also features daily Bible reflections for each participant. Our belief is that integrating Scripture into our learning about evangelism in this way ensures it features strongly in the evangelism and witness of the local church.

**Mr Martin Auton-Lloyd (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q116** Following the publication of the Coming Home report in February 2021 please can we have an update on the implementation of two recommendations firstly that to create a social disposal power for PCCs and DBFs especially in the light of the current affordable housing crisis. Secondly what progress has been made with changes to the rules around glebe land notably empowering DBFs to use the proceeds of the sale for appropriate missional costs in addition to ministry costs?

*The Bishop of Chelmsford to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** The national Church's Legal Office's view on the current extent of social disposal power of PCCs and DBFs can be found at: [Sale of land by DBFs and PCCs to further their objects.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](https://www.churchofengland.org/~/media/Church-of-England/Assets/Policy-and-Strategy/Sale-of-land-by-DBFs-and-PCCs-to-further-their-objects.pdf).

The possibility of legislative changes arising from recommendations of the Housing Commission was discussed at the Archbishops' Council last May, and it was agreed that further work was required on the proposals. It remains on the Archbishops' Council action log but to date it has not been possible to progress the work internally due to pressure of work and capacity constraints in the National Church staff teams. This is a disappointment to me, but these are complex matters which require detailed work and consultation to turn them into workable legislation.

The Legislative Reform Committee has suggested using a Legislative Reform Order for a permissive power which would facilitate shared management and / or ownership of such assets of glebe, and discussions with the Housing Executive and its Advisory Board on whether to seek to progress this are on-going.

**Mr Stephen Boyall (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q117** Do dioceses use a benchmarking scheme against other dioceses of similar size to assess appropriate staffing? If so, please can you publish the details of groupings of dioceses that are in place for this process.

*The Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** There is no formal benchmarking scheme for staffing levels amongst dioceses. However, dioceses consult informally about staffing structures and levels for different areas of work on a regular basis, either in the national or their regional network. Further work is being done in this area as Diocesan Boards of Finances seek to maximise effectiveness and minimise cost.



## CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

### **Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q118** What did information about the role of bishops who campaigned against slavery contribute to the decisions to develop the £100m impact investment fund?

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:*

**A** We seek, through the research we have done and our response, to acknowledge the truth of our past, apologise for the wrongs that this research has highlighted and to address these wrongs through repentance, remembrance, reconciliation, and renewal. It is impossible to repair the damage caused by the generations of human misery inflicted through the Transatlantic Slave Trade in any fair or meaningful way. The Church Commissioners see the proposed response as a means of investing in a better future for all - we want to help create a lasting positive legacy.

This is a direct response to the Commissioners' research into the origins of Queen Anne's Bounty and doesn't seek to consider all of the various theological, social and political attitudes of the Church during the time period encompassed by the research. In the course of our research, however, we have learned much about the diversity of positions on slavery taken by bishops and other clergy at that time. Some were slave owners themselves, some proponents of slavery, while others worked for its abolition. Some of the artefacts reflecting this diversity of thought and action are currently displayed at Lambeth Palace Library in the exhibition 'Enslavement: Voices from the Archives' which we would encourage all Synod members to visit. The exhibition is open until March 31 2023.

### **The Revd Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q119** Could the Church Commissioners give details of how the oversight group for the management of £100 million Slavery fund will be constituted through fair representation, as well as guarantee the synod that this oversight group will actually have the power to shape the process, investment and outcomes of the aforementioned fund.

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:*

**A** We seek, through the research we have done and our response, to acknowledge the truth of our past, apologise for the wrongs that this research has highlighted and to address these wrongs through repentance, remembrance, reconciliation, and renewal. It is impossible to repair the damage caused by the generations of human misery inflicted through the Transatlantic Slave Trade in any fair or meaningful way. The Church Commissioners see the proposed response as a means of investing in a better future for all - we want to help create a lasting positive legacy.

A new Oversight Group will be formed during 2023 with significant membership from communities impacted by historic slavery. This group will work with the Church Commissioners' Board on shaping and delivering the response, listening widely to ensure this work is done sensitively and with accountability.

We are currently in the process of developing the terms of reference for this Group and will be happy to share this with Synod for information once it has been approved by the Church Commissioners' Board.

