

# **Report of Proceedings 2021**

## **General Synod July Group of Sessions**

**Friday 9 July 2021 – Monday 12 July 2021**

### **Virtual Meeting**

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## **Full Synod: First Day Friday 9 July 2021**

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* took the Chair at 12.30 pm.

*The Chair.* Dear friends, a very good afternoon to you and a very warm welcome to this meeting of the General Synod on what I consider to be a weekend full of hope for the life of our nation. I am really sorry that we are not able to meet together in person, but it is lovely I can see many of you on the screens either side of me. As we gather, it is only right and proper - in fact, it is the only thing that we can do - to begin with prayer and praise and seek the guidance of God in our deliberations and discussions over these coming days. A very warm welcome to you and I now invite our Synod Chaplain, Michael Gisbourne, to lead us in our opening worship.

### **WORSHIP**

*Revd Michael Gisbourne (Chaplain to the General Synod)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

### **ITEM 1 INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOMES**

*The Chair.* Thank you, Michael and Anne, for leading our worship and we do not hold you responsible for the serious doctrinal error contained in one of the responses. I am afraid the word of God in Scripture “or” the word of God among us is not a choice that we are allowed. Rest reassured this is a typo for those of you who have the order in front of you.

It is my great pleasure on your behalf to welcome two new members of Synod who have joined since our last meeting. I do not quite know whether they are going to be able to wave to us but we will in a moment endeavour to wave to them. They are the Revd Paul Bradbury from the Diocese of Salisbury who is replacing the Revd Dr Helen Dawes; and Dame Caroline Spelman, an ex officio member of the Synod, we welcome her back in her new role as Chair of the Dioceses Commission.

I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the ecumenical representative attending for the first time, Shermara Fletcher, who is representing the Pentecostal and black majority churches. Could we please greet them as best we can by raising our blue or yellow hands or any other suitably appropriate reaction that you can find on Zoom. Synod, that concludes this item of business and we turn immediately to the next item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 12.42 pm.

## **ITEM 2 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

*The Chair.* Good afternoon, everyone. I am delighted to be with you. While we wait for the Archbishop to get into position, can I just remind you to make sure you have renamed yourself using the protocol that we have been using since we have been on Zoom. This next item that we come to, Item 2 on our Agenda, is the Presidential Address to be delivered by the Archbishop of York. I now invite the Archbishop of York to deliver his Presidential Address.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you very much, Rose. I have just managed to dash to the other space in the building where this happens.

Dear friends, let me start where we began, by which I mean where this General Synod began, almost six years ago, on a glorious November morning as we walked up the aisle of Westminster Abbey in carefully choreographed two by two formation with no need of social distancing, preparing ourselves for the arrival of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness, the late Duke of Edinburgh, at the start of the tenth inaugural service of the General Synod.

There is always a guest preacher and in 2015 you may remember it was Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the Papal Household. His text was Haggai 1:1-8, “Rebuild my House”, a passage which many of you will be familiar with. It was a quite brilliant sermon, a call to build the unity of the Church, particularly memorable for his oft-quoted observation that “in those parts of the world where Christians are killed and churches torched, it is not because they are Catholic or Anglican or Pentecostal, but because they are Christian”.

This was the particular line we all went on to quote, “In our persecutor’s eyes we are already one. Let us be one also in our own eyes and in the eyes of God”. This turned out to be quite a theme of our Synod and of our working together as one Church of England: how to improve the quality of our disagreements; how to face up to failures with honesty and humility; how to strive for what Pope Francis calls “reconciled diversities”.

I read that sermon again recently and was struck by something else as well: Fr Raniero’s unwavering emphasis on the person of Christ as illustrated in the preaching of the Apostles. They faced a pre-Christian world, he observed. We face a largely post-Christian world. To quote the sermon again, “When Paul wanted to summarise the essence of Christian message in one sentence, he does not say, ‘I proclaim this or that

doctrine to you'. He says, 'We preach Christ crucified' and 'We preach ... Jesus Christ as Lord'" - the text from morning prayer this morning as it happens.

As we approach the close of this Synod, we believe - and by "we" I mean that bit of the Church of Jesus Christ which is the Church of England and the fruit of much prayer, discussion and discernment involving hundreds of people - that as we shape our life together in the 2020s and discern our priorities, God is calling us to a fresh and radical obedience to Christ: to be a Christ centred and a Jesus Christ shaped Church. This is what Fr Raniero ended up saying. He said, "We need to start again with the person of Jesus, humbly helping our contemporaries to experience a personal encounter with him".

It seems then, even at our beginnings in that very first sermon, God was calling us to be a simpler, humbler and bolder Church. Other matters have arisen and been discussed and acted upon during the lifetime of this Synod. We have seen the publication of the *Living in Love and Faith* resources and now these are being discussed in our parishes and dioceses.

We have started to bring in important new legislation as a consequence of IICSA. We have been doggedly trying to simplify our legislation - and later in this Synod will thank that giant of synodical process, Pete Broadbent, for his leadership in this area. In the midst of the world's environmental crisis, we have expressed our determination that the Church of Jesus Christ should take a lead and we made a bold and challenging decision to commit ourselves to becoming a net zero Church by 2030. The Church Commissioners have led the way with their impressive and game-changing policies on green investment and shareholder power.

Also, at this Synod, we will thank and pay tribute to Loretta Minghella for her leadership. In a relatively short space of time, the whole public image of the Church Commissioners has shifted from being "those people who lost billions of pounds in the 1990s" to "those people who are using their investment power to change the world" and, in spite of severe financial challenges, still showing astonishing returns to invest in the ministry of the Church of England.

We have had debates and taken action on issues of racial justice, Windrush, the ethics of nuclear weapons, estates evangelism, advertising and gambling, *Setting God's People Free*, *Growing Faith*, cathedrals, clergy wellbeing and much more besides. We have prayed together, met in small groups, plotted in tearooms and, when we were able, sat late in the bar enjoying alternative forms of spiritual refreshment.

In York, we even watched a football match together. On that subject, and mindful of the date all of us will have in our diaries for Sunday evening, I have turned to Scripture for help, where I find, encouragingly, at Ezekiel 40:28 these words, "He brought me to the inner court - that is the prize and victory we long for - by the south gate". This, surely is the inspiration we are looking for as a nation.

We have also been the Synod who have lived through the painful waves of the Covid pandemic. We have learnt how to Zoom. This has been hugely testing and I do want to acknowledge the disappointment and frustration of some members who are challenging us to go further to make sure that no one is disadvantaged by the way we meet and how we use technology.

But there have also been so many wonderful stories of Christian resourcefulness, creativity and tenacity in our parishes, chaplaincies, Church schools and just about every other expression of Church life. We have found ways of sustaining the life of worship, built new online communities of faith and served our local communities. As we emerge into the next phase of our learning how to live with Covid, we do not know how many people will return to worship.

We do not quite know what will happen with the new communities we have nurtured online. We do not know the full extent of the financial challenge. I know how difficult it has been in parishes and dioceses where at every level of Church life we have had to make some difficult decisions, but I want to encourage you. I think that what the Church of England has done in the past 18 months, especially in the local church, is simply magnificent.

Just this week, the Bishop of London spoke powerfully about how inspired she was by the way churches have risen to the challenge, found new ways of gathering to worship God and reached out and served their neighbours. I too want to thank clergy and lay leaders for their faithfulness and perseverance. I am deeply, deeply sorry if anything that has ever been said from the centre ever caused anyone to doubt this.

Apparently, in some quarters it has been suggested that somehow clergy are a limiting factor on Church growth. I think I want to agree. A shortage of clergy would really limit us. But you, the clergy of the Church of England - of which, of course, I am one - we need you more than ever. We need more vocations. This, I can assure you, is my prayer that God raises up priests to serve a priestly people. This is the vision given us in the Ordinal and it is not going to change.

It is also the heart of the Vision and Strategy we will discuss on Monday that, centred in Christ, the parish system of the Church of England will be revitalised in such a way that we will all discover the part that we have to play in God's mission and find new ways of serving our nation with the Gospel and, of course, this will come under the oversight of bishops whose cure of souls is shared with incumbents.

I also want to emphasise again this Synod's deep gratitude to the NHS and other frontline workers, particularly those working in social care and schools and particularly all the chaplains who work in this sector. Dear friends, I believe in the Church of England. I

believe that as we emerge from Covid we will find a simpler, humbler, bolder way of being the Church. It will not be easy and hard decisions lay ahead.

But I am spurred on by the call of the Gospel and hugely encouraged by some of the research that is now emerging showing the impact of the ministry of the Church of England during the pandemic. Do look at the recently published research from the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture at the University of York entitled Churches, Covid-19 and Communities. It affirms the key importance of church buildings and the Christian ministry which flow from them as sources not just for solace and sanctuary, not just for worship but, flowing from that, so many other community goods.

As I conclude, it would be remiss of me not to thank on your behalf the team at Church House and the Corporation who work alongside us to ensure that meetings of the General Synod take place, whether that is in person or virtually. In spite of additional demands, they have remained professional, good humoured and resourceful. We are also indebted to William Nye and his colleagues in the Central Secretariat, the Legal Office and all the other teams across the NCIs who staff our Committees, offer advice and contribute so crucially to the work of the Church of England.

Having only just welcomed you now to this group of sessions, I find myself talking about farewells. I am sure I will see many of you, hopefully, in person in the chamber in November but, for others who might not get re-elected or for those who have decided now is the time to allow others to have a go, I want to say a very particular thank you because the new Synod will have some big shoes to fill. But, of course, the work of the Gospel extends beyond Synod and whilst the need to digest all the papers might happily disappear, or the fear of being given a room in Alcuin - this need never worry you again - God's mission continues.

It is our love and care for this mission which brought us on to Synod. It is the same love and care for the Gospel, for the whole creation and for every person, fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God, that is the great commission Jesus gives to the whole Church. It is Jesus we preach and Jesus we follow. It is his love we long to share with others through his Church. This is our vision and our strategy as we go forward. There is no other.

As some of us process up the aisle in Westminster Abbey in two by two formation in November, possibly two metres apart, possibly masked, please be praying for us that we will carry on the work that is begun and, centred and shaped by Christ, enable our beloved Church of England to serve our nation well. And however the new Synod looks once all the elections have taken place and whatever shape our churches and dioceses emerge into as we surface from this pandemic, I leave you with one final challenge laid down to us by Fr Raniero six years ago. His, as it turns out also a prophetic challenge, was to be a bolder Church.

His sermon ended by saying, "Take courage you bishops. Take courage you clergy. Take courage you laity of the Church of England. Take courage to work because I am with you, says the Lord. Our God believes in us. Our God loves the Church of England. Our God wants to do new things through us and he wants us to work together for the building of his Kingdom here and to make Jesus known".

May these words and the assurance of God's presence remain with us as we continue on our journeys here and follow the paths of our loving heavenly father with simplicity, humility and courage. Thank you. Amen.

*The Chair.* Thank you, Archbishop Stephen. That concludes this item of business, thank you.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker)* took the Chair at 12.58 pm.

### **ITEM 3 REPORT BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (GS 2208)**

*The Chair.* Good afternoon, members of Synod. We now come to Item 3, which is the debate on the Report of the Business Committee. Members will need GS 2208 for this item. Time for this item is, I am afraid, rather short and so I regret I will probably need to seek your consent for closure on this item before all who have indicated they would like to speak have had an opportunity to do so.

Members are reminded, please, to confine their contributions strictly to the shape and content of the Agenda before us at this group of sessions and not to seek to make speeches of a more general nature. I, therefore, call upon the Chair of the Business Committee, Canon Robert Hammond, to move the motion. Canon Hammond, you have up to ten minutes.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Members of Synod, the Business Committee and I are really sorry that we are not meeting together as we had planned. You will know that we were planning to meet in York and that was not possible. We then started to plan to meet in London and that became impossible.

Like many of you, I am disappointed that we are having to meet using the provisions from the Remote Meetings Measure passed by Synod in September 2020 for the third time. I know that many of you were hoping to be able to meet in person and to say goodbye to friends and colleagues after six years of working together. So was I. Although we cannot arrange it centrally, there is nothing to stop dioceses or groups of dioceses meeting together later this month to say goodbye if you wish to.

I know there are differing views on meeting remotely and I am sorry if you find it challenging or difficult; however, many other members have welcomed it, meaning they

can play their part in Synod. Having said that, we are becoming used to this way of working in spite of its challenges and, as ever, and as the Archbishop of York has just said, I appreciate your understanding and forbearance with these remote sessions.

As with previous groups of sessions, we have provided practical and voting guides for further details on how this meeting will be run. [Support@churchofengland.org](mailto:Support@churchofengland.org) can also be contacted if you have got any questions. Do not worry, staff will circulate that email in the Zoom chat very shortly. It is also a good idea to keep an eye on the Synod app, the website and your emails for Order Papers and additional Notice Papers.

We have a full Agenda for the next four days. In planning the Agenda, the Business Committee has endeavoured to provide sufficient screen breaks between items. Please do use them and please take care of your own wellbeing over the next four days. As with both the November and April groups of sessions, members of the Panel of Chairs will be present here in Church House alongside key members of Synod and staff to deliver the meeting.

I would like to thank both the Synod staff and the staff of the Corporation for their support with this and for facilitating this meeting, particularly with adapting twice to the changes that we have had to make in light of the Government's delay with the roadmap. Following some issues with the voting technology at the last two groups of sessions, we have switched to a different software provider.

We have been working with Lumi Technologies for some years now and they provide the voting handsets that we use at physical groups of sessions. They also have an online voting platform which we are using at this Synod. We have been provided with guidance about using the technology in the Synod Members' Guide but, hopefully, you will not experience much difference from the user interface at previous Synods. However, from a back office perspective, we think that the results will be processed more quickly and accurately, which is why we have made the change.

In terms of the Agenda, the Business Committee Report sets out the Agenda items, but I would like to draw your attention to a particular piece of business and I convey the apologies of staff for this along with their thanks to Nigel Bacon from Lincoln Diocese. The item in question is the seats amendment resolution for elections to the General Synod. Following the debate in April, it was flagged that there were a number of errors in the original allocation made back in February 2020. The Secretariat have apologised for this error and have taken steps to ensure that, in future, it does not happen again. The Business Committee will be looking at this and will ask the new Elections Review Group to undertake a review for Synod.

I will not go through all of the items that we have to cover over the next few days as my time is limited and I have other points that I want to raise, but I did just want to highlight that one. You may remember that, back in 2015, the General Synod Business Committee



started developing a series of voluntary guidance documents which eventually formed the General Synod Code of Conduct document which may be viewed on the General Synod website.

As you are aware, the legal status of the General Synod Code of Conduct is entirely voluntary. Indeed, the biggest sanction that we can offer to those whom the Business Committee thinks has breached it is a stern letter from me. Whilst that may be a terrifying prospect for many Synod members - I will let you make up your own mind - the General Synod is out of step with other public legislative bodies in not having an enforceable Code of Conduct.

This is not a straightforward matter and we do not wish to interfere with the right and duty of Synod members to engage in public debate on what can sometimes be contentious and painful matters of theological understanding. Freedom of speech should remain a central tenet of every public legislative body. Legislation to introduce an enforceable Synod Code of Conduct would need to be debated and approved by the General Synod itself. More importantly, we would need the majority of Synod members to buy into the spirit as well as the letter of any enforceable Code of Conduct.

To this end, the Business Committee will be asking the new Business Committee that will be formed in the next quinquennium to begin a process of consultation with Synod members, probably using fringe meetings and consultation exercises, so that Synod can start to design on a collaborative basis the kind of Code of Conduct it would like to see and would be willing to comply with in any eventual legislation. In the meantime, I can only remind Synod members of the existing voluntary Code and encourage you to read it. I also commend it to anyone thinking of standing for election to the next General Synod.

As the second legislative body of England, we have the enormous privilege of passing legislation that becomes the law of the land. With the privilege of being part of this national body comes some status in the wider Church and in our communities. We must use this privilege wisely for the work of the Kingdom. The duty for Synod members is to model Christian charity and kindness in all parts of our lives and not just on the floor of the General Synod.

I hope that the next Business Committee's work on the new Code of Conduct will be an opportunity for us to think carefully about the whole life of Synod and its missional purpose. I want to come to an area which is apparently quite a routine matter of housekeeping which I know can stir some quite strong emotions. In February 2020, this General Synod voted to commit the Church of England, its national bodies and dioceses to reach a net carbon zero target in ten years' time.

It is important for Synod to practise what it preaches. We cannot ask the dioceses to achieve stringent environmental targets without making every effort to ensure that we do so ourselves. This is the main reason why, at its meeting on 24 May, the Business

Committee agreed to cease the practice of circulating hard copy papers for General Synod members. In cash terms, it costs approximately £18,000 per year to print and post hard copy papers, putting aside the additional environmental cost.

The General Synod Office, with the full support of the Business Committee, has made significant strides in recent years to improve the quality and the scope of the technology available to Synod members to allow them to follow Synod electronically, whether via the Synod app or by downloading papers onto their PCs or other electronic devices via the website. We will continue to upgrade the app and the Synod website in the next quinquennium and we also hope to introduce dedicated email addresses for each Synod member in order to enable greater security and convenience for members when accessing papers from the app, signing PPMs, voting in elections and so on.

All of this has required and will continue to require some considerable financial investment. The Business Committee felt that it was not financially viable to return to issuing printed copies of papers in addition to the newly introduced cost of continually upgrading the Synod app and the website on an ongoing basis. The Business Committee does realise that for some members this is disappointing, but we do hope that this is compensated for by the other changes that have been made to the accessibility of Synod papers via the app and website and, of course, this is a much more environmentally friendly solution.

As this is my final Business Committee Report speech for this Synod, I would like to end by reflecting that this sixennium - as now it has been - has been challenging, exciting and sometimes testing, but it has been a real pleasure to work alongside you for these six years and especially rewarding during the last six months as your Business Committee Chair.

I know farewells are on Monday, but I did want to wish everybody well and to know that you are in my prayers. For those that are not planning on seeking re-election, please do let the Synod Support know - you can email Synod Support - so that we can send out a Notice Paper noting those who are leaving. As always, I want to thank all the Synod staff and my fellow Business Committee members for their support, loyalty and massive amount of work over the past few months. Finally, I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair.* Item 3 is now open for debate and the speech limit to begin with is five minutes.

*Revd Canon Andy Salmon (Manchester):* My question to the Business Committee is about one thing that has been left off the Agenda, which is the Generosity and Diocesan Finances paper. It seems to me that diocesan finances are an urgent matter and that this paper raises very urgent business. I am disappointed that it is not included in the Agenda and that we have not been able to find time to discuss this. It concerns me particularly

because in the paper I find it really encouraging that this issue is being looked at, but I feel - and I suspect that a few other Synod members feel - that perhaps it is not being looked at radically enough.

Therefore, I would welcome General Synod being able to express a view on this. It feels like leaving it to another meeting is unfortunate. I would imagine that it is too late to include this now in the business, although it would be great if we could. I wonder whether there is some way in which those who are looking at Generosity and Diocesan Finances could at least gauge the views of Synod on what is being discussed at the moment so that we can possibly get a little bit more radical in the thinking about this.

*Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln):* I wish to comment on the amount of time given in this Agenda to issues concerning the Senior Appointments process. We have a debate today on the CNC election process and then two debates back-to-back on the final day concerning the application of the Five Guiding Principles. From time to time, or perhaps even every time the Agenda is settled, there will be winners and losers amongst those hoping for their item of business to feature in the Agenda. On the final day of this session, there are two items back-to-back and they hugely overlap in terms of content and themes.

The Private Member's Motion of Mr David Lamming, if amended, in effect, will ask Synod to take effect of the Report that Synod had already been asked to take note of in the debate of that Report, the Report of the Implementation and Dialogue Group. I am concerned about two things. First, the settling of this Agenda and the proportionality of time being given to items that duplicate points of interest especially where the events behind the PMM are historic. Second, whether items of business were bumped from the Agenda to make way for a PMM, which cannot now be rescued.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I would like to begin by expressing my thanks to the Business Committee - and I am sure that in saying this I speak for all members of Synod - for the work in preparing the Agenda for this remote meeting and to acknowledge the extra work entailed in the late enforced switch from a face-to-face meeting at Church House to a remote online meeting.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those who contacted me wishing me well following the April meeting of Synod, which, as members know, I joined from my ward in Ipswich Hospital while awaiting a heart bypass operation. I am recovering well from that operation now, which was eight weeks ago. It is sad that we are not meeting physically this weekend, but one benefit, at least for me, of it being a remote meeting is that I am able to attend.

Paragraph 26 of the Business Committee Report refers to the Private Member's Motion that Carl Fender has just mentioned having been included in the Agenda. It is my Private Member's Motion, review of the Five Guiding Principles, Item 32, scheduled for debate on Monday afternoon. My PMM was tabled over four years ago in March 2017. I

recognise this passage of time and subsequent events in my briefing paper GS 2226A. Whether in the circumstances my PMM was appropriately included in the Agenda was the subject of an online article in the *Church Times* on 28 June.

Also, in scheduling for debate ahead of another PMM, that is the subject of a question, Question 120, to the Business Committee Chair by Christina Baron (break in audio) finding have ceased to be members of Synod. The motion, in fact, achieved the required threshold of 100 signatures by July 2018, three years ago.

The delay in it being included for debate is partly Covid-19 related. Indeed, it was forecast business for July last year in the Business Committee Report of February 2020. William Nye in his paper, GS 2226B at paragraph 5, has noted that, "There are some who have expressed concern as to whether specific references in the opening paragraphs, and the personal references in particular, are suitable for a motion of Synod". Indeed, since the Agenda was published, representations have been made to me personally asking me to consider withdrawing the motion, one saying that, "A motion that takes us back to those very dark days of 2017 will be bad for the Diocese of Sheffield".

Another from the Bishop of Sheffield, Pete Wilcox, while having no argument with any clause in the motion which he would "happily have voted for in its entirety" in late 2017, endorses the point that time has moved on. He believes that withdrawal would be in the best interests of the Diocese. It is not just the passage of time. We now have the Implementation and Dialogue Group Report, GS 2225, on the Agenda for a take note debate immediately prior to my PMM on Monday.

That debate will enable Synod members to raise issues relating to the Five Guiding Principles and mutual flourishing and, effectively, supersedes paragraph (e) of my PMM. In his email to me, Bishop Pete noted that, "We urgently need the debate we will be having on the Five Guiding Principles and mutual flourishing, but we really do not need the trauma of the early months of 2017 to be revisited".

Having taken time to reflect on these important representations, I am withdrawing the PMM and so it will not be on the Agenda for debate on Monday. Those immediately concerned, including Robert Hammond, have been informed of my decision and Robert will explain how Monday's Agenda may be adjusted to make use of the time now available which could include allowing more time than presently allocated for the IDG debate.

May I conclude with a word about the scheduling of PMMs for debate once they have achieved the threshold of 100 supporting signatures as required by Standing Order 6. I mentioned Christina Baron's question which queries the order in which PMMs are chosen for debate. The only guidance to the Business Committee is this in Standing Order 6(8), "In determining the order in which Private Members' Motions are to be specified in the Agenda for debate at a group of sessions, the Business Committee must, in the case of

each Private Member's Motion, have regard to the number of names supporting a debate on the motion".

Perhaps there needs to be an addition to the Standing Orders directing the Business Committee specifically to take into account whether a motion is time critical when making its decisions and I would invite the new Business Committee to consider this.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limited of three minutes.

*Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich)*: In answer to a supplementary question at the April group of sessions, the Archbishop of York said that questions holding the Church to account is "a vital part of Synod's role". I am very grateful to all those who have worked over the last few years to make the Question Time at Synod run more smoothly. Particularly as we have been doing this remotely, I think we are doing a lot better than we were first time round.

But I note that in answer to a question by Andrew Pressland, Question 121 in this session, the Chair of the Business Committee says that, "Inevitably, given the number of questions posed and the limited time available on the Agenda to answer them, not all questions on the Questions Notice Paper are reached at any group of sessions". I just wondered whether something could be done about this inevitability, that there be some way of scheduling more time for questions or a second session for questions later on in the Agenda or using contingency time to pick up where we left off. I hope the answer will not be, "But we have never done it that way before".

The second point I wanted to raise, and one many others might be thinking, is why we are not having any discussion of the *From Lament to Action* Report which came out. I see from paragraph 28 of the Business Committee Report that there was no request to debate this, which rather surprised me because we had a very helpful discussion at our diocesan synod last month where we engaged with it and had some group discussion.

I know for me that has already helped me think about how I might respond personally. I am very glad to see from GS Misc 1282 that a request to debate this Report will come to Synod for 2022 and I very much hope the Business Committee will bring it on as soon as they possibly can.

*Dr Mike Lawes (Rochester)*: As a relative newcomer to Synod, at the end of this extended and my first quinquennium I have studied with interest the way in which our affairs are conducted - overseen, of course, by the Business Committee. I have also felt not a little frustrated that, despite repeated requests to make a maiden speech, this is the first time that I have been called to speak. I would have preferred to have spoken and contributed to those debates in which my lived personal and professional experience might have been particularly relevant; for example, human sexuality, valuing people with Down's Syndrome, mental health issues or the NHS. However, I was unsuccessful.

Over the last couple of years, we have been provided with a list of speakers with the Report of the Business Committee and it is remarkable how a small cohort of members are repeatedly called to speak. It is often the usual suspects from one group of sessions to the next, somehow managing to obliquely weave their familiar themes into the debate about a completely unrelated subject. On those occasions that I have tried to speak, it has been impossible to listen to the debate while I have been bobbing up and down every few minutes trying to catch Chair's eye.

Listening well seems to be at a premium amongst us and if we find it challenging to listen to one another, then how much more so to hear the voice of God speaking to us as a body? The adversarial nature of so many of our debates serves only to engender suspicion, distrust and rancour. Am I being too optimistic in imagining a Synod that values diversity above division, acceptance over rejection or unity rather than uniformity?

It saddens me that the Synod Eucharist is relatively poorly attended and that so many feel that they cannot share Communion with their brothers and sisters here. I realise that the Chairs have great difficulty identifying who is standing as they strain their eyes across the chamber and I understand that it is more pragmatic to call the familiar or well-known. Zoom has been a better medium in that respect. I think the Chairs do a great job given the constraints of the format in which they are asked to work.

As we hand over to a new Synod later this year, I wonder whether the Business Committee might consider steps to reform the way in which our debates are structured, if necessary, to allow more time for more voices to be heard on the contentious issues of the day. As we are looking forward to a younger, more diverse and fresher Synod, will consideration be given, therefore, to a more substantial and supportive induction process for new members, together with facilities for those with special needs such as child care? How wonderful to see Emily Hobbs with her baby on her knee at this meeting on Zoom.

Would it be possible to establish a more efficient call to speak process such as is already available to those with disability, maybe using the app or other electronic technology?

*The Bishop of Burnley (Rt Revd Philip North):* I want to place on record my warm welcome for David Lamming's decision to withdraw his PMM. I am grateful to him for tabling a motion which was well-intentioned and intended to build up the unity of the Church but, as he said, it has been bypassed by events and I am very relieved that it has been withdrawn.

It seems pretty obvious then that an option might be for the Business Committee to plug the gap left on the Agenda by that withdrawal by restoring the critical item on Mutuality and Finances which was to have been brought to this Synod by the Bishop of Sheffield. If that is impossible, I would really love to know why the Business Committee felt that an

item which seeks to address hardcore and chronic inequalities between dioceses should be such a low priority.

Every time we name and condemn inequality in our nation, our moral case is undermined by the gross inequalities that exist within our common life. For me, that is a massive Kingdom priority and, indeed, a real test of our desire to be a humbler, simpler and bolder Church. I wonder why it does not seem to be for the Business Committee? A reassurance that this item will be on the Agenda in November will be helpful. What I would really like to know though is the thought processes that lay behind the decision to defer that item in the first place.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Revd Tim Goode (Southwark):* I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Robert, the Business Committee and the whole Synod staff for the hard, challenging and, I am sure, exhaustive work that they have done to ensure that we are here today able to gather online for our Synod. Since April's Synod, they have had their focus first on a York on-site Synod, then a London on-site Synod and then a fully online Synod after the Government moved the final easing of protocols.

I would also like to share with Synod how appreciative I am of both the Business Committee's and the Synod staff's serious engagement with me and others when we asked them to explore the possibility of having a hybrid Synod both on-site and online when it looked like we were going to meet on-site this Synod. I am very grateful for their sharing of the complexity that it would involve, including the overall cost and the staffing needed.

But I am also very encouraged that they share the view that the possibility of Synod of becoming hybrid would seriously assist our aim of Synod being accessible to a far wider demographic than at present and, therefore, have a Synod that is more representative of the Church it seeks to represent. I welcome the commitment from the Synod staff to draft a paper on the feasibility and cost benefits of a future hybrid model of General Synod that, hopefully, will come before Archbishops' Council in December.

I also wish to share with Synod both the Business Committee's and Synod staff's active engagement in working through the recommendations of the Access Audit, so ably led by Fiona MacMillan and Ann Memmott, that so many of you participated in at our last on-site Synod in London and their desire to work with disabled members of Synod on the induction for new members in November, including any accessibility updates needed in the guide and in providing webinars for new members.

*The Chair:* Thank you. Tim, you are out of time. Peter Bruinvels followed by Jayne Ozanne, at which point I think I will be seeking your consent on a motion for the closure.

*Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford):* At the April Synod, I asked for us to have a debate on the outstanding role played by the Armed Forces in our fight against Covid-19 and also on the Covenant that we as the Church of England signed as Armed Forces Champion for the Church of England. Sadly, it was not granted. I was told that the request should come either from Mark Sheard from Mission and Public Affairs, or to write to Robert Hammond as well.

I wrote to both of them requesting such a debate. Both came back to me saying that the request must come from the other person and so, in fact, we got nowhere as such. Therefore, there is sadly no debate featured today or during these group of sessions. I find this very disappointing when the House of Commons at the moment is debating the Armed Forces Bill and we have been asked particularly for consultation on what we might see in education, in housing and in health.

Outside the Church of England, we had a special service at St Paul's Cathedral and the NHS, quite properly, received the George Cross. It seems important that we can show our support for our military. The guidance is out for consultation now. The Bill is back before Parliament for report and third reading next week and we are appearing to miss the boat. This third reading is really crucial as it is asking for bodies involving schools and education, health and local authorities who have signed the Covenant to give their evidence.

All such bodies will need to then show due regard for the concerns and effect of how it will affect all service personnel. Chairman, tri-service personnel have done their very best for us in these great hours of need during the pandemic. I think it is time for us in the Church of England to have an opportunity to thank them and to ensure that no member of the Armed Forces is disadvantaged because of their outstanding service to the nation. We need that response to our Bill. We can also share best practice and be an exemplar. They are the best and they deserve our support now.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* At the start of this quinquennium, in a debate akin to this one, I voiced my concerns about "the high number of presentations that we had on our Agenda" and the way in which I feared that there were moves to try and control the Synod. As I said then, we have to trust that God is working in and through us here. I went on to say that I believed or, rather, had hoped that we are going to have some very difficult debates in this quinquennium and so we are going to need to learn to discuss items of difference in a way that models good disagreement. No such debates have been allowed.

This Synod, as I feared, has been heavily managed. In this group of sessions, we have nine presentations, three of which only allow us to ask questions and three of which are followed by take note debates, so that our only option is to press the nuclear button and not take note if we have any concerns. Of course, it is always the most contentious of issues where these tactics are employed: safeguarding, sexuality and strategy, the three S's.



Interestingly, today, the Church of England chose to launch its campaign to try and attract people from more diverse backgrounds to take part in General Synod. However, I would suggest that, unless we have a clear understanding of what Synod is actually for and what it is actually supposed to do, few lay people with busy lives and full-time jobs will see the point in giving up their holidays to participate.

My own understanding is that Synod is an important part of the accountability process that we believe in as a Church of England, especially needed as there are, sadly, no select committees as our colleagues in Parliament wisely have. I fear, sadly, that I am therefore going to have to not take note of this Report as I am deeply concerned how that

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*The Chair:* Jayne, I am going to have to stop you there. Thank you very much for your contribution. Members of Synod, I said time was short and I am afraid I would now like to test your mind on the closure for this item. This will be a 30 second vote using the Lumi platform in place of a show of hands on a motion for the closure on Item 3.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chair:* I invite the Chair of the Business Committee to respond to the debate. Robert, you have up to five minutes.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you to everybody who has contributed. There were lots of different comments there. Firstly, I am very grateful to David Lamming for letting us know of his intention to withdraw the PPM. It is extremely beneficial for us to know that. In terms of timing, we will see how the overall Agenda pans out and where we get to on Monday and we will see how, if there is any time available, that will be used, but we have to let this Synod take its course.

With regard to Andy Salmon and to Bishop Philip around the Mutuality and Finance item, we will be bringing that in November when I understand that a more substantive document will be used as the material for the debate. It seemed to the Business Committee that, actually, that is the sort of debate that is very well-served by a face-to-face debate rather than a debate using Zoom, but we will do that in November.

Caroline Herbert on questions, we will look at the overall context of questions. It is always very difficult. Questions are very difficult to slot in because we need to make sure that we absolutely have the respondees all there at the same time and by having it at one place we can be clear that all the answers are there at the same time. If we slot it in, that may need a bit more work. Questions are complex to slot into business as we are going along.

On *From Lament to Action*, if we are requested then we will find time to put that on the Agenda if we are able to. To Mike Lawes, this is not a get-out by me but the chairing of the debates is the responsibility of the Chairs and the Panel of Chairs. We hope that providing the list of speakers helps them and helps Synod, but it is not for the Business Committee to control that. The Chairs are independent and rightly so. They will have heard you about that, as will the present and the future, when elected, members of the Business Committee.

Tim Goode, I am very grateful for your thanks to the Business Committee, that is exceptionally kind of you, and we will consider issues around hybrid Synods but we will need to carefully test and plan and pilot how that operates. Our resources are not the same as the House of Commons and we need to make sure that, if we begin to go down a hybrid route, it works.

To Canon Peter Bruinvels, I do not think that Mark and I pass the buck to each other I am afraid. My understanding of the exchange was slightly different, but it is an MPA decision on whether to bring an Armed Forces debate or not. You have the option of a Private Member's Motion as well, of course. Let us take that up with MPA.

Finally, to Jayne Ozanne, I hope that young people will see the value of Synod and I hope that, as we are able to move back into face-to-face debates, we will be able to tackle some of those really important issues in a face-to-face way which is where those discussions can take place. We have been hampered, have we not, over not being able to meet face-to-face.

We will be looking at some of the issues around select committees. Had we met face-to-face this time, we would have begun to trial something. We have taken that seriously, Jayne, and the Business Committee will continue to look at that. I think I have picked up most of the points, Chair. Thank you very much.

*The Chair.* Robert, thank you very much indeed. Members of Synod, I am now going to put Item 3 to the vote. This will be a 30 second vote again using the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chair.* That concludes this item, thank you.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 12.41 pm

## **ITEM 4 RACIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION (GS MISC 1282)**

*The Chair:* Hello, Synod. We are now at Item 4 on the Agenda, the Racial Justice Commission. You will need the paper, GS Misc 1282. This is a presentation under Standing Order 107. I will hand straight over to you, Stephen, thank you.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Synod, this is a brief opportunity to outline the plans for the Racial Justice Commission. As you will have read in GS Misc 1282, a proposal for a debate on *From Lament to Action*, the Report from the Anti-Racism Taskforce, will be submitted to the Business Committee, hopefully, for inclusion at a group of sessions in 2022.

However, before I continue, I am sure that many of you will have heard the very sad news that the Revd Dr Joel Edwards died just over a week ago. We benefited hugely from his advice in planning the Racial Justice Commission and we will miss his warmth, humour, energy and wisdom. I would like to take a minute to pay tribute to him.

Joel was appointed General Director of the Evangelical Alliance in 1997. He was the first black Pentecostal to hold the post, having previously been General Secretary of the African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance. He has also served as the International Director for the Micah Challenge, as a Commissioner of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, on the Advisory Board on Human Rights and Religious Freedom with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Metropolitan Police's Independent Advisory Group. Many of you, I am sure, will have known him and enjoyed listening to his wisdom on *Thought for the Day* and his BBC Radio 4 features in *the Today programme*.

As we mourn today, do join me as we pray and give thanks for this dear brother in Christ, Joel, who has helped us so much to get to this point in this such important work for the Gospel. Let us pray:

"Happy are those who die in the Lord! So it is, says the Spirit, for they rest from their labours! Oh, God of Grace and Glory, we remember before you this day, our brother, Joel. We thank you for giving him to us, his family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before, through Jesus Christ our Lord". Amen.

Synod, let me now update you on the plans for the Racial Justice Commission. The Church of England Racial Justice Commission is appointed jointly by Archbishop Justin and myself in response to the Anti-Racism Taskforce Report, *Lament to Action*. We will be announcing the names in the next few weeks and each person will be appointed for a period of three years, but I am delighted today to be able to share with you that the Rt Hon Lord Paul Boateng has been invited and accepted the challenging task of chairing this Commission.

Lord Boateng is of Ghanaian and Scottish origin and was the UK's first black Cabinet minister when he was appointed as Chief Secretary to the Treasury in May 2002. After serving the House of Commons, he served as the British High Commissioner to South Africa from March 2005 to May 2009. He was introduced as a member of the House of Lords in 2010. We are so grateful to Lord Boateng for agreeing to take up the leadership of the Commission.

These appointments arise out of commitments Archbishop Justin and I made to take action that might identify, respond to and root out systemic racism in the Church. The Commission will be an independent body that is representative of complex interests and expertise within and beyond the Church. This collective of clergy and laity will bring rich experience that meets the needs of the tasks ahead and represent expertise and activism in racial justice programmes and black theology, ecclesiology and liturgy, formation and theological education, history and politics and a variety of other areas the Church of England might draw on as it attempts to discern an agenda for ecclesial transformation.

While the Commission's deliberations are formed independently, it has been appointed in full consultation and with the support of the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council by whose authority and mandate they will function. Furthermore, the biannual reports that the Commission will produce will be considered, examined and discussed by both these ecclesial bodies. Whilst the deliberations are independent of the Church of England and we hope will bring necessary challenge to the National Church Institutions and allied bodies, the processes which facilitate the Commission will be delivered by colleagues working for the NCIs.

To tell you a little bit more about the Commission, let me introduce my dear sister, the Revd Sonia Barron, who was the Co-Chair of the Archbishop's Anti-Racism Taskforce and a former Archbishop's Adviser for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns. Sonia, over to you.

*Revd Sonia Barron:* Thank you, Archbishop Stephen, and thank you, Synod, for your patience. Before I make my prepared presentation, General Synod members will be aware from the Questions' document that the Archbishops' Council have taken the decision not to accept our recommendation to appoint full-time diocesan racial justice officers. I am deeply shocked and disappointed by this decision and know that the other members of the Taskforce will share these sentiments.

As a Taskforce, we remain hopeful that the Council, together with the Church Commissioners and House of Bishops, may still reconsider that decision and rightly prioritise and fund the work of racial justice. As I have previously commented to Archbishops' Council directly, "If not now, when?" Before turning our focus to the work of the Commission, let me first take this opportunity to thank you, Synod, for the great encouragement that has been received following the publication of the Taskforce Report;

encouragement in the form of personal messages, prayers, blog posts and emails, evidence of your support as we embark on this work.

It has not been easy over the past couple of months and we have had a range of responses, some of them very robustly expressed, but we have navigated our course under the loving and watchful eye of the Father whose faithfulness has been our stay. Today, I am delighted to share with you that 12 individuals from across the Church of England and beyond have been invited to form a Commission for Racial Justice in the Church of England. I am one of them as a representative of the Taskforce.

The purpose of the Commission will be to set out a compelling agenda for change driven by Gospel principles. The Commission is appointed for three years with a mandate to hold the Church of England to account on the progress and commitment to anti-racism efforts, working collaboratively with the Racial Justice Directorate and other partners.

The Commission will build on the five key areas identified by the Anti-Racism Taskforce and develop frameworks of change in further workstreams within this period. Twelve members have been carefully selected according to particular expertise to meet the challenges ahead. The work of the Commission will be supported by a staff team, including a researcher/co-ordinator and a communications officer, and this team will be led by Dr Sanjee Perera, the Archbishops' Adviser for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns. Her role will be to take charge of institutional liaison for the Commission.

The Commission's conduct will be further bound by the Racial Justice Commission protocols during this three year period. The objectives of the Commission include advocating for implementation of the actions of the five priority areas identified by the Taskforce, based on themes which were repeatedly highlighted in previous CMEAC reports. These include participation (including appointments); education; training and mentoring; young people; structures and governance.

The work of the Commission will build on these priority areas, developing a change-making model that captures the aspirations of the 47 recommendations. Given the wide range of experiences, approaches and opinions held in the Church of England, the Racial Justice Commission will take a highly participative approach to gathering evidence and finding common ground. Within every workstream and at regular intervals throughout the three year period of the Commission, we anticipate using a variety of engagement activities to ensure that the needs and tensions of the whole Church are recognised.

The Commission will be formally launched in September 2021 and reach its full term in September 2024. It will aim to produce reports twice a year on progress made over the next three years, which will be considered, examined and discussed by the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council. The Commission will meet once a month either by Zoom or in person depending on national guidelines.

In addition to the monthly meetings, Commissioners will promote particular streams of work, leading on areas according to their particular expertise, supporting evidence-gathering exercises and focus groups, media and public engagement events and other appropriate efforts to enhance the policy and culture change by tackling racism in the Church of England.

Synod, I hope that these terms of reference for the Racial Justice Commission will receive your support and proactive engagement. We hope to hear from you about your aspirations, anxieties, concerns and hopes for this work. We ask that you pray with us and for us. We hope you will be inspired by the Holy Spirit to be part of the solution as you support our work with your own gifts and encourage others to do the same.

Synod, this Commission holds the convictions, hopes and lamentations of many minority, ethnic brothers and sisters that are your family, that sit with you virtually today in this Synod, in your pews on a Sunday morning, and sometimes outside the doors of the church waiting to be welcomed in. Synod, I commend this Commission to you.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Sonia and the Archbishop of York. Archbishop, have you got anything further to add, please?

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Sorry, no, I think that is the conclusion of the presentation as far as I am aware.

*The Chair:* Great, I will take your word for it, Archbishop, thank you. Synod, that concludes this item of business. I now adjourn this sitting for a screen break and we will resume for Item 5 at quarter past 2 prompt. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 2.15 pm.

## **ITEM 5 IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF GS 2202 “RESPONSIBLE REPRESENTATION” (GS 2209)**

*The Chair:* Good afternoon everyone, especially if you are tuning in for the first time this afternoon. We come to Implementing the Recommendations of GS 2202 “*Responsible Representation*”. For this, members may like to have to hand GS 2209. I call upon Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to speak to and move item 5 on behalf of the election process for the CNC Review Group. You have up to ten minutes, thank you.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Thank you Chair. Chair, members of Synod may recall that, perhaps uncharacteristically, I ended my response to the debate on responsible representation in April with a reference to football. Whilst I do not suppose much has happened since then on that particular sporting front, a great deal of work has

been going on in the intervening two months to bring to this Synod the necessary business to implement the Report's recommendations, as requested by Synod in April.

I would like to reiterate my sincere thanks to the members of the Review Group and,, indeed to the staff who have so ably supported us, who might perfectly reasonably have expected our work to have ended in April, but whose gracious generosity of time and commitment has enabled this work to proceed to this stage now. This is particularly significant as a delay in this business coming to Synod would have meant a different group having to pick up our work over the past two-and-a-half years, building on the O'Donovan Report, warmly endorsed by the Synod, as several members of our group will soon cease to be members of the Synod.

On behalf of the group may I also thank all those many members of Synod who have engaged with our work at various stages, whether at one of the two fringe meetings or in response to the invitations issued to members in the summer of 2019 and following the April 2021 Synod, or, indeed, during the debate at the April Synod. A number of members have also written to us directly and we are grateful to everyone for sharing with us their insights and frank observations.

Members will, I hope, recall that responsible representation set before the Synod a challenge and an invitation to rethink the way we approach our roles as electors and representatives and to seek with a fresh urgency to ensure that the voices around the table better reflect that glorious diversity of perspectives and experiences which characterises the Church and to which every member, made in the image of God, contributes.

It is in the nature of the Synod's work that changes to our procedures require detailed drafting. Bringing to Synod the changes needed to implement the recommendations relating to the election of diocesan and central members to the CNC, and to the Vacancy in See Committees, are no different. To some of us - I am a lawyer after all - this brings particular interest and pleasure. For normal human beings, however, changes to Standing Orders and Regulations, especially when we reach amendments to amendments, can seem technical and complex and somewhat difficult to follow.

The approach that has been adopted, therefore, is to give the Synod an opportunity to vote on five propositions, reflecting the recommendations received by the Synod in April and amended in response to some of the representations we received. The outcome of those votes will reveal what changes to the Standing Orders the Synod wishes to make and the Synod's timetable includes time on Monday for the necessary amendments to the Standing Orders to be considered and made. I hope members will find this approach more accessible than it might otherwise have been.

I hope members will also, however, bear in mind that the various propositions do, to a certain extent, hang together as part of a coherent whole and so, as we consider each in turn, I hope we might also keep in mind the bigger picture and the aspirations to new and creative ways of working together for the sake of the Gospel.

In a few moments, therefore, we shall move to the first of the propositions and will then move through each proposition in turn, voting on each as we go. It will be helpful to members to have GS 2209 to hand if you have not read, learnt, marked and inwardly digested it.

Before we proceed, I hope you will forgive me, Chair, if I remind Synod that the business before us addresses only part of the group's recommendations. The change the group considers necessary cannot be merely changed to the legal framework in which the CNC, the General Synod, or the Vacancy in See Committees operate, or be limited to revised procedural rules, though we earnestly hope that they will contribute to better processes and outcomes.

As the Report sets out, the essential change needed is a change of culture, most notably in the General Synod, but more widely in the Church, so that our primary concern, both individually and corporately, is the flourishing of others, putting their needs and wellbeing ahead of our own. As the Review Group sees it, ultimately the challenge for all of us is so to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, that having gazed on the beauty of Christ we can begin to glimpse the possibilities for the reordering both of our own lives and of our common life rooted in him. If all else in our Report were to be stripped away, we would implore all members of Synod to join us in taking this opportunity to think afresh about how we each respond to our responsibility as electors and how we each faithfully fulfil our roles as representatives.

Nevertheless, turn to the propositions we must, and the first proposition is that the electorate for the election of central members of the Crown Nominations Commission comprises the combined membership of the Houses of Clergy and Laity. So, what does this mean in practice? It means that rather than two separate elections taking place for central CNC members, one restricted to the House of Laity to elect three lay members and one restricted to the House of Clergy to elect three clergy members, there would be one election for a total of six places, or pairs, as we shall come to in a moment, in which the members of both Houses could stand and vote. The constraint in the STV system will ensure that there continues to be an equal number of clergy and laity elected.

Why have we recommended this? We believe that perhaps the most significant advantage of this approach is that it maximises the possibility of the election of a more diverse group. The election would be from a larger, single pool of candidates, with every elector able to vote for any candidate. The expert advice we received, having considered various options, was that this approach would be preferable and more consistent with the aspirations in relation to representation set out in our Report.



This approach recognises both our view that a distinction between laity and clergy is unnecessary among the electorate in this context, but also our respect for the distinctive vocations of lay and ordained. Significantly, this approach would be consistent with the way in which the diocesan representatives are elected by the Vacancy in See Committee, where all the members of the committee vote in one election for the six representatives.

Furthermore, there are a number of other examples of this approach among synodical bodies in elections. For example, in the same way candidates for the Ministry Council may be nominated by any member of Synod and the whole Synod is entitled to vote in the election, and the constraint applies in the election to the effect that one of those elected shall be a member of the House of Clergy and the one shall be a member of the House of Laity. RACS and Finance Committee elections also involve a single, combined electorate, as does the election for the Chair of the Business Committee.

Chair, I cannot guarantee a more diverse group of elected representatives. The group offers this recommendation, confident that it represents an opportunity but it is for every Synod member to consider her or his response to that opportunity. Only by the action of each member will the potential represented by this proposal be realised. Chair, I beg to move item 5.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Aiden. Item 5 is now open for debate. Please note that the speech limit will be three minutes. Also, members, please remember to indicate if you wish to speak by using the hand icon on Zoom. I invite Stewart Fyfe to speak, please, thank you, so three minutes.

*Revd Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle):* Thank you for calling me, Chair. I want to begin by thanking Aiden Hargreaves-Smith and his team for their close attention to this really important matter and I absolutely support the intention to improve the breadth of representation in our electoral processes, particularly given the last Agenda item. Achieving it is clearly not a straightforward matter and, while many of the proposals are helpful, I fear that this particular point, combining the membership of clergy and laity, will actually make us less diverse and less representative.

To some extent it is fair to say that clergy can speak for laity and vice versa, but that is not to say that it would not diminish the depth of perspective that we each bring from our personal lived experiences. It is hearing the perspective of so many voices speaking from the inside of personal lived experience that has helped me to understand so much better many of the issues with which we have grappled over this quinquennium, and I think the need to hear those perspectives seems to me an essential element of improving our diversity and representation in this really important area for the life of the Church.

However hard we try to listen and understand one another, we simply cannot speak for one another from the inside, from the daily lived experience which informs the sheer

breadth of our distinctive perspectives. I have to say I also find the theological basis for this proposition to be rather unconvincing. Although God shows no partiality, he does ordain different roles for clergy and laity within the body. These roles are God-given and they are authorized by Scripture, and if we are looking to bring a wider variety of competencies and interests then it seems to me that blurring and merging our God-given diversity would be counterproductive, and I can only see that it will hamper our ability to hear God speaking through His Church in the way that He himself appears to have ordained.

It seems to me that the really critical point is the point that Mr Hargreaves-Smith ended with, which is that, fundamentally, all of this only works if we take our own personal responsibility, and that is where the culture shift needs to take place. I am minded to resist this particular item, simply because I do not see that it adds anything and, indeed, I fear rather hampers our aims rather than aiding them and I am glad that we can debate this particular item separate from the other items which I think will be, on the whole, far more helpful.

*The Chair:* Thank you. I see no one else wishing to speak so Aiden, I ask you to respond to the debate, please. You have up to five minutes. I am sure you do not need five minutes. Thank you.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, let me thank Stewart Fyfe for his generous words, I am very grateful for them, and for his support for the principles that we are trying to achieve. I think I would just want to say to him that we are not seeking to reduce in any way the representation of clergy or laity, there will still be equal representation of both clergy and laity on the Commission and we would not see it as a blurring or a merging, rather we will still continue to hear the distinctive voices of those clergy and laity. It is simply that we think that with a bigger pool in terms of the electorate there will be a greater diversity of voices in those who are chosen by the Synod.

*The Chair:* We will move to vote on item 5. I put, therefore, item 5 to the vote. This is a 30 second vote in place of a show of hands.

*The motion was put and carried.*

## **ITEM 6**

*The Chair:* Thank you, we now move to Item 6 on the Agenda. That means that we return to Aiden, so Aiden I call you to speak. You have up to ten minutes to move Item 6. Thank you.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Thank you, Chair. I fear you are going to be very fed up of me by the end of the day. The second proposition for Synod to consider is that the election of central members of the CNC must take place at a group of sessions of the

Synod, with only the members of the Houses of Clergy and Laity who are present, including by participating remotely in the case of a remote group of sessions, being entitled to vote.

The effect of approving this change is that the election of the central members of the CNC would take place in a context of prayer at a group of sessions rather than by postal ballot. Only those present would vote, as with the normal business of the Synod. The proposal has its origins in *Discerning in Obedience* but is commended to the Synod by the Review Group from our own profound experiences of seeking to discern in the context of silence and prayer. We found something really profound and liberating in first stilling our souls to wait upon God, being attentive to God in silence and, like Our Lord's blessed mother, pondering these things in our heart.

This is nothing new, of course. Christians have been doing this down the ages and we still have powerhouses of such prayer and reflection in our religious communities, thanks be to God.

But our hope is to bring this process of prayerful discernment into the corporate life of the Synod in the CNC central members election process. It is our belief that, broadly speaking, we shall all, as members of Synod, be more likely to be open to genuine discernment in a prayerful space we inhabit together. That is not, of course, to say that discernment cannot happen in any other context or that the Holy Spirit is somehow constrained in time or space, but the proposal we have offered reflects our considered view of how a particular community, the General Synod, might best be enabled to pray and discern together in the particular context of the CNC elections. The implication that only those present should vote in the election of the central members is, as it happens, also consistent with the existing rules that already apply to the election of the diocesan members. Moreover, it is consistent with the rules for voting in the CNC itself.

Having listened carefully to comments in the debate in April and having received representations, the group changed the relevant proposition which is now before the Synod, so that the requirement for "presence" will be satisfied even where a member is not physically present, if that member is considered to be present under the Synod Standing Orders. We did not feel that it was for our group, concerned with discrete matters of representation and the CNC, to seek to expand the wider concept of "presence" for synodical purposes when that is so clearly going to be a major question the Synod will need to address.

We therefore took the view, by ensuring a degree of flexibility in the proposals coming before the Synod, we did not constrain or pre-empt the Synod's deliberations in that respect. I am reminded of the psalmist, "Lord save us from our presumptuous sins".

Shortly before this group of sessions we became aware that there was a risk of misunderstanding in our wish to avoid making proposals we felt were beyond the scope

of our own work. I am particularly grateful, following a conversation with the Chair of the Business Committee for his personal recognition that we have sought studiously to avoid overstepping the mark, when I signal now to the Synod that the group warmly welcomes the amendment being proposed by one of our number, Mrs Anne Foreman, and is content to accept Mr Lamming's amendment on the understanding that the group is expressing no view on the desirability or otherwise of so-called hybrid meetings.

We do, however, wish to place on record two points. First, we genuinely believe that whenever possible Synod should come together to discern together in a prayerful way in preparation for the election of the central CNC members. Secondly, we also feel strongly that if there are barriers to full participation in the life of the Synod, we should be seeking ways to overcome those wherever possible, rather than making adjustments which may give the appearance of inclusion but which do not afford the member concerned the same experience as other members.

Finally, and perhaps a little surprisingly, another way in which we believe our proposals might increase inclusion is by increasing participation. On the information provided to us it would appear that the level of attendance at meetings of the General Synod in the respective Houses may actually have been greater than the level of participation in the last CNC postal elections. Chair, I beg to move Item 6.

*The Chair:* Thank you. Item 6 is now open for debate. Please again note that the speech limit is three minutes. I invite Jonathan Alderton-Ford to speak, followed by Sam Margrave, please. Thank you.

*Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I rise to defend postal voting. And the reason why I do that is that it is, I am afraid to say, slightly absurd to say that the Holy Spirit does not move in my office when I pray over the votes I have taken over the last 22 years by post, and that the Holy Spirit does not direct me in who to vote for. At a time when most democracies are moving towards more postal votes to include more people in elections because of the problems of physically getting to a voting place on time, it seems to be counterintuitive.

Secondly, I have attended Synod, in York and other place these 22 years, and I have frequently seen people like clergy who have got weddings and fetes and are unable to attend the whole Synod making sure they get back in time for the crucial vote only to find that for very good reasons the Business Committee has shifted an important vote to another time when they were not there. This Measure, as it stands, does not safeguard that eventuality. Although I have not put down an amendment, I would urge the Synod to resist this, although I would support the amendment slightly because that does improve it, but it still does not mean that we are fully democratic in our election to this crucial body because, ultimately, we are a democracy.

This is not like the Book of Acts when they were selecting the new apostle where they gathered the Church together and then drew lots. So, therefore, I would ask that postal voting would still be included.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Having had a number of discussions with Committee members I wanted to thank the Committee for listening to my representations and making provision particularly for disabled people and those with health conditions who may be unable to attend in person. However, I do want to put on record that while I support those amendments, I still have reservations about these proposals, including removing postal voting, block voting or pairs.

I do not know about others, but the Holy Spirit often visits me at home and I disagree with the proposal. However, I think it is very important when putting forward ideas that we make sure we achieve the best we can, so I support the amendments and if they do go through, which I am sure they will, I want to thank the Committee for making provision and also support Mr Lamming's amendment in relation to hybrid meetings.

*The Chair:* Thank you Sam. We are now going to move to dealing with the amendments, working our way through them, starting, therefore, with the amendment at Item 90, Mr David Lamming's amendment. So, I invite you, David, to speak for up to five minutes. Thank you.

## **ITEM 90**

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Thank you Madam Chair, I shall not need five minutes. My amendment is quite a simple one, and one which I hope is non-controversial. It is, as you will have seen from the Order Paper, to insert the words "or hybrid" after "remote" in the phrase in brackets in the proposition at Item 6. This will then read "including by participating remotely in the case of a remote or hybrid group of sessions".

Hybrid groups of sessions, although that term is not used, are provided for by the terms of section 1(1) of the General Synod Remote Meetings Temporary Standing Orders Measure 2020, and Special Standing Order 2, that Synod approved in November 2020 that the Standing Order would allow a hybrid Synod meeting, with members present physically and others participating remotely, was explained in paragraph 8 of GS 2177X. So there is no, as it were, legislative problem to such a meeting being held, although of course we heard from Robert Hammond in the debate earlier this afternoon about the concerns, the practical concerns and other concerns, in relation to setting up a hybrid meeting.

My amendment to insert "or hybrid" is entirely without prejudice to the decision to be made as a matter of principle whether elections of the central members of the CNC should be made at a meeting of the Synod rather than, as at present, by returning ballot papers by

post. So Synod members can agree the amendment while, if they consider it right to do so, voting against Item 6, as amended, and therefore maintaining voting by post.

If Item 6 as I propose it should be amended is passed, of course, it will be for the Standing Orders Committee to consider whether a clarifying amendment is needed or desirable for Standing Order 137(b) which is on the Agenda for debate on Monday. I move my amendment accordingly.

*The Chair:* Aiden, I ask you therefore to respond to David Lamming's amendment, telling us whether you wish to accept the amendment or would rather reject it. Thank you. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* I will not take that long, Chair, thank you. I look at Mr Lamming, sadly not across the chamber, as a fellow lawyer, and would have given him a knowing look and said, "It is one of those lawyers' games, isn't it?" When is including inclusive and when is including exclusive? Perhaps there is a question there, in fact, for a wider group, but that is for another day. The use of it here was definitely inclusive and so Mr Lamming's amendment simply adds another possibility into that. I have indicated that we are expressing no view on the matter of hybrid meetings, so the group is happy to accept his amendment.

*The Chair:* The amendment at Item 90 is now open for debate. The speech limit is three minutes. Please make sure that any comments are made in relation to David's amendment. As I see no one indicating that they wish to speak on this amendment, I now put Item 90, the amendment, to the vote. This is a 30 second vote in place of a show of hands. Thank you.

*The motion was put and carried.*

## **ITEM 91**

*The Chair:* We now move on to the next amendment standing at Item 91. Anne Foreman, you have up to five minutes to move the amendment standing in your name. Thank you.

*Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter):* Speaking to this amendment, I confirm to Synod that GS 2022 is underpinned by a commitment to inclusion and diversity in order that all might be enabled to pray and discern together in the CNC elections process. We have been very grateful for the opportunity to consult with Synod members and have enjoyed it and as a result, as Aiden has outlined, the further consultation changed the original proposition to the one you have before you, in order that the requirement to be present is satisfied by what is considered to be present under Synod standing orders.

We were concerned too, not to stray into an area that more properly, we felt, rests with the Business Committee and being present is, of course, consistent with the rules that apply to the election of diocesan members.

However, in the light of the potential that an unintended consequence of not addressing the particular needs of disabled people, people with disabilities, it could be that of excluding them, then we hope this amendment will ensure that does not happen, that our aspiration remains for Synod to be fully accessible to all so that no one is excluded from being physically present in order to pray and discern together. We are very grateful to members for highlighting this possibility and to Mr Margrave, in particular, for his persistence in asking the group to look again at this. We are happy to respond to the concerns he raised and I ask Synod to support this amendment.

*The Chair:* Thank you Anne. It is back to you Aiden, I would like you to respond to the amendment. Again, you have up to five minutes and to indicate whether you wish to accept or reject the amendment standing in Anne's name.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, I simply indicate that the group is very happy to accept this amendment, and, if you will indulge me for one moment, it gives me an opportunity to place on record my particular thanks to Anne, who has made a huge contribution to our work over the past nearly three years and to express my appreciation for that. Thank you.

*The Chair:* Item 91 is now open for debate. The speech limit is three minutes, and I invite Clive Scowen to speak, followed by Paul Benfield, please.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I struggle with this amendment, not because I do not want people who are ill or disabled to be able to vote, but, for starters, the way it is worded, it does not actually make sense, but understanding as I think what it intended, it seems to me to drive a coach and horses through the original proposal. Either it matters that all members voting have been present at the act of prayer and worship prior to the vote or it does not, and if it does not, then why is it only ill or disabled people who are going to be allowed to vote, even though not present?

What about, for example, people who are caring for a sick relative? They are not ill or disabled, but surely they are as entitled to be considered as those who are? What about, as was mentioned earlier, clergy who are having to conduct a wedding or some other urgent pastoral matter which prevents them from being present? I have rather great sympathy for Jonathan Alderton-Ford's point about the ability of the Holy Spirit to lead us whether we are at Synod or at home, but if we are going to accept that some people can be led by the Holy Spirit at home because they are ill or disabled, why should that not apply to other people who have equally good reasons for not being present?

I also wonder how this is going to work in practice. Where do we draw the lines around what counts as being ill, for example? And how ill do you have to be? I think the intentions behind this are laudable but I really do not think it has been clearly thought through and I think it is likely to lead to quite a lot of argument about who qualifies for this exemption and who does not.

For myself, I am minded, in the light of what Jonathan said, to vote against Item 6 anyway, but if it is justified then the justification has to be thoroughgoing, and has to mean that people who cannot be there for any reason ought not to be able to vote. This compromise seems to me to be unfair and unworkable and I cannot support it.

*Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* I would endorse everything just said by Mr Scowen, and would simply ask who is going to decide whether someone is absent by reason of illness or disability.

*The Chair:* Thank you, that was very succinct, Paul.

*Dr Michael Todd (Truro):* The text as it stands is unclear as to how, as I read it, people with illness or disability will actually be able to vote in the context that it is a physical meeting. Will there be special remote provisions for them if we are not having hybrid meetings or, alternatively, will they be able to do a postal vote, or a proxy vote? I just do not understand what mechanism is intended.

*Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells):* I am going to join the reluctant chorus of those who oppose this way of doing business on two fronts really. The first one is the question of definition. Who decides if you are ill enough to stay at home and get a vote? To take this to ludicrous proportions, are we into doctors' certificates or what? I remember some years ago at York, I was taken ill and had to disappear for a day or so and I missed some votes. I just think that is how it is, sadly. I understand what we are saying about inclusion, I have a particular concern about disability, but it has to be workable within the Synod's way of being.

That takes me to my second objection, which is about how we do elections anyway. Aiden has pointed out that the turnout for voting on the CNC is lower than the attendance at Synod, and that is true for all our elections partly because we have these horrible little bits of A5 paper in different colours where you must put your name in block capitals, and all the rest that goes with it.

We are saying we are going to reform voting on one item, which is CNC membership, actually we need to reform our voting on all items and allow electronic voting, or whatever it may be. To suddenly do a reforming of voting for one item of Synod business and not for all the rest is inconsistent, so I think I must vote against this too with a heavy heart.



*The Chair:* Thank you, Stephen. Sam Margrave, and then after that I am going to reduce the speech limit to two minutes, because we have got a lot to get through this afternoon.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I am disappointed by the speeches so far. Eminent people as they are, I feel that they are incredibly misguided in their position. This is about equity and equality and inclusion. I found it astounding that the previous speaker mentioned that they believe in inclusion and, in particular, supporting those who are disabled, but then wished to exclude disabled people and ill people, because not supporting this would send a clear message that we are not welcome and we do not matter and our views will not be counted.

This is not the same as passing legislation when you do have to be in the Synod chamber, this is the removal of postal voting, which I do not support, and you can vote against this if that is your position. But if we do remove postal voting then we need to make provision for those who may, for a variety of reasons, not be able to attend. The Equality Act clearly defines who is disabled. I am sure no disabled person would use this if they were able to be present, but I do think if somebody is taken ill, in hospital or unable to attend, let us say because there are too many people and they are anxious, the reality is that we need to make sure we hear all the views of all the members of Synod, whether they are disabled or ill or not.

We need to lovingly open our arms to all and hear their views, hear their voices and to receive the gift of one another. In not making provision, particularly for those disadvantaged, we are sending a damaging message that we do not want to have a diverse and inclusive Church.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* I have to support this amendment. I hear Sam very clearly and I also understand that every person who attends Synod comes in a position of trust. I think it is a big mistake to actually try to exclude anybody because they are ill. I would trust any member of Synod to declare whether they are ill or not and I do not think certificates are required for that. I think we all come with our faith and our trust in God and our trust in one another.

I would also say to you that from a perspective of looking in from outside, if people are watching this today and they are thinking of standing for Synod, and they know they have an illness, and they know they may not be able to attend, how is that going to reflect outside this body. It is a very poor reflection, really, to hear the things that have been said this afternoon. I sincerely hope that everyone here who is electronically voting, and can see that it is possible, understand that sometimes people need to be away from Synod.

We are in the middle of a pandemic and if people are isolating I would expect them to be at home and not in presence with everybody else, so thank you Sam for sterlingly standing the point. I entirely agree with you.

*The Chair:* Under Standing Order 31, I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 91 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 91. Everyone will be pleased because we are going to have double the amount of seconds to vote, okay? We are listening to what is happening at home for you all.

This is now a 60 second vote in place of a show of hands, using the Lumi platform. Thank you. I hope everyone is clear that this is for closure on this item. We are not actually voting on the amendment yet, just so that everyone is clear what we are all voting for.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chair:* So, I now put Item 91 to the vote which is the amendment standing in Anne Foreman's name. This is a 60 second vote in place of a show of hands using the Lumi platform. This is now voting on amendment 91.

*The motion was put and carried.*

## **ITEM 6**

*The Chair:* We will now return to debating Item 6 as amended by Items 90 and 91.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* I want to support this particular point, because I think new members have the opportunity if you are in debate together to see, hear and have the opportunity to speak to anybody who happens to be standing for CNC. We have to bear in mind that there will be new members, and they will not know everybody as we may know them now. Some of us will be re-elected, some of us will not, and it is an opportunity to be able to discern together, to be able to pray together and to be able to see and speak to candidates. It is a very good opportunity, I think.

At the last election, there was a big turnover, people will remember, in elections, and I am expecting probably the same thing again and I think it is really preferable to a paper vote when people do not know each other very well at all.

*Mr Michael Stallybrass (York):* Chair, thank you very much for calling me, and apologies for my technical glitch earlier. Basically, I was going to say that concern has been expressed over the low take up of postal voting and it is hoped that by the votes being done in person in Synod itself, it will increase the turn out. But may I point out that we

are on the verge of moving from postal voting to e-voting for election of General Synod members.

Now, to take an analogy, I simply cannot believe that anybody would have seriously suggested that we switch the voting system for General Synod from being a postal vote to a personal vote at every deanery synod. Instead, we are moving to a system which actually does allow for electronic hustings, as we are having in the Diocese of York, so that there is an opportunity for people to get to understand and know who the candidates are, even though you are not there in person.

And I actually feel quite strongly that moving to a vote in Synod itself, as opposed to some form of replacement of postal voting by e-voting is actually going to be a retrograde step.

*Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I want to make two brief points. One is now that we have decided, which I warmly welcome, that disabled people and people who are ill can participate in this election, can we have some assurance from the Chair that we will see how this is to be achieved, bearing in mind you cannot do it just by Zoom, because Zoom keeps breaking down.

The second thing I would like to say is that a previous speaker has accused people like me of discriminating against disabled and ill people. In my speech I said nothing of the sort, and therefore I would seek an apology from that person, as he has put it in the public debate that those who oppose this, who have spoken earlier, are against disabled people. That is unfair and untrue.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Mrs April Alexander (Southwark):* The subject has been brought up about whether we should have discussion with the candidates electronically, if necessary, and I have spoken about this before, but I would like the opportunity to explain why it is so important. It has been clear since 2015 that fewer women have been appointed as Diocesan Bishops than men, and fewer than their supporters might have expected in these first few years when the candidates included the pioneer group of women, those who have been steadfast over many years of disappointment and wrangling, and have shown themselves to be particularly gifted.

The reason is numbers. Ultimately, the Crown Nominations Commission casts votes for the preferred candidate who needs to secure two-thirds of those votes. This is a high bar: out of a possible 14 votes, they have to get 10. But, as you know, General Synod votes for six members of CNC and the diocese in question elects six members. And if two or three of those central members hold theological convictions which lead them to support exclusively, or even predominantly, men for diocesan appointments, then women candidates are automatically at a disadvantage.

If two or three members of the diocesan synod are of the same persuasion, it is yet more difficult for a woman to be selected. It is crucially important that every member who has a vote understands that and understands the preferences of the people for whom they are voting, whether by electronic means or whether in person in the meeting that is proposed under this arrangement. So, if six such members of the Commission have these theological convictions, it is actually impossible for a woman to be elected, and this has happened, in my experience.

*Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells):* What I want to say is that we have been tremendously inventive over the last few years in terms of the way that we conduct our business and I think that we often find ourselves in the mindset of thinking that we always have three meetings in a year, or two if we do not have a November meeting, but the experience over the last few months, or 18 months, has been that we have been able to meet online quite successfully. I just wonder whether or not a meeting that is purely for the election of the CNC members, perhaps on a single afternoon, would give everybody the opportunity to do this remotely and we could then release our in-person meetings for doing the more important business.

*Mrs Debra McIsaac (Salisbury):* I would like to suggest to you that two issues have been conflated here. There are three choices in the way in which a vote is taken for members of the CNC. The first is in the traditional way by postal vote, the second is in the way that everything seems to be moving, which is online voting, and the third is getting together and voting during a session.

I see considerable problems with the third of those, not least, for example, if we are going to have hybrid sessions - and we must allow for those - but today shows the difficulties of relying on that functioning properly in what is a very important choice. If we are going to vote together in the same place, inclusively, with those who are joining us technologically or in some other fashion, it seems to me that the case for live hustings is absolutely irresistible, and if you have got six pairs, how many candidates are we going to be hearing from? We are going to have to add an extra day to the session to conduct those electronic hustings properly, or hustings properly.

*Revd James Dudley-Smith (Bath & Wells):* It seems to me that a vote against Item 6 is actually a vote for the maximum possibility of inclusion and diversity.

*The Chair:* I love it, short and sweet. Thank you. I now see no one else indicating that they wish to speak so I ask Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to respond to the debate, please. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, I hope those who have spoken, and I am grateful to everyone who has contributed, will forgive me if I do not turn to each speech individually, and that a few reflections will offer a response.

In terms of practicalities, as I indicated earlier, we did not want to overstep the mark, and the fact is that the practicalities will come to the Business Committee to determine, so it will be for the Business Committee to determine a number of those issues that were raised in the debate as to how things would happen. Can I say that Mrs Allen, in fact, provided the answer to a number of earlier speakers about how certain things would be sorted out, and that is through trust, and as a body I would hope that we can trust each other. That is part of the challenge, of course, that was in the Report that we brought to Synod.

The proposal for the election of CNC members to take place in this way was grounded in *Discerning in Obedience*, that great theological piece of work undertaken by Professor O'Donovan and his colleagues, and it is really about the way we operate as a Synod, how we make decisions. Of course, as I said in my initial speech, there is no constraint on the Holy Spirit, of course the Holy Spirit is just as present in Mr Alderton-Ford's study as anywhere else, but the question is about how we might best together discern, and whether we are best discerning on our own, or whether sometimes the opportunity for corporate prayer and worship, to engage with each other and to discern together in that prayerful and liturgical space, does not give us an opportunity to make decisions in a better way.

I think if anybody were suggesting that the Synod be reduced to an electronic poll where we simply ticked boxes and sent the answers back, of course there would be some reaction. So, members, I commend this proposal to you and invite you to vote in favour.

*The Chair:* Thank you Aiden. I now put Item 6, as amended by Items 90 and 91, to the vote. This is a 60 second vote in place of a show of hands by using the Lumi platform.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chair:* Jayne Ozanne, a point of order?

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Chair, I do not know how we ask for an indication of what the votes actually are, please, because I tried to raise a point of order to actually ask so we can get an actual result but was not called in time, unlike what we had earlier in the last group of sessions when we did a quick poll on Zoom and we could see the results immediately, so we could see roughly what percentage of Synod voted in which way.

At the moment, we have no indication whatsoever. I am told you cannot do that for a 30 second vote, however you have been taking 60 second votes and yet we still have not been given any of the results. So, can we have an indication, please, and at what point should each of us be asking points of order to get it?