We are wholly committed to ensuring that the Group has broad representation from communities impacted by the legacy of transatlantic chattel slavery, and also that the Group is able to shape the process, investment and outcomes of this fund. While final decisions will of course be made by the Church Commissioners' Board, not putting the Oversight Group's recommendations at the heart of the fund going forward would constitute failure to learn from the upsetting history of the Church's endowment.

**Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q120** With respect to the grant funding aspect of the Church Commissioners' response to historic transatlantic chattel slavery, please can you provide the expected timing for bringing forward to General Synod the required legislation to amend the charitable aims and objectives of the Church Commissioners to enable this grant funding to be focused on those most impacted by historic chattel slavery, for example including those in West Africa and the Caribbean?

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:*

**A** We seek, through the research we have done and our response, to acknowledge the truth of our past, apologise for the wrongs that this research has highlighted and to address these wrongs through repentance, remembrance, reconciliation, and renewal. It is impossible to repair the damage caused by the generations of human misery inflicted through the Transatlantic Slave Trade in any fair or meaningful way. The Church Commissioners see the proposed response as a means of investing in a better future for all - we want to help create a lasting positive legacy.

The Church Commissioners are currently exploring all possible options for the operation of the Impact Investment Fund that will be established in response to the findings of our recent report.

It is too early to know how or where the fund will be invested, or any grants made, although our focus will be on investing in a fairer future for all.

A new Oversight Group will be formed during 2023 with significant membership from communities affected by the legacy of transatlantic chattel slavery. This group will work with the Church Commissioners' Board on shaping and delivering the response, including the use of the funding, listening widely to ensure this work is done sensitively and with accountability.

Once we have a clearer picture of the detailed plans for the fund, we will assess whether this may require legislative change.

**The Revd Canon Timothy Goode (Southwark) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q121** Given our ambition to be a church that is younger and more diverse and our desire to be an equal opportunities employer, could the Church Commissioners share how they are proactively ensuring that both clerical and lay posts are accessible and open to applications from disabled people?

*The Bishop of Manchester to answer as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:*

**A** The Church Commissioners are clear that diversity and inclusion are morally imperative and crucial to effective governance and performance. We are fully committed to the NCIs' Belonging and Inclusion plan, part of which involves working with our Disability Network to review and monitor recruitment processes,

reasonable adjustments and training approaches, as well as our continued work on mental and physical wellbeing for all our people and how hybrid working can support staff with different needs.

In recent years, we have put particular focus on trustee-level recruitment with the intention that our Board can become more diverse. We are currently drawing up plans to help us build on the progress we have made with gender diversity, and are beginning to make with ethnic diversity, in other areas including disability. Actions include more diverse recruitment panels, stricter criteria for recruitment consultants, more inclusive language in adverts and accessible processes. If Canon Goode is willing, a member of the Church Commissioners team would be delighted to have a discussion with him about this work and will welcome his advice.

**Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q122** Which Christian groups and/or their representatives has the Second Estates Commissioner met with since his appointment and how many times has he met with them?

*The Bishop of Manchester to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:*

**A** Since taking up the role in January 2020, the Second Church Estates Commissioner has met with representatives of the groups listed below. This is in addition to the large number of regular meetings with the NCIs' boards, committees and officials, government ministers and officials, bishops and members of Parliament.

- Anglican Communion Primates
- Anna Chaplaincy
- Archbishops' Housing Commission
- Association of English Cathedrals
- Centre for Cultural Witness
- Christian Broadcasting Council
- Church of England Evangelical Council
- Church Revitalisation Trust
- Evangelical Alliance Freedom of Religious Belief Conference
- Faith in Later Life, supported by the Evangelical Alliance and Affinity
- Methodist Church and 'Reset the Debt'
- National Churches Trust
- National Prayer Breakfast sponsored by The Bible Society (twice)
- Open Doors, 'World Watch List'
- The Ozanne Foundation
- The 95 Network and 'Reimagining Church in a Digital Age'

Additional detail about these meetings (and some others not included here because they were individuals rather than Christian groups) has been made available on the noticeboard.

**The Revd Anne Brown (Truro) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q123** If the Church of England National Investing Bodies decide that some fossil fuel companies are 'Paris Aligned' and so continue to invest in them, how will they ensure that these companies continue to be aligned with the Paris Agreement in future years?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The assessment of the transition plans of our investments in fossil fuel companies is an ongoing component of our responsible investment approach and the Transition Pathway Initiative is the primary tool for this. The recommendations by the Task Force for Climate-related Financial Disclosure and its uptake, both in regulation and voluntarily, further promotes transparency, which helps assess companies' 'alignment'. (<https://www.fsb-tcfd.org/press/tcfd-report-finds-steady-increase-in-climate-related-financial-disclosures-since-2017/>).