*The Chair:* Thanks, Jayne, for raising all that. What we are doing with the Lumi platform is as if we were all in the chamber here together, and that would be the equivalent of a show of hands. If yourself or other members would like a counted vote, then we need to ask for a counted vote of the whole Synod like now, after I have just done what we have

done, or earlier on, as soon as I say that we are moving to the vote. And that would be the same if we were all the chamber together. I hope everyone has got all that okay.

Point of order, Neil Patterson.

*Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford):* Just to expand on Jayne's point. I think the point Jayne was making was that if we were in the chamber we can all see each other's hands and we can kind of sense the mood of Synod. At the moment we are simply being told this has passed, this has passed, which has pleased the Business Committee really, but we have no idea really what the feel is, other than the fact we are all sitting here listening to the debate, hearing that everything has passed, regardless of the speeches and we do not feel we sense what the mood is.

*The Chair:* Thanks Neil, for that extra clarification. I absolutely hear what you are both saying that if we were all in the chamber together we would get a sense of how the voting was going through the show of hands. It is at my discretion to be able to order a count of the whole Synod, so on Item 6, as amended, that is what I shall now do, okay? This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 6, as amended by those two Items 90 and 91, and there will be 90 seconds for this vote using the Lumi Platform. Thank you.

*The motion was put and carried, 185 voting in favour, 86 against, with 12 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 7**

*The Chair:* After those couple of points of order, I will be mindful of what was said as we carry on with the rest of the debate this afternoon. We therefore turn to Item 7 on our Agenda and again I call Aiden to speak to this item. He has up to ten minutes.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, I could not agree more with Mr Patterson, how good it would be to be together in the Synod chamber. Soon may it come.

Chair, you know the sort of sermon, the preacher has indicated that there are three points, like all good Anglican sermons, but as the exposition proceeds, it becomes clear that point 2 seems to have developed 5 sub-points. Well, I am afraid Item 7 is a little like that, though you have been given fair warning.

Proposition 3(a) is that central members of the CNC are elected as six pairs, three pairs from the House of Clergy, and three from the House of Laity, with one member of each pair serving for the consideration by the CNC of a particular vacancy, the pair agreeing between themselves which of them is to serve or, in default of agreement, the matter being determined by lot.

The Review Group is clear that this is a key plank of our proposals. We believe the simplest and most effective way of enabling a greater breadth of experiences, perspectives and thinking amongst the elected central members is to increase the number of central members. However, we accept that there should be no increase in the number of six central members engaged on any particular vacancy. As I explained in the debate in April, we considered a large number of options, and ultimately came back to build on the concept of pairs arising out of the theological work undertaken by Professor O'Donovan and his colleagues.

We therefore propose that the Houses of Laity and Clergy together will vote for pairs of candidates. The pairs will be formed by individual members of Synod choosing a running mate from the same House, and we dare to hope that members will seek to reflect a commitment to legitimate diversity by embodying it in their pairings as well as demonstrating it with their vote. The top three ranked pairs of laity and top three ranked pairs of clergy will be elected.

We envisage that each pair will work closely with each other as equals, and, similarly, with the other pairs of central members in a new and creative way, modelling a supportive and collaborative way of working and bringing a broader range of insights to the CNC table than is possible with six members as at present. We believe that the reduced time commitment and increased flexibility mean that a wider range of Synod members will be able to consider standing, especially those whose family responsibilities or employment arrangements currently prevent that, so bringing the potential for a further broadening of backgrounds and perspectives.

Central membership of the Commission will always be a demanding responsibility, but this proposal provides an opportunity for it to be a practical possibility for more members. This is not just theory. With a large number of vacancies already on the horizon it will be a real issue for those considering standing for election as a central CNC member next year.

We are aware that some members are concerned about a perceived lack of continuity amongst the central members, as potentially a different combination of six out of the 12 serves for successive vacancies, and, putting it bluntly, that this somehow hands power and control to the Archbishops as the only true permanent voting members. Well, their Graces might wish. Actually, I doubt that they do.

but putting aside my views on metropolitan authority, may I say to Synod that I find it difficult to imagine that those elected in their laity and clergy pairs by members of this Synod would be any less able to engage persuasively, firmly, and yes, when needed, robustly with all the members of the Commission on which they served than those who have served in the past or serve now.

Others have questioned our belief that the increased number will lead to greater diversity amongst those elected. To this, I can only repeat that our proposals provide the opportunity, but it will be for every member of this Synod to respond, having reflected on our responsibilities as responsible representatives. Under God, the future is in our hands, the choice is ours.

Chair, an amendment specifically to remove the pairings proposal was put to the Synod in April and was overwhelmingly rejected by the Synod two to one. I ask Synod now to maintain its support for this proposal unamended.

Proposition 3(b) is that a casual vacancy among those elected from the Houses of Clergy and Laity is always filled by a fresh election, held in the same manner as an ordinary election of a complete pair from the relevant House.

This proposal comes to the Synod in response to a point helpfully raised by Prebendary Cawdell in the April debate and by others in correspondence, for which the Review Group was most grateful. It means that if one member of a pair steps down from the CNC, there will always be a fresh election for the pair. Normally, in the first two years following election, the original votes are used to determine who should fill the vacancy. In an election of pairs, this would have prevented the remaining member of the pair from being able to continue. This was an unintended consequence of the original proposal, and we are happy to have been able to modify the proposition before it came formally to the Synod now.

A remaining member of a pair would now be able to stand with a new running mate for election and it might be thought would, as someone previously elected and with recent experience of the Commission, be in a strong position. We did consider a number of other options, including that to be proposed by Prebendary Cawdell, but we felt the principle of pairings and the model of collaborative working it provides is more compelling than concerns expressed about the potential loss of the remaining member of the original pair or the effects of a fresh election for a single pair.

Moreover, we were not persuaded that the continuity represented by the remaining member of a pair remaining in office on her or his own was preferable to the electorate having the choice to return that remaining member to office with a new second member of the pair, or to elect a different pair.

Again, members of the Houses of Laity and Clergy, it will be for you to discern. In fact, whilst I should probably tell you that past performance is not necessarily indicative of future results, we understand that there has been only one such casual vacancy in the last decade or so, and this has not been an issue in the past. Chair, I beg to move Item 7. Thank you.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Aiden. Item 7 is now open for debate.



*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester):* I have one very simple point to make, and Aiden referred to it. It is unhealthy when too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few people. Three people are present ex officio on every ex CNC, the Archbishop of the relevant province, the Archbishops' appointment advisor and the Prime Minister's appointments advisor. Despite the fact that the last two cannot vote, these people, by their knowledge, experience, status and long familiarity with the CNC process have enormous power to argue and persuade.

I have no doubt at all that they only exercise this for what they believe to be the good of Christ's Church, but surely we have learnt that concentrating most of the power in the hands of a few is not good. For the CNC members elected by us in Synod, it takes time to get used to the system and to the issues needing to be considered. Inevitably, at first they are guided by the people with experience, the ex officio members.

If we accept the proposed pairing arrangement, it will take twice as long for them to feel that they know the ropes, twice as long to bring their own distinctive contribution, twice as long to be an effective, different voice, to counterbalance the power of the ex officio members. What we might gain in diversity, and Aiden himself has said it is only a might, we would definitely lose in experience, knowledge and balancing influence. This proposal is very well meant but I urge you to vote against it.

*Canon Nigel Bacon (Lincoln):* I am very much in favour of increasing the diversity of people on the CNC, but I remain concerned about this proposal for pairing. If it works, which I doubt, I fear that it could land up having unintended consequences. By pairing people who have very much opposing views from across the breadth of our Church, and I rejoice in the breadth of our Church, it will have the effect of squeezing out those who hold a middle position on issues.

I would far rather we have an approach where we had a pool elected by General Synod of six clergy and six laity, voted on by a single transferable vote, and that for each of those a profile is then published. And then when a particular vacancy comes up for consideration, those who are available to offer to serve on the CNC indicate, and then let us allow the diocesan vacant CNC to select three clergy and three laity.

I urge Synod to reject this proposal and to ask the Review Group to revisit this area of its proposals.

*The Chair:* I am going to invite Michelle Obende, followed by Paul Butler, the Bishop of Durham, and then we will move to work our way through the amendments. Thank you.

*Mrs Michelle Obende (Chelmsford):* Brothers and sisters, despite the well-intentioned proposals, I do not feel that it will, in fact, enable a more diverse mix of central members of CNC. If we truly want to have a diverse CNC, or at least one which reflects the make-up of our whole Church, then why not mandate diverse pairings. If it is not mandated, then how do we make sure that the intentions will be delivered.

For example, what is to stop 12 men of similar convictions, thinking, race, age, ability and sexuality - which I might add is not representative of our church today - being elected as central members for the CNC. Now, I appreciate that we might not want to be too directive, and hope that we are able to achieve desired intentions with hope, goodwill and prayer, but I think it is evident from the make-up of our current General Synod members that to truly represent the Church and be diverse in all our governing bodies, we must do more than desire and encourage change, and actually be bolder and mandate it if the CNC and other bodies within the Church of England should reflect the diversity of our Church.

I am encouraged by the changes in the recent paperwork, to ensure that in the event of a person resigning from the Commission, the remaining member of the pair can re-stand in the by-election with a new partner, but I do feel, however, that the Working Group could have gone further in the revisions. With the way the recommendations are currently worded, I am not sure I would put myself forward, as I would not want anyone who I would potentially pair with to lose their place as a result of me needing to pull out if family commitments got too much, being a new working mother.

The point I am trying to make is that with the recommendations the way they are written today, someone like me might not even try to make it work. If you truly want a diverse CNC, I ask you to question whether you truly believe that the pairing system in its current form will deliver the change and vote consciously in that conviction.

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler):* Briefly, I recently sat for my first time ever on a CNC because the Archbishop of York, rightly, recused himself from the Chelmsford process, and may I say I much enjoyed being part of that process with the previous speaker, Michelle. This is simply my reflection on some of the comments which are made elsewhere.

My experience of being on the CNC for the one-off - which also included a clergy member, Kate Wharton, who was on also because another clergy person had to recuse themselves because of their connections with Chelmsford - was that I saw absolutely no evidence of the officers who are there as ex officio in any way seeking to influence unhelpfully. In fact, their whole purpose was to help all of us as CNC members do our job as well as we could.

I saw no evidence that people who are there permanently saw themselves as more powerful or more influential in any way than those of us who were there for a one-off. I

actually want to speak commending the work that has been done. I think Aiden and his team have come up with an elegant solution. There is no permanent way of dealing with all of this. I think Michelle makes some suitable points about whether or not it will produce more diversity. I think it is more likely to produce more diversity than anything else, and certainly more than the amendments. So, I would encourage Synod, from my experience of being on CNC, to trust the process and support the proposals.

## **ITEM 92**

*The Chair:* We are now going to work our way through the amendments starting with Item 92, Mr Clive Scowen's amendment. So, I invite Clive to speak to his amendment. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Chair, this amendment is seeking to replace the pairs proposal in the Review Group's Report with what was originally proposed by Professor O'Donovan's group in their report *Discerning in Obedience*. They proposed that candidates stand for election as pairs with a principal and an alternate. The principal would be the main member, entitled to attend the Commission for every episcopal appointment, and the alternate would be just that, a person who would attend when the principal either could not do so, or for whatever reason wished the alternate to attend.

If neither could attend, the Chair of the House to which the pair belonged would appoint a substitute, as happens at present when a single member cannot attend. This, it seems to me, has two major advantages. First, if, as the main motion proposes, a pair consists of two people who are equally full members, the natural expectation of both members of the pair will be that they will be able to attend roughly half of the meetings. If that happens, neither will build up the experience and skills to operate as members of the Commission on an equal footing with the Archbishops or the advisors. To say this does not impute any bad motives to either of those permanent members, any of those permanent members, it is simply a reality of life that if you are there all the time you get a better understanding of history and of other people who have been considered than any member will who is only there for roughly every other appointment.

Whereas a principal and alternate system will give the expectation that the principal will attend most meetings, as individual members do now, and thus build up the experience and skills they need much more quickly, and the existence of the alternate will avoid the need for the Chair of the House to appoint a substitute anything like as often as happens at present. And when the alternate does attend, they will be in a better position than a substitute under the current system, since they are likely to attend more often than a substitute would.

The second advantage of my amendment is that it would maintain the diversity of membership which the proposers of the new system say is so important. And I agree. The Review Group's proposal, not spelt out in the main motion, but clear from the Report

and the draft Standing Order changes in the 58<sup>th</sup> Report of the Standing Orders Committee, is that if neither of the pair could serve on a particular vacancy, the Archbishop, after consultation, would ask a member of one of the other pairs to serve. That would not only give the Archbishop unacceptable influence, in my view, over the membership of a particular Commission, but it would compromise the very diversity which STV has secured.

By contrast, there is a strong convention that the Chair of the House concerned will appoint a substitute with views as similar as possible to the member unable to attend, thus preserving the diversity of view on the particular Commission. For these reasons, it seems to me that the principal and alternate system proposed by Professor O'Donovan is far better than what is now proposed by the Review Group, which is probably why he suggested it.

This is not just a concern of evangelical or conservative people like me. Christina Baron and I do not often agree on issues, but I found myself agreeing with every word that she said on the subject at Synod in April. She was criticised for speaking from a position of privilege as a current member of the CNC, but in truth she was speaking from a position of knowledge. She knows what she is talking about, as only those who have served on the Commission do.

I hope that in this debate, others of very different views from mine on most issues will be called to speak in support of this amendment, which I beg to move.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Clive. I ask Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to respond to the amendment, please. You have up to five minutes, and please indicate whether you accept or reject the amendment standing in Clive's name.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* I am grateful to Mr Scowen for his amendment because it demonstrates a characteristically detailed level of engagement with the business before the Synod, which I believe we should appreciate and respect.

Nevertheless, the Review Group urges Synod to resist this amendment for a number of reasons.

First, we do not believe this would be genuine pairing at all. The model we have presented to Synod is based on equality between the members of a pair, and a genuinely shared commitment to the work of the Commission. The election of a principal and an alternate is effectively hierarchical, without any suggestion of that genuine shared engagement and sharing of insights and ideas.

Secondly, with a subordinate alternate, we consider it far less likely that the opportunity will be developed to have diverse pairs; an aspiration we would wish to encourage the Synod to hold on to.

Thirdly, there would seem to be every possibility that some alternates might never, or almost never, function as a member of the Commission. It is difficult to understand how they might engage in the life and work of the Commission without the essential experience of the CNC process.

Fourthly, if as proposed, a surviving alternate would continue alone if the principal dropped out, that could be quite a different role from anything the alternate had ever envisaged when considering standing for election as such.

Fifthly, and crucially, this proposition does nothing to increase the breadth of perspectives around the CNC table. If you support our wish to enhance the range of voices amongst the central members, this amendment cannot be for you, I would suggest. Indeed, whilst it gives a democratic mandate to the alternate, which present deputies do not have, its impact would be to reduce the potential diversity of those involved in the process.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Aiden. As Aiden is rejecting amendment 92, standing in Clive's name, members who wish the debate on amendment 92 to continue are now invited to do so. A member who wishes the debate to continue and a vote to be taken should select the green tick. There is no need for members who do not wish the debate to continue to select an option. I see plenty of green ticks, therefore we will now debate the amendment, paragraph 92.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* I am really confused over the issue of diversity, both in relation to the main item and this amendment, and I hope somebody can help me out, because it seems to me that diversity means two very different things that are being conflated here.

One is demographic diversity. I can see how a pairing system could achieve that and would give members the opportunity to be on CNC who might not otherwise have been able to. I can definitely see the point of that and would support it. But the other kind of diversity, which, frankly, to my mind is far more important when it comes to how I cast my vote in a CNC election, is diversity of viewpoint.

Having served on two CNCs as a diocesan representative, it seems to me that diversity of viewpoint in churchmanship is already fairly well represented. But if the idea is that members representing very different theological positions would pair up for the election, I have to say that seems to me somewhat bizarre and unfair on the electorate, because it would be rather as though the American electorate in the last presidential election had been faced with a ticket with Donald Trump with Kamala Harris as his running mate and they had to try and decide whether they wanted to vote for that ticket. I just do not think

that is fair on the electorate. I think people, rightly, are going to vote for people who they think will represent their views.

Also, there will be an element of people wanting to support certain candidates on the basis of their personal qualities, neither of which would really be achieved by pairing. I think whether or not Clive's amendment makes sense or not depends to a large extent on what we actually mean by diversity.

Now, I know that Mr Hargreaves-Smith will tell us that he has no control over how members of Synod might choose to pair up, and that is indeed quite true, but I am interested to know what the intention was.

*Revd Canon Dr James Walters (Universities & TElS):* I am speaking against this amendment. I served on both the O'Donovan group that wrote *Discerning in Obedience* and on this Election Process Review Group. The O'Donovan group, as we heard, suggested the election of pairs to provide alternates because of our concern that the current substitution system for central members operated according to a kind of tribal logic. We wanted everyone on a CNC to have a democratic mandate and we had begun to see the potential for a system of pairings that could run against rigid tribalism and steer us towards greater diversities of both the kinds we just heard outlined providing pairings, for example, for those who want to support mutual flourishing within the Church.

It is that idea that has been developed by the Election Process Review Group, in conversation with Professor O'Donovan I should say, to see how 12 equal voices can be brought to the table in a way that retains strategic continuity through communication in pair, but also incentivises diversity characteristics by making a pair more electable to a Synod that has said it wants more diverse voices in places of power. We have used, sometimes, the example of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris to illustrate how this wider electoral appeal might work.

That is where we have moved away from simply alternates because the diversity element only stands a chance of working if both candidates have an equal role. There would be dangers of tokenism here otherwise. Kamala Harris might be Vice President, but she does not just turn up to work when President Biden is unavailable.

So, although a system of alternates would address the issue of democratic legitimacy of substitutions, passing this amendment would really take away the central CNC reform designed to promote diversity at precisely the time when we say this is a key strategic priority for the Church. It would be a source of shame to this Synod if we have, again, six white, middle-aged central members and a smattering of more diverse voices among alternates who get an occasional look-in. We need 12 equal members, standing in pairs as equal running mates.

I fear that this and other amendments reflect a key challenge of widening participation. Some people are going to have to let go of some power and control, which they sincerely believe they exercise in the interests of the Church but which is actually blocking the diversity of perspectives that we need to hear and through which the Holy Spirit speaks to us.

I urge Synod to vote against this amendment.

*The Chair:* Just before we hear any more speeches, could you please check whether you have got your green tick still showing on your screen at home, and, if you have, can you remove the ticks. That would be really helpful at this end. Thank you.

*Ms Josile Munro (London):* I am not going to be long, and I am sitting to speak against this amendment. I would surely say that the proposal of having an alternate does not build up experience. We have been talking about experience, but if you only have an alternate person coming in once maybe in the period of three years then actually they do not get any experience at all and I think it goes against the whole pairing and diversity system that we are trying to identify here. They need to be equal members.

All we are doing is putting in place a similar system to what we have now, only that we are voting on it, but I think actually let us go radical, let us look at having a pair that works, you know, alternately, and really builds up the experience of being able to be on that Synod. So, I am saying to Synod to vote against this amendment.

*The Chair:* After Archbishop Stephen has spoken, I am going to take the point of order.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I was very hesitant about saying anything in this debate because I do recognise that as an Archbishop I have a particular place within the CNC process, but listening to James Walters speaking, and he spoke at the debate last time, and both times in my view extremely movingly and powerfully, about a different sort of culture within our Church, which I have to say is something I long for and something which I believe touches on every debate we are having at the moment about can we trust each other, can we work together, can we raise our horizons and can we find different ways of working which will give breadth and purpose to that?

Although this amendment seems deceptively reasonable, I believe we should resist it for the simple reason that what is before us here is an idea about doing it differently through pairings. I simply believe that Synod needs to vote on that idea. We may vote against, we may vote for, but we must vote for it because it is central to everything that is being presented here.

Also listening to my good friend and former colleague Michelle speak so powerfully and movingly as well, earlier in the debate, I believe that the pairings may present us with the

best way of being more diverse, recognising that we are not very diverse at the moment in the CNC.

I think we should resist this amendment, simply because an idea, a new way of doing it is put before us, and we the Synod ought to have the chance to vote on it.

*The Chair:* Your point of order, Jonathan Alderton-Ford? Thank you.

*Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* My reason for my point of order is that I am getting very concerned about this debate. There is a lot of experience in this Synod, particularly legal experience. Everybody does want a more diverse CNC, but if somebody does not like a set of proposals, the implication is that they are baseless.

*The Chair:* Excuse me Jonathan, what is your point of order please?

*Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I wish to stop that sort of thing happening. We need to debate logically.

*The Chair:* Jonathan, this is not a point of order, okay? Thank you.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich):* I want to speak in favour of Clive's amendment. As I see it, having 12 equal pairs means that there would then be, if I have done my maths right, 64 possible combinations of the six central members, which is obviously far greater than the number of dioceses, so there is no opportunity for the central members to grow in working together, discerning together and providing that sense of continuity and stability.

I can also see that this idea of six diverse pairs could actually, as I see it, lead to less diversity. If each pair has an A and a B, and all the As are quite similar in some way demographically or theologically, and if all those go on to the central CNC then you have actually ended up with a less diverse CNC than having the sense of principals and alternates where the Synod can be confident that the principals do express some diversity. I know we can always improve on that, and it would be really good to look at other ways of doing that and encouraging more diversity in those standing next time, but please vote in favour of this amendment.

*Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* As I have been listening to this debate, I get the impression that it is a question of turkeys voting for Christmas. Again and again, we are a conservative body regardless of where we come from and our challenge about multiple diverse representation is not one to do with CNC, it is to do with Synod itself.



My concern is that when we work with pairings, those that will most want diversity will be ending up in the middle and those that are not so much in favour of diversity will organise and caucus as they do at the moment, and we will have extreme votes one way or the other. And, as happens at the moment, those that get elected will be those who have most caucus votes for them.

In that case, to be honest, the current system, where someone stands down and then the next person stands up, often provides more diversity than what is proposed because the person who comes second in the vote is almost always someone from the other team. We are a tribal Church. I am sorry to say that, and I wish it were not so, and I wish we could trust each other to vote for the good of the Gospel but I worry that we will not.

*The Chair:* Simon Talbott for a point of order, please.

*Revd Simon Talbott (Ely):* Sorry, I did not ask for a point of order actually. I am trying to find a point of order button, which I have still not located, but thank you for calling me. I have nothing to add.

*The Chair:* Thanks, Simon. Under Standing Order 31, I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 92 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on debating Item 92 to the vote. This is a 60 second vote in place of a show of hands on the motion for closure on Item 92 using the Lumi platform.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chair:* Mike Todd for a point of order, please.

*Dr Michael Todd (Truro):* During this debate members have received two emails regarding the voting processes using Lumi and these two emails not only do not seem to be consistent with each other but they are not consistent with the practice that is taking place. In particular, Item 7 of the first document says that all votes are counted votes as defined by Standing Order 37(6). The second email says that there will be two types of votes, a 30 second vote as a show of hands, and a 60 second vote for a counted vote. Could you ask the Chair of the Business Committee to come to Synod and clarify rather more precisely which of the documents and interpretations should be followed?

*The Chair:* Thank you, Mike. During the course of this afternoon's debate, we have realised that people need longer than the 30 seconds, so what is referred to in the 30 seconds in that email is now 60 seconds and that is the equivalent of everyone showing their hands in the chamber if we were all together here at Church House.

The 60 seconds that is referred to in that email, again, we have also extended, so that is now 90 seconds. So everyone has got longer to vote in order to be able to do that calmly

and fairly on their devices. Thanks everyone for bearing with us. Robert Hammond, as Chair of the Business Committee, is going to speak just before our screen break which is coming up very soon.

In the meantime, Douglas Dettmer, you have a point of order.

*Ven. Douglas Dettmer (Exeter):* Under Standing Order 37(4), and when we come to vote on Item 92, in view of the particular significance of this amendment, as it goes to the heart of the proposals on responsible representation, may I request a counted vote by Houses?

*The Chair:* Thanks very much for that point of order. We can do that providing we have at least 25 green ticks. Maybe people would like to do that right now. There are loads of green ticks, so that is what we shall be doing. Before we come to vote, I just need to hear the point of order from John Wilson, because then I would like to vote on Item 92.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* Chair, there is some confusion here. We heard from Mike just now about the two emails that have come out about the vote. If the 90 second vote is a count - and one of the things which Jayne Ozanne raised was the fact that we cannot actually see who is voting which way to get a feel for the mood of Synod - why can we not have the actual results, the numbers voting either way?

*The Chair:* Fellow members of Synod, we are hearing all the points of order, and the man himself, Robert Hammond, has just dashed into the chamber and is going to address these points, because these are things he was going to cover before our screen break. We are going to take Robert now and then hopefully that will give more clarification before we move to vote on Item 92. Robert, if you have managed to catch your breath from your sprint over to you.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Thank you for bearing with us. I thought it might be helpful if I were to say something about voting using the Lumi platform. All votes at this group of sessions will be conducted using the Lumi voting platform.

The most recent instructions given by the Business Committee under Standing Order 38(8) sets out how votes will be taken via the Lumi platform. Those instructions provide for 30 second and 60 second votes. They say that the voting figures do not need to be read out on a 30 second vote, because a 30 second vote is intended to replace a show of hands in the chamber, but we have heard the feedback from members and in the points of order that have been made in this debate already, and understand that point, that where a show of hands is taken in the chamber it is possible to get some sort of view as to how many members are voting for or against a particular item of business.

I am therefore asking Chairs not to use the 30 second option in the Business Committee's voting instructions, but only to use the 60 second option. That means that the voting figures will be read out for all votes. I hope Synod members will find that helpful.

On a different point, if I can, staff have been told by some members that they are being logged out of the Lumi platform between votes. We have spoken to Lumi, whose staff are here in Church House with us, and they have assured us that this is not a problem with the Lumi platform. The platform does not log anybody out and there are not any time-outs or anything like that. Members are advised to check any settings on their devices which might result in their automatically being logged out of websites. Members should also avoid opening the Lumi platform on more than one device or in more than one browser tab. If you log in to the Lumi platform on a second device or a second tab, you will automatically be logged out on the first device or the first tab.

The advice is therefore to only use one device for Lumi or to have only one tab open on your internet browser. If your device is logging you out please prepare by logging back in when the mover of a motion is replying to the debate. Please do not wait until the vote is announced. I hope that is clear and I hope that helps Synod.

*The Chair:* Thanks, Robert. So, hopefully that has added some clarification for everyone. We are now going to vote on Clive Scowen's amendment, standing at paragraph 92, Item 92, and although this is a counted vote by Houses, I direct the bell not be rung on this occasion.

*The vote on Amendment 92: In the House of Bishops, those in favour four, against 24, with two recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 42 in favour, 81 against, with eight recorded abstentions. In the House of Laity, 64 in favour, 71 against, with 16 recorded abstentions. The motion was therefore lost in each of the Houses.*

*The Chair:* That means that Amendment 92 is lost. As a result, amendment 93 lapses, and we move on to amendment 94.

## **ITEM 94**

*The Chair:* Looking at paragraph 94 then, Simon Cawdell, I invite you to move your amendment. You have up to five minutes.

*Revd Preb. Simon Cawdell (Hereford):* Chair, members of Synod, in April I raised the issue of by-elections having a perverse outcome when the members of the pair are both forced to resign when one does, and I am grateful for the tweak which the Implementation Group have taken, which at least means that the remaining pair could stand again but with a new partner.

Unfortunately, I do not think the change that has been made entirely avoids the problem which I was seeking to avoid on our behalf. Indeed, you have just heard from Mr Hargreaves-Smith that this was a matter of judgement by the group and I hope to demonstrate now why I believe this is a significant misjudgement.

The main thrust of the proposals is to enable CNC to be made up of a broad range of perspectives, and use of the STV system enables it very well. It means, in fact, that to enable the election of a pair of the successful candidates will need just one more than one-seventh of the total vote, thus ensuring that those who have a clear mandate to represent a minority viewpoint on Synod will be appropriately represented. I welcome that, as I am sure we all do.

The problem starts when one of a pair resigns their position. The consequence of the present proposal means that the other member of the pair, a person who has already demonstrated through the STV system that they carry the confidence of Synod, has to resign as well, and should they wish to run the gauntlet of a fresh election with a new partner. This new election will now require the winning pair to command the majority of Synod members voting, because that is the consequence of how the STV system works in a by-election for a single outcome.

I ask you, members, to think for a moment of the potential consequences, and perhaps it helps to personalise it, but think of a member of a minority view or protected category, who has been elected to the CNC amidst rejoicing from us all with just over one-seventh of the vote. You could think of one, or some, perhaps, but because their partner has had to resign, they now must find a new partner with them to stand again.

Others choose to stand also, and there is an election. The usual interest groups send out lists of supported candidates and the wheels of the election turn, and on a simple majority Synod returns a different pair of people, perhaps white, male, middle-aged, like me, and the minority voice, which has perhaps been performing most effectively on CNC, is silenced. There would be an outcry. Publicity would be terrible, but most of all the Church would be lessened in its reach, its impact and its authority and deep personal harm would have been done.

My amendment is a simple one, which, in the event of one member of a pair resigning for any reason, would enable the other member of the pair to continue in place as they have already demonstrated they have the confidence of Synod. In the event they could not serve for a particular vacancy, then their place would be filled, as at present, after consultation, by nomination of the Chair of the relevant House. My amendment enables the diversity of this new CNC to be retained and avoids the serious likelihood of a serving member being unseated in a fresh election before the end of their natural term, with the result that the CNC would be narrowed in its diversity and that there could be serious hurt caused to any one of many minorities who would rightly feel disadvantaged by the process, and I ask you to support it. I move item standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Simon. I invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to reply to that. You have up to five minutes and please indicate whether you accept or reject the amendment.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Prebendary Cawdell is also owed a debt of gratitude by the Synod for the care with which he always approaches the business of the Synod. He describes his proposal most persuasively but with the Review Group's unanimous support I must ask the Synod to resist his amendment. There is, of course, an attractiveness to maintaining the continuity of membership of the CNC of the continuing member of a pair, but we believe that it does not justify a breach in the principle of lively, engaged pairs of equal standing. We are concerned that there would be an imbalance in the Commission with five pairs functioning as intended and the single surviving member of a pair having to bear the full weight of CNC membership in a rather different way. And, ultimately, 12 members provides more opportunity for diversity than 11 members.

Finally, may I remind members that the way that the Synod votes depends on how we, as the members, vote, each of us, and change can happen in the way that we vote if only we choose to make it happen. Thank you.

*The Chair:* Members of Synod, as Aiden has rejected that amendment, amendment 94, like earlier on this afternoon members who wish the debate on the amendment, amendment 94, to continue, are now invited to do so. A member who wishes the debate to continue and a vote to be taken should select the green tick. There is no need for members who do not wish the debate to continue to select an option.

Thank you, members of Synod. I see loads of green ticks and really we now need a screen break, so I am going to adjourn at this point and when we come back after our screen break we will get straight in to debating this amendment, paragraph 94.

It is coming up to half past 4, let us gather together again at a quarter to 5. Thank you.

*The Chair:* Welcome back, everyone. I hope you enjoyed that little break. We are dealing with Item 7 and at the moment we are going to debate amendment 94 standing in Simon Cawdell's name.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln):* I wish to oppose the amendment of Prebendary Cawdell. In my view, there is an important relationship of trust that underpins the pairings in any election, and that trust lies at the heart of the success of the model that is being proposed. The pairs will offer themselves to the electorate with personal statements of commitment to each other, as well as to us, especially where they are from different churchmanships, to engage in a discernment process that might result in the appointment of someone who is not from their church tradition. I would feel concerned that a single member continuing on alone may not feel bound by the promises they made to the electorate and to the other member they no longer serve with. Therefore, we need to recognise importance of pairs

being present throughout, because they are critical to the success of the model being proposed.

*Canon Dr John Mason (Chester):* I have a slightly different take on that. My feeling is that there would be quite a strong bond between the pair. I rather suspect that if one person was minded to resign, rather than risk putting the other member of that pair in the situation that Simon described where they might fail to get re-elected, they might just decide to take a backseat and effectively resign, but not actually resign, and allow the other member of the pair to field all the remaining vacancies for the period of office. It would be a compromise of integrity but something which would be very tempting to do.

You stated it would be a burden for that one or other individual. I do not think that would be the case. It would only be reverting to the situation at the moment. Also, as is stated in paragraph of GS 2209, this sort of situation is extremely rare, the last casual vacancy occurring around a decade ago. I do not think, on the basis of its rarity, it is sufficient to outweigh the situation where somebody who had been elected was effectively kicked out for no purpose, through nothing that they had done wrong themselves, and opened themselves to the pair of them not being re-elected in a subsequent election.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I just want to support Simon Cawdell in his amendment. I agree with everything he said. I put in a similar amendment, which is why I believe you have called me, and withdrew it in favour of Simon's. I just want to emphasise one other point, and that is much is made of the rarity of by-elections for the CNC in the past but, of course, if you require both members to retire when one goes, actually it makes a by-election twice as likely. At the moment there are six members elected by the Synod and there will be 12, and any one of those 12 would precipitate a by-election. That makes it twice as likely that the very diversity that the STV system established will be undermined by the holding of by-elections. As Simon very capably pointed out, on the main CNC election, it only requires, under this system, one-seventh of the electorate to get you elected. At a by-election it will be halved and it could produce a very different result. You only need two of those in the quinquennium that a CNC was elected for to radically alter the balance and the diversity, and potentially reduce the diversity of the CNC as a result.

I urge Synod to be very thoughtful about this. I know the workings of by-elections are highly technical and not everybody's expertise or cup tea, but please believe me if you have by-elections – sorry, I got interrupted by something that said recording ---

*The Chair:* Yes, because your two minutes is up.

*Mrs April Alexander (Southwark):* I want to ask a question, if I may, because I have realised how enormously this would alter or affect this whole proposal of having pairs. As you all know, the cloud of secrecy around CNC is extremely tight, and I would like to know whether a pair sitting on a particular Commission, making a particular appointment, would

be allowed to discuss that appointment and share the papers with his or her pair. If that were allowed, I think it would enormously improve the proposal that is being made.

*The Chair:* I see no one indicating that they wish to speak, therefore, we are going to move straight on to the vote. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 94, Simon Cawdell's amendment.

*The motion was put and carried, 128 voting in favour, 125 against, with 26 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 7**

*The Chair:* We will now return to debating Item 7 as amended by Item 94. Aiden, you may reply. There was the first part, of course, way back before our screen break and so, Aiden, you have up to five minutes to respond to the various points you have heard, including what we debated on Item 7 earlier on and the various points raised in the amendment debates.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* May I start again by saying to all speakers, thank you very much for your contributions. To Mr Cornes, I may be described as misguided, I may be described as naïve, but I do speak from experience as I think the longest-serving elected member of the CNC, having served two full terms, when I say that I feel rather uncomfortable when we talk about the need to retain control or power in the CNC. Of course, any Chair has the power but the authority of the body is amongst the membership and the group believes that it is in the credibility of greater diversity in that membership that greater authority will be invested.

Nigel Bacon is concerned about the consequences of enforced pairings. The good news, Mr Bacon, is that pairings will not be enforced. They will be self-selected. To Mrs Obende, we are not in a position to mandate diverse pairings, but you have seen the Report has put down the clearest marker that we hope we will have a such a change in culture that there will be an electoral incentive to do exactly that; to do what you are hoping will be the case.

I am grateful to the Bishop of Durham for his valuable comments based on his experience. To Miss Daley, can I say in response to your question as to what sort of diversity, the answer is every diversity, because every diversity - diversity of perspective, diversity of insight and diversity of experience - is present in the body of Christ, and it is that body that we are seeking to represent in our central members and with which it is dealing in its work.

Mr Dotchin, absolutely, can we trust each other for the good of the Gospel. Thank you to Carl Fender for that wonderful phrase when he talked about the election statements being a statement of trust to each other in the pair and to the electorate.

To Mrs Alexander, the answer to your question is on page 25 of the Report, paragraph 98, where it makes it clear that both members will share the confidential CNC information within the pairing.

The Archbishop of York talked about a different culture. The Synod has been offered in this Report a new approach, a different culture, a recommitment to others that comes out of a valuing of diversity because it is more representative of the Church and of the body of Christ. The choice now before us is whether we retain the six as at present or move to the 12 in the pairings.

Because it is so key, I hope you will let me finish with a quotation from someone else who speaks far more eloquently than me as to why this matters. The Archbishop of York spoke this morning about Pope Francis and these are his words, “So many past controversies between Christians can be overcome when we put aside all polemical or apologetic approaches, and seek instead to grasp more fully what unites us, namely, our call to share in the mystery of the Father’s love revealed to us by the Son through the Holy Spirit. Christian unity, we are convinced, will not be the fruit of subtle theoretical discussions in which each party tries to convince the other of the soundness of their opinions. When the Son of man comes, he will find us still discussing! We need to realise that, to plumb the depths of the mystery of God, we need one another, we need to encounter one another and to challenge one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who harmonises diversities and overcomes conflicts, reconciles differences”.

Members of Synod, I ask you to vote in favour of this Item. Thank you.

*The Chair.* We move now then to vote. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 7 as amended.

*The motion was put and carried, 217 voting in favour, 69 against, with 26 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* There was a point of order, but it has been withdrawn.

## **ITEM 8**

*The Chair.* Now we move on to Item 8. I call on Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to speak to and to move Item 8 standing in his name. You have up to ten minutes.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* The fourth proposition is that the CNC may co-opt one non-voting member for the consideration of a vacancy if it considers, having regard to the documentation received from the Vacancy in See Committee and the Secretaries to the CNC, that its membership is not representative of the diocese as a whole.



I would like to think, of course, that the power of co-option envisaged in this proposal will never be needed, that the comprehensive diversity of those elected by the Vacancy in See Committee and those central members engaged in each particular vacancy will not only enable the most fruitful and valuable discussions but will also inspire ever-greater confidence in the relevant diocese and across the wider Church in the process of discernment of diocesan bishops. Unfortunately, experience suggests that we have some way to go yet. The Review Group hopes that other aspects of our proposals will assist in improving the position, but we believe this proposal remains, at present, a necessary backstop and a helpful opportunity.

As we explained in our Report, in light of the submissions made to us about the significance of electoral mandate and accountability in the synodical context, we concluded that the co-opted place should be non-voting. We are also clear that it is only intended for use where a need is clearly established.

The proposition now before the Synod has been changed by the Review Group in response to representations made by members who expressed concern about the power of co-option being in the hands of the Archbishop in the Chair for the relevant vacancy. There also appears to have been a misunderstanding among some members that this power could be used effectively to tell the diocese that they had got it wrong in their choice of diocesan representatives.

I would like to emphasise,, therefore, the following points. First, the amended proposal now gives the Commission as a whole the power to consider and to decide on any possible co-option. Secondly, we have always said any proposed use of the power of co-option in the context of discussion amongst the full Commission and within the clear framework of the documentation produced by the Vacancy in See Committee and by the Archbishops' and Prime Minister's Appointments Secretaries would clearly need to be justified and agreed by the Commission. Thirdly, this forms part of an integrated set of proposals to improve the breadth of legitimate diversity amongst those responsible for the nomination of diocesan bishops. The effect of rejecting this provision would inevitably be to weaken those efforts. Chair, I beg to move Item 8.

*The Chair:* Thank you. Item 8 is now open for debate.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford):* Aiden is a very persuasive chap and he is doing a brilliant job handling this particular item. However, I have always nervousness with any kinds of co-options. I always believe if they are elected they are elected; if they are appointed they are appointed. Co-options is almost like a clear-up, something has been forgotten, we had better bring someone else on. I note very seriously that this is a non-voting co-optee, but I would like to know and understand how that person would be selected? Is it just for that one vacancy? I know it says that, but could that person then

be used in other vacancies in other parts of the Church of England? Is there a guarantee that this is a one-off? Bearing in mind we have had discussions about the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary and the Archbishops' Appointments Secretary, this is another person without a vote, but perhaps a man or women of considerable influence. Will that influence will be placed too unduly or taken too seriously by the rest of those people?

As far as administering that co-option, I am assuming that person will be bound by all the other requirements of secrecy, that they will have all the papers, that they will be effectively a full member; and I would like that confirmed. Is there any possibility that person could end up - I have been on CNCs myself - chairing the CNC? I know it is written clearly that it could be either Archbishop. I would urge caution on this. As I said at the beginning, Aiden is a very persuasive man, but I am not totally persuaded as yet.

*Revd Julian Hollywell (Derby):* It has been a long afternoon, friends, so I will be very brief. I support co-option and I support this proposition as tabled, but wish to express a brief concern as to how it is enacted. I found acting as a diocesan member of the CNC was, at times, an utterly incomprehensible experience. At our last meeting I was pleased that Judith Maltby, a central CNC member, talked about how intimidating an experience it can be for diocesan CNC members. That should be of concern to us.

We have heard much this afternoon about inclusion. Participative inclusion has to be based on more than simply representative diversity. I support proposition 4 entirely, and I have not proposed any amendment, but without suitable guidance I worry that its ambiguity favours the powerful at the table. I would suggest that if we want a CNC that is diverse in action then the mechanism by which co-option is to be made (or objected to) by diocesan CNC members must be clearly explained and agreed when a CNC meets.

With all respect, my experience of serving on a CNC differs to that of the Bishop of Durham. As has already been alluded to, it may be difficult for diocesan CNC members to voice disagreement with the Chair or Appointment Secretaries, especially as such a decision will be made very early in the proceedings.

I would ask therefore, while supporting the proposition as tabled, may we consequently have reassurances that suitable guidance will be provided to empower diocesan members' participation in such circumstances?

*Revd Anne Stevens (London):* Like the previous speaker, it is the ambiguity that is my concern. I just wonder whether it would be helpful to define which categories of representation you are talking about, otherwise we have to find a way of working out how many women there are in the diocese, how many disabled people there are in the diocese, what the precise racial breakdown is in the diocese, et cetera, et cetera. I do not know that I will vote against it, but I think it needs more specific definition.

*Very Revd Tim Barker (Dean of Guernsey):* I am grateful for the proposal for the possibility of co-option. I think there are situations in which this would be very useful. At the moment the Channel Islands are still not fully part of the Diocese of Salisbury. Even though the Synod passed the Measure in February 2020, the legal processes on the two islands are still being worked through. This means that, although we have been fully included in the conversations about the appointment of the next Bishop of Salisbury, we are not able to be legally part of the Vacancy in See Committee in Salisbury and therefore are not in any way represented on the CNC. I have no doubt that our needs will be represented by those who will be serving on the Committee, but the very particular needs of the Channel Islands could well have been a case where co-option would have been very useful. Even though this may not benefit us this time round, I very much welcome the proposal for co-option in exceptional circumstances.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I too am generally supportive of this proposal. It in fact mirrors a proposal in the current Vacancy in See Regulations whereby the bishop's council of a diocese can nominate additional members to the Vacancy in See Committee if they consider that the Committee as elected is not truly representative of the diocese as a whole.

My concern, which I would like Aiden to address when he replies to the debate is this: how would it actually work in practice? Who would be the person or persons who would raise the issue of lack of representation or proper representation? When would the decision be taken and how would the decision be taken to make a co-option? Bearing in mind that under present arrangements the CNC meets twice, is it intended that such co-option would take place at the first meeting of the CNC when that co-opted person would not be participating in that first round of voting? I would be very grateful if Aiden could explain how he envisages this would work out in practice. Nonetheless, in principle, I am supportive of the proposal.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* I fully support many of the recommendations, but this item is an exception. An important aim of the recommendations is to facilitate the highest degree of democracy reasonably practicable; an admirable aim. Despite Aiden's contention to the contrary, proposition 4 rests on the assumption that a small number of people know better than the electorate, and for this reason it is undemocratic.

Further, following the logic of the proposal, why only one co-option? What if a CNC considers that its membership is not representative of the diocese as a whole in two or three respects? In these circumstances, the members of CNC are placed in an unenviable position: how and on what basis do they choose? This is a point which others like David and even supporters of the proposal have made with considerable force, but until it is answered we must stand against it. For these reasons, I would urge Synod to vote against the proposition for Item 8 on the Agenda. Thank you.

*The Chair:* After Josile has spoken, I invite Jayne Ozanne and, hopefully, Jayne, you will be the last person on this item because time is marching on.

*Ms Josile Munro (London):* I support this proposition and this item simply because of our own experience in London where we failed to elect a group of people for the Vacancy in See Committee who were diverse enough. Metropolitan London having quite a lot of minority ethnic people, we have failed to elect even one of our four. We made strenuous efforts, but everybody was quite unhappy at the end, and we were then reliant on the central CNC, and that was also all white, for the vacancy in London. In the end one of the representatives stood down and gave the place to somebody who was able to bring that diversity and represent minority ethnic people who might be in London.

This is an example of where this might work, where we bring some kind of diversity and somebody who could actually speak and show that the Church is aware that if they are trying to appoint somebody in London or a very diverse place, it should not just be a group of white people doing that, male or female; it should really represent the diversity of that place. Thank you for calling me. I am saying I would like support this.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Briefly, I want to support this really important clause. I want to remind Synod that we use co-option on the Archbishops' Council. It is how I got involved with the Church. It was to ensure we had a balance of voices around the table. It requires trust. I think a lot of this debate for the whole afternoon has been about how much do we trust each other to make sensible and wise decisions. As Josile has just pointed out, and as Tim Barker has pointed out, there are cases where we need those extra voices and views, and it is important they are around the table. The system, because of our divisions, does not always deliver the full range of diversity that we need. I think this is an important clause. It will be sad if it goes down. I think we have proven through the Archbishops' Council co-opted members that they can do a good job and that the Church is stronger for them.

*Dean of Manchester (Very Revd Rogers Govender):* Like Josile and Jayne Ozanne, I want to support this motion. We know that there is a huge deficit in terms of diversity in the Church of England in our structures. Aiden has been remarkable with his team in really promoting the whole issue of diversity on a broad spectrum in the CNC debates last time round and now. As Josile said, because we are a Church that tends to be tribal in the way that one of our colleagues said earlier on, we tend to vote for people we know and we know will simply represent our interests.

The fact of the matter is that UKME people generally do not get a look-in. The very membership of this Synod over the past five years has reflected that. It is for that reason that the *From Lament to Action* Report called for co-option of additional UKME folk to the next Synod. I think this is a very important provision, and I think we really ought to support it to bring in more voices, not just UKME voices but voices that are often in deficit in these very important decisions. I would urge the Synod to support this, please.

*The Chair.* I see no one else indicating that they wish to speak, so I invite Aiden to respond to the debate please. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Aiden-Hargreaves Smith (London):* Once again, thank you to members for very helpful and thoughtful contributions. Mr Bruinvels, I hope I will prevail in being persuasive when I explain that this is part of a considered response. It is part of a package. It is not an end in itself. It is our response to a context in which we believe that we have some way to go as a Church before the breadth of diversity of the body of Christ is fully reflected in every context. It is in that context that we bring this to the Synod.

Could the person who has been selected be used for more than one vacancy? I am sure that would be a possibility. It is not an intention that there should be a person who is hanging around waiting. It would be a matter for every Commission and, yes, that person will be a full member of the Commission for that vacancy. Could the person chair the Commission? No, under the CNC Standing Orders that must be, if it is not the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Archbishop of York, one of the elected members of the Commission.

To Julian Hollywell, may I say thank you very much for your helpful points. I very much hope those will have been heard by the central members. It will not be for the group with which I am working to respond to that. It is for the central members to consider what material can best be used with the Commissions, but I am sure that they will have heard that and will consider the guidance that you suggest, which I am sure will be helpful.

To Anne Stevens, I would similarly want to say that it will be a matter for each CNC to consider what representative means in that particular context, so it will be an engagement between diocesan members and central members to discuss the principle and, ultimately, who that person to be co-opted might be.

Thank you to David Lamming for drawing the parallel with the diocesan Vacancy in See Committee. That is helpful. You asked how it will work in practice. I am afraid my answer is the same as it was earlier, that it will be for the members of the central CNC to determine the precise outworking of it, but I would have thought that any member of the Commission would be able, after the membership has been determined, to raise the point and then it will be, as I said, a matter for the Commission to engage all of the members together and to consider and to determine how to take matters forward.

To Stephen Hofmeyr, I of course cannot fault his logic, but I think what I want to say is that what we are looking at here is a balance; a balance between respect for accountability, accountability to the Synod that elected members have, with a genuine wish because we feel that there is a need to enhance the diversity of the CNC where that is needed and it will only be where the Commission determines that it is needed. As I said at the beginning of my speech, we can hope that in fact it is never needed.

Josile Munro, thank you for speaking from your personal experience in London, an experience that we shared together. Jayne Ozanne, “trust each other” has been one of the bywords, I think, that has been part of our Report. It can only be when we trust each other that the sort of culture change which we identify in that Report, and which I referred to at the beginning of this afternoon, is going to be possible. It is something that we hope members of Synod will willingly and eagerly commit ourselves to.

I am delighted that the Dean of Manchester should be the last to speak on this item. He was the last to speak in the debate in April, and I thank him as warmly as I did then for his insights. Thank you very much.

*The Chair:* We move now to vote on Item 8. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 245 voting in favour, 42 against, with 20 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 9**

*The Chair:* We now move to Item 9. I am sure people are going to be relieved that we are into the home straight on this part of our afternoon. I now invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 9 standing in his name. You have up to ten minutes.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* The fifth proposition is that should the CNC fail to agree on a name for submission to the Prime Minister, it may direct that the process for filling the vacancy is to recommence at a stage it specifies, which may include the stage at which diocesan members are elected by the Vacancy in See Committee. This is a practical proposal intended to provide a degree of flexibility in the rare but not unknown circumstances in which a Commission’s deliberations are inclusive, and a decision has to be made about how best to proceed.

Once again, the proposal now before the Synod reflects a significant change, made in response to the representations we received. Thus, we now propose that the decision as to which stage at which the process should recommence will be one for the Commission as a whole, not simply for the Archbishop in the chair acting in consultation with Commission members.

We were sorry to read that some members felt this proposal in some way suggested an overbearing CNC telling a diocese to choose different representatives. In my own experience on the Commission - over a decade - one of my abiding memories is of the almost universally positive and constructive relations shared between diocesan and central members. The emphasis was always on working as one body, one commission. I understand that more recent feedback from diocesan representatives following the conclusion of their CNCs provides clear evidence that such relationships remain excellent.

The proposal is intended to provide for a situation where consideration of a vacant see has not resulted in a nomination, but time has passed and it may be, for example, that some of those serving are no longer qualified to do so and have only continued to do so by virtue of what we might call the commission's "Mastermind" rule, "I have started so I'll finish." In such exceptional circumstances, it would seem only reasonable with the passage of time and while work is undertaken to refresh the formal paperwork that a diocese might be given an opportunity to conduct a fresh set of elections for its representatives, being free, of course, to elect the same people, if they are still qualified to be so, and indeed a fresh invitation be extended to the central member pairs to indicate which of them will be acting. Chair, I beg to move Item 9.

*The Chair.* Item 9 is now open for debate.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Chair.* I see no one indicating they wish to speak on Item 9, therefore we move straightaway to a vote on Item 9. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 9.

*The motion was put and carried, 281 voting in favour, 12 against, with seven recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* Members of Synod, that bring us to the end of our working our way through Items 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 this afternoon. Thank you, everyone, for your contributions. Thank you for the various points of order. We hope that will assist us as we progress through the rest of this group of sessions. We will now move to the next Item.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 5.35 pm.

## **ITEM 10**

### **THE NATIONAL INVESTING BODIES' APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE: UPDATE (GS MISC 1283)**

*The Chair.* We come now to Item 10 on the Agenda, the National Investing Bodies' approach to climate change. This is a chance for Synod to be updated on the work of the National Investing Bodies in relation to climate change. It builds on the July 2018 motion which requested an update on progress in implementing the substance of the motion within three years. At the end of the presentation there will be an opportunity for a couple of questions. I now invite Loretta Minghella and Clive Mather to give their presentation. They have up to ten minutes between them.

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio):* I would like to thank the Business Committee for allowing this opportunity to report back to Synod on the progress that the National Investing Bodies (NIBs) have made in response to the July 2018 motion on climate change. I am pleased to represent the Commission and to be joined by Clive Mather of the Pensions Board. We are also speaking today on behalf of the other National Investing Body, the CBF Church of England Funds managed by the CCLA.

I would also like to draw members' attention to the three separate stewardship reports of each National Investing Body available on our respective websites and provide further information about our approaches to responsible investment, more than we can cram into this brief presentation today.

Just moving on in the slides, together with the Pensions Board in 2018 I spoke to the motion that is in front of you that received a near unanimous vote of the Synod, and with a sense of enormous responsibility, at this, my final Synod as First Church Estates Commissioner, I am glad to present what we have achieved. However, I do so, even as we see headlines like those shown on the slide that detail the continuing disruption which is caused by climate change. It is enough to know that even with one degree of warming, people are suffering and, with extreme weather events becoming more and more frequent, it is the poor who did the least to cause problem who are suffering the most. It is an emergency - of that there can be no question.

What we present today is just one part of a whole Church response to climate change. It is a response that seeks to ensure that all parts of the Church are working to address this wicked challenge. It calls on all of us to act. Every one of us has a role to play, whether supporting your place of worship to become an eco-church or cathedral, campaigning for governmental action on climate change, supporting charities like Christian Aid and Tearfund, each one of us can make a difference.

Today we focus on what the NIBs can uniquely do, not just to cut our own emissions but, through shareholder power, to drive global change in line with the Five Marks of Mission, because if we do not see global change, it is the most vulnerable who will continue to be the most impacted and the least able to adapt to the extremes unleashed by climate change.

But let's be clear, Synod, this is not an easy transition. It is a multi-decade challenging transition that requires the global economy to change completely. It also requires governments to match what we can do as investors and what we can do as a Church. That is why we have been public advocates of the policy needed from governments to deliver on the commitments of the Paris Agreement. We have been supporting the Powering Past Coal Alliance, which seeks commitments from governments to phase out coal power. We have called on the UK Government as COP host to stop subsidising fossil fuels, as well as using the COP to raise the profile of a loss and damage mechanism and the need to include air transport and shipping within the mechanisms of the Paris



Agreement. We have ongoing engagement with the Brazilian and Indonesian Governments on enforcement of existing deforestation laws and to ensure forest protection. Most recently, we have been looking at the debt we hold of countries themselves looking to develop an international tool that will assess which countries are taking adequate action and which are not.

We cannot transition in a vacuum as investors. We need enabling regulation and governments across the world need to change their policies if we are going to be able to deliver ourselves. So all eyes are on the COP in Glasgow in November; it simply has to deliver.

Now I will pass to Clive to talk about what we have done to assess and address the companies in our portfolio.

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* Thank you, Loretta. The foundation of the NIBs' approach has been a world-leading intervention. The Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) was created by the NIBs together with the Environment Agency Pension Fund which our Pensions Board continues to chair. It is a global partnership between the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics, the London Stock Exchange and asset owners around the world.

Quite simply, it involves a rigorous, comprehensive and independent assessment of companies which tracks their transition to net zero and guides our decision-making as investors. The TPI framework holds companies publicly accountable to deliver on their commitments.

It is a "tool for the common good" which underpins the whole global investor community today and will do for years to come until the transition is made. It is already supported by over 100 investors representing over US \$29 trillion in assets under management.

Even more significantly, through Climate Action 100+, TPI provides the Net Zero Company Benchmark for almost half of the world's investable capital. My friends, that is a mighty weapon in the global battle against climate change.

TPI is now a part of the global architecture to support the transition needed. TPI is now informing market indices, such as the award-winning FTSE TPI Climate Transition Index. This index incentivises companies to change by rewarding those who are most committed. Conversely, for those not disclosing targets, they fall out of the index and pay the price. I was delighted when we allocated £800 million of our pension fund assets to that index.

TPI is now also part of the reporting requirements of the London Stock Exchange. Our ambition is to make the index available to small investors too, like those in DC pension

schemes and even individuals, so each one of us can put our money where our head and heart are.

As you can see here from the sectors assessed by TPI, and where the NIBs are engaging, we are not just looking at fossil fuel companies; we are looking right across the economy. Our work goes far beyond the 2018 resolution as we need to change the whole economy.

Disinvesting from one company or industry does send a strong message, but that does not mean the challenge has gone away, which is why we are working with investors internationally, with the support of TPI, to address the systemic causes of climate change; to challenge and change the operations of individual companies, and from their example to change their sector, and other sectors too, because, ultimately, all parts of the global economy are interconnected.

Going back to the 2018 resolution and based upon what we have learned from TPI, we have set engagement hurdles that companies must clear as we move to our 2023 deadline. Our work will not stop in 2023, it is just that that is an important milestone in the context of our engagement with fossil fuel companies and our commitment to you. In short, TPI enables us to differentiate between companies that are changing and those that are not.

And when a company does not meet our hurdles we will disinvest just as we did last year with nine companies representing £32 million. We believe engagement is the best way to achieve lasting change, but we do not have time to wait if companies are not ready to get going. Back to you, Loretta

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio):* The NIBs have led key global engagements with some of the world's largest carbon-intensive companies. For example, the Pensions Board has led engagement at Shell, which was the first oil and gas company to set targets covering all their emissions including those of their customers, and to incentivise their executives to achieve those targets through their remuneration. The Pensions Board was clear at its AGM in May about the further steps that Shell still need to take to align fully with our 2023 deadline.

The Commissioners have led at Exxon and this has been a hard-fought relentless engagement. Let's be clear, we have faced real opposition from their board and, as a result, we have worked with other investors to build global support for a new slate of directors who have climate experience. In a world first the result was widely reported. We saw three of the directors replaced on the board - sending a message to every carbon-intensive company that if you stand in the way of the transition, directors will be held accountable and, if necessary, will be replaced.

Let us be clear from this platform today to any fossil fuel company we are invested in that that is the focus of our engagement. As responsible investors we will walk with you, we

will help you, we will support you if you commit to the changes we ask for. However, be under no illusion that if you do not meet our requirements, by 2023 at the latest, we will sell our holding.

A key part of our approach is also to invest in solutions to the climate crisis. To shift the real economy we also need to catalyse the new businesses, the new opportunities and the new jobs in the green economy. For the Commissioners, we have over £630 million in low-carbon investments. We are investing in forestry and have planted five million trees since 2019, but also looking for opportunities that can support the UK's transition such as our investment of £30 million into electric vehicle infrastructure and charging points. The Pensions Board too is committing significant funds to sustainability and impact solutions through new mandates to their managers, and it has invested £135 million in renewables and low-carbon technologies.

The CBF/CCLA has been involved in real innovation in partnership with the UK Government's Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Department to support companies trying to bring low-carbon solutions in energy production and energy efficiency to the market.

Through all of these investments we are trying to drive real solutions and the future low-carbon economy.

Synod, we commend to you this Report on the progress we have made to date. We do so knowing we still have much to do. We commit to report back to Synod in 2024. We want to leave you with this message. We are clear that we commit to support a just transition; a just transition not just for the workers and communities in industries that will change, but a just transition for the poorest, and a just transition for those future generations that will rightly look at what we did and what we did not do. We welcome your comments and questions, thank you.

*The Chair.* We are pushing up against time and we are going to take a couple of very quick questions. First of all, I am going to ask Bishop Graham Usher, who is the lead Bishop for the environment, to put his question, please.

*The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham Usher):* Thank you to the NIBs for their collective efforts in producing this very detailed Report and all their ongoing work in seeking to reach net zero. I think the Report gives a very helpful overview of the very nuanced and balanced set of tactics that are really driving change on a global scale and thus contributing to our broader mission. There are also the technical efforts, perhaps less under our Synod spotlight, to go beyond this Synod's 2018 motion and key to the NIBs and investments in the global economy achieving net zero emissions.

My question is: do the officers of the NIBs see this year, like me, as being a kairos moment for change for the world? How will they be promoting their work and sharing their results

more widely, including within the life of the Church, so as to support the major net zero actions that are needed at COP 26?

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of one minute.

*Dr Michael Todd (Truro)*: I would like to hear what consideration the NIBs have given to cryptocurrencies. It is widely reported that the operation of cryptocurrencies is a huge consumer of energy, mainly in the form of electricity, to power the very large computing efforts needed. I have seen it estimated that bitcoin alone is roughly equivalent to the consumption of the whole of Sweden. This consumption and its rapid growth comes at a time when we are being encouraged, especially for climate change reasons, to switch to electricity from other energy sources. The allocation of such a large amount to something that is of dubious merit and adds very little to conventional financial trading---

*The Chair*: Can we have your question, please?

*Dr Michael Todd (Truro)*: My question is will the NIBs consider the investment ethics of cryptocurrencies, and, if appropriate, use their investment influence accordingly as we shift from an emphasis on the emissions of companies to the effectiveness with which they use the energy they consume?

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)*: What steps are being taken to ensure that the drive towards net zero will not work against growth and economic development in the poorest countries that is essential to lifting people out of poverty around the world?

*The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Steven Croft)*: Thank you to Loretta and Clive and your teams. It has been astonishing and it is a really detailed report. I really want to note, Chair, that we should have had more time on this item this afternoon proportionate to the previous one.

Since 2018, public awareness of climate change has increased. Synod made a commitment last year to net zero by 2030 in terms of our emissions. Can we expect in 2024 a further ratcheting up of the Commissioners' divestment as well engagement programme, and an even deeper sense of urgency, combined with the evident expertise which is there?

*The Chair*: Loretta, may I come back to you?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio)*: Thank you to Bishop Graham for your support and your ongoing engagement with the NIBs. I think we all feel that this is an absolutely pivotal year as we approach the COP, and nothing less than the world's very best is going to do, so prayer and campaigning towards our Government as it hosts the COP will be essential. It is also crucial that 2021 marks the start of a green recovery. We have to continue to push governments across the world to provide the enabling environment for that. We

need to collaborate across the Church for increased ambition at the COP and for the delayed COP 15 on biodiversity as well.

As for commitment to reporting back, we will report back annually in our reports through our Stewardship Code reports. I can pick up Bishop Steven's point at this stage and say when we come back and report in 2024, the battle against climate change will not be done. It is quite clear from the International Energy Agency's Report that in the long run-up to 2050 we have to keep the pressure up on ourselves, on each other and on the global economy in the round. Perhaps Clive, you would like to take the question from Prudence Dailey about just transition and also the point made about cryptocurrency.

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* Mike, thank you for the question about cryptocurrency. I will be first to admit I really fail to understand this. I fail to understand the underlying logic and I fail to understand the algorithms and other processes which drive it. I do agree with you, however, that the energy impact on this is increasingly worrying. We, through the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, has a lot of our resources now dedicated to understanding the implications of this and other aspects of what we call big tech. That is the digital sector as a whole. Work is already underway and I am expecting us to get a read-out on this later on this year. I cannot at this stage be clear exactly what tactics we will adopt, but we will certainly be engaging with the major players on this, so have my assurance on that, but I think we need greater understanding before we go into battle.

On the question of the Third World and the impact on developing nations as a result of the policies that are being promoted, and we trust will be put into practice, this is immensely complicated. Loretta through her work, and my work through Tearfund, fully understands it is the poorest who are the most affected. Some of these major policy decisions taken at world level have unintended consequences. I think the only assurance we can give you is that we understand it and we are tracking it. As we engage with companies and as we advocate with countries, this will be very much on our Agenda.

It is a long-term game and it is reliant on all of the leverage we can apply through that immensely powerful TPI tool that we can and we will make a difference. Thank you for all your interest in this. We are available outside the meeting. We always love to hear from you and we will certainly be keeping you in touch.

*The Chair:* Thank you very much for your presentation, and thank you to those who were able to ask questions. I am sorry to those who would still like to but were not able to because we need to end now. I am afraid that this now concludes this item of business. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 6.01 pm.

## **ITEM 12 QUESTIONS**

*The Chair:* We start now with the Question Time. Just in order to clarify how we are going to run this, may I just remind you that when supplementary questions are asked priority is given to the original questioner, and the normal default is two supplementary questions per question posed. In view of the pressure on time, I am not inclined to depart from that.

Members have had an opportunity to indicate in advance if they wish to ask a question. The list of questioners circulated this morning actually reflects that as we understood it at the time, but during the course of the day it has emerged that there were some technical glitches lying behind the preparation of that, so there will be odd occasions as we go through when I will be departing very slightly from the list of questions in order to accommodate the correction of those glitches.

May I remind you also that although we have a list of people who have given prior notice of their wish to ask a question, the Standing Orders do allow supplementaries without notice. Under the terms and conditions we are operating at the moment with Zoom, I invite members to exercise a degree of self-denying ordinance in this because it is very difficult otherwise for the people who are cueing in the speakers to manage things smoothly, and to know who amongst the around about 500 members want to ask a supplementary. Obviously, I cannot say do not ask questions, but, if you do, think hard about whether there is a reasonable amount of coverage of what you want to ask in the questions as printed.

I also remind members that even if you have put in to ask a supplementary you are not obliged to do if, for example, the previous question has sufficiently covered the ground.

I remind you, too, that questions must be questions and not speeches and arguments. I doubt that we will get much further than partway through the House of Bishops questions given the time constraint. For this item you will need the Questions Notice Paper circulated electronically on Wednesday and the list of questioners circulated this morning. That list takes account of the situation in which no more than two members will be asking questions. A certain amount of paring down has taken place in order to arrive at that, because for a few questions there were several possible questioners. I think that is the procedural matters dealt with and we can now move smoothly on to the questions themselves.

We begin with questions to the Liturgical Commission, to be answered by the Bishop of Exeter as Chair of the Liturgical Commission.

## **LITURGICAL COMMISSION**

1. *Revd Canon Robert Cotton (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: At a time when many parish clergy are finding the predominantly male language for God in Common Worship to be increasingly uncomfortable and limited, what is the Liturgical Commission doing to help us more readily find and use gender-inclusive authorized worship material?

*The Bishop of Exeter (Rt Revd Robert Atwell)* replied as Chair of the Liturgical Commission: The Commission recently spent some months working on a document entitled *God, Language, and Worship* which set out some basic theological and practical considerations in this area, taking the view that the language we use about God can help (or hinder) us as we grow in our apprehension of the mystery of God. We look forward to working with the Faith and Order Commission in the near future on a more wide-ranging study of these areas (mindful that questions of inclusivity need to be broader than gender, including for example race, disability and age-appropriateness). We would hope to include in the completed resource examples of good practice and references to material which might be helpful.

As members will know, the Commission cannot engage in drafting or re-drafting of authorized liturgical texts without an invitation from the House of Bishops and the appropriate synodical processes.

*Mr Bradley Smith (Chichester)*: In considering this issue what will the Commission do to ensure that its deliberations and the potential outcomes of those deliberations do not undermine the place of the *Book of Common Prayer* as containing the Church of England's official standard of doctrine.

*The Bishop of Exeter*: Thank you very much for that question. Language is always changing and evolving. One of the things that I am aware of is the fact that much hymnody and liturgy written in the 1960s is incredibly dated now. I think of Eliot's words that words "slip, slide with imprecision, will not stay still". We are conscious that language is evolving, and, therefore, in that context our liturgy like Scripture, is like a holdfast; it roots us deep within the tradition. Therefore, you should be cautious about keep changing it every five minutes. That is the tension that we live with.

As I said in my answer, it is not for the Commission to decide, for example, whether authorized texts should be revised or new ones commissioned. That lies with this Synod and with the House of Bishops. Whatever we do, it is certainly not going to undermine the established important part that the *Book of Common Prayer* exercises in that.

*Ms Josile Munro (London)*: My question is: in the answer, Bishop, you mentioned a document called *God, Language and Worship* which you have been working on and I am wondering if that has been published. If it has not been published, when is it likely to be published?

*The Bishop of Exeter.* The document that I referred to in my answer is an internal working document of the Liturgical Commission which we then shared with the Faith and Order Commission. What was decided was that we needed to go much deeper in this, and, therefore, we are intending in the next quinquennium for the Commissioners to form a joint working party to explore these matters further. In due course it may be that this report will then go into the public realm, but this was an internal document for the Commission.

2. *Mrs Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: At a recent Safeguarding Leadership training session we engaged with Scripture in regard to the role of the Church and safeguarding. It was suggested that the C of E ought to review the Common Worship liturgy through a safeguarding lens, from the viewpoint of those who suffer or have suffered abuse in all its forms. For example, how it might feel to those who have suffered abuse to hear “The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit”. Could consideration be given to a review/changes in liturgy through the lens of safeguarding, to be as inclusive and harm-preventing as possible?

*The Bishop of Exeter (Rt Revd Robert Atwell)* replied as Chair of the Liturgical Commission: The Liturgical Commission encourages ministers to take the time to choose the texts used in public worship with care and sensitivity in all situations. *Common Worship* and the *Book of Common Prayer* provide a wide range of options from which to choose, and the ‘default’ in any given setting may not always be pastorally appropriate.

In May 2018, the Commission published, and the House of Bishops commended *Towards a Safer Church: Some liturgical resources* to make specific provision for a variety of pastoral circumstances in relation to safeguarding.

In common with the passage mentioned in the question (drawn from Psalm 51) much of the language and imagery in our liturgy is drawn directly from Scripture. Any review or re-consideration of authorized liturgical material would need to be at the invitation of the House of Bishops and be undertaken through the proper synodical channels.

*The Chair.* We move on to the questions to the Church Commissioners, questions 3 to 16, questions 3 and 4 to be answered by Eve Poole as Third Estates Commissioner.

## **CHURCH COMMISSIONERS**

3. *Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Church Commissioners: Can the Commissioners provide the Synod with the following figures relating to bishops’ costs in a table with a comparison also showing the answers given to question 16 in February 2015 and whether costs have increased or decreased:

- the average cost of diocesan bishops’ housing;
- the average cost of suffragan bishops’ housing;
- the average annual cost for the ongoing maintenance of bishops’ houses;



- the number of bishops living in houses with more than 6 bedrooms;
- the number of bishops with chauffeurs, and the cost of providing them;
- the number of bishops with a gardener;
- the annual cost of bishops' private club members; and
- the average annual amounts given to bishops for expenses or hospitality, paid by the Commissioners?

*Dr Eve Poole (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* This question has not been asked since 2015 so we are grateful for its timeliness: In the light of Transforming Effectiveness, we are currently working with bishops to review episcopal costs, so we invite members of Synod to contact the Secretary of the Bishops and Cathedrals Committee with any views they may have on this subject.

Under the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009 the Commissioners are required to provide a house for a diocesan bishop which is “reasonably suitable for the purpose”. The Church Commissioners also pay their stipends and support their ministry as per the requirements of the Episcopal Endowments and Stipends Measure 1943.

Bishops' expenses are effectively delegated through the block grant process, so individual queries would need to be taken up with bishops directly.

We have provided a table comparing the answers from 2015 and 2020 in response to the specific requests.

Question	Answer from 2015	Answer for 2020
The average value of diocesan bishops' housing;	£2.26m (excl Lambeth Palace)	£2.26m excl Lambeth Palace <sup>1</sup>  See answer below re. maintenance costs;
The average cost of suffragan bishops' housing;	Suffragan bishops' housing is a matter for dioceses	Suffragan bishops' housing is a matter for dioceses
The average annual cost of maintaining bishops' housing;	£61,079 per house.	£70,310 per house
The number of bishops living in houses with more than 6 bedrooms	26 see houses have more than 6 bedrooms (excluding areas outside the bishops' demise which are let or occupied by staff).	26 see houses have more than 6 bedrooms (excluding areas outside the bishops' demise which are let or occupied by staff).
The number of bishops with chauffeurs, and the cost of providing them;	11 bishops have drivers (4 of these also act as gardener) at a total cost of £207,400p.a.	There are no staff employed solely as chauffeurs. A number of bishops have staff who will on occasion do some driving for them in particular situations.
The number of bishops with a gardener	Not asked	12 <sup>2</sup>
The annual cost of bishops' private club members	Not asked	Not known
The average annual amounts given to bishops for expenses or hospitality, paid by the Commissioners?	Not asked	Average local spend: £36,976 Average spend on meetings and hospitality: £3,200 <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Valuation was carried out by Knight Frank LLP as at 31 December 2013.

<sup>2</sup> 12 Diocesan Bishops directly employ gardeners, although some of these roles are shared with other duties; others have external gardening contracts.

We have separately commissioned a review of See house sustainability because we know that See house gardens and the impact of these houses may prove vital in helping the Church meet Synod's target of achieving net zero by 2030.