The National Investing Bodies made a commitment in January 2020 for their investment portfolios to be net zero by 2050 as part of their commitment to the Net Zero Asset Owner's Alliance (AOA) and other initiatives. This involves ongoing assessment of the emissions profile of our portfolio, to ensure we can meet our interim targets. See: <https://www.unepfi.org/net-zero-alliance/resources/target-setting-protocol-second-edition/>

The Church Commissioners have employed a Net Zero lead to oversee this commitment. As part of this we review on an ongoing basis the emissions profile and Paris alignment of the most emissions-intensive holdings in our portfolio.

**The Revd Anne Brown (Truro) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q124** In their assessment of the Paris alignment of fossil fuel companies, are the Church of England National Investing Bodies including Carbon Tracker's conclusions contained its December 2022 report 'Paris Maligned', that the production plans of Shell, Total Energies and other major oil companies are not aligned with the Paris Agreement?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** No, the National Investing Bodies (NIBs) assess investee companies for Paris Agreement alignment against the assessment provided by the Transition Pathways Initiative (TPI) which independently assesses companies' Paris alignment. This is in accordance with the July 2018 General Synod Motion on climate change which urged the NIBs to "to engage urgently and robustly with companies rated poorly by TPI and, beginning in 2020, to start to disinvest from the ones that are not taking seriously their responsibilities to assist with the transition to a low carbon economy". The TPI includes criteria to assess companies' short-term (2025), medium-term (2035) and long-term (2050) alignment.

The Carbon Tracker research report is, though, a thought-provoking one which reminds us of the importance of continuing to assess the robustness of transition plans of the energy majors and the commitment and ability of the boards of those firms to execute those plans, through engagement via the TPI and through engagement with the firms in question as appropriate.

**The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q125** What have the Church of England National Investing Bodies done to raise concerns with BP with regard to CEO Bernard Looney attending the COP27 climate talks as a delegate of Mauritania, one of the world's poorest nations?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** As the Church Commissioners no longer held shares in BP at the time of COP 27 in November 2022, they were not involved in engaging with the company at that time.

**The Revd Canon Katrina Scott (Hereford) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q126** With increasing numbers of Dioceses making disinvestment commitments as a response to the climate crisis, have the Church Commissioners entered into any discussions with CCLA to confirm that funds held with them will remain disinvested from fossil fuels on ethical, theological and spiritual grounds, in their current five-year plan and beyond?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Church Commissioners work closely with the CBF Church of England Funds, managed by CCLA, as two of the three National Investing Bodies to implement the 2018 Synod Climate Motion (the third being the Church of England Pensions Board).

A full report of this work can be found here: [GS Misc 1283 - NIBs Approach to Climate Change- Report for July 21 Synod \(ID 246478\).pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

CCLA's management of the CBF funds is not, however, a matter for the Commissioners. Further information can be sought from CCLA via [clientservices@ccla.co.uk](mailto:clientservices@ccla.co.uk)

**Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q127** At the end of 2022, how much money did the Church Commissioners have invested in oil and gas companies?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** At the end of 2022, the amount the Church Commissioners had invested in oil and gas firms was less than 1% of the total fund. I am unable to give an exact figure since it is not yet audited.

Drawing on Transition Pathways Initiative data, we, along with the other National Investing Bodies, intend to divest from oil and gas companies that are not Paris-aligned by mid-2023, in line with the 2018 General Synod motion. We will report back to the July 2023 Synod.

**The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q128** What plans do the Church Commissioners have to increase investment in climate solutions such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, battery storage and electric vehicle charging infrastructure?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** We regard investing in climate solutions as a continuation of our responsible investment strategy as we seek to influence the world positively with our capital.

At the end of 2020, £1.1bn (roughly 12% of our fund) was invested in social and environmental solutions and the majority of this was in climate solutions. In 2021, we allocated an additional £100m to social and environmental solutions, which accounts for a significant portion of invested capital over this period. The majority of our investment in infrastructure is allocated towards investments related to the low-carbon transition, including renewable energy.