<sup>3</sup> In 2019, for a pre-Covid comparison, average local spend: £53,446; average spend on meetings and hospitality: £15,238.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* From the response set out in the additional information, it appears that the cost of bishops has risen by nearly £1 million over four years while parishes close or face cuts and stipends are half-timed due to affordability. To help General Synod members understand and scrutinise the cost of bishops, will the Commissioners publish a breakdown of all costs of bishops for the last quinquennium by year and annually going forward, along with a data trend analysis, so we can fully understand the cost, or increasing cost of bishops?

*Dr Eve Poole:* Sam, thank you very much for the question. Just to say yes, of course.

*The Chair:* Thank you, a nice short answer. We move on to question 4 for which there are no notified supplementaries.

4. *Revd Preb. Simon Cawdell (Hereford)* asked the Church Commissioners: Under the Church Property Measure 2018 (CPM) s. 16(2)(b) a DBF must keep the Commissioners informed of “matters concerning transactions affecting the diocesan glebe land”. The CPM s. 21(4)(c) requires a DBF on selling glebe to be satisfied that ‘having considered the report [of a qualified surveyor], ... that the terms of the proposed transaction are the best that can be reasonably obtained for the diocese”. This provision reflects the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity Commission’s advice to trustees, “you must decide you are satisfied that the proposed terms are the best that can reasonably be obtained in the circumstances of the disposal”. CC28 2012. As also did the judgment in *Harries v The Church Commissioners for England* [1992] 1 WLR 1241 concerning the duties of charity trustees when optimising investments.

Where a DBF is not required to provide an element of affordable housing under local planning regulations are the Commissioners:

- (a) aware of the pressures that some dioceses are under to provide glebe at less than open market price for affordable homes?
- (b) able to support such dioceses by publicly explaining the legal requirements of the CPM?

*Dr Eve Poole (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* The Commissioners do not now routinely require DBFs to provide details of particular glebe land transactions. DBFs do refer cases to the Commissioners under CPM 2018 (s. 21) where connected parties are involved, or where the advice of the agent has not been obtained, or where the DBF does not plan to follow the advice for a particular reason which could mean a disposal at below market value.

No cases have come to the Commissioners requiring consent under s.21 in recent years. However, we are aware anecdotally of the pressure on disposals more generally. Glebe lands must be held, managed, and dealt with for the benefit of the diocesan stipends fund.

The Commissioners provide advice and guidance on disposals, but dioceses must take their own legal advice in relation to any transactions.

The manual was reviewed and updated in autumn 2020. See:  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/parish-reorganisation-and-closed-church-buildings/parsonages-and-glebe-guidance-and-forms>  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Parsonages%20and%20Glebe%20Diocesan%20Manual%20June%202020.pdf>.

*The Chair:* We move on to questions 5 to 16 where the respondent is Loretta Minghella as First Estates Commissioner.

5. *Revd Anne Brown (Truro)* asked the Church Commissioners: Natural England assesses land designated as a SSSI with the objective that all SSSIs might achieve 'favourable condition status' (a status designating healthy habitats and features and appropriate management for conservation). Currently, 38% of SSSIs in England are assessed as being in 'favourable' condition by Natural England.

What proportion of SSSI units owned by the Church Commissioners are currently assessed as in favourable condition by Natural England, and what is the sum of their area?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners' natural capital baseline results are based on the position in December 2019. At that date, land in the Commissioners' ownership included approximately 2,094 acres of SSSI, 948 acres (i.e. 45%) of which were in a 'favourable' condition.

At present, the majority of SSSIs form part of tenanted holdings where management decisions and activities are decided by our tenants.

We are developing a process for annual carbon and natural capital reporting to assist with our natural capital and net zero strategy and our ongoing stewardship of these areas.

*Revd Anne Brown:* Which of the SSSIs owned by the Church Commissioners do not fall under the tenanted holdings, and what is their condition?

*Ms Loretta Minghella:* Thank you, Anne, for your question. I am afraid I do not know the answer to that, but I will write to you about it. Thank you for asking.

6. *Revd Anne Brown (Truro)* asked the Church Commissioners: In February 2021, Natural England released a report on Chichester Harbour SSSI, which called for the restoration of at least 257 hectares of saltmarsh.

Given that the Church Commissioners own saltmarsh within this harbour, some of which has been assessed as of unfavourable condition, what is the Church Commissioners' strategy for managing and restoring their parts of this site of global significance?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The small area of saltmarsh within the Commissioners' ownership is encompassed in strips along the shoreline and contained within two secure farming tenancies where our tenants currently have management control. Both farms are currently in existing environmental stewardship agreements and we are supporting our tenants to look at new schemes that may come available when full details are made available by DEFRA.

The Commissioners will be encouraging tenants that farm within the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to consider opportunities for restoration and improvement, including seeking financial support through the 'Funding for Farmers in Protected Landscapes' scheme which was launched at the beginning of July. It is hoped that, with annual funding of £125,000 capable of being accessed, this will assist with saltmarsh protection.

7. *Revd Canon Jeffrey West (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: What are the NIBs doing to respond to the concerns expressed by Bishop Luke Pato in the Diocese of Namibia, who has called for ReconAfrica to halt the drilling for oil in the Kavango Basin, a key biodiversity area which is home to the largest remaining population of African elephants and 400 species of birds?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* As the Commissioners do not have a shareholding in ReconAfrica, we do not have any investor rights to speak to management in the same way as for companies in which we are invested. We focus our engagement efforts on our holdings, where we have more leverage and a greater chance of positive impact.

We are collaborating with other major international investors and NGOs to develop a global biodiversity engagement programme, pushing companies to understand, tackle and report on their biodiversity impacts. The energy sector will be among those targeted, and key habitats and regions of natural capital loss will be identified and prioritised.

Our direct exposure to the energy sector was just 0.5% of the entire portfolio as of year-end 2020, with further divestments expected at the end of 2021.

8. *Revd Dr Mark Bratton (Coventry)* asked the Church Commissioners: The Church of England is a partner on the three-year Christian Ethics of Farmed Animal Welfare project (2018-2021). Its Policy Framework was published in November 2020 and recommends that churches should shift away from animal farming systems that provide poor opportunities for flourishing to support those rated better (such as RSPCA Assured) or best available (such as Organic). What plans do the Church Commissioners have to

collaborate with their land agents to ensure that future tenancy agreements incorporate these recommendations?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners' rural portfolio is a let portfolio with almost all farms tenanted. While tenants enjoy certain autonomy over their farming practices, through modern farm business tenancies they are obliged to comply with any acts of parliament which relate to animal husbandry and any local byelaws.

Those tenants who are claiming subsidy through the basic payment scheme are also obliged to comply with the cross-compliance regulations, some of which relate to animal husbandry.

Several tenants will belong to various recognised farm assurance schemes including the Red Tractor Scheme, Leaf and the Soil Association.

During tender processes for new lettings, our agents scrutinise potential tenants' farming practices and those which do not meet our expectations around animal welfare are not taken forward.

*Revd Dr Mark Bratton:* What are the Church Commissioners' current expectations around animal welfare for scrutinising potential tenants, and how is this rubric determined?

*Ms Loretta Minghella:* Excellent question, thank you. At the moment we expect tenants obviously to meet all statutory requirements, including any new requirements brought in by the law such as those included in the latest Agriculture Act 2020. One of the exciting things that is going on that I will be sorry to leave behind is a new environment strategy for our real estate holdings. We have got to the stage of beginning a natural capital baseline assessment. We have the preliminary results of that and we are going to use the results of that to determine what our strategy is around this and other areas. You can expect to hear more from us about this in the coming years.

9. *Revd Dr Mark Bratton (Coventry)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given the findings of the International Energy Agency (IEA) report in May that there should be no new investments in oil, gas and coal from this year for the world to limit global average temperature rises to 1.5C and reach net zero emissions by 2050, how are the NIBs ensuring that oil and gas companies in which they have investments stop their exploration and extraction of new fossil fuel reserves this year?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* Exploration and extraction plans are key topics in the Commissioners' engagement with oil and gas companies, and asking companies to react to the IEA's net zero scenario has been central to every recent engagement we have had in the sector. The alignment of capital expenditure with the energy transition is a vital part of any robust net zero plan,

and is included in the recently published Climate Action 100+ Net Zero Benchmark, which informs our engagements. We have also supported shareholder resolutions calling for companies to assess the impact of the scenario on their strategies and finances.

The NIBs' climate performance hurdles for 2021 focus on energy companies' alignment with global governments' emissions reduction commitments - those that are not aligned will be at risk of divestment. In practice, companies with plans to expand capacity in a way that is not consistent with the energy transition will find it difficult to pass this hurdle.

*Revd Dr Mark Bratton:* Given the IEA finding that there should be no new investments in oil gas and coal from this year, are the NIBs withdrawing their investments from those companies that are going against this clear conclusion from the IEA?

*Ms Loretta Minghella:* You will see that the action we took on Exxon was precisely driven by their rather alarming plans to significantly increase their oil and gas capacity. You will see the firmness of the action we took in relation to them.

We are absorbing the results of the IEA's new net zero scenario and I think what you will find is that it will be placed into the TPI modelling tool, and, once it is there, it will in fact mean that we use the 1.5 degree scenario for our 2023 hurdles. We will need to look very, very closely at companies as they come to the end of this year. As I said in my written answer, those which are expanding their capacity in a way which is not consistent with a just energy transition are less likely to meet this year's hurdle.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* How do the Commissioners hope to maintain any influence over energy companies by divesting themselves of their shares, since all the recalcitrant has to do is to hold out for a couple of years in the knowledge that if they do not play ball we will sell up and go away?

*Ms Loretta Minghella:* I understand your concern, Clive, which is one of the reasons why what we have done is, I think, very strategic. The outstanding work the Pensions Board has done in developing the TPI tool, for example, where half of the world's investable capital is in the hands of people who use our tool (TPI) to assess corporate behaviour. The TPI will carry on being a really seriously influential tool and its impacts will be felt not just in engagement but also in the way people invest now that, for example, the Pensions Board on behalf of the NIBs has collaborated in the invention of this index. We are also looking at sovereign debt as well, and looking at tools for the assessment of sovereign debt, to see what country investments can be justified. The structural work continues.

10. *Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS)* asked the Church Commissioners: The Climate Change Committee has recommended that all social homes should meet an EPC rating of C by 2028. Bearing in mind the Church's own net zero targets, what proportion of existing Church Commissioner-owned commercial and residential

properties have an Energy Performance grade C or above, and what steps are being taken to improve those which fall below this standard?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* Of the residential and commercial portfolio properties, where the Commissioners are responsible for procuring an EPC, 33% are rated at 'C' or above.

The Commissioners will undertake the works necessary to raise the EPC rating to, at least, the minimum standard required for letting when the property becomes vacant (in almost all cases, this has led to securing a 'C' or better rating) and progress across the portfolios is reviewed regularly.

As a high proportion of commercial and residential properties are listed buildings (around 40%), works to improve energy performance can be constrained by the need to avoid altering the appearance or character of the building and we continue to work with other asset owners sharing knowledge and best practice.

11. *Dr John Appleby (Newcastle)* asked the Church Commissioners: Following the election of three new directors onto the Board of ExxonMobil, what criteria or 'climate hurdles' are the Church Commissioners using this year to decide whether the company has taken sufficient steps towards alignment with the Paris Agreement by 2023?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* We are pleased with the impact our activist approach has achieved so far, gaining three of the board seats for directors with a clear mandate from investors to lead the company in the energy transition.

We are engaging with the new directors to understand their plans and timeline for urgently reviewing Exxon's approach and implementing a robust and ambitious transition strategy. These conversations will help us assess the likelihood of Exxon aligning with our climate standards and the Paris Agreement.

The new directors will need time and support to implement the sweeping transformation required but our 2023 timeline is very clear and will be reiterated to the reconstituted board. The NIBs reserve the right to make divestments outside of the annual hurdles they have implemented, should a company fail to show sufficient ambition or progress despite engagement.

*Dr John Appleby:* Thank you for the answer to the original question. My supplementary is this. Given that in your answer to question 9 the NIBs' climate performance hurdles for 2021 focus on oil and gas companies' alignment with global governments' emission reduction commitments, such as, for example, the Netherlands' new regulation, is this one of the criteria you will be applying to ExxonMobil?



*Ms Loretta Minghella:* No, the bottom line here is that Exxon starts a fair way back. It has a huge mountain to climb to remain investable, and that was the message we gave as investors in our coalition at the AGM in May loud and clear. We will be engaging with the three new directors that have gone in on our slate. We will need to see a really, really marked confidence shift here to see that the company can remain investable. I think there are very many hurdles for this company still to meet.

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* Could you just tell us what criteria you use for assessing stranded asset status for fossil fuel companies and how that applies to ExxonMobil?

*Ms Loretta Minghella:* I am not exactly sure that I understand the question, but I think what we do know, if this is an answer, Gavin, is that the world has to change for companies to survive. Everything we are doing is geared up to making sure that everything we invest in still justifies our investment, both on ethical and financial grounds. Companies that do not move swiftly enough will not be able to command the support of any shareholder, never mind us, because, as you imply, eventually they will represent stranded assets on everybody's balance sheets. We do take that into account, both financial and ethical considerations of course.

12. *Mrs Enid Barron (London)* asked the Church Commissioners: Once the natural capital assessment of the Commissioners' 92,000-acre rural portfolio has been completed, what percentage of the portfolio will be designated for protecting and enhancing nature, including forestry land, strategic land, and other land holdings?

*Ms Loretta Minghella replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* Within the rural portfolio at the end of 2019 over 10,000 acres (or 10.8%) of the portfolio is subject to an environmental designation such as SSSIs, AONBs, Special Protection Areas and National Parks. An additional 6,000 acres are identified as Priority Habitats.

Results of the natural capital assessment are being analysed to better understand the current position of our portfolios. All the land holdings will be reviewed to understand where improvements to enhance nature can be encouraged amongst tenants and implemented.

Across the development land portfolio, new planning applications are typically seeking to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain across development sites, in line with the requirements we would anticipate in the light of the Environment Bill.

Additionally, the 92,700-acre Timberland portfolio provides commercial forestry exposure in the UK, US and Ireland. Independent, third-party certification ensures the sustainable management of these forests. For instance, at least 20% of the area within our UK forests are managed with biodiversity as the primary objective.

*Mr Michael Stallybrass (Leeds):* In the portfolio there is a lot of land which is actively farmed. At a recent climate change conference that I was involved with, it was stated that the Church Commissioners could do a lot more to actually encourage farming practices which are going to be more carbon friendly. Is this something which the Church Commissioners are actually considering at the moment?

*Ms Loretta Minghella:* This is what I was referring to before. We are completely re-thinking our environmental agenda so far as concerns real estate, in fact, our whole ESG agenda for real estate. I think we have been known for our ESG agenda in relation to our corporate portfolio, and we want to bring everything we do up to that same sort of visibility, measurability and accountability. Yes, we will be looking at all of this. Please hold my successor to account on that.

13. *Mr Bill Seddon (St Albans)* asked the Church Commissioners: The *Coming Home* Report recommends that the Church Commissioners set an example to other landowners by favouring developments that align with the Housing Commission's five core values, the first of which is sustainability. Given that the Church Commissioners have emphasised the importance of reducing emissions in the real economy, how will they ensure that emissions related to the new homes that they plan to develop on their land comply with their own net zero targets?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Commissioners' real estate team is working closely with its development partners to determine the means by which our developments can assist the transition to net zero emissions on new homes. It is expected that this target will be met via numerous means, including the implementation of higher building regulations (such as the Part L Regulations and the Future Homes Standard, when they are brought in) and the development of energy strategies across individual sites.

This work will be influenced and informed by the Environmental, Social & Governance Framework which is currently being prepared for our development land portfolio and which will help identify areas where the portfolio can be most impactful in addressing the need to reduce emissions.

14. *Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TEs)* asked the Church Commissioners: I welcome the establishment of a sub-group to carry out research into the Transatlantic Chattel Slavery and Commissioners' funds, as it was mentioned in the Church Commissioner's Annual Report and reported publicly. Could the Commissioners share to the General Synod, firstly, who is leading this research group and the constituent membership of this group, and, secondly, will this research only look into "the Queen Anne's Bounty and Ecclesiastical Commissioners' Funds" or all other possible investment funds that benefited from Transatlantic Slave Trade?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* We are grateful to hear this positive feedback from a member of Synod on this initiative, which was established following a review by the Audit & Risk Committee.

The sub-group is made up of the following members of the Church Commissioners' Board: The Bishop of Birmingham, the Dean of Ely, the Reverend Stephen Trott, Alan Smith, Jay Greene, Poppy Allonby and Suzanne Avery. They are supported by NCI staff including the Commissioners' Chief Executive and the Director of Library & Archives.

We have also engaged independent accountants to undertake forensic research. This particular project is focused on the Church Commissioners' predecessor bodies as they were the origin of the fund now managed by the Church Commissioners.

Investment funds of other bodies are not within our remit, but we intend to share our findings once the research has been completed and would hope that this may also be of benefit to other endowment funds.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Can the Commissioners share the terms of reference of the group and confirm if the request by his Grace, the former Archbishop Rowan Williams, to pay reparations will be considered by the group?

*Ms Loretta Minghella:* I am not on this group. May I take away the request for terms of reference? I would say in relation to the second part of your question, Sam, that it is quite premature given that we are still in the inquiry stage to consider what may be the implications of any findings we make. As I think I have made clear here, we will be sharing those findings and we will be ready to engage on any of the obvious implications of them.

15. *Revd Barry Hill (Leicester)* asked the Church Commissioners: Mindful General Synod has a relationship with, but not control, of Church Commissioners' finances, are there plans for conversations between the NCIs about how the deferral from this Group of Sessions of the motion on Generosity and Diocesan Finances gives opportunity for the debate and motion also to take into account the significant and sustained real terms increase in Church Commissioner assets over recent years?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* As noted in GS Misc 1296, the Mutuality in Finances Group was established to explore options for greater generosity between dioceses. It did not examine assets held by parishes, cathedrals or the NCIs.

The Commissioners manage the Church's endowment fund to support the mission and ministry of the Church of England across the country in perpetuity. Advised by our actuaries, the Commissioners evaluate the maximum sustainable level of funding which can be provided. We are in the process of distributing £930m in this triennium (2020-22) more than one-tenth of the fund's most recent valuation.

The next triennial actuarial review of the endowment takes place early next year and will determine the sums we can make available for distribution in 2023-25. This will take into account the latest available information including the recent strong performance, the value of the fund at the end of 2021, and future return expectations.

The process to establish a Triennium Funding Working Group to make recommendations on how the funding should be distributed to support the Church's mission and ministry is underway. Membership will be drawn from the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council, as well as the Church Commissioners.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* As a Church committed to a bias to the poor, how much of the extra £50 million will be directed to our most in-need parishes and communities which are experiencing social deprivation?

*Ms Loretta Minghella:* When you are talking about the additional £50 million, Sam, I am not quite sure where you are looking, but what you might mean is the additional £50 million additional distributions we are making each year in this triennium, because we have more to distribute than just call and pensions. We continue to make specific contributions through the Archbishops' Council to the lowest-income communities through the dioceses, and the work that we support through the Strategic Development Fund is, in general, directed to areas of particular deprivation, so there is a bias to the poor in the distribution of those additional funds.

16. *Revd Barry Hill (Leicester)* asked the Church Commissioners: As we give thanks to God for the 10.7% increase in the Church Commissioners' investment value during 2020, up to a record £9.2 billion, the almost £250 million they have invested in the local church, especially those most in financial need and in areas of strategic priorities, mindful some, but very far from all, parish reserves have also grown significantly over the past five years, and that increased subsidy should never be used to avoid the changes to which God calls us; how do we discern when it is time to stop building bigger barns?

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Commissioners aim to distribute the maximum funding for mission and ministry that can be maintained in real terms into the future. This balances the needs of the current and future beneficiaries: The task of a permanent endowment.

The value of the fund is one of several factors that determine the level of distributions deemed affordable over the long term. Assumptions for the target future growth rate for the main distribution categories, future investment returns and pensioners' longevity must also be considered.

For 2020-22, in addition to clergy pensions, core in perpetuity expenditure, and time limited expenditure, we were glad to make available additional distributions of £50 million

p.a. to support a range of priority areas. Our most recent actuarial advice is that it is reasonable to plan for additional distributions to be maintained at current levels for the rest of this triennium and the next.

The total distribution for the current triennium is expected to be £930m including these additional distributions, with a similar overall sum anticipated for the next triennium as well.

*The Chair.* That brings that block of questions to an end. We move to questions 17 to 21 which are questions to the Pensions Board to be answered by Mr Clive Mather as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board.

## **PENSIONS BOARD**

17. *Ven. Malcolm Chamberlain (Sheffield)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What is the current level of investments held by the Church of England Pensions Board in renewable energy, clean technologies and other climate solutions; what percentage of the total Pensions Board's investments do they represent; and what steps are being taken to increase these investments, as requested by the motion passed at General Synod in July 2018 (Item 11)?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:* The Board holds approximately £125 million in renewable, clean, or climate solutions across asset classes, which represents 4.1% of the overall portfolio. This represents a significant 'tilt' relative to our holdings in oil and gas which total £8.9 million, approximately 0.3% of the overall portfolio. The Board has made a series of investment decisions and commitments that will further increase our 'green revenue' exposure over time. These include our allocation to the FTSE TPI Climate Transition Index, which features a strategic positive weighting to climate solutions, and commitments to private equity mandates with a focus on sustainability and impactful investments, including clean technology.

18. *Revd Canon Jeffrey West (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Following the recent Dutch court ruling that Shell must reduce its global carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 compared with 2019 levels, what more is the Pensions Board asking Shell to do to be aligned with the Paris Agreement by 2023, as required by the 2018 General Synod resolution?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:* We made a clear public statement at the Shell AGM that outlined the Board's expectations of the remaining steps the company needs to take. This statement was published on the Church of England website and reported in various media. We explicitly stated our expectation that absolute emissions targets are required for 2030 in line with the Climate Action 100+ Net Zero Company Benchmark. We also asked the company to reassess its targets following the publication of the International Energy Agency 1.5 degree scenario

that was published on the morning of the Shell AGM. As set out in the AGM statement we have been very clear about the need to take the remaining steps by the 2023 deadline as required by the 2018 Synod resolution.

19. *Revd Canon Ruth Newton (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Given that 30% of shareholders concerned about the climate crisis voted for the *Follow This* resolution at Shell's AGM, what reasons did the Pensions Board have for not supporting this resolution?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:* The Pensions Board is also deeply concerned about the climate crisis and co-leads a \$54 trillion global collaborative engagement with Royal Dutch Shell. Along with the majority of shareholders, we did not vote for the *Follow This* resolution, although we have done so in the past. We believed that the resolution was unnecessary on this occasion in light of having secured agreement for Shell to be the first oil and gas company to put an Energy Transition Plan to an AGM vote. We also secured agreement that there would be an annual vote on the company's delivery against that plan. We remain confident that engagement with Shell is delivering tangible results. The Board also made a clear statement at the AGM about the remaining steps we require the company to meet in line with our 2023 commitment to Synod. If they do not meet these, we will disinvest our holding.

*Revd Canon Ruth Newton:* Why did the Pensions Board vote in favour of Shell's energy transition plan when Shell is planning to increase gas production by 20% in the next few years?

*Mr Clive Mather:* I think the answer is very much linked to the written response we gave earlier. The simple fact is that Royal Dutch Shell, as a result of the engagements which we have led, has effected very, very substantial change right across the sector: the first company to embrace Scope 3 emissions; the first company to produce a target based on absolute emissions; the first company to link the targets to executive pay; the first company to address the question of lobbying through associations. So, remarkable progress has been made. We still have much to confront them about, to ensure that they deliver on their commitments and thereby can remain through the TPI index in 2023. Right now we have chosen to recognise the commitment and the progress they have made and to encourage them to go further both in their own right but as a beacon right across the sector.

20. *Dr John Appleby (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What advice did the NIBs give to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his response to the letter sent to him by 41 civil society organisations in Nigeria expressing grave concerns about Shell's climate and energy plan and its activities in the Niger Delta?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:* The letter in response to the Nigeria civil society organisations was written by one of the Archbishop of Canterbury's senior advisers during the Archbishop's study leave, and was clearly signed as such. She discussed the response with various colleagues from the National Church Institutions, including the Pension Board.

*Dr John Appleby:* Thank you for the response to the original question. My supplementary very simply is please will you summarise now the advice that was given, and make it available?

*Mr Clive Mather:* This was correspondence dealt with through Lambeth Palace. We were asked for our position on that. We laid out our position, which is essentially the position that we have been talking to in the presentation earlier this afternoon, and which is laid out in our Report. That was given to Lambeth Palace. It is their letter; they drafted it. We did not give them detailed advice on the specific correspondence itself.

21. *Revd Canon Patricia Hawkins (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Are there any criteria, and if so what are they, to determine whether a member of the clergy pension scheme, obliged by circumstances to take early retirement, might be exempt from the reduction of their pension in respect of years of service already accrued?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:* The Church of England Funded Pension Scheme is administered according to the rules set by Synod. There is no reduction in benefits where the Pensions Board accepts an application for retirement due to ill-health or where a Responsible Body agrees to meet the full cost of augmenting a pension to offset the reduction if a member retires before Normal Pension Age.

The test for ill-health retirement is that the member is:

- unable to perform the duties of his or her office or doing any other remunerated work, and
- that the underlying cause of ill health is likely to be permanent.

The Pensions Board considers medical advice to help determine whether the member meets these tests.

*Revd Canon Patricia Hawkins:* Thank you very much for a very clear reply. My question is has consideration ever been given to the position of those who retire early not because their own ill-health but because they have necessarily become a full-time carer?

*Mr Clive Mather:* Early retirement is a complex arrangement which has very significant financial impact of course on the individual but also on the fund. We are a regulated fund and we have to abide by the rules of our trust deed. It is simply not possible for us to

allow people to retire without the cost of that arrangement being addressed, otherwise the other members of the fund could be disadvantaged by the person leaving.

Of course, through our conversations with the employers and the responsible bodies, we are always open to any consideration about the flexibility or the regulation under which we operate, but we do have to, by law and by trust deed, operate according to the rules given to us.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* With your indulgence, Chair, may I withdraw 22 and 23? In respect of 21, bearing in mind the work on clergy wellbeing and the financial difficulties responsible bodies are experiencing, has the Pensions Board considered developing a national scheme to ensure no clergyperson who is having to retire due to disabilities or ill health is unsupported because of the financial difficulties or constraints of one of the responsible bodies, for example their diocese simply having no cash?

*The Chair:* Before I ask the Chair of the Pensions Board to reply, I am afraid I missed what you said at the outset. I was busy pressing buttons and all the rest of it. Could you repeat what you said about questions 22 and 23?

*Mr Sam Margrave:* I withdraw them.

*The Chair:* I will ask the Chair of the Pensions Board to respond to the supplementary you have asked in relation to question 21.

*Mr Clive Mather:* Thank you, Sam. we recognise that in a period of change we all need to be sensitive to individual arrangements, but it is simply not within our gift to enter that domain other than to provide whatever support we can through the services we are commissioned to provide. That is, of course, pensions, housing and retirement services, and making information and support available in specific cases. But I think the thrust of your concern would have to be addressed in the responsible bodies and from there the conversation could come to us. I do not believe that that is something that we could take on itself.

*The Chair:* That brings to an end that set of questions. We move now on to questions to the Archbishops' Council which is questions 22 to 40, with questions 22 and 23 to be answered by the Bishop of Durham on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council.

## **ARCHBISHOPS COUNCIL**

22. *Dr Paul Buckingham (Peterborough)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In May and in June the Education Office has issued guidance in relation to the constitutional options for Diocesan Boards of Education under the new Measure. The Office advises that it is for each diocese to make its own choice between the options. The



May guidance says - 'which of these structures may be the most appropriate for ...each diocese will be a matter for each diocese to decide'. The June guidance is emphatic that 'this guidance only applies to a DBE which is a committee of the Board of Finance'. There is thus at present no advice to dioceses about the prior stage - that of choosing which option to adopt.

Clause 18 of the Measure provides for the issue of guidance by the Archbishops' Council. Will the Archbishops' Council use its power under Clause 18 and issue guidance to dioceses on how to choose between the options for how their DBE is constituted? And, if not, on what basis has it decided not to do so?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* Archbishops' Council guidance under s.18 of the DBE Measure 2021 is guidance to which the DBE, DBF, bishop and Diocesan Synod must each have due regard as a matter of law and so must follow it unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so. General guidance highlighting the benefits and risks of incorporated and unincorporated DBEs has been provided, with clear guidance being given that if the unincorporated structure is selected legal advice must be taken to mitigate the inherent risks. However, it is not considered that s.18 Guidance is appropriate here as, if it was to provide that one structure was the most appropriate, or was not generally considered appropriate, a diocese would need to have cogent reasons not to select or to select that structure for its DBE. This could be seen as undermining the choices available in law given to dioceses by the 2021 Measure.

*The Chair:* Sam Margrave has withdrawn his supplementary there on 22, but Clive Scowen wishes to ask a supplementary. He suffered from the glitches I referred to earlier, so if he would like to ask his question, please.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* In view of the assurances given in the debate on Final Approval of the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021 that guidance would discourage the use of the unincorporated structure for DBEs, is it not incumbent on the Council now to honour that commitment, given s.18 guidance that an unincorporated structure should not be adopted unless special local circumstances justify it, given that the existence of such circumstances would provide the cogent reasons needed for departing from the guidance?

*The Bishop of Durham:* Thank you, Clive, for that question. The law, of course, is now the law of the land, and it is entirely up to each diocese to make its own decisions. It might be helpful for Clive and members of Synod to know that at least 13 dioceses we know are taking their own independent advice as to the risks which need mitigation in each model, so not simply around the unincorporated model. There are different options and there are different pluses and minuses around each.

In response to your specific question, Clive, we do not think that it is a requirement to put further guidance out. The guidance is there, and it is up to each diocese and DBE to explore for themselves and reach their own decisions. If they wish to ask the National Office as part of that process then they are free to do so, but independent advice would make a great deal of sense where there are questions still in people's minds.

23. *Miss Sophie Mitchell (Church of England Youth Council)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Given the emphasis on "younger and more diverse" in the new national strategy, what provisions are being put into place by the National Church and Dioceses to ensure that there are Children and Youth Advisers who can provide specialist support for parishes?

*The Bishop of Durham replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The emphasis on 'younger' echoes the culture change that 'Growing Faith' has been calling for and requires purposeful and well-resourced implementation at national, diocesan and parish/school level. This will involve the strategic engagement of senior staff, and also the appropriate levels of resource being focused on a variety of posts to reflect the intention to place young people instinctively at the heart of the Church of England's mission.

Children and Youth Advisers are clearly part of this ecology but should not be seen as solely responsible for implementing this change. Growing Faith calls for a much wider and deeper engagement at all levels both within diocesan teams, and also in wider appointments at parish/school including clergy and school leadership/teacher appointments and also including Chaplaincy, Youth Worker, Children's/Family Worker posts.

*The Chair:* We move to questions 24 to 25 to be answered by the Archbishop of York as President of the Archbishops' Council.

24. *Ms Debra Walker (Liverpool)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What progress has been made to release funding for the appointment of Racial Justice Officers around the Dioceses as directed in the report 'From Lament to Action'?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as President of the Archbishops' Council: The Archbishops' Council has concluded that it cannot support this recommendation in this formulation at this time, given the need to reduce costs in diocesan and national administration. The Council understands the rationale for this recommendation and will do more work on how best to support racial justice across the country through a network of officers who would be suited to different contexts. The Council will look at whether and how this might be supported in a different way as part of looking at funding priorities for the next triennium.

*Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities and TElS):* Your Grace, in your paper on Mission and Strategy you say it would be disastrous and foolish to ignore God. Do you think the decision by the Archbishops' Council not to support one of the critical recommendations of the Taskforce is exactly doing what you describe as disastrously and foolishly ignoring what God is calling us to do on the critical work of racial justice as a Gospel imperative ---

*The Chair:* May I interrupt you? This sounds to me as if it is asking for an opinion which is not allowable in the Question session.

*The Archbishop of York:* I am happy to offer a reflection if the Chair will allow it.

*The Chair:* Yes, all right, a brief reflection.

*The Archbishop of York:* I think Anderson knows my own commitment to this and my own sadness, and the sadness shared by the Archbishops' Council, that for pressing financial reasons it is not able to progress this recommendation at the moment. But I hope the answer gives enough encouragement that we will be doing our best to find out how racial justice can be supported through a network of officers, but possibly having to, certainly in this initial period where moneys for the next triennium are already committed and where there are huge financial challenges, find other ways of doing this. That is not really the answer I want nor the answer he wants, but I think it would be unfair to see this as not being fully committed to racial justice.

Just for his interest, in the York Diocese, where I now serve, we have already started to work out how we can have a little network of racial justice officers working across the Diocese. I am meeting with people shortly to discuss that. I think there are other ways of taking this forward. It is not what was hoped, but it is not nothing. I know that is disappointing, and I am not going to pretend otherwise, but I do not think it should be interpreted as a lack of commitment to the path that we are going down. I commit myself to doing all that I can to keep this at the heart of the agenda.

*The Chair:* That was one supplementary in relation to question 24. There are hands raised. I will take one question and the person who had a hand raised first was Zahida Mallard.

*Canon Zahida Mallard (Leeds):* Archbishop, I want to ask a question of the whole of Synod and of our Church. I wonder how money is found for other equality characteristics, but for these 43/57 recommendations, narrowed down to five, and yet there appears to be no movement or no negotiation. What is this saying about the culture change and the voice of people like me and my family?

*The Archbishop of York:* Zahida, I hear what you are saying. I think I can assure you and the Synod that money is being put into this work, but at the moment this particular

recommendation is not being supported in the way that it was proposed but we will be, as I said in my answer to Anderson, looking at other ways. I want to say to you, Zahida, that I do not under-estimate the disappointment this has caused, but I continue to make that personal commitment for us to be a more diverse Church, and to put racial justice at the centre of our agenda.

25. *Revd Mike Smith (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Has the Archbishops' Council had opportunity to read the Sheldon Hub Report on the impact of CDM proceedings on clergy "I was handed over to the dogs" or the heart-rending account given in the *Church Times* of 18 June 2021 by Mrs Sue Overend of the impact on her and her husband of the handling of a particular CDM complaint? If so, would they be prepared to offer an apology on behalf of the Church to those suffering such experiences?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as *President of the Archbishops' Council*: I am aware of the Report and am very grateful to the Sheldon Hub and to all those who have contributed to it. I can only imagine how painful it must be to tell the story again of so many difficult situations. I am extremely sorry for all the wrong that has been done and am committed to ensuring we work together to do better. I hope the debates and discussions we are having in this Synod on these matters will assist us all in moving forward.

*Revd Mike Smith*: Thank you for your written answer and the apology it contains. One of the problems for safeguarding survivors has been the frequency of apologies, with a sense that little real change that has followed from those apologies. What assurance can you give those affected by CDM cases that this will be different and that real change will follow from this apology?

*The Archbishop of York*: Let me try to give as much assurance as I can. As someone whose own Christian life has been shaped by the Catholic tradition, and for whom the sacrament of reconciliation is an important part of my spirituality, I know that penitence must be accompanied by amendment of life. I believe that the process that is ongoing at the moment looking at CDM, and looking at the way that it has brought terrible unnecessary hurt to some people, is now being addressed in the ways I assume you are aware, and in which the Sheldon Hub and other people who have been involved in these discussions have been brought around the table.

I cannot promise you it is going to get better, I cannot do that, but I can absolutely assure you that the issues that have been raised are being attended to, and I remain optimistic and hopeful that what comes out of the ongoing review of CDM will massively minimise the terrible hurt that some have experienced. Of course, I speak not only as somebody who has to hear CDMs but somebody who has had CDMs taken out against them. I am aware of these issues, and I am very grateful both for the question and for the work of the Sheldon Hub, and all who are part of that, for their contribution to this work.

*The Chair.* I notice there are several people who would like to ask questions. We have had one, so I will invite one further questions on the raised hands principle. Simon Talbott, please.

*Revd Simon Talbott (Ely):* I welcome Archbishop Stephen's statement and the written apology. Archbishop, I would be interested in finding out what qualities you might be seeking in the Lead Bishop for chairing the group to set in train the new Measure. Also, what kind of qualities would be you looking for in the group of people that they will gather around them to take this work forward?