We also see part of our work on climate solutions as collaborating with, and fostering, a community of responsible investors. As part of this, the Commissioners are members of the Financing Transition Track, one of the workstreams within the Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance (AoA). In 2021, the Commissioners along with AOA members developed the AOA's climate solutions

reporting template, which draws from our own experience, regional taxonomies, and related research to develop a reporting template for climate solutions and applicable key performance indicators (KPIs) that are comparable across regions and investor types. This is now used by all members of the AOA, which will help compare and benchmark climate solution investments across different asset owners.

**The Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q129** What percentage of Church Commissioners' tenants have conducted a recent farm carbon audit, and what targets have the Commissioners made to increase this?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** 100% of all *new* publicly-marketed farm lettings since 2021 have included a carbon audit process which is a collaborative initiative between the Commissioners and the new tenant. This policy is in place for all future lettings. Within *existing* tenancy arrangements, these audits are voluntary and tenant-led and as such we do not know the number of audits completed so far. We do however encourage tenants who have not completed audits to do so and we offer recommendations on companies that are able to assist.

Through frequent estate visits and tenant meetings, we have also established that an increasing number of tenants have conducted farm carbon audits for a variety of reasons, including supplier contract requirements, and efficiency and yield analysis.

We are in the process of collecting further on-farm data and increasing the number of audits and we expect to be able to share further details publicly during 2023.

**The Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q130** What targets have the Church Commissioners made for increasing hedges and small scale woodland on farmland, and what progress has been made so far?

*Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** There is not a formal, portfolio-wide target as our focus is on farm-specific targets in new leases and collaboration on specific planting projects. As part of all new leases, farm-specific initiatives relating to biodiversity are identified and included.

We actively collaborate with our tenants, conducting regular meetings at which we emphasise the importance of increasing both hedgerow planting and utilising marginal areas for tree cover. The majority of planting projects are tenant-led and we encourage participation with relevant environmental schemes and direct tenants to grant funding opportunities, offering financial support where possible.

We participated in the Queen's Green Canopy initiative on a range of schemes including a 11,080 mixed tree plantation in north-west England. We also facilitate or fund a range of other local tree planting initiatives.

Improving woodland cover is embedded in our wider work on regenerative agriculture that promotes environmental improvements alongside the need for food production.

**Dr Cathy Rhodes (Sheffield) to ask the Church Commissioners**

**Q131** What formal partnerships have the Church Commissioners made in order to protect and restore peatland on its land?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The vast majority of peatland owned by the Church Commissioners is located in the Fens. As such we are active members of the “Fenland SOIL” group whose primary aim is to achieve climate mitigation and biodiversity enhancement in connection with agriculture in the Fens, whilst seeking to positively engage with policy makers and improve emission data around peaty soil used for agriculture.

Our partnership to date has included a co-hosted training day for our land agents and establishing links with our fen-based farming tenants relating to peaty soil management. Planned future events include running workshops for tenant farmers, including local Diocesan tenants as well as Church Commissioners’ tenants, seeking to widen the reach of the group. This will include funding membership for our farmers.

We are assessing other areas of peatland across the portfolio and exploring similar opportunities and partnerships for restoration and biodiversity improvements.

**Mrs Sue Cavill (Derby) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q132** Given that Dioceses continue to sell off land and vicarages to meet operational deficits, will the Church Commissioners bring forward a policy measure to offer first refusal on land sales to ensure that assets remain within the Church?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Church Commissioners manage the Church of England’s endowment fund for the benefit of the mission and ministry of the wider Church. We adopt bespoke investment strategies which seek to maximise returns whilst minimising risk and adopting a sustainable and ethical approach to investing.

The Commissioners invest in ‘real assets’ as part of a diversified fund. We have allocations to residential property and farmland (these being the most likely sources of any diocesan sales) based on highly targeted strategies for asset selection. However, we are at or above our strategic asset allocation for real assets and would not therefore have capacity to invest in surplus diocesan assets.

**The Revd Marcus Walker (London) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q133** In 2007 the Church Commissioners held assets of approximately £5.5 billion; in 2023 this has almost doubled to £10.1 billion. Could the First Church Estates Commissioner provide detail on their contribution to the life of the church between 2008 and 2023 in terms of (a) cash per annum, (b) percentage increase or decrease per annum and (c) contribution as a percentage of its portfolio, broken down by year?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** Through their management of the Church’s endowment fund, the Church Commissioners seeks to make available the maximum sustainable level of funding to support the mission and ministry of the Church of England for current and future generations.

From 2005 to 2020, the Commissioners’ financial support for the Church (excluding pensions) grew on average by three times the rate of inflation. This growth was enabled by the strong long-term performance of the Church’s endowment fund, which is the key to secure funding for the Church’s work in perpetuity.