*The Archbishop of York:* Simon, what a good question. I think I would have needed advance warning of that to give the considered answer that my small mind will not conjure up quickly enough. Knowledge of human failing and human sinfulness, great compassion, as well as great attention to detail are probably the things that are needed most. The text of Scripture that I keep turning to in all of this is that the wheat and tares grow up alongside each other; therefore, we need to be aware of these things. We need a transparent process where the detail is attended to, but we need a compassionate process; therefore, I would hope that the people who would be leading and inhabiting that process would have those things. There are probably many other things besides which I will think of as I finish, so I apologise if that answer seems a little thin.

*The Chair.* There are several other people who want to ask questions, but I am going to stick to the rule of two, so I move on to question 26. This is the first of a set of questions 26 to 28 to be answered by Mr Mark Sheard on behalf of the Archbishops' Council.

## **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL**

26. *Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Please can Synod be provided with an update on progress against the priorities set out for the Archbishops' Council's Evangelism and Discipleship Team, as set out in GS 2118 and welcomed by Synod in February 2019?

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Archbishops' Council:* The Team have worked hard on developing the six priorities in order to 'motivate our million' regular worshippers to pray, articulate their faith and live it out in the whole of their lives. Good work has been made on all priorities despite Covid. This includes resources produced by the Team on Everyday Witness and Everyday Faith which are vital to our priorities. 'Thy Kingdom Come' is now integrated into the Team to emphasise the importance of prayer and the Greenhouse Project is resourcing teams across many dioceses to develop new fresh expressions of church. The pandemic has impacted some of our plans but our series of regular webinars for church leaders across a wide range of our priorities has meant we have connected with, informed and resourced over 6000 leaders during the last year.

It is also worth noting how closely these priorities align with the Church's vision and strategy.

*Dr Andrew Bell:* Thank you for your helpful reply. It is encouraging to hear of the progress despite Covid. It is also reassuring to all of us that, as you point out, the priorities match the vision and strategy for the Church.

Will there be monitoring and reporting not only of, for example, leaders and teams being resourced, but also of actual outcomes of such resourcing; outcomes such as new congregations and, most importantly, new disciples resulting from these initiatives, so that we can indeed become a church of missionary disciples as commissioned by Jesus at the end of Matthew 28?

*Mr Mark Sheard:* Thank you very much indeed, Andrew, and thank you for the encouragement there is in your questions. In one sense the answer is yes, we are already measuring stats as the recent work on Fresh Expressions has already shown. It is partly measured already also by the mission stats that we are doing. The Church Development Tool, which will be coming online shortly, will enable us to measure the depth of discipleship as well. I am really pleased that you raise that as a very particular point. As we count, we are not just counting numbers, as in backsides on seats, but also the depth of discipleship that we are growing. I welcome that, and I hope that gives you some indication that we are very much on that case, and keen to both measure and to report back to Synod at the appropriate time.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* In respect of work to motivate our million regular worshippers, have the Archbishops' Council considered whether clergy were a limiting factor or an essential enabling resource in delivering these priorities?

*Mr Mark Sheard:* Yes.

27. *Miss Sophie Mitchell (Church of England Youth Council)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: This year, the Young Christian Climate Network are organising a 1,000+ mile relay pilgrimage from the G7 in Cornwall to COP 26 in Glasgow. Does the Archbishops' Council support YCCN's call for fair climate finance and belief that no country should go into debt because of climate justice, and will the Council call upon the Government to reinstate the foreign aid budget to pre-Covid levels and to advocate for and support fair international financing of climate induced loss and damages?

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Archbishops' Council:* The Environmental Working Group of the Archbishops' Council is working in partnership with other faith organisations calling for action at COP 26, especially for a global green and just recovery from the pandemic. Finance is key to this, and to the principle of climate

justice. Through the Climate Sunday initiative, we are asking churches and individuals to sign the Climate Coalition declaration (see <https://thetimeisnow.uk/declaration?partner=106>) calling for increasing support to those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Through the Make COP Count coalition (see [ps://makecopcount.org/](https://makecopcount.org/)) we are calling for new and additional sources of finance for climate-related loss and damage. YCCN are doing an amazing job highlighting this issue and the EWG is supporting their relay and commends it to others to do the same.

Both Archbishops have made repeated calls on the Government to reverse the cut in overseas development aid.

28. *Canon Linda Ali (York)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Has the Church of England contributed to the Covax Global Immunisation Programme under WHO? If so, how much? If not, are we expecting to contribute to this essential exercise to protect the world's most needy communities?

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: A meeting, convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the start of this year, brought together Faith Leaders, NGOs and Government, and resulted in the formulation of the 'VaccinAid' Campaign. This campaign, coordinated by UNICEF UK, enables individuals, parishes and groups to donate to the COVAX Immunisation Programme. It aims to help fund almost two billion Covid-19 vaccines for health workers and the most high risk and vulnerable people around the globe with its message 'Give the World a Shot'. The Church of England has played a pivotal role in establishing the campaign and, through its members and parishes, it continues to support its development. By the end of June 2021, VaccinAid was estimated to have raised in excess of £3,630,000.

*The Chair:* Questions 29 to 30 to be answered by Mr James Cary on behalf of the Archbishops' Council.

29. *Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What national support and advice is available from the Church of England's Digital Team to support churches who want to carry on using digital platforms to connect with their community and to reach new people especially when many churches are beginning to meet in person once again?

*Mr James Cary (Bath & Wells)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Since March 2020 the digital team has adapted its training programme to meet the unique challenges churches are facing. More than 9,000 attendees have joined webinars on topics such as how to live stream, staying connected online and online giving.

The digital team has also worked with the Evangelism and Discipleship team and the Diocese of Exeter to produce a Step-by-step guide to online and onsite services, available on the Church of England website at [cofe.io/ServicesGuide](https://cofe.io/ServicesGuide). This thorough resource

combines missional and digital wisdom to inspire and inform churches planning for the post-Covid online world.

The AChurchNearYou.com resource hub continues to offer churches free resources for online and onsite: Free images, customisable graphics and five new hymns each week for use in services. More than a million of these hymns have been downloaded so far.

The national online services continue to support churches as an alternative to producing their own online service.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Is Archbishops' Council aware or do you plan to learn lessons from Coventry's DBF's plan to appoint a digital missionary post and a digital strategy group to explore ways of resourcing and developing online church, social media, and helping parishes in order to establish and grow a hybrid pattern of in-person and online church?

*Mr James Cary:* Thank you very much for that, Sam. I do not know if the digital team is aware of that in particular. It is regularly in contact with dioceses running workshops and all kinds of things. That is really exciting and interesting, so I would love to know more about it. Perhaps you could email me off-line and tell me more. It sounds great. Thank you.

30. *Revd Canon Andy Salmon (Manchester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Prior to March 2020 there were some churches that had no digital presence at all. The pandemic has pushed all of us to develop our online and digital presence and the national Digital Team have been a great help with this as have local Diocesan officers such as Eve Powers in my own diocese of Manchester. What progress has the Digital Team made with training for parishes and how many churches are now considered to have moved from little or no digital presence to a good digital presence?

*Mr James Cary (Bath & Wells) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The Digital Team began training churches to use digital platforms to grow their worshipping communities and keep in touch with their congregations in 2017, training 1,000 each year.

Since March 2020, more than 9,000 attendees have joined a digital webinar. Webinars were scheduled daily during the first lockdown and have adapted as guidelines changed. There has been an increase in demand for strategy and advanced skills, indicating a maturing of the local church's digital presence. Many of these webinars are developed in partnership with diocesan communication teams.

Weekly Digital Labs blogs on the C of E website have - seen more than 200,000 times in 2020 - sit alongside the webinars to equip churches.



AChurchNearYou.com saw its busiest year in 2020, with more than 77 million page views. The number of editors has increased by more than 10,000 since March 2020 to just under 30,000, suggesting more churches are using this tool to promote both online and onsite services.

*The Chair:* We move on to questions 31 to 35 to be answered by Canon Dr John Spence on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council.

31. *Revd Canon Martyn Taylor (Lincoln)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: We hear much about mixed ecology: What support is the central Church giving to help parishes to offer online worship?

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* Since the pandemic began, churches have shown incredible enthusiasm for finding digital solutions to changing guidelines. AChurchNearYou.com now lists more than 30,000 live-streamed and pre-recorded services.

To help with the hybrid approach to worship, the national Digital Team is increasing support for clergy, staff and volunteers through blogs, webinars and conferences.

The June 2021 Digital Labs conference saw more than 400 church leaders gather to explore mixed ecology and how to plan for online and onsite worship. The conference featured sessions on vision and strategy, how to encourage online giving and the theology of online ministry, alongside practical workshops.

Since March 2020, the Digital Team's regular webinars to upskill churches and cathedrals have been attended more than 9,000 times.

The Church of England website has more than 20 blogs with practical help, and a step-by-step guide to online and onsite worship aims to make planning for the post-Covid world simpler.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* What extra funding has been made available for digital resources for churches nationally. Bearing in mind that most dioceses are at full stretch with this at the moment, what extra assistance has been offered apart from that detailed in this written reply?

*Canon Dr John Spence:* We have allocated a budget of £5 million over this triennium for all the work the digital teams are doing. That work takes the form of enabling dioceses to pick up the pieces themselves. I was delighted to hear what Sam was telling us. There is much there. We make no charges for all the different elements of the training that is being delivered, other than sometimes to cover costs. This is very much enabling dioceses to have the facilities to do it themselves, and at parish level, as you have seen,

the very large number of parishes and people who have engaged with the training and development.

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* By the way, this was put down under 31 but it was misallocated against 35, so if you could bear that in mind when you get to 35. Whilst welcoming huge progress in online worship within the Church of England, why is higher priority not given for convergence with Premier Christian Radio, who would welcome it, with all its deep capability for mission in the digital and broadcasting media?

*Canon Dr John Spence:* Gavin, thank you, and that is a question I cannot answer as to what engagement we have with Premier Christian Radio. That is a question I will need to refer back to the team to understand what may or may not be there already and what arguments there may be, so I will come back to you in writing on that.

32. *Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Of the c.£167.7m allocated to projects by the Strategic Investment Board from 2014-20, what proportion have been assigned to supporting churches, whether new or established, belonging to or associated with the Church Revitalisation Trust (as identified by their own website)?

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* Strategic Development funding, to which this question relates, is awarded to dioceses. It is the decision of dioceses which churches, activities and networks they support, in line with their strategies.

We do not routinely capture data on the proportion of funding directed to particular networks. Most projects will work with a number of different parishes and Fresh Expressions of Church (e.g. across a town). Our broad estimate is that 10% of projects are solely focused on Church Revitalisation Trust churches; another 20% include a Church Revitalisation Trust church as one of a number being supported.

33. *Revd Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In the light of SLDP PROJECT (Group 7) which reviewed the dioceses' allocation of the Lowest Income Communities Fund (LICF), what progress has been made in ensuring that the allocation of LICF is reaching the low income communities and in ensuring that the way the funding is spent is through consultation among lowest income communities themselves?

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* Since its creation in 2017, the purpose of the Lowest Income Communities funding has been to redirect funds to low income areas, and the national church has worked with dioceses to ensure this happens as swiftly as possible while minimising disruption to ministry.

Year on year, the amount that can be verified as reaching low income communities has increased, even during the pandemic, and the SIB has sought assurances from every diocese that the funds will all be distributed to low income communities by the end of the triennium.

How funding is spent locally is a matter for dioceses, and it is hoped that all deployment and resourcing decisions involve local consultation. We have seen examples of this through diocesan reporting.

*Revd Andrew Yates:* Thank you very much for the answer and encouraging news of the direction that we are going in, but just to ask whether it is appropriate to use LICF to cover the drop in parish contributions to DBF and so pay the shortfall in stipends that is arising now?

*Canon Dr John Spence:* I think, Andrew, you were referring to LInC funding. My view would always be it is for the dioceses to determine how best that money can support our mission in those poorest areas of the country and in the communities in their areas. As we move to the next triennium, as part of being a bolder, simpler, humbler Church, I will certainly be looking to see what the direction is for increasing LInC funding if funds can be made available. Clearly, from my way of doing, additionality is proved if LInC funding enables mission to be continued in an area which otherwise could not afford to sustain a priest, although I was very well reminded recently that we should not always assume that that is the case because often our poorest communities are the most generous.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* How many of our poorest or estate churches have been saved from closure by the Lowest Income Communities Fund? If we do not know, can we seek to find out and measure this metric in the future?

*Canon Dr John Spence:* Sam, it is a great question to ask. You know I do not know the answer, I suspect. Has it been saved through the provision of funding is a very hard thing to measure because in many cases the funding is used in different ways to enable growth, to enable curates to be deployed where they otherwise would not be. In many cases the estates churches may be saved for other reasons. I will take it back to my colleagues in the Strategy Development Unit. I am not going to give you a glib answer again. We will see how measurable it is and, again, I will come back to you in writing, Sam.

34. *Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Giving Strategy is a major investment. What progress has been made and, given that giving income in parishes is vital to enable the payment of parish share to dioceses; what range is there in the levels of parish share receipts by dioceses, and what can be done to assist those dioceses with lower parish share receipts?

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In the first 18 months of the National Giving Strategy:

- 23 dioceses have received funding for new giving advisors;
- over 2,300 churches have set up online giving accounts;
- pilots on contactless giving have begun (Carlisle and Southwark dioceses)
- an online will writing pilot has begun (Manchester and Winchester dioceses).
- over 1,000 churches have attended webinars on giving,
- the findings of the first Anglican giving survey have been widely shared.
- new parish resources to encourage giving have been produced
- the giving team have also delivered clergy training in twelve dioceses and one theological college.

In 2020 average parish share receipts were 7% less than in 2019. In 2020 on average parish share represented 66% of dioceses' incomes, ranging from 36% to 93%.

To assist dioceses with lower parish share receipts, last year sustainability grants of £14.9 million were made to 24 dioceses. £20 million of these funds remain available for distribution in 2021.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel:* Thank you for the reply to my question. It is in the parishes where the rubber hits the road. Could you explain what parishes and dioceses can do to encourage generosity in giving, with the obvious knock-on effect on parish share receipts, and what is the capacity of the National Giving Strategy to help with this?

*Canon Dr John Spence:* Bearing in mind the keenness to get through as many questions as possible in limited time, I will give a fuller answer as part of my budget presentation tomorrow. I would observe that so far 23 dioceses have taken up funding for a giving adviser. That feels pretty fundamental to me given the correlation between giving advisers in post and progress on generosity, but I will give a fuller answer on the budget debate tomorrow.

*The Chair:* There is a point of order from Dr Ian Paul.

*Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* I notice that on my calculations we are not going to get much past question 40 in this session. In Questions we normally get to around the 70s or 80s. Can the platform make any provision, please, for a return to Questions, because there are obviously some very important follow-ups that need to be asked, perhaps in the space left on Monday with David Lamming's withdrawal of his PMM?

*The Chair:* That is not a matter for me to decide. The point you have made is noted and will be responded to elsewhere. I cannot respond to it now. We will continue until 7.15 as scheduled. It is out of my hands as to where we go from there.

The second supplementary question to question 34 is Sam Margrave.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Does the strategy consider maximising giving receipts by using Gift Aid? Has any consideration or approaches been made to HMRC regarding Gift Aid for online giving or money that is not on the plate because we are moving to a cashless society?

*Canon Dr John Spence:* Absolutely, we do not need to make representations to HMRC. We have worked with the Parish Giving scheme to enable Gift Aid to be included in that piece. On contactless giving, the team are working on how that can be done. The great piece is to work it out ourselves, I think, and I believe that we will find answers to that. But thank you, Sam. Good point.

35. *Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Has consideration been given to the provision of financial resources to dioceses and/or parishes to assist them in the financial challenge of meeting the 2030 net zero target set by this Synod?

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The whole Church will need to devote financial and other resources to achieving Synod's net zero carbon target, and there are no easy answers to this, but it is being worked towards.

The Archbishops' Council's 2021 and 2022 budgets include additional resources for work on the environment, enabling:

- An update of the environmental section of the online grants directory, to be published soon.
- A scoping exercise to assess what sources of income exist which could be approached nationally, in order to benefit dioceses and churches, and how this should best be approached. Budget has been allocated for ongoing fundraising.
- Commissioning of training webinars on environmental fundraising. ([www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/webinars-getting-net-zero-carbon](http://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/webinars-getting-net-zero-carbon))
- Creation of a small 'diocesan projects fund', open for applications from Diocesan Environment Officers, to support local projects with potential national benefit.

The provision of financial resources for this work beyond 2022, alongside other priorities, will be considered as part of the exercise to develop spending plans for 2023-25.

*The Chair:* Questions 36 and 37 are to be answered together by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich on behalf of the President of the Archbishops' Council, and there are supplementaries after that. Sam Margrave has a question in relation to question 36 and he also has a question in relation to question 37.

36. *Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Will the Archbishops' Council please publish a complete breakdown of the figures for

clergy at a national level, broken down by the particular characteristics (age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, et cetera) now gathered by the Church of England People System?

37. *Ms Jay Greene (Winchester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Knowing the importance of good statistics, please may members of this General Synod have a full breakdown of figures from the new national database for clergy, giving statistics for all characteristics?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: With permission I will answer questions 36 and 37 together.

The People System can provide this data in an anonymised state, and we hope to have some initial figures towards the end of the year, but we are not yet in a position to release such a report now. First, the Archbishops' Council would need to consider whether to publish the data sets that are not currently published, noting that the data was optional for people to fill in and will, therefore, be incomplete. Then there would be steps that must be taken to ensure the report is built correctly, undertake quality assurance on the output to ensure the data are accurate and correct, and format the report so that it is presented appropriately to assure anonymity.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)*: My question on 36 and 37 is can disability figures also be included, please?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich*: I am sure they can. I think there is the continuing issue about the partiality of the responses, but I will take that back, Sam, to make sure we can do the best we can.

*Very Revd Tim Barker (Dean of Guernsey)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What is the reason for the problems with the National Clergy Register, whereby a number of clergy, including those serving in the Channel Islands, are not shown as being authorized for ministry? What are the plans for resolving the problems? Has the purpose of the Register, which is greater clarity on which clergy are authorized for ministry, been compromised by the initial problems?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Bringing together blocks of overlapping clergy data - owned and managed in different ways - has been complex. After six rounds of validating data with dioceses we knew the information in the People System, which feeds the National Clergy Register, would not be perfect when we opened it up. We relied on dioceses and clergy to inform us about changes; thanks to further data feedback we have now made significant strides towards accurate, up-to-date information on all active clergy. The People System and Register are major achievements which will make a lasting positive difference to Church life and meet our safeguarding commitments. We

hope the initial problems have not compromised the overall project, but we recognise all major IT projects face significant hurdles, despite detailed governance, planning and resourcing. The Channel Islands changed dioceses during the project: Salisbury Diocese needed more time validating the data, which is about to be uploaded.

39. *Revd Dr Philip Plyming (Universities & TEIs)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What discussion has taken place on Council concerning the Resourcing Ministerial Formation process, and what detailed consideration of the different financial models is planned before proposals are brought to the General Synod for discussion and approval?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Resourcing Ministerial Formation review is being carried out by the Ministry Council who have discussed it at each of their meetings since February 2019, with only one exception.

The Archbishops' Council discussed a brief report indicating a direction of travel for priorities, TEI sector structures and funding in December 2020, and in March 2021 a fuller report including some draft initial proposals developing from this. Archbishops' Council members also received papers from the most recent round of consultation with dioceses and TEIs together with an invitation to participate or comment. Detailed work is now underway on understanding the implications of proposed funding models that have developed through the consultation process. These are intended to lead to a more sustainable, accessible and less competitive TEI sector, including incorporating formation for some lay ministries. Proposals will then be shared in further consultations with the sector and with dioceses and discussed by the Archbishops' Council.

*Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)*: Can you tell us whether the Archbishops' Council has been broadly supportive of the RMF process when it has been informed on it, or not?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich*: Ian, you would know the answer to this question as well, since you sit on Archbishops' Council. Re-reading the minutes of the last two meetings, when it came to December there was broad support for the direction of travel, and in the March meeting there were various questions raised about the process which we have taken back and are engaged in a reflection on that, and also in light of the consultation process that has been going on, which has been a widespread consultation process, involving a lot of people.

40. *Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Given that the target set by General Synod in 2015 to increase the number of people entering training for ordination by 50% (against 2013 levels) by 2020 and sustain that level annually looks unlikely to be met on the basis of the most recent Ministry Statistics,

what plans has the Archbishops' Council to consult with dioceses about the number of candidates needed going forward?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Archbishops' Council:* In 2013 there were 288 ordinations to stipendiary ministry. In 2021, we anticipate there will be around 410 - an increase of 42% which is to be celebrated. We are grateful to diocesan vocations teams for their partnership in this outcome and we thank God for his provision. The size of the stipendiary clergy cohort has currently stabilised at around 7,600 - a key objective of Renewal and Reform.

We are aware that ordinations to self-supporting ministry have remained fairly stable over the same period and some in-depth research is currently taking place to help us understand this situation more clearly.

The National Ministry Team consults regularly with dioceses on these matters. During the period of the pandemic, these consultations have intensified as we seek to understand both the current picture and longer term plans. The situation is dynamic and diocesan teams are working hard to establish their local response to uncertain conditions - we are grateful to them for this work as we collate the national picture.

*Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford):* The desire for quantity is usually paired with the need for quality. For example, under the old system of eight criteria for selection, a ninth was added for mission and evangelism. While encouraged by the quantity of candidates, may I ask what means for and evidence of quality control and maintenance are in place, especially with regard to mission and evangelistic effectiveness? Quality control as well as quantity please, means and evidence.

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich:* The means and evidence continues in the same way that it has done in the past through the use of the selection criteria, and then through the reports that bishops get from their theological training institutions. One of the things that I have noticed going on through these last few years, and interestingly, is I think people have been acutely aware of through the time of this pandemic (because you appreciate that a whole of lot of things have changed, including the way in which the selection process has been undertaken and the way in which the actual formation process has been undertaken) that that attention to rigour and quality has been, I cannot say accentuated but close attention has been paid to that.

## **HOUSE OF BISHOPS**

*The Chair:* We now move on to questions 41 to 95 which are all to the House of Bishops. Questions 41 to 53 are to be answered by the Bishop of London on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops.



41. *Mr Jeremy Harris (Chester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the House of Bishops confirm that the Church of England does not oppose so-called “conversion therapy” for those struggling with gender dysphoria and who willingly seek such therapy?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops confirms that “conversion therapy” is not intended to prevent people from seeking help when they are experiencing gender dysphoria. The Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy (2015), which was endorsed by General Synod, clearly states that banning conversion therapy “is not intended to discourage clients with conflicted feelings around sexuality seeking help. Psychological therapists routinely work with people who are struggling with inner conflict. ‘For people who are unhappy about their sexual orientation [...] there may be grounds for exploring therapeutic options to help them live more comfortably with it, reduce their distress and reach a greater degree of self-acceptance.’” The 2017 Memorandum extends this caveat to include persons seeking help in relation to gender identity.

*Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford)*: Your answer says that comfort therapy, consolation therapy and contentment therapy are all acceptable, but the fact that your answer puts conversion therapy in inverted commas suggests that it is still unhelpfully ill-defined and necessarily contested. Would the House of Bishops clarify what careful legal definition of conversion therapy they are working with and would commend to others in this debate?

*The Bishop of London*: As you say, conversion therapy at times has been contested, but I think the fact is with the inverted commas we were mirroring the question, not so much the answer. I do think that the work of the Next Steps Group and also looking forward to some of the work that we have undertaken in government this year means I can confirm that we will spend some more time reflecting on the nature of conversion therapy in this way. I would want to underline that the Church of England has said we would want to see the banning of conversion therapy. My answer specifically relates to medical and psychological therapists that are routinely used by people in the mainstream profession. I would underline that the House of Bishops confirms that it would want to see the banning of conversion therapy.

*The Chair*: I can take one further question from the floor, as it were, and Jayne Ozanne had her hand up first on the screen.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)*: I am wondering if the Bishop is aware that the Secretary of State, Ms Truss, made explicitly clear on 24 March that a ban on conversion therapy will include protections for the transgender community, who their research has shown are twice as likely to be offered conversion therapy, and which my own research has shown is widely at the hands of religious communities?

*The Bishop of London:* I was not aware of that quote at all. Thank you for putting it into my knowledge and I will clearly take it away.

42. *Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Participating in the LLF Course and reading the LLF book, I was struck by the fact that there is no reasoned case made out, or set of reasons set out, in support of changes to the Church's current position on issues of human sexuality. The nearest one gets to grounds for change are the exposition of readings of Scripture on pages 283-294 of the LLF book and more briefly on pages 48-49 of the Course, and the paper from Walter Moberly in the LLF library looking at "How should Christians read and use those passages of Scripture which speak of same-sex issues?" Nowhere in LLF is it said that the Church should change its position in X way for Y reasons. I have been led to understand that a deliberate decision was made not to set out systematically the case for and against maintaining the status quo. If a decision is made at the conclusion of the process either to maintain or change the Church's current position, this will not be following a reasoned case having been put forward in LLF for doing so because no such reasoned case exists.

How is it proposed that this lacuna will be filled to enable individuals, parishes, Deaneries, Dioceses and General Synod to make an informed and reasoned decision?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The purpose of the LLF resources is to enable the whole Church to enlarge and deepen their Christian understanding of what it means to be human and to set questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage in that context. This means gaining deeper insight into why we reach different conclusions about particular questions.

The responses and insights of all who have engaged with the materials will be gathered nationally as part of a prayerful discernment that is informed by the resources, and the learning and reflections of the whole people of God. Whatever decisions are reached will draw on the LLF resources and the insights gained in the Church-wide process of learning together to offer a reasoned case which we pray, by God's grace, the Church will have arrived at together.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr:* I am grateful for your response to my question which, with all due respect, unless I am misreading it, and other members will be able to form their own view, does not provide an answer to the question. It is a good example, if I may say so, of a parry of the kind which has given rise to question 121. I did not ask what the purpose of the LLF resources is, nor did I ask about how responses would be gathered.

As a supplementary question, may I ask you either to confirm or to deny the premise on which my question was based, namely, that a deliberate decision was made not to set out systematically the case for and against maintaining the status quo. And, if so, and

my information is correct, are we not doing a disservice to those who advocate for change if the reasons on which their convictions are based are not clearly articulated?

*The Bishop of London:* Thank you, Stephen, for your supplementary question. The premise of *Living in Love and Faith* was about a process of engagement where we listen to each other and to God. As I have often said, my hope for the process is that that is exactly what we do do. I have also been very clear that I did not at the launch of it, and I do not at this stage, have any view about what actually is the outcome. Whether it is the status quo or not the status quo, that is not the purpose of this document. The purpose of the document was around how we enable the whole Church to enlarge and deepen its understanding of what it is to be human, and to begin to explore those questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage in that Christian context. That is the purpose, and my hope still is that we can listen to each other, and listen to God.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I withdraw 44 and 45. In respect of 42, this Synod was previously told LLF was a teaching document, not a process. Now it is a process, has the House of Bishops considered there is a danger that with limited resourcing LLF has now become a Poundshop shared conversation, and, if so, what was your conclusion about resourcing needs?

*he Bishop of London:* It is interesting, is it not, about how people learn and how you teach. One of my reflections as somebody with dyslexia is that documents are not always the best thing for me. I much prefer a variety of different modes. Whether it is a document or a process, what I would say is that what we are doing is engaging people to listen to each other. It is about learning in that way. We are using different tools and different models. There is a document, but there are also different ways of learning. That is about widening the accessibility to people, which I am sure you will appreciate, to a whole range of people, so that we listen and we learn. I think there is, therefore, a greater richness of material and I think the people who put them together have done a great job. I am very grateful that there is not just a document but there are also other tools. To teach, to learn, it is a process, Sam.

43. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the significant distress that Debbie Hayton's film in session 5 of the LLF materials has caused those trans people who have inadvertently been subjected to it, what steps are being taken to protect other trans people from being traumatised by it?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question. Given the diversity of followers of Jesus Christ portrayed in the LLF resources, many people are likely to find one or more of the films in the LLF Course deeply uncomfortable, if not distressing. That is why the LLF resources include a range of ways to help groups and their leaders to take responsibility for engaging with the materials and with each other in as safe and brave a way as possible, modelling loving pastoral care. These include the reflections on the

Pastoral Principles, guidance notes for leaders (which draw attention to the need to be alert to the potential impact of the story films), as well as facilitation training specifically geared to situations when participants might be powerfully affected by an element of the resources and/or a perspective with which they disagree.

*The Chair:* Question 43 is another of those instances where I have to depart a little from the published speakers. Jayne Ozanne.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Thank you for your response, Bishop Sarah, which shows an understanding of the need to safeguard LGBT people from views that trigger deep trauma and pain. However, does the Bishop understand that including material from someone who is outspoken in her denial of the very existence of trans people completely undermines the willingness of trans people to engage with the LLF process, and diminishes the credibility of the Church of England in the eyes of all those committed to international human rights and who view this as evidence that the Church of England is, sadly, transphobic?

*The Bishop of London:* Jayne, you know that this is a difficult area. In terms of talking to the trans community, there are those who clearly were upset and concerned by the use of Debbie's film, but also we had other voices that said that, actually, they had found it helpful. I think one of the challenges of us talking about things that affect us and other people so personally is that there will be challenges for people around how it affects them, which is why, I suppose, one of my biggest concerns is around how we create safer environments for people.

Whilst I recognise, Jayne, that that is work in progress, we have tried to work hard to create safer spaces for people. Therefore, that is why I have said all along do not engage with LLF if you do not personally feel safe, but we are trying to work through the facilitators, through the work that has been done on learning safer together, to try to create a safer environment. As you will recognise, there are different voices on not just this issue but other issues. I am very aware that this process will for many people be difficult, which is why we have to do it in an environment of care and love.

*The Chair:* Of the other questions, I see a hand raised by Ian Paul, so I will take his question, please.

*Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* I am sorry I was not able to ask a second supplementary to question 39. I think Martin Seeley's answer was in danger of misleading Synod. I can assure Synod that it was not the mind of the Archbishops' Council to approve the general direction of the RMF, and it had some serious questions about it.

On question 43, could I ask the Bishop what action is being taken to protect the important voice and the felt experience of people like Debbie Hayton who are transsexual but who

are opposed to much transgender ideology? What is being done to protect voices like hers from intimidation and from attempts to silence her?

*The Bishop of London:* Ian, the work that we have done around how we create safer spaces goes for all of us, whatever our theological view or whatever our sexual identity. Ian, you will recognise that one of the concerns I personally have is that in the Church we are not always a safe or nice environment to each other. I think that is at the heart of our culture. Culturally, we have to change to be able support each other even if we have a different view and a different ideology. That starts with us, but the team itself from *Living in Love and Faith* have spent a lot of time with those that have been involved in the filming of material, and we are supporting them as individuals, and of course we hope that *Living in Love and Faith* will be a conversation of love, in love. That goes for all of us and us working out and being, I suppose, self-reflective on how we could have a negative effect on somebody else because of our views and our power base. That is why, for me, at the heart of this it is about our culture; we do have to treat each other better.

44. *Dr Mike Lawes (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The LLF consultative programme demands meaningful engagement with our church communities and, acknowledging the nuance and sensitivity associated with conversations around the materials, in person meetings are hugely preferable to remote meetings.

In view of the difficulties encountered by diocesan implementation groups in engaging parishes and deaneries and rolling out the LLF initiative, due to social distancing and public health measures; would the Next Steps Group agree that it would be preferable extend the window for feedback, once all social distancing measures have been lifted, for a period of at least 6 months to allow local groups to give sufficient time for consideration of the materials and constructive feedback?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question about the timeframe for Church-wide engagement with LLF. This view has also been expressed at the many *Living in Love and Faith* events across the dioceses and at the regular meetings with LLF Advocates. At the same time, there have been reports of many groups having positive experiences of engaging with the resources online over the past six months.

The Next Steps Group is listening to this feedback and considering how it might best be addressed. There is a need to avoid lengthening the timeframe within which a way forward will be reached, while honouring churchgoers' desire to engage well with the resources at a time that is both possible and fruitful.

*Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells):* I am asking this question from the basis of being trained as facilitator for LLF. Given that the answer implies there is a real issue here about take-up at parish level of LLF stuff as we come out of Covid, will the Next Steps Group consider again reviewing the timescale to give people in parishes, who are

tired and trying to rebuild church life, a better chance to do LLF better, rather than it just shoot by before they have noticed it?

*The Bishop of London:* Thank you for your question. It also gives me an opportunity to thank not just you as a facilitator, but all those other people who have volunteered their time to be facilitators or advocates. We are very grateful. Thank so you very much. We are aware of the pressures in terms of people engaging, but we are also aware that there are people who do not want us to knock this into the long grass. There is no doubt that the Next Steps Group are listening to the feedback we are already having, and in terms of the timing it is something that we would want to consider, yes.

45. *Mr Jon Walker (Leicester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that the House of Bishops has what many perceive to be a relatively poor record when addressing matters of human sexuality (especially the report that Synod declined to note, and other pastoral pronouncements that seemed at best ill-judged); what reassurance can you provide that a process that is led by a group comprised only of Bishops and where the same House of Bishops dominates the next steps will be more attuned to and aligned with the leading of the Spirit across the whole Church, and the call for love, justice and inclusion to prevail over expediency?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question. *Living in Love and Faith* is one of the most far-reaching processes that the Church of England has conducted in recent history. It is based on the belief that the Spirit speaks through Scripture and the reflections of the whole people of God. Every churchgoer is invited to use the LLF resources together with others and to feed back to the Church their learning, experience, insights and reflections. These are gathered by means of a questionnaire, as well as through the opportunity to offer a creative response. This material is being independently gathered by colleagues with expertise in quantitative and qualitative research and analysis. The findings of this 'Listening to the Whole Church' process will be made publicly available as they become part of the discernment and decision-making processes that will be led by the bishops together with members of General Synod.

46. *Dr Angus Goudie (Durham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In view of the recent resolutions and discussions at the Methodist Conference, (final votes awaited until after the question deadline), will the LLF Next Steps Group be in dialogue with their Methodist counterparts, possibly along with the Next Stages Covenant Group?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question. Even before the recent decision at the Methodist Conference to make it possible to conduct same-sex marriages, the Next Steps had begun to formulate plans for engagement with our ecumenical partner Churches in relation to *Living in Love and Faith*. Dialogue specifically with the Methodist Church will take place at various levels for different purposes, including in relation to Local

Ecumenical Partnerships and the work of the Next Stages Covenant Group. The LLF Next Steps Group will ensure that their work is joined up with these developments. Exactly what this means in detail is still to be worked out.

*Dr Angus Goudie:* Thank you for your answer, Bishop Sarah. In view of the substantial view of the Methodist Church in favour of allowing same-sex marriage in their churches - over 84 % in favour - what does the House of Bishops' Next Steps Group propose should be done to enable those Methodist congregations within LEPs and other joint working with the Church of England to act and accord with their well and prayerful discernment, especially during this interim when we are seeking to discern the Holy Spirit's leading in our own LLF process?

*The Bishop of London:* Thank you, Angus. I am not sure I can answer that. I think that is a question for the Next Stages Covenant Group. I am very happy to take that away to that group and ask them to respond to you.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Will the House ensure that the decision of the Methodist Church regarding same-sex marriage will not result in Church of England buildings being used for Methodist same-sex wedding services?

*The Bishop of London:* Thank you, Clive, for that question. I would like to take that away. I think it is an area of overlap between the Next Steps Group and also the Next Stages Covenant Group. I will take that away, Clive, and come back to you.

47. *Ms Christina Baron (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Following the Bishop of London's *Via Media* article "Texts of Terror: are we helping or harming?"; what steps will the House of Bishops take to ensure that clergy and the Church as a whole are helping, not harming, LGBT Christians?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question. The Pastoral Principles and the other resources and activities that underpin the Church's engagement with the *Living in Love and Faith*, are designed to help clergy and all who participate in the LLF process to become more pastorally sensitive, self-aware, welcoming and loving in our relationships with LGBT Christians. Some dioceses are taking up the 'Pastoral Principles Course' that was released earlier this year and many dioceses are rolling out their own facilitation training as a result of participating in the national programme - in which over 300 people have already taken part.

The hope is that these activities and resources - alongside learning together using the LLF resources - will be formatively transformative at all levels of the Church: among Synod members and Bishops, in dioceses, deaneries and local church communities.