Please see the table on the noticeboard for the requested analysis. The amount available for distributions is established through the triennial actuarial review, although the exact quantum of distributions each year reflects the timing of individual grant commitments, hence the variation each year.

Looking forward, the Commissioners plan to provide distributions of £1.2bn across 2023-25, representing an average annual distribution rate of 4.0% of the end-2021 asset values (on which the decision was based). This is an increase of approximately 30% over the total distributions in the 2020-22 triennium.

**Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q134** What additional measures are being considered to support our cathedrals during the current cost of living crisis?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Church Commissioners have continued to support cathedrals in a number of ways, in addition to our ongoing funding for the Dean and two Residentiary Canons at most cathedrals.

The Cathedral Sustainability Fund (CSF) has made available £1.5million to support staff costs at those cathedrals struggling financially due to increased energy costs; so far eight cathedrals have benefited from this.

We are also supporting cathedrals in their efforts to make their buildings more sustainable, part of the 2030 Net Zero programme, which is even more vital in light of the current energy crisis.

During the 2023-25 triennium, the Commissioners will commit £7million to the CSF to support cathedrals with their financial sustainability, and also continue to support the implementation of the new Cathedral Measure and cathedrals' move towards charitable status.

**Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q135** In the light of Her Majesty's Treasury's 'Green Book' recently changing the way in which the Government measures well-being and the subsequent estimate by the National Churches' Trust that the actual social value of the UK's church buildings and the activities that take place within them is about £55.7 billion, up from the previous (September 2020) estimate of £12.4 billion, will this updated evidence be provided to individual dioceses to take into account when making decisions on the possible closure of church buildings?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** In 2021 the National Churches' Trust published the 'House of Good' report with an introductory statement from the Archbishops, who warmly welcomed the research. It was well publicised through national communications channels. This report highlighted the valuable contribution that churches make in their local communities.

Through their daily work to support churches, dioceses will be very well aware of the spiritual and social value of parishes, volunteers and buildings.

A wide range of factors will always be carefully considered when church closure is being discussed by parishes and dioceses. There remain relatively few church closure cases, and these tend to come forward when church communities are no longer able to continue the positive activities referred to in the report. Parish reorganisation may be needed to ensure that such work becomes more sustainable.



**Mr Andrew Gray (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q136** In May 2022, an independent review was undertaken on the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). As its recommendations are now being considered by its Trustees, will the report be published so that Synod may debate the effectiveness and future of the CCT?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Church Commissioners commissioned an independent review of the CCT, which was completed in May 2022. The report and findings were shared with and fully accepted by the CCT Board in September 2022, an action plan has been approved at board level and progress is being made on implementation.

In July the Commissioners will table the CCT Funding Order for the next triennium, 2024-2027. We will update Synod on the main findings of the review and the progress that has been made on implementing the action plan as part of that process.

The CCT is holding a fringe at 12.45pm on Tuesday 7 February in the Abbey Centre at which Synod members will be able to find out more about the Trust's work.

**Mr Andrew Gray (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q137** From 2018 to 2021, CCTEL, the commercial arm of the Churches Conservation Trust which operates consultancy services and "champing", has paid the CCT £19,500. From the same period it owes the CCT a cumulative unpaid balance of £219,500. What has happened to this amount? (Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand)

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Churches Conservation Trust Enterprise Ltd (CCTEL) is the trading subsidiary of the Churches Conservation Trust. CCTEL does various activities including Champing and consultancy work and they reimburse the CCT for costs incurred, and then gift any profit to the CCT.

In the years 2018-2021 CCTEL reimbursed CCT for costs of £271,644 for staffing costs and facilities charges (\*see below), and in addition gifted profit of c£40,000 to the CCT. The payment of the costs by CCTEL to CCT is an internal cross charge which is accrued and accounted for in the CCTEL company accounts (which are lodged with Companies House) and is included as a creditor to the parent entity.

We do not recognise the figures mentioned in the question but if the source can be clarified we will seek further analysis from the CCT.

\*2017-18 - £47,830  
2018-19 - £111,891  
2019-20 - £74,078  
2020-21 - £37,845

**Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q138** GS 2272Y clause 12 makes it clear there is no role for a PCC in disposal of land for provision of a highway in the absence of an incumbent. Are there any circumstances in which a PCC is actively involved in the disposal of land under the Church Property Measure 2018?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** Clause 12 (GS2272Y) corrects a lacuna by allowing the bishop to make decisions about land, including highways, when a benefice is vacant. Clause 12(1) - which has specifically in view the dedication of land for highway - reflects the provision already made by s.1 of the Church Property Measure 2018 which enables the bishop to deal with a parsonage house during vacancy.