48. *Mr Jeremy Harris (Chester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In view of the success of the Covid-19 vaccines in the UK, what representations has the Church of England made to the Government for the restoration of full freedom of worship in the UK as soon as possible?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Church of England continues to discuss all relevant aspects of the pandemic with the Government, primarily through the Places of Worship Taskforce and related channels. We have stressed the need for government guidance to reflect current scientific and medical advice while taking fully into account all aspects of Article 9 of the Human Rights Act (1998). We are encouraged by the success of the vaccine programme and hope that responsibility for conducting public worship will, once again, soon become a matter for the religious bodies concerned and not the Government.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)*: While many will welcome getting back to normal, bearing in mind there are millions of people in England who have health problems, and the vaccine does not make anyone immune, has the Church of England considered how it creates services, provides provision or recognises those unable to come to church when others are maskless and there is no social distancing? How can they have access or continued access to the sacraments?

*The Bishop of London*: Thank you, Sam, for your question. What you raise is a really important question. As you say, whilst some are celebrating that we are getting back to some sort of normality within our church buildings, there are those for whom this announcement has created a lot of anxiety.

I would say a couple of things. One is I would note that there is some comment in today's media that the Department of Health and Social Care is going to make some comment about those people who are clinically vulnerable more nationally and, clearly, we will keep our eye open for that. There is also a meeting next week of the Places of Worship Taskforce headed up by the Government to which I will go. Our Recovery Group in the Church of England is working with that group and we are also working with people around how we can, in a sense, recognise whatever the lifting of restrictions from the Government are, but also at the same time to enable us to behave responsibly (and that is a wonderful term the Government use), but there is something about us having a sense that we are a body, the body of Christ, and therefore we have to recognition of those within the body that have different needs from us.

Our question with the Recovery Group is about how we enable people to take those decisions locally. We are looking at that at the moment and, Sam, I am absolutely committed to enabling churches to make some of those difficult decisions, recognising, as you say, that there are people who are not only anxious but also potentially at risk as we begin to hit what is clearly a third wave.



## *Questions not reached during Synod.*

49. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of the decisions of the Scottish and Welsh Governments to permit congregational singing from the beginning of June, will the House of Bishops redouble their efforts to persuade the UK Government to change its guidance in the same way, and then amend the Church of England's guidance accordingly?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Church of England has been in continual contact with the Government, principally through the Places of Worship Taskforce and related channels. We have stressed the role of singing in public worship and have emphasised the importance of the resumption of congregational singing as soon as it is prudent to do so, as has been the case in those parts of Scotland and Wales where the incidence of the coronavirus is low. Church guidance will be amended to reflect any change in Government guidance which we hope will be in the near future.

50. *Dr Mike Lawes (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of GS 2192 Response to Covid-19 and our resolution to “celebrate the role of churches in building mental and spiritual resilience to face the crisis”, how have our church leadership responded at a national level to peoples' anxiety, grief and deep spiritual questioning in the context of the pandemic?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As a Church nationally we have held webinars on loss and remembering and participate with other churches in the Loss and HOPE initiative. We resourced churches to take part in the National Day of Reflection and have published resources to support individuals, families and churches during the pandemic to pray about the issues that concern them.

51. *Mr Michael Stallybrass (York)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Last year, a document ‘Covid-19 Safer Churches’ was produced, which gave very helpful and clear guidelines over how to plan safe distancing in churches, including safe distancing during services when people need to move about. On making enquiries about the lack of visibility of this document early this year, I was told that “we have been working with the company that produced the document you highlight to produce an updated version”. Has that update been completed, and how can the latest version of that document be found?

I note that the current Parish Risk Assessment template contains a link that is clearly designed to take one to that document, but which actually takes one to the generic C of E Covid Documents web-page. That page then has no links to either the original, or to any updated version of that excellent guidance document.

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The National Church Institutions worked with a specialist architecture and design company, IF\_DO, who were awarded government funding to create a series of Covid-19 safer spaces guides. The initial guide was published along with C of E guidance, and we are very glad many found it helpful.

The guide was updated in February 2021 following changes in regulations and is available online. I am grateful to have the broken link pointed out; this has now been corrected. The NCIs are considering if a future version would be useful to aid Covid safe measures after current restrictions come to an end. As with all Covid guidance adoption is a matter for individual parishes but I hope this work will continue to be useful in managing our spaces safely.

52. *Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House considered, and, if not, will it consider, instituting an independently-chaired inquiry into the Church of England's response to the pandemic over the past 18 months, with a view to learning lessons from the past and applying these in the future as and when they may become necessary?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* While not encompassing the whole of the Church of England, a high-level review by the independent National Church Institutions Risk and Assurance function of the work by the group set up by the House in response to the pandemic, the Recovery Group, has been undertaken. The draft report has been issued to the Regional Conveners for the House to consider and review. The scope of this review was limited to the Recovery Group but did consider its impact in terms of the wider Church of England.

53. *Revd Peter Breckwoldt (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: When is there to be a review of the national Church's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic covering the work of the Bishops, Church House, cathedrals, dioceses, local churches, and the Church of England's Recovery Group, so as to attain the lessons that can be learnt and how we can improve and develop our response to be more effective in holding out the Gospel? And how might such a report be debated by General Synod to strengthen the wider Church in her mission and ministry of supporting and encouraging the nation in a time of crisis?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The National Church Institutions Risk and Assurance function has conducted a high-level independent review of the work undertaken by the Recovery Group. The draft report has been issued to the Recovery Group for consideration and review. The scope of this review was limited to the Recovery Group, but did consider its impact in terms of the wider Church of England.

54. *Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Paper GS Misc 1291 reports (para 7) that the House of Bishops, at its meeting on 20 April 2021, “agreed to the establishment of a Working Group on the Administration of Holy Communion.” In answer to a question from me (Q38) at the April 2021 group of sessions, the Bishop of Lichfield, replying on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops, stated, “The House of Bishops is actively considering the shape of the theological and liturgical study that it intends to carry out in respect of Holy Communion” (Questions Notice Paper, April 2021, page 25) and, in answer to a supplementary question, he said, “We hope that the House of Bishops’ Working Group should be completed at the latest by the end of 2022.”

Noting that there is no reference to the Working Group or the study in (a) paragraphs 8-12 of GS Misc 1291, summarising decisions of the House of Bishops during its meeting on 17-18 May 2021, or (b) the press release following the House of Bishops’ meeting on 24 June 2021 and published on the Church of England website; can Synod please be given a progress report, including (i) the membership of the Working Group; (ii) its terms of reference, and (iii) the timetable for its work?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Details of the membership of the Working Group and its terms of reference have been provided.

Once the Working Group has met formally, probably at the end of the summer, it will be possible to give more details of its programme of work.

## **Holy Communion Working Group**

### **Terms of Reference**

1. The House [of Bishops] invites the Bishop of Lichfield to continue as the chair of a ‘Holy Communion Working Group’, supported by the National Liturgy and Worship Adviser.
2. The Group’s remit is as follows: to
  - (a) advise the work of the House of Bishops Recovery Group on practical guidance related to the sacrament of Holy Communion, as required from time to time;
  - (b) provide resources for bishops and others to use in teaching the faithful about Holy Communion, and for reflection and study by members of the House at its invitation;
  - (c) investigate theological questions about Holy Communion which have been brought to prominence as a consequence of the pandemic, and which may continue to affect the worshipping life of the Church of England, and to offer to the House practical suggestions for practice. In

particular these include exploring:

- (i) an Anglican understanding of Spiritual Communion;
- (ii) the theological arguments for and against receiving Holy Communion in one kind as necessity may require;
- (iii) the significance of the common cup, and how that significance could be expressed through different methods of administration;
- (iv) theologies of the Eucharist which might underpin 'blended' celebrations of Holy Communion at which some participants are not physically present with the president, or at which only the president is physically present.

*Chair*            The Bishop of Lichfield

*Members*        The Bishop of Fulham  
                      The Bishop of Kensington  
                      The Revd Dr William Adam  
                      The Revd Canon Prof Loveday Alexander  
                      The Revd Mark Earey  
                      The Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones

*Secretary*      The Revd Dr Matthew Salisbury

55. *Revd Preb. Karl Freeman (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Simpler, bolder, humbler. Given our new streamlined thinking, might the House of Bishops concede that, in the light of a likely long wait until confidence in the common communion cup returns, a temporary measure should be made now allowing the use of individual cups until the fear of Covid-19 infection is no longer an issue?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: To assist those who object conscientiously to receiving Holy Communion in one kind alone, last year the Archbishops commended a procedure for receiving Communion in both kinds by simultaneous administration. This guidance was promulgated in December to all the clergy of the Church of England.

The legal advice to the House of Bishops is that individual cups cannot lawfully be used at a celebration of Holy Communion in the Church of England. In this light, the capacity to permit the use of individual cups, even for a temporary or emergency period, is not available to individual bishops, nor to the House of Bishops collectively. If the House determined that it was appropriate to make individual cups permanently lawful, it could bring appropriate legislative and liturgical business to the General Synod, but while the Synod meets remotely Article 7 business may not be debated.

56. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In recognition of the key role played by parishes throughout the pandemic, will the House of Bishops' Working Group, referred to in answers to Questions at the April meeting of General Synod, actively engage with what is actually happening at parish level in terms of distributing the wine at Holy Communion and report back to members of General Synod, not just the House of Bishops?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Chair and Secretary of the Working Group have been gathering information and engaging actively with parochial practice in venues where parish voices were well represented, notably in the seminars in the Diocese of Lichfield's *Bread of Life* teaching series and in discussions in other dioceses where varied responses to the sacraments at parish level have been well documented.

The Working Group, having been constituted by the House of Bishops, will report back to that body in the first instance.

57. *Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In order to reduce deaths of unborn children and for the sake of vulnerable women who are left without support and counselling, will the Church of England make its voice heard and press for the prompt ending of DIY home abortion "pills by post"?

58. *Mrs Kathy Playle (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the Church of England make representations to the new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Department of Health to end pills by post abortion, as promised when the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted (currently expected to be 19th July) to seek to end this extreme lack of care to women and further precipitating the tragedy of the death of unborn children?

*The Bishop of Carlisle (Rt Revd James Newcome)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission I will answer questions 57 and 58 together.

Through the Mission and Public Affairs Council, the Church of England made a submission to the Government's consultation on this issue in February of this year. We stressed our conviction that the practice should end when the temporary provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 expires. In particular, we emphasised the physical, psychological and social risks involved, especially for vulnerable women. The Government has not published its response to this consultation, but we will continue to make our case both within Parliament and elsewhere.

59. *Mrs Kathy Playle (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the Bishops make their voices heard to protect the weak and the vulnerable in the current public debate about euthanasia and assisted suicide?

*The Bishop of Carlisle (Rt Revd James Newcome) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Church of England has consistently opposed any change in the current law on assisted suicide. In February 2012, the General Synod passed a motion affirming the intrinsic value of every human life and expressing its support for the current law on assisted suicide as a means of contributing to a just and compassionate society in which vulnerable people are protected. Bishops, through public statements and contributions to debates in the House of Lords, have defended and promoted this stance and will continue to do so in the ongoing debate.

60. *Ms Debbie Buggs (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Since the launch of the C4 Safeguarding Training for Senior Leaders course, how many people have been required to do the course because of the office they hold, and how many have actually completed the course (or its equivalent under “Framework 2021” published on 23 April 2021)?

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The 2021 version of the Senior Leadership Pathway launched on 4 May 2021. We expect to deliver this to senior staff teams across all dioceses, cathedrals, religious communities, theological educational institutions, provincial palaces and senior chaplains to the Armed Forces over the next 12–18 months. In total this amounts to approximately 1,200 people or 140 cohort groups.

To date five cohorts (46 people) have completed the pathway sessions and are now working on the post-course evaluation.

A further 24 cohorts (approximately 200 people) are part way through the pathway.

All cohorts will have completed the pathway by December 2022.

61. *Mrs Kathryn Tucker (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Communications team at Church House told the BBC in May 2021 that the Makin Review into the abuses perpetrated by the late John Smyth and the alleged cover-up thereof was still due to be published in “mid-Summer”. Given the additional information that has subsequently been reported, is this still the current projected date for the delivery of the report?

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The BBC reported what is currently on the website which states “completion will be mid-summer at the earliest”. Due to the ongoing high volume of information coming into the reviewers, following the recent publication of various statements and findings relating to Smyth, the deadline for completion and then publication following checks is expected to be later. For the survivors of the appalling

abuse it is vital this review is done thoroughly but also within a defined timeframe. The NST hopes to confirm more detailed timings this month.

62. *Revd Charles Read (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can you confirm that the NST expects all dioceses and TEIs to deliver the new Leadership module as it is, without modification or omission, and what action is being taken where dioceses or TEIs are refusing to do so?

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Yes, that is the expectation. Where it is known that there are issues with implementation the NST are working with church bodies to assist in working these through - by offering to co-deliver sessions, for example. It is expected that all Church bodies will be fully compliant with the requirements of the Learning and Development Framework by January 2022. All dioceses are reporting that as of September 2021 they will be fully compliant with the requirements of the Leadership Pathway.

63. *Canon Dr Addy Lazz-Onyenobi (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the Church of England saying and doing about the current situation in Nigeria with regards to the killings of innocent people, in particular Christians and burning of churches, and the increase in kidnapping of bishops, clergy, and students from their boarding schools?

*The Bishop of Guildford (Rt Revd Andrew Watson)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: It is a matter of concern to everyone that the religious freedom conditions in Nigeria remain poor, with a marked deterioration over the last year in both state and societal perpetuated violations. As the Rt Revd Edmund Akanya, the Bishop of Kebbi, explained to the Diocese of Guildford's Diocesan Synod on 30 June 2021 the situation across the country remains critical. As set out in *The Church - An Advocate for Freedom of Religion or Belief (GS 2197)* the MPA Division is working with African Parliamentarians for Human Rights, and other such bodies, to help build the capacity of parliamentarians across Africa, including in Nigeria, to hold accountable those who perpetuate such violent acts. Several Lords Spiritual are active members of the All Party Parliamentary Group for International Religious Freedom which has prioritised Nigeria as a country of particular concern in recent years.

64. *Mrs Enid Barron (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the current state of play on the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT); in particular:

How many churches have supplied 2020 figures for the EFT;

what does an analysis of this information reveal so far; and

What progress has been made in developing the tool's use for other buildings?

*The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham Usher)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The EFT is open April-August 2021 for 2020 data collection. Currently

2,000 churches have submitted their data. This is 1,000 more submissions than at the same point during the 2019 data collection.

Data collected by the EFT for 2020 will be reported in Autumn 2021.

The Energy Toolkit, the collective instruments by which other buildings of the Church of England can measure their energy usage, is in development. It will cover cathedrals, schools, TEIs, offices, clergy housing, and work-related travel.

Representatives of dioceses and of the different building types have been consulted to understand their requirements and identify existing measurement tools. It is anticipated that the toolkit will open for testing and piloting 2020 data for all other buildings in Autumn 2021.

The analysis of last year's EFT results can be read here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environment-and-climate-change/about-our-environment/energy-footprint-tool>.

65. *Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What processes are in place to check national digital communications for their theological coherence and intelligibility?

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The services, prayers and other worship content shared by the Church of England via our national social media channels pass through a thorough process, involving ordained members of NCI staff and other specialists, while also seeking to reflect the diversity of worship across the Church of England.

Content in the case of services is initiated and provided by clergy and other contributors taking part and is then produced and shared by the Communications Team.

These processes are regularly reviewed and strengthened to ensure that what is shared reflects what we believe as a Church. While our processes are not always failsafe, we are committed to learning lessons given the growing and dynamic scale of digital outreach.

66. *Ms Josile Munro (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Is any central church guidance being developed on how (a) to catalogue the built environment and contested heritage relating to the transatlantic slave trade in churches, cathedrals and other associated buildings; and (b) what action to take following the cataloguing, given that dioceses are beginning to work on this, and that this is a workstream of the Racial Justice Commission?



*The Bishop of Bristol (Rt Revd Vivienne Faull) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Cathedral and Church Buildings Division published guidance for parishes and cathedrals on Contested Heritage The Church of England. This includes resources for parishes and cathedrals to use when considering how a piece of material culture relating to the transatlantic slave trade impacts on a church or cathedral's ability to be a place of welcome and solace to all, and how this can best be addressed.

The guidance is written to help parishes and cathedrals who wish or need to engage with this issue with research, how to assess the significance of objects, and assessing the need for change. Decisions on what action to take is down to each parish - there is no national policy.

A sub-committee of the Church Buildings Council is being formed to provide further support for parishes and cathedrals. This sub-committee will liaise with the Racial Justice Commission on its workstream on slavery.

67. *Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What plans does he and the House of Bishops have to mark and celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 recognising both her long and loyal service, and also that Her Majesty is Supreme Governor of The Church of England, and if he will make a statement?

*The Bishop of Worcester (Rt Revd Dr John Inge) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Liturgical Commission, alongside colleagues in the Archbishops' Council, have begun work on plans to mark and celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022. The House of Bishops will give some time to considering plans in the autumn.

68. *Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Is any consideration being given by the Governance Review Group to how the General Synod might become bolder, simpler and humbler?

*The Bishop of Leeds (Rt Revd Nicholas Baines) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Governance Review Group's work has mainly focused on the current structure of the National Church Institutions (NCIs) as set out in the 1998 National Institutions Measure. The Review Group has not focused on Synodical governance, but it is expected that our recommendations will include a recommendation that further work should be done to review this in the near future.

69. *Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given (a) the concern of the House of Bishops for greater transparency and accountability, and (b) the importance for the whole Church of England of the issues involved, will the House please publish to all General Synod members the information referred to in the press release issued following the House of Bishops' meeting on 24

June 2021, namely (i) the “series of proposals for delivering new ways of working and cost savings for the National Church Institutions (NCIs)” and (ii) the “analysis of dioceses’ financial situation in the wake of the pandemic” presented to the House by the Deputy Director of Finance for the NCIs?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The proposals for delivering new ways of working and cost savings for the National Church Institutions cannot be shared at present due to the sensitive implications for employees of the NCIs. The principles on which these proposals are based are contained in paper GS 2224.

The paper on diocesan finances drew on information provided by dioceses in confidence given its provisional and/or forward-looking nature and so is not suited for wider publication in its current form. Having said that, I understand that John Spence will share information on parish share receipts since the start of 2020 in his presentation on the Archbishops’ Council’s budget tomorrow.

70. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the House of Bishops confirm that there is nothing which Revd Dr Bernard Randall said in his Trent College sermon, as published in the *Mail on Sunday* on Sunday 8th May 2021, that falls outside the doctrine and teaching of the Church of England.

*The Bishop of Hereford (Rt Revd Richard Frith) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Assuming that the text published in the media is an accurate version of the sermon as delivered, I can certainly confirm that it does not fall outside the doctrine and teaching of the Church of England.

71. *Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: It has been widely reported that a school chaplain has been subject to disciplinary action by his employer and reported by them to the police for setting out the Church of England’s doctrine of marriage, and explaining that it is both permissible and lawful for people to believe in it. What support might he, and others who find themselves in a similar position, expect to receive from the House of Bishops, both in terms of personal pastoral encouragement, and public statements of support?

*The Bishop of Hereford (Rt Revd Richard Frith) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* I am aware of these reports. As the full case, to be presented to the Employment Tribunal, is not yet in the public realm, it is premature to comment further at this time. In answer to another question, I have stated that the text of the sermon, as reproduced in the media, does indeed represent views which are permissible and lawful to believe in. It is not clear, however, that the case turns on the doctrinal content of the sermon.

In terms of support for the individual concerned, I am assured that the diocesan bishop has made suitable pastoral support available. Details of pastoral support in an individual context, and speculation about support that might be offered when the full facts are known, are not matters to discuss on the floor of Synod.

72. *Revd Peter Breckwoldt (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The appointment of bishops is an important ministry and work in the life of the national Church. When a bishop has been in post (say after 6/18months); what appraisal and evaluation is undertaken to ensure that he/she is matching up to the profile drawn up by the diocese prior to their appointment? When has it been necessary to take action to help and support a bishop to ensure that they are equipped and trained for their ministry and work so as to deliver against the profile produced? Who provides that support?

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Following early discussions with the Archbishop of the province on appointment, new diocesan bishops meet with them again about 18 months later for a formal MDR. The Charge, based on the profile from the CNC, is key to this discussion as is 360 feedback. Diocesan bishops are responsible for the arrangements for their suffragans.

All bishops take part in a range of induction activities including standard and tailored briefing and development modules in addition to the ongoing development programme arranged by the Archbishops' Advisers for Appointments and Development. Each diocesan bishop is offered a transition coach.

Where specific needs are identified, the Senior Leadership Development team is available to support bishops to identify appropriate development options.

73. *Mr Graham Caskie (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In reference to the wearing of a stole or scarf with robes, what are the obligations and restrictions on what an ordinand can and cannot wear at his or her ordination as a deacon or priest?

74. *Ms Debbie Buggs (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: During the recent ordinations it has become apparent that different dioceses have binding dress requirements of ordinands. Would the Chair of the Liturgical Commission please outline the national Church policy on this matter, particularly around whether it is acceptable to wear a scarf rather than stole as was previously the case?

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission I will answer Questions 73 and 74 together.

Matters relating to the form of clerical dress to be worn at ordinations are the concern of the relevant diocesan bishop having regard to paragraph 1 of Canon B 8 (no particular doctrinal significance attached to diversities of vesture) and the applicable rubrics.

75. *Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the Archbishops' stated desire that we should eliminate the 'culture of deference' within the Church, what plans has the House of Bishops made to remove the title 'Lord Bishop' and other such honorific expressions?

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Following resolution 41 of the Lambeth Conference of 1968, which recommended that the bishops "as leaders and representatives of a servant Church, should radically examine the honours paid to them in the course of divine worship, in titles and customary address, and in style of living", the then Archbishop of Canterbury announced a simplified form of address for the clergy of the Church of England which recommended using "archbishop" and "bishop" as forms of address in place of "Your Grace" and "My Lord". Since that time, general usage has followed that recommendation. Older forms are now almost wholly confined to certain legal documents issued by the Crown. While the House has not considered the specific question, I would expect it to take a similar view to that taken in 1968. Many of us are quite happy to be addressed simply by our Christian names.

76. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: For those CDM cases which can only be considered following completion of action within the Criminal Justice System, what are the predominant factors underlying the time subsequently taken to complete the CDM process?

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There are two routes for disciplinary action following proceedings that have concluded in the Criminal Justice System. Where a respondent has been convicted of any offence, other than a summary only offence, and/or receives a sentence of imprisonment (whether implemented immediately or not), the bishop may remove from office and/or prohibit the respondent (whether for life or for a limited period) without a formal allegation of misconduct being instituted under the CDM. Alternatively, where criminal proceedings end on any other basis than that set out above, a formal allegation of misconduct under the CDM may be instituted, taking into account where relevant the guidance set out in paragraph 167 of the Code of Practice. Thereafter proceedings continue in accordance with the statutory time limits as set out within the Measure and Rules.

77. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In seeking to develop a more workable and arguably more humane replacement to the existing Clergy Discipline Measure, has the House identified any lessons that the General Synod and others involved in the development and implementation of church legislation might usefully learn from the way in which the existing Measure was developed and implemented?

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Working Group has considered carefully how the Clergy Discipline Measure was developed and then implemented both locally and nationally. The group particularly recognised the lack of a separate track to determine low-level complaints and the need to properly resource training, early investigation and oversight of the system. Additionally, it is clear to the Working Group that the current Measure is too inflexible in responding to changes in accepted practice, particularly in relation to survivors, but also to the Church's understanding of what constitutes misconduct. The implementation group will consider how best to approach these issues.

78. *Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Is the House aware of who will be succeeding the Bishop to the Armed Forces in the role of steering the CDM proposals through the Synodical process after his retirement this summer? If not, could Synod please be informed of the process by which this is to be decided?

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The proposed next step for this work is the formation of an Implementation Group. The House of Bishops will consider who the most appropriate chair of that body will be, taking into account the nature and intricacy of the work involved.

79. *Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What thought has been given beyond para 9 of GS 2219 to the membership of the Implementation Group there referred to?

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The membership of the Implementation Group will include those with the necessary expertise to continue the work carried out by the Working Group, including the process of formulating legislative proposals, taking into account the need for a range of diverse voices.

80. *Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What thought has the CDM Working Group given to measures that can be taken against people found to be making frivolous or malicious complaints against members of the clergy, sometimes on a recurring basis?

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Working Group has considered the issue of frivolous or malicious (also known as 'vexatious') allegations of misconduct. The amendments to the CDM Code of Practice approved by Synod in April 2021 include new guidance (paragraph 144) on dismissing vexatious allegations. Further, the suggestion of the Working Group is that the proposed Clergy Conduct Measure (GS 2219) provides the bishop with the power to summarily dismiss such allegations. The Implementation Group will further this work and consider proposals for the use of formal steps to prevent persist complainants

from bringing repeated allegations. GS Misc 1285 proposes the formation of a group to review the issue of lay misconduct.

81. *Revd Canon Leah Vasey-Saunders (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Working Group's Progress Report in December 2020 recognised the difference between more serious complaints and less serious complaints suggesting that only the more serious complaints would be dealt with by a method that "may look similar to what currently exists" (para 20). In April we approved a new CDM Code of Practice to try and ensure that only serious misconduct was dealt with under the current Measure. Why has the Working Group now stepped back from all this and proposed that anything that might be categorised as misconduct, even if not serious misconduct, is dealt with in a manner very similar to the present system?

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There has been no change in the Working Group's proposals. The December 2020 Progress Report identified the need to separate out into separate tracks complaints which constituted 'misconduct' and complaints which fell short of that, for example arising out of pastoral breakdown or other less-serious issues. The Group's proposals in GS 2219 carry this forward by designating the first category as 'allegations of misconduct' and the second as 'complaints'. The Implementation Group will carry out the work of clearly defining these terms, but there is no proposal to change the current position that allegations of misconduct will only be for serious matters.

82. *Canon Peter Adams (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Primate of Hong Kong has recently called on churches in the UK to welcome Hong Kong residents moving to the UK under the visa scheme announced by the Government in response to the new national security laws. However there are reports of many, especially students, not included in our Government's provisions seeking asylum as they flee arrest after demonstrations against those laws.

Will the Bishops consider pressing HM Government to expedite their asylum cases as soon as possible to allow them to continue their education and resume their lives?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: I share the anxieties outlined in the question. There are serious concerns about the Government's approach, including the lack of detail for any plans for integration, and concerns about the eligibility and status of those born after 1997. The Lords Spiritual have raised these and related questions in Parliament. We are working with ecumenical campaigns around the issue, and we will continue to press on this matter over the coming months, including in relation to the forthcoming Borders Bill.

83. *Ms Josile Munro (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: One of the workstreams of the Racial Justice Commission concerns using theological concepts to drive curriculum design that promotes equality and racial justice. Will this development

cover PAN Key Stages 1 to 4 and is there any discussion with Government (Department for Education) to enable the issues of race and equality to be included in examinations?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Work is already underway which will support curriculum design across all Key Stages, including Key Stage 5. The resource will also be useful for those planning curricula in FE and HE, as the theological concepts will be applicable there as well.

The intention is not to design actual curriculum resources for schools, but to provide some of the underpinning theological concepts and examples to support educational leaders' own detailed subject-specific planning. We continue to work closely with the Department for Education on policy issues, including examinations, whilst recognising that oversight of this lies with Ofqual.

84. *Mr Graham Caskie (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops expressed a view, and, if not, will it consider expressing a view, on whether probity in private life (including marital fidelity) should be expected of those serving in public office?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The House has not expressed a collective view on this matter, not least because we believe that all people are called by God to live virtuously. Human frailty is a theological and a practical reality and we know that marital fidelity may be a manifestation of relationship problems that cannot always be laid solely at the door of an individual. People in public office often have their failings exposed publicly, but looked at pastorally, which is how the Church should approach the matter, it would be rash to leap to judgment simply on the basis of media reports. Adultery is always a sin, and as forgiven sinners, our prayers and thoughts should turn to those injured by infidelity and to pray for wisdom and contrition from those who have offended.

85. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the House of Bishops now reaffirm their prayerful sympathy and support for spouses, children and wider families who are left devastated when middle-aged men have "a bit of a fling", and reaffirm their confidence in the benefits of life-long marriage and the grace which God provides to those who seek it to keep their marriage vows?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied on behalf of the House of Bishops:* The Church has never ceased to affirm the benefits of life-long marriage and to trust in the grace of God to console those caught in marital strife and support those who seek to sustain their vows. This is inseparable from the Gospel of compassion toward repentant sinners. Adultery is not the sole province of middle-aged men and there are many spouses of both sexes who have been given the strength by God to forgive and to preserve their marriages. Nevertheless, marriages fail for many reasons and adultery is not the only way to break faith. We have been wary of the concept of "no fault" divorce

precisely because divorce always involves falling short of marital ideals. We all fall short in some way or another, and public and blatant fault by one partner never gives a full picture of a marriage's fruits or its failings.

86. *Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Would the House of Bishops confirm their support in principle of the belief that at the beginning God made humans male and female?

*The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops recognises the action of God in creation narrated in Genesis 1 as making human beings in God's image, male and female. The House of Bishops rejoices in this focus on the inclusion of all humanity, across their many differences, as being made in the image of God, with equal dignity and worth. The House of Bishops also recognises the need to learn from science, and that science has shown that biological sex cannot be deemed to be entirely binary at all times. This in no way undermines the truth of the biblical accounts of creation.

87. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the House of Bishops please ensure that public statements from Church of England Bishops about adultery address the sin, repentance and forgiveness of God first and foremost rather than making any other comment which undermines the solemn nature of wedding vows and marriage?

*The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops affirms the dignity and solemnity of marriage and the vital importance of faithfulness in relationships. It also recognises the deep pain caused to all involved when relationships break down, particularly for children. The House encourages a gracious and humble approach in specific pastoral situations, in line with the words of Jesus in John 8.

88. *Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: With reference to recommendation 4 of GS 2225, please can you advise the Synod of the timescale for gathering examples of good practice and practical experience in order to produce the revised guidance on the operation of the settlement and on how parishes may petition for extended episcopal oversight?

*The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: After Synod, it is expected that the proposed Standing Commission will be established and will start its work. As part of this, it will need to set out its work plan which would include timescales for deliverables.

One of the first pieces of work for the Commission will be to review the recommendations from GS 2225 and to look at where and how these can be delivered. It will engage with different bodies as appropriate to do this.



In terms of recommendation 4, this will be an iterative process, as there are always new examples of good practice and experience. The Commission will be seeking and disseminating good practice on a regular basis, and will be looking to improve guidance in light of this.

89. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Under the Five Guiding Principles how should we respond to those in episcopal authority who openly reject others within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests, and thereby cause significant pastoral damage to their mutual flourishing?

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: Central to the 2014 House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (GS Misc 1076) are the Five Guiding Principles. All members of the House of Bishops, and indeed all clergy, are required to work within the Five Guiding Principles. In situations where it is considered that this is not the case, a complaint may be submitted to the Independent Reviewer who will look into it and make a report with recommendations if required. The Implementation and Dialogue Group has also made recommendations to the House of Bishops on the continuing implementation of the Five Guiding Principles and a Standing Commission will be set up following this Synod to aid this work.

90. *Canon Shayne Ardron (Leicester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Part of the vision for the 2020s is that we will be sent out to build God's Kingdom in the world. Will there be teaching and resources created to help us see where God's Kingdom is already beginning to take shape so we can join in? Also what we need to look out for to recognise the Kingdom for ourselves, e.g. the characteristics?

*The Archbishop of (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: Two strands of resources are in preparation to promote being missionary disciples as Kingdom citizens. The Everyday Faith digital platform will carry reflections for 'faith at work' - shaping a Kingdom focus and suggesting practical ways of engaging in God's mission at work and with others in community transformation. Additionally, materials affirming calling to various social vocations are being developed. These materials will be used to continue to broaden and equip a wider notion of vocations as Kingdom Callings. They will be available Autumn 2021.

91. *Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of the recognition afforded to the Revd Bassi Mirzania by the Archbishop of Canterbury - the Alphege Award for Evangelism and Witness - for her tireless and exceptional service as founding Chaplain to the Persian/Iranian community in Great Britain for more than 20 years, would you now be willing to revisit the decision not to appoint a successor?

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops:* Revd Mirzania’s legacy has been deeply valued by the Church. It’s clear that Persian/Iranian heritage Christians now constitute a substantial and vibrant part of the Church of England in so many of our towns and cities. The launch of the Persian-language eucharistic liturgy at Wakefield Cathedral in 2019 is just one indicator of the strength of the Persian diaspora integrated within the Church of England. It is exciting to witness, too, the emergence of significant numbers of Persian/Iranian heritage leaders, who have grown in number among both the clergy and laity and created a significant network to share resources and support emerging ministries across the country, supported and encouraged by the ministry of Bishop Guli and others.

Exploring how these ministries could be better supported will be a part of the racial justice work ahead of us, and I am excited to see how this will bless the Church.

92. *Mr Joseph Diwakar (ex officio)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of its remit “To review recommendations made in previous Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) reports, noting actions taken or omitted, and to identify previous recommendations which could be implemented swiftly”, which of the actions proposed in *From Lament to Action* comprise those which have been previously recommended, which are new, and what reflection was given as to why any previous recommendations were not implemented?

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Archbishops’ Anti-Racism Taskforce was asked to do this and the introduction and priority areas section of the *From Lament to Action* Report does confirm that they considered previous reports and their recommendations. The Report as published does not contain an analysis along the lines asked about.

93. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How will the Bishop of Liverpool be sanctioned for delivering a speech against the Church of England’s teaching on marriage, as reported in *The Guardian* (26/06/21) in which he said he wants “to see a gender-neutral marriage canon, such as they have in the [US] Episcopal church or in the Scottish Episcopal church”?

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops:* Thank you for your question. As you know, there are disagreements within the Church of England about its teaching on marriage. These disagreements also exist among the Bishops, and acknowledging this publicly is not a disciplinary matter. Paragraph 25 of the House of Bishops’ statement [House of Bishops Pastoral Guidance on Same Sex Marriage](#) states, “clergy are able to argue for a change in its teaching on marriage and human sexuality, while at the same time being required to fashion their lives with that teaching”.

The *Living in Love and Faith* resources were produced to help the whole Church to learn together about these and other questions relating to a Christian understanding of what it means to be human. Their purpose is to help us better understand why we reach different conclusions about some questions - while also gaining a deeper appreciation of our common ground. The hope is that the very way we - the whole Church, including the Bishops - explore these questions together will deepen our love for one another and will be a testimony to the presence of Christ in our midst.

94. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Are bishops expected to uphold the Church's teaching on marriage in their media appearances?

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question. I refer you to my answer to your previous question.

95. *Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Recognising that membership of the Church of England has been dropping particularly during Covid-19 and the fact that under his leadership he wishes to see our Church becoming leaner, humbler and bolder, has he and the House of Bishops yet considered merging dioceses and reducing the number of both diocesan and suffragan bishops and if he will make a statement?

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: The Archbishop of Canterbury and I have commissioned work to be done concerning a variety of matters relating to episcopal ministry. The Emerging Church Steering Group will also ensure it considers wider issues as part of its remit relating to structures. There is also now in place a new Chair of the Dioceses Commission who is in communication with the Archbishops about wider matters.

## **SECRETARY GENERAL**

96. *Revd Canon Dr Lisa Battye (Manchester)* asked the Secretary General: Given that the Clergy Discipline Commission does not collect data in relation to the existence of financial settlements or non-disclosure agreements connected with the operation of the CDM (ref. Response of Dr Jamie Harrison to Question 71, April 2021 General Synod); please will a relevant officer advise Synod how such payments are accounted for and where such data can be accessed, particularly in relation to unusually large sums?

97. *Mrs Gill de Berry (Salisbury)* asked the Secretary General: Are the details of NDAs collated centrally or by individual dioceses? How many have been signed by clergy in the past five years?

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General:* With permission I will answer questions 96 and 97 together.

Any such agreements will be within the knowledge of the bodies or officeholders who are parties to them. We would not expect, and cannot require, information about such agreements to be provided to the National Church Institutions and are not therefore able to assist in the way these questions suggest.

98. *Canon Peter Adams (St Albans)* asked the Secretary General: In recent years we have seen the Church make increasing use of Public Relations Companies rather than the Church's in-house communications officers. IICSA have been strongly critical of what they have termed reputation management. However, such usage has not been confined to safeguarding issues. Would the Secretary General help Synod understand the reasons that govern a decision to use a PR company?

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General:* The national Church does not have a PR agency. The overwhelming bulk of publicity, media relations, content production, publishing and digital marketing work is carried out by Communications staff in Church House. This includes safeguarding communications.