More generally, the Measure makes provision for the disposal of various kinds of land and property assets and the role of the PCC varies depending on the type of land or property. As an example, before giving consent to action under Part 1 of the 2018 Measure (dealings with the parsonage house), in most cases the bishop must give notice to the PCC affording them the right to raise objections or to make representations. Where the Diocesan Board of Finance holds land in trust for the PCC the expectation is that disposal will only happen if it has been requested by the PCC.

## **PENSIONS BOARD**

**The Revd Nicki Pennington (Carlisle) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:**

**Q139** At the end of 2022, how much money did the Church of England Pensions Board invest in oil and gas companies?

*Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:*

**A** At the end of 2022 the Pensions Board held £5.16m of equity holdings in oil and gas companies that are all subject to continued stewardship activities. This equates to 0.18% of the total fund, and compares to 0.28% of the fund invested at the same time in the prior year. Further details of the Board's climate strategy can be found in our Stewardship and TCFD reporting.

In line with the National Investing Bodies' commitments, no later than July, the Pensions Board will restrict and disinvest from all fossil fuel companies not assessed by the Transition Pathway Initiative as aligned over the short, medium and long term to the Paris agreement. This timescale permits one final round of engagement and voting at company AGMs.

**The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:**

**Q140** What steps are the Pensions Board taking to increase investment in climate solutions? What new investments have they made in this area in the last 12 months?

*Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:*

**A** Over the last 12 months, the Board, through its infrastructure fund managers, has made new investments in highly efficient waste-to-energy assets in the UK, a renewable energy (wind and solar) platform in Portugal and a renewable energy project developer in Taiwan (creating onshore wind, floating solar, rooftop solar and energy storage).

The Board has also reviewed its future asset allocation. This will result in further changes to our investments over the next year. All allocations are considered in the light of our Net Zero commitment, which includes our commitment to increase climate solutions investments.

In 2022 the Board also set up and continues to lead a group of 12 UK Pension Funds to develop an approach to investing in support of the transition in

emerging economies. The first outcome of this work was published during COP27.

Our forthcoming Stewardship Report will detail further information about our approach to climate solutions.

**Mr Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask the Church of England Pensions Board**

**Q141** In view of recent reports questioning the validity of carbon offsetting by Shell and other major oil companies, do the Church of England National Investing Bodies make an independent assessment of the carbon offsetting plans of fossil fuel companies that are including such plans in their net zero 'ambitions'?

*Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:*

**A** Yes, the National Investing Bodies draw upon a range of credible independent sources to form a view on a particular company plan. This includes guidance from: IIGCC, SBTi, TPI, CA100+ Carbon Tracker analysis as well as civil society views.

The use of offsets to meet emissions reduction is controversial for all companies and particularly for fossil fuel producers. Most credible guidance points include:

- Companies should have flexibility to use a range of measures to reduce emissions but should be transparent in the volume of offsets they intend to use and the type/quality of offsets used.
- Companies should build the cost of any offsets planned into their disclosures around climate capex and opex.
- Companies should avoid, cap or limit the amount of offsetting used against their target (for example SBTi proposed 10% as the maximum contribution for offsets) and offsetting should not form the main approach to emissions reduction.

**Dr Cathy Rhodes (Sheffield) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:**

**Q142** What are the Church of England National Investing Bodies doing to raise concerns with TotalEnergies about their plans to increase gas production by 26% by 2030, according to Carbon Tracker's December 2022 'Paris Maligned' report?

*Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:*

**A** The Board continues to engage with TotalEnergies. There are a number of elements of this engagement including:

- the role of gas in Europe to displace gas derived from Russia.
- the role gas will play in displacing thermal coal in emerging economies whilst renewable energy capacity is developed.
- the need for TotalEnergies to demonstrate how individual projects and capital expenditure can be demonstrably aligned to a country's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

Additionally, the Pensions Board has led the development of the first Net Zero Standard for Oil and Gas companies through an engagement under the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change (IIGCC) and with the independent academic input of the TPI Global Climate Transition Centre. This is an exacting standard which will be the basis of assessing TotalEnergies later this year.