From time to time a specialist digital agency assists with key tasks - for example, providing additional support responding to the volume of social media traffic at peak times or working on materials for campaigns. Given the large increase in output from the department especially since the pandemic, it also occasionally uses freelancers for specialist tasks - for example filmmakers or graphic designers to produce some print and digital resources. These are often for one-off projects.

99. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Secretary General: The September 2018 Fact Sheet of types of abuse adopted and published by the Church of England recognises inter alia a category of abuse known as "Organisational and Institutional Abuse": Given the multiple layers and breadth of parties potentially caught within such a definition, to whom should such a complaint be initially addressed to avoid difficulties of conflict of interest from the outset?

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General:* The 2018 Types of Abuse Fact Sheet statutory definition quoted from the Care Act 2015 refers specifically to "*Neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home*". This means it is very unlikely to apply in a church context.

However, organisational bullying or harassment may occur, and unless there is reason to believe this is a safeguarding matter, in which case it should be raised with the DSA, this would be dealt with through the HR process of the institution concerned.

100. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Secretary General: Does the Church have any mechanism to ensure that the misleading of bishops through documents submitted under the CDM process is thoroughly and independently investigated?

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General:* The Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 sets out the process that must be followed in relation to allegations of misconduct against bishops, priests and deacons. The first part of that process involves the bishop considering an allegation in the light of a report prepared by the diocesan registrar. If a question were to arise about a document that had been submitted with the allegation, it would be for the bishop, advised by the registrar, to consider what might be required in terms of investigation.

## **CLERK TO THE SYNOD**

101. *Miss Emily McDonald (Church of England Youth Council)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Considering the Church of England's commitment (as stated in its Vision and Strategy) to growing the Church younger and more diverse, could Synod please be updated regarding the arrangements being made to ensure the representation of under 25-year olds in the next quinquennium?

*Dr Jacqui Philips replied as Clerk to the Synod:* The number of under 25-year olds in the membership of General Synod is ultimately decided by the electors of the Houses of Clergy and Laity. Work has been done to encourage younger people to stand for election to General Synod in the form of the recently-launched #StandForSynod campaign. This campaign forms a key part of the Church of England's vision of becoming a younger and more diverse Church. The advertising and information #StandForSynod campaign includes a 90-second film, a short explanatory animation, and a dedicated webpage, which may be viewed at [www.churchofengland.org/synodelections](http://www.churchofengland.org/synodelections).

These materials are being shared online, across our social media channels, and with chaplaincy networks, Cathedral Groups, HE groups and other networks - as part of the drive to engage younger audiences to stand.

102. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: On what basis are questions that highlight the shortcomings of the Church of England ruled out of order?

*Dr Jacqui Philips replied as Clerk to the Synod:* A member will be informed that a question submitted to the Clerk is out of order if the question does not comply with the following requirements as to the content of questions contained in Standing Order 113:

- (1) A question to the Chair of a body referred to in SO 112 must relate to the business of that body.
- (2) A question to the Secretary General must relate to his or her duties.
- (3) A question to the Clerk must relate to his or her duties.

- (4) A question or supplementary question must not -
- (a) contain argument or imputation, or
  - (b) ask for an expression of opinion, including on a question of law, or for the solution of a hypothetical problem.

The fact that a question draws attention to shortcomings of the Church of England is not a consideration.

## **NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL**

103. *Mrs Chris Fry (Winchester)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: What was the nature of Stonewall's involvement in *Valuing All God's Children* and has that involvement continued with the Church of England Education Office on issues of policy and guidance?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society Council: The Department for Education contracted with Stonewall to support schools in developing guidelines on preventing homophobic bullying and they were the conduit for Government funding in this area.

Given the recognition that our Report was so well received within the education sector, we availed ourselves of the Stonewall/DfE conduit to fund the printing and distribution of our second edition.

*Valuing All God's Children* was first published in 2014 with a second edition produced in 2017 and updated in 2019.

As part of the process of writing it we consulted with a wide variety of organisations, including Stonewall, but Stonewall as a matter of clarification is not involved in the Church of England Education Office development of policy and guidance on any issue.

104. *Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: In the light of the widespread withdrawal of many organisations (including the Equality and Human Rights Commission) from Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme, and the finding by an independent report commissioned by the University of Essex that Stonewall gave the University incorrect and potentially illegal advice on transgender issues, how is the use of material supplied by Stonewall being reviewed within the Church of England Education Office, and what public comment is planned?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society Council: In producing our resource for the prevention of homophobic and transphobic bullying (*Valuing All God's Children, Second Edition*) we referenced the *Stonewall School Report (2017)* as it was the leading report on the extent of homophobic bullying in schools, but our Report does not include advice from Stonewall on transgender issues. *Valuing*

*All God's Children* will be updated in the light of developing thinking in this area, not least through connecting to the rich resources of *Living in Love and Faith*.

105. *Mrs Chris Fry (Winchester)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: How is the Church of England Education Office applying Department for Education guidance on carefully vetting organisations that come into schools to provide teaching assistance and guidance on policies, particularly with reference to the use of the organisation Stonewall which is widely used in Church of England schools for anti-bullying lessons?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society Council: It is for schools to decide which resources they use and which organisations they want to work with, not least because schools operate in a variety of different contexts. Schools have both the expertise and knowledge that makes them best placed to make these decisions.

Schools can use the DfE's recently published implementation guidance and must consider the statutory guidance, which sets out clear advice on choosing resources. The Church of England Charter sets out helpful guidance for schools in this area.

Schools are aware of their duties in relation to political impartiality and must exercise their own judgment reasonably, in line with their legal responsibilities, in the selection of providers and resources to be used.

106. *Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: What support is available from the National Society Council for employees who find themselves in a disciplinary procedure in their workplace after expressing the teaching of the Church that sexual intercourse properly belongs within marriage exclusively, and marriage is of a man and a woman?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society Council: The objects of the National Society are "the promotion, encouragement and support of education in accordance with the principles of the Church of England, in England and in Wales and in any other part of the world where the Church of England or churches in communion with it may be at work." It is not the role of the National Society to provide support or advice to individual employees of other organisations and such individuals are advised to take their own legal advice and seek pastoral support as appropriate.

107. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: Given the recent Report which described sexual exploitation in schools (mostly directed at girls through social media) as 'normative', what action is the National Society taking or planning to take to ensure that Church of England Schools and Colleges are able effectively to address these issues so that Church of England Schools and Colleges are

healthy and safe places for all their students? And what level of priority and urgency is the National Society taking towards these issues?

*The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied as Chair of the National Society Council:* The Ofsted report makes for sobering reading and underlines why good Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is so important in schools. Sexual harassment is abhorrent, and nobody should have to normalise it, let alone a child, and we will continue our work to eradicate it in schools. The issue is one for the whole of society to address but schools need to play their part too, and this is why the National Society supported the Government's introduction of better and compulsory RSHE. Our Charter sets out how schools should ensure that their RSHE curriculum protects, informs and nurtures all pupils, and the change in legislation will mean that all schools have to address this as a matter of urgency.

## **COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

108. *Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TEs)* asked the Chair of the Council for Christian Unity: What discussion has the Council for Christian Unity had in terms of the ecumenical impact of the non-pandemic related decision in 2020 to limit consecrations in the Church of England to only three consecrating bishops, not only in terms of participation of bishops from the Anglican Communion but in particular to the ecumenical impact on relations with the Old Catholics, the Mar Thoma Church of South India, and Porvoo Churches?

*The Bishop of Chichester (Rt Revd Martin Warner) replied as Chair of the Council for Christian Unity:* The Council for Christian Unity has not had these discussions so far. A review of arrangements for consecrations is currently taking place and will take ecumenical aspects into consideration.

## **MINISTRY COUNCIL**

109. *Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Please can we have a breakdown of the number of disabled people (those who have declared a disability) who have been accepted for training in the last three years, and of those who have approached a DDO but who have not been recommended for training?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* We only hold data on those who come through the national discernment process so are not able to comment on those who approach a DDO but who do not come to BAP. For 2018, 2019 and 2020, (the 2021 season is currently ongoing) the national outcomes were as follows:

2018: 30 candidates declared a disability.

26 were recommended to train for ordination and 4 were not.

2019: 39 candidates declared a disability.



33 were recommended to train for ordination and 6 were not.  
2020: 36 candidates declared a disability.

33 were recommended to train for ordination and 3 were not.

110. *Mrs Debrah Mclsaac (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Given the strategic significance of the Everyday Faith project and the priority of equipping lay people to live out their faith, what discussion has taken place within Ministry Council about how much of this theological equipping should be delivered and resourced on a local level, and how much should be from or supported by national Church resources?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The Ministry Council has worked closely with the *Setting God's People Free* programme and the work of promoting Everyday Faith across dioceses. The Council has discussed the shared work undertaken across national Church teams which is engaging with TEIs and Dioceses to shape formation and training that equips ordained and lay ministers to 'enable everyday faith'. Experience from the implementation of SGPF highlights that locally and contextually developed resources and training have the most impact. The project has grown a national network of disciple enablers is in place to share and develop approaches that are seen to be beneficial. This includes resources and training for individuals and churches. Investment is being made at a national level to provide a digital platform for Everyday Faith - which will include reflection materials and practical advice developed by national Church teams, dioceses and partner agencies. A refreshed Church Support Hub is also in development to provide practical resources for local leaders.

111. *Revd Canon Dr James Walters (Universities & TEIs)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Given that Vote 1 is one of the most significant budget items which members of Synod are invited to review and approve, what plans has Ministry Council agreed to ensure that Synod members will be fully involved and consulted before any material changes are made as to how this budget is spent?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: When the Ministry Council began the review of the RME funding model (as it had committed to Synod that it would do after three years), it did so with the intention of ensuring that the TEI sector and dioceses were actively involved in developing proposals for theological education that would lead to a sector that is more sustainable and accessible, and less competitive. Planning for this had always recognised that any significant changes would need the Approval of Synod. As noted in the answer to question 113, there have been a series of consultations to date and further consultations with dioceses, TEIs, the House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council are expected leading to a presentation to Synod for consideration, possibly in November, at which some initial decisions may be sought before final decisions in a subsequent Synod.

112. *Revd Canon Dr James Walters (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What discussion has taken place within Ministry Council concerning the strategic significance of ensuring that all three training models - full-time residential, full-time non-residential and part-time - remain viable for the resourcing the Church's mission, and how has this discussion informed the planning of the Resourcing Ministerial Formation process?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The Ministry Council has consistently affirmed the value of all three modes of training. Early in the Resourcing Ministerial Formation process, the Council agreed a vision statement following discussion by the College of Bishops in which it was explicit that the Church should expect all three modes to continue to be available in the future since each will offer the best formational environment for certain ordinands. One of the goals of the Resourcing Ministerial Formation process is to ensure that the Church's financial arrangements for ministerial formation align with its strategic objectives, now also including the outcomes of the Vision and Strategy process led by the Archbishop of York. The RMF Review Group is considering how it might be possible in a context of financial constraint nevertheless to give the TElS serving the Church greater financial security than now, when they can be significantly affected by annual fluctuations in ordinand numbers.

113. *Revd Dr Philip Plyming (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What consultation has already taken place concerning the Resourcing Ministerial Formation review, and what consultation with the whole Synod is planned before any formal proposals are brought forward for consideration by the Synod?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: In 2020 there was broad consultation with dioceses and TElS, initially inviting written responses (33 received) and then in an online event (more than 80 in attendance). In 2021 there was initially a further written consultation on a proposed direction of travel shaped by the earlier process (39 responses), then online events with 120 in attendance. There have been focus groups to hear the view of participants representing perspectives otherwise underrepresented in the consultation, and a meeting with some Ordinands Association representatives. There has also been discussion at the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council. A considerable amount of feedback has been received and further work will now be done before further consultations with stakeholders including dioceses, TElS, the House of Bishops and Archbishops' Council. This will lead to a presentation to Synod for consideration, possibly as early as November, at which some initial decisions may be sought before final decisions in a subsequent Synod.

## **REMUNERATION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE**

114. *Revd Charles Read (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: Can you confirm that currently HMRC does not allow stipendiary clergy to claim membership of a trades union as something for which they can claim tax relief and, if so, is the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee doing anything to negotiate a change of policy here?

*The Bishop of Hereford (Rt Revd Richard Frith)* replied as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: It is the stated policy of HMRC that “subscriptions to trade unions and other comparable bodies are not deductible under Section 336 ITEPA 2003, even where membership is required by the employer” (see HMRC Employment Income Manual 32885 - <https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual/eim32885>). The expense is not incurred in the performance of the duties and nor is it necessarily incurred which are two of the tests for the availability of tax deductions.

In view of this, it is difficult to see on what grounds we could argue for clergy to be treated differently from others here.

## **MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

115. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: What action has the Mission and Public Affairs Council taken to support and join in the calls from many quarters on Her Majesty’s Government to bring forward urgently effective action by social media companies to implement robust age-verification procedures for access to pornographic material online?

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio)* replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: The MPA Council has not directly considered this matter. We do not normally join organised lobbying alliances where we cannot control the circumstances in which the church’s name may be used. However, MPA staff have been at the heart of the major project of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group studying the ethics of big tech, including social media companies, and basing the work on substantial theological foundations. This work will be a major resource for the whole Church to inform our engagement with the wide range of ethical issues raised by contemporary technological developments and focused strongly on protecting the vulnerable. Age-related bars on social media raise questions about the boundary between proper controls and censorship which require a firm grasp of the particular ethical issues raised by social media technology and are not wholly comparable to analogue media.

## **APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

116. *Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Appointments Committee: How is the Legal Advisory Commission constituted; and what steps have been taken to ensure its membership includes a wide range of theological opinion in the Church of England so that its advice is not open to the charge of partisan bias?

*Canon Margaret Swinson (Liverpool) replied as Chair of the Appointments Committee:* Details of the constitution of the Commission are set out in GS 1829 - see Microsoft Word - GS 1829.doc (churchofengland.org).

The Committee will, as with any body to which it appoints, seek an appropriate degree of diversity commensurate with the skills and relevant experience needed to carry out the responsibilities of the relevant body. In this case the Commission is required to give authoritative independent legal opinions; and that consideration would have been a prime consideration in determining its membership.

117. *Revd Mike Smith (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Appointments Committee: What role will the Committee anticipate having in agreeing the membership of the Implementation Group taking forward the replacement of CDM? What place might there be for non-Synod members who can bring appropriate expertise to bear?

*Canon Margaret Swinson (Liverpool) replied as Chair of the Appointments Committee:* The Committee would be happy to advise on the membership of such a group in the event of a proposal being put to it. As would normally be the case, it would consider appropriate diversity of membership in the light of the particular needs of the group in question. This might well include non-Synod members (as was the case recently with the groups concerning clergy wellbeing).

## **BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

118. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: For each group of sessions in the current and preceding quinquennia, how many Diocesan Synod Motions were debated, and how many were held over for later consideration?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford) replied as Chair of the Business Committee:* For the Quinquennium 2010 2015:

Nine Diocesan Synod Motions were debated.

- Seven Diocesan Synod Motions were held over for the new Quinquennium.
- Three of these concerned the Anglican Communion Covenant.

For the sextennium 2015-2021:

- Ten Diocesan Synod Motions were debated.
- Thirteen have been held over until the new Quinquennium. One concerns the Anglican Communion Covenant.

During the pandemic the Synod has had to meet on a remote basis using Zoom. In order to keep the Agendas as short and as manageable as possible, given the constraints of Zoom, the Business Committee has postponed taking non-time critical business, including Diocesan Synod Motions. We hope to start scheduling DSMs on the Agenda once the Synod is able to meet in person again.

119. *Mr Michael Stallybrass (York)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: Although PCCs are sometimes employers, and on some other occasions may discuss what, in terms of the Freedom of Information Act should be classified as Reserved Business, there are currently no provisions for Reserved Business in the Church Representation Rules [CRR].

Reserved Business covers Agenda items which are deemed to involve, and are likely to generate information in the resulting minutes, which ought to be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. This includes personal data about any named or identifiable living person, and in particular includes sensitive employment-related information about individuals, and sensitive information about the health, welfare or personal lives of individuals. Recent legal changes, which now require PCC consent for an incumbent to remain in post beyond the age of 70, have highlighted the lack of provision for Reserved Business as a potential problem.

Unfortunately, the CRR have two clauses [M28(2) and M28(3)] which can effectively force the publication of such details. Clause M28(2) states: "If one-fifth of the members of the PCC present and voting on a resolution so require, the minutes must record the name of each member voting for the resolution and the name of each member voting against". Thus this clause, in particular, has the potential to be used to bully and intimidate PCC members in the context of sensitive personnel discussions.

Can the Business Committee please give an assurance that this anomaly, embedded in the new CRR, will be addressed as a matter of urgency?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)* replied as Chair of the Business Committee: Rule M28(2) provides for the recording in a PCC's minutes of the names of those voting for and against a particular resolution if one-fifth of the members so require. That does not mean that the names or the voting figures must be *published*. The PCC can decide that certain minutes are confidential under rule M82(6), with the result that those minutes are accessible only to members of the PCC and a very limited list of other persons. Unlike other PCC minutes, they are not accessible to persons whose names are on the church electoral roll but who are not members of the PCC. If Mr Stallybrass is concerned that the existing provisions as to confidentiality are inadequate, the Business Committee would be glad to hear from him.

120. *Ms Christina Baron (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: Given that the motion Liturgies for same-sex couples received the signatures of a hundred members before the motion on the Five Guiding Principles, why was the latter tabled for debate at this group of sessions when the former has yet to be debated?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)* replied as Chair of the Business Committee: Although it is a convention that Private Members' Motions (PMMs) which achieve 100 or

more signatures are considered for inclusion on the Synod Agenda, there is no legal requirement for the Business Committee to do so. In considering which PMMs to schedule, the Business Committee is mindful of the wider context and other ongoing initiatives. In this case, the Business Committee decided to delay the scheduling of Ms Baron's motion on the Agenda until after the *Living in Love and Faith* initiative had presented its final report to General Synod.

121. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: Will the Business Committee give consideration to how the effectiveness of Questions could be improved, and, in particular, to how it could be ensured that all questions were actually answered, and none were parried or avoided?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)* replied as Chair of the Business Committee: The Business Committee regularly reviews the format and handling of Synod Question Time and has done so after each group of sessions held remotely, passing its feedback onto the Panel of Chairs. The introduction of a Speakers List at the April and July remote meetings of Synod was a result of this feedback. The Business Committee consistently asks those answering questions and the staff serving them to ensure that they are well prepared to give full and frank answers to the questions and to any supplementary questions posed. Inevitably, given the number of questions posed and the limited time available on the Agenda to answer them, not all questions on the Questions Notice paper are reached at any Group of Sessions.

122. *Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: What research has the Committee done

- To measure the mental health, wellbeing and physical demands of Zoom Synods,
- To gauge the opinion of Members about meeting by Zoom.

If such research has been done, what are the conclusions?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)* replied as Chair of the Business Committee: The Business Committee is well aware of the strain that meeting by Zoom places on Synod members. We very reluctantly concluded that the Synod had to meet on a remote basis in July due to the ongoing Government restrictions which made an in-person meeting impossible.

The Synod Office did issue a questionnaire to members in late May to assess their individual willingness to attend a physical meeting at York University, but we have not done any specific health assessment exercise of the kind you describe.

In planning the July meeting, the Business Committee has done its best to build in break periods and reorganise the business in order to make the remote meeting as manageable as possible given the constraints we are all having to work under.

## **CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION**

123. *Mrs Kathryn Tucker (Bath and Wells)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: What written and publicly available procedures are in place for scrutinising and verifying candidates' CV's before presenting them to the Crown Nominations Commission?

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: Members of the Commission are provided with a wealth of information for each potential candidate including

- CV (structured template);
- personal statement; and
- references from a candidate's diocesan bishop and three other people.

Members are provided with online access to *Crockford's Clerical Directory* to enable them to research candidate biographies. The Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments (ASA) invites members of the CNC to raise questions on candidates so that additional information can be sought if necessary. Her department also receives confirmation of ordination and authorisation for ministry through the Clergy Current Status Letter (CCSL). During the interviews, candidates are asked to share examples from their current and former roles, which help the Commission to better understand the candidates' prior experience.

## **FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION**

124. *Mr Jacob Vince (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: Given that next year, spring 2022, is the 800th anniversary of the 1222 Synod of Oxford, the 'Magna Carta' of English canon law, which implemented some of the most egregious antisemitic decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council, such as the law that Jews wear a badge of shame to isolate them from the Christian public around them, laws which heightened antisemitic feeling and led to the first nationwide expulsion of all Jews from England in 1290; have these foundational canon laws ever been formally repented of in the intervening centuries? In light of rapidly worsening antisemitism in the UK in recent months, might the 800th anniversary next year be an opportune moment for the Church of England to consider making a formal break with these historic prejudices as a gesture of solidarity with our Jewish neighbours, England's oldest ethnic minority? Has the Archbishop's office received a letter and research paper on the topic of this octocentenary, and are there any plans to appoint suitable individuals to investigate these matters further with a view to conducting a fitting service of corporate repentance?

125. *Mr Jacob Vince (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: Following the excellent Faith and Order Commission publication *God's Unfailing Word*, which includes the Archbishop of Canterbury's introduction advising that "Christian communities may wish to consider whether there could be suitable opportunities in their

public worship to focus and express repentance for Christian involvement in fostering antisemitism”, particularly noting the traumatic history of Jewish-Christian relations in our own country, and in view of the positive responses to Lisa Battye’s questions of General Synod February 2020; are there any plans for a national service of repentance for historical Christian antisemitic legislation, led by the Church of England and potentially alongside the Catholic Church in England? And would there be interest in proposals for such a national and corporate act of repentance, so that we are seen to follow through on our words?

*The Bishop of Lichfield ((Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: With permission I will answer both of Mr Vince’s questions together.*

The Archbishop’s office has indeed received a letter proposing a service that might offer an act of repentance at the 800th anniversary of the Synod of Oxford and its antisemitic laws. I note the proposal and the significance of this in the context of the 2019 Faith and Order Commission document on Christian-Jewish relations, *God’s Unfailing Word*. We are exploring the idea of such a service to be planned in conjunction with the Council of Christians and Jews, as well as the potential for a liturgical resource that might be offered to local churches to model an appropriate symbolic repentance.

## **LEGAL ADVISORY COMMISSION**

126. *Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone (Oxford) asked the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: What mechanism is in place for the Legal Advisory Commission to reconsider or withdraw its previous advice, like its contentious opinion concerning individual cups at Holy Communion?*

*Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: The Commission is able to reconsider, and if it considers it appropriate to do so, revise opinions previously issued by it. It might do so, for example, if the applicable law were to change or if a relevant statute or authority had not previously come to its attention. It does not consider that there is any need to revise or withdraw the advice referred to in the question.*

127. *Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich) asked the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: What are the grounds on which the Legal Advisory Commission decides whether or not to ‘star’ its opinions for publication?*

*Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: The Commission considers a number of factors. They include whether the opinion is intended to be for the general assistance of members of the Church of England or has been produced at the request of a particular body to address a particular point that is of concern to that body. It is the Commission’s policy*



not to engage publicly in disputed questions, as its role is to give “authoritative and entirely independent legal opinions”. Its decision whether to star an opinion for publication will take account of that policy.

128. *Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: Given that the Church of England webpage Legal Opinions and other guidance (<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/legal-opinions-and-other-guidance>, accessed 28 June 2021) says that: “The Legal Advisory Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England exists to give advice on non-contentious legal matters of general interest to the Church ...”, could the full terms of reference for the Legal Advisory Commission be made publicly available, in particular who determines what legal matters are “non-contentious”, and what are the grounds on which such a determination is made?

*Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: The constitution of the Legal Advisory Commission is available online at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/ga%201829July11.pdf>.

It is the Commission’s policy not to engage publicly in contentious matters, as its role is to give “authoritative and entirely independent legal opinions”. The Commission necessarily decides whether a matter is contentious for the purposes of its policy.

129. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: Would the Legal Advisory Commission please agree to providing General Synod with a legal advice which responds to the legal opinion of six barristers, including members of General Synod, which challenges the LAC’s advice to the House of Bishops against allowing the use of individual cups?

*Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: It is the Commission’s policy not to engage publicly in disputed questions, as its role is to give “authoritative and entirely independent legal opinions”. The Commission does not, therefore, issue responses to other legal opinions. It nevertheless takes account of legal opinions which are brought to its attention if it considers that they raise points that merit further consideration and revises its published opinions if it considers it necessary to do so. The Commission did not consider that the opinion referred to in the question affected the substance of the advice it had previously given in its published opinion.

*The Chair.* I am afraid that the clock has brought Question Time to an end, even though we have only got through a small proportion really of the questions asked. That is the inexorable effect of time. I bring this item of the Agenda to a close and I invite everyone to remain online for the closing act of worship. Thank you.

*Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

## **Full Synod: Second Day Saturday 10 July 2021**

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 9.08 am.

*The Chair:* Good morning, Synod, and welcome to Saturday here at Church House. Wherever you are, it is very good to see you on the screen. We are going to begin with our opening worship and I invite Shayne Ardron to lead us in this act of worship.

### **WORSHIP**

*Canon Shayne Ardron (Leicester)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

*The Chair:* We are grateful to Shayne and to Barry for leading us in our worship as we begin this particular day. Before we move to Item 13, I am going to call the Chair of the Business Committee, Robert Hammond, to speak to a variation of business.

### **VARIATION IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* First, three housekeeping points if I can. Would members please refrain from using the chat function to contact the Support Office. The chat function is not monitored and, if you do need support, please use the Synod Support email address. Secondly, when you use green ticks to indicate that you support or do not support continuing an amendment or items like that, when that item has finished can you take the green tick down because the support staff are unable to remove those centrally; You have to do that yourself.

Finally, the name you are using to identify you - to enable staff to easily identify and to unmute you, and that is the really important thing, among the many members on this Zoom meeting - could you check please that you have named yourself by your three digit number. That includes the leading zeros, please, and then the initial of your House, be it L, C or B, space, and then your name. That means that, when the staff are searching for us, they can find us easily and it will speed up proceedings.

Can I please, Mr Chair, propose a variation in the order of business. As we were unable to take Item 11 yesterday, the Appointment of a Body to Oversee the Next Stage of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant, I propose that we insert that item on Monday afternoon after Item 31, the motion from the House of Bishops on the Report from the Implementation and Dialogue Group. As space is now available on the Agenda due to Mr Lamming having indicated that he has withdrawn his Private Member's Motion, I would like to insert Item 11 after Item 31 on Monday afternoon, please.

*The Chair.* Thank you, Robert, for proposing that. That has my support but I need to test the mind of Synod and we will need to use the Lumi system for that. I now put this variation of business to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried.*

## **ITEM 13**

### **JOINT PRESENTATION BY THE ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL AND THE CHURCH COMMISSIONERS ON THEIR ANNUAL REPORTS (GS 2211 AND GS 2212)**

*The Chair.* We move now to Item 13, which is a joint presentation by the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners. Synod, this is going to involve, first of all, the presentation and then a period of time we have for questions. To begin with, I invite Loretta Minghella and Maureen Cole to give their presentation.

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio):* Good morning, Synod. I am delighted to present for the Commissioners this morning side by side with my colleague, Maureen Cole, from the Archbishops' Council, in what I think is a first joint Annual Report presentation. At the Church Commissioners, we strive to manage the funds entrusted to us in a responsible and ethical way, to grow our support for the Church and give the consistency we know our beneficiaries need.

In support of that aim, in 2020 we delivered an investment return of 10.4%, which was ahead of our target, despite the extraordinarily volatile market conditions. The asset base grew to over £9 billion after we had distributed a record £281 million. Our active management style really came into its own last year. Our stock market investments outperformed the market, returning 18.3% and, while real estate markets were challenged, the team was able to deliver a positive overall return of 5.6%.

A particular highlight in 2020 was our sustainable global forestry portfolio. Originally invested in primarily as a diversifier, it returned 41.3% and was an important contributor to the overall return. Our holdings are in mature, developed markets of the UK, US and Australia and the slide shows a forest that we bought last year in Florida. We established new woodlands too and planted two and a half million trees in 2020. The slide shows the 155 acre woodland we established in Perthshire. The result was achieved in unprecedented market conditions but also the difficult personal circumstances brought by Covid, and I applaud my fellow Assets Committee members and our extraordinary staff.

As I prepare to bid farewell to Synod and go into my final months as First Commissioner, I assure you all that they are truly world class and we should all be proud of them. While

2020 was a very creditable return, what is more pleasing is that we have matched or exceeded our returns target over one, three, five, ten, 20 and 30 years. That timeframe, remember, contains two stock market crashes and the arrival of a global pandemic.

This long-term track record is the most important thing in determining our sustainable distribution levels, on which I will say more in a moment. Responsible and ethical investment is key to our mission and we have put in place a new responsible investment policy which broadens and deepens our focus on two pillars: our respect for people and our respect for the planet. Quite simply, we want to be at the forefront of the investment industry in driving positive change in the real economy.

Last year, we joined the UN Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance and began the process of divestment from companies that do not take seriously their responsibilities to assist with the transition to a low carbon economy. We have a comprehensive list of ethical exclusions but, as members know, we put a great deal of effort into engagement and, following engagement, 12 companies made changes to meet our 2020 climate change hurdles and only nine were excluded because they did not.

As I mentioned yesterday, last year's engagement efforts paid off this year when the activist group we support managed to get three new members of Exxon's board elected, all with huge experience in energy transition. Please just pause and think how big this is to overcome the resistance of one of the world's biggest companies and get 25% of the board changed is a great example of shareholder muscle. Engagement is not something we do instead of taking robust action; it is robust action.

We have also put in place the new voting framework which now includes ethnic diversity as well as gender diversity. That is what we want to see on the boards of the companies that we invest in. For all that we say about avoiding "sin stocks" and engaging with poorly behaving companies, we are increasingly seeking out impact investments where we can achieve the win/win of good returns and a positive impact on the world. At the end of 2020, we had over £1 billion - you will see that table there - in these impact investments and that represents a £250 million increase on the previous year.

As this slide shows, with investments mapped against the third, fourth and fifth Marks of Mission, the main areas of impact investment include sustainable forestry, health and affordable and social housing. I have been tremendously excited about the growth of impact investment these last few years and delighted that we won the IPE's inaugural Impact Investing Award in Copenhagen last year and I hope to see the Church Commissioners' impact portfolio continue to grow after I have taken my leave.

As Synod knows, much hard work was also done last year and this year across the Church with the Archbishops' Housing Commission, now the Housing Executive. We are engaging with them to find ways in which the Church Commissioners can help realise the Housing Commission's aims to increase the quantity, quality and affordability of homes,

which we wholeheartedly support. Although we are not ourselves a social housing provider, we do already enable the provision of quality, affordable housing and we are actively exploring what more we can do when bringing forward land for new housing developments and how we best go about that exercise.

We aim to deliver a range of homes and employment opportunities to enhance local surroundings and by strengthening existing communities and building new ones. I hope I will have an opportunity to say more about that in the housing debate later.

Our investment returns only matter in the end because they enable us to make distributions for the Church's mission and ministry and, as this slide shows, consistently strong long-term investment performance has allowed our support for the Church to grow over time and is the key to future growth, although I have to tell you that the outlook for global economies and markets is ever more challenging.

If you look there in the 2005-07 triennium, core and additional expenditure was £208 million and in 2020-22 core and additional expenditure was £183 million per year. This growth rate is 6.7% compound over 15 years compared with inflation over that period of 2.2% on average. In other words, as this slide shows, our distributions, excluding pensions, have grown at three times the rate of inflation over the period. I will say a little more in a moment about the growth in our distributions but, first, I want to say something about the other important work we have done beyond the management of investments.

In doing so, I give huge thanks to the Third Commissioner, Dr Eve Poole, and her Committee members and staff, for all the excellent work on what we affectionately know as "Eve's side of the House". In particular, under Eve's brilliant leadership, work has continued during 2020 to move the new Cathedrals Measure through the synodical process with Royal Assent granted earlier this year making preparations for the co-regulation of cathedrals. Cathedrals were devastated by Covid. Events stopped.

The slide shows the Museum of the Moon at Rochester. Cafes closed. In-person worship ceased. The Bishops and Cathedrals Committee increased the Cathedrals Sustainability Fund and provided support for lay clerks, heritage trades staff and others. They also considered a master plan for the refurbishment of Lambeth Palace and agreed the essential works required to make it safe and accessible while also providing the opportunity for it to be a pioneer for sustainability. Of course, the wonderful new Lambeth Palace Library moved towards practical completion in 2020.

2020 also saw the completion of a See House Consultation which will help us improve our management of see houses. Pictured here is Chester See House where works continued through the Covid-19 disruption. In addition, a See House Pilot Sustainability Project reviewed nine see houses and we installed electric car charging points as necessary.

The Third Commissioner's other Committee, the Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee, was the first to enter the scary new world of remote working, holding its Zoom meeting a couple of days after the first lockdown and its processes were adapted to allow consultation on pastoral reorganisation to continue, notwithstanding the Covid challenges. 2020 saw the completion of the disposal of 12 churches, three of which will have a future as a centre for community use and one of which will have a worship use. Two, including Barmby-on-the-Marsh, pictured here, have transferred to a preservation trust.

The other church on the slide was acquired by the Guides to use for activities alongside an important regional activity centre - and the building will remain available for other community activities in the area. The demolition of St Elizabeth's, Eastbourne has been completed following the removal and preservation of some very important murals and the site will shortly be marketed. Its redevelopment is expected to include social housing. The team also started a programme of online deanery planning seminars, gave training on property disposal processes and is now drafting enhanced guidance on dispossession for publication later this year.

I will not say more about the review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure except that Eve is very keen indeed to hear your views, so please do come to the debate on Monday morning.

What drives all of this work is, of course, people. We are greatly indebted to our trustees and our brilliant staff. Our new Chief Executive, Gareth Mostyn, has led the team superbly despite being locked down almost immediately after taking up his post. He and the whole team have maintained business as usual, and so much more, in such trying circumstances.

All the NCI chief officers have worked together on lockdown plans and have led regular webinars for all staff during this period. Particular attention has been paid to staff wellbeing and this was recognised in very high staff survey scores on questions about pandemic support. I am especially grateful that a Belonging and Inclusion Strategy and a Mentoring Scheme have been put in place to help all staff feel really valued as part of the whole - the latter being promoted in particular to underrepresented groups.

87% of staff now tell us they would recommend the NCIs as a good place to work, although, of course, I would like to see that number go higher still. In the extraordinary circumstances of Covid, we have benefited more than ever from having trustees of the very highest calibre, but we must pay constant attention to that. The recruitment campaigns we ran or supported last year and in the early part of this year produced some wonderful appointments, reappointments and co-options to the Board and our various committees.

What pleases me most is that ten of the 17 appointments were women and five UKME. This shows our recent interventions are bearing fruit, but we have more to do and we are doing more. For example, we recently ran a successful “talent pipeline” event which will definitely be the first of a series.

Before I hand over to Maureen to talk about the Archbishops’ Council’s work, I said I would return to the Commissioners’ expenditure, much of which, of course, is distributed via the Council. As this slide shows, excluding expenditure on our statutory pension liabilities, charitable expenditure last year was £163 million, an increase of £45 million on 2019, primarily reflecting an increase in support for dioceses and cathedrals.

Following the 2019 actuarial assessment, we were pleased to be able to make available £155 million in additional funding across the triennium. The increase in expenditure in 2020 reflects the first year of those plans and we took the decision to maintain our planned expenditure despite the unprecedented uncertainty in the markets created by Covid. We worked with the Archbishops’ Council to agree the most appropriate allocation of those funds in the light of the pandemic and to ensure funding was available to provide emergency support to dioceses and cathedrals.

In addition to a range of liquidity measures, the Commissioners and Council worked together to make £35 million available in the triennium to support dioceses’ response to Covid, of which £15 million was awarded in 2020. Our expenditure in 2020 also reflects a range of new funding streams, including support for additional ordinands and curates and diocesan transformation programmes. This was in addition to the core funding we provide for Lowest Income Communities and Strategic Development.

I hope this overview of our work has been interesting to hear. It has most certainly been an enormous privilege and fascinating to be involved in for the last four years. I thank you all for your partnership in it and I look forward to your questions. But, for now, over to Maureen.

*Ms Maureen Cole (ex officio):* Good morning, everyone. If we can stay on this slide, please. Thank you, Loretta, for your presentation and for all your work with the Commissioners and Council over the past few years. We are immensely grateful for all you have done for our Church. The aim of my part of the presentation is to give an insight into how Church Commissioners, Archbishops’ Council and the House of Bishops work together to support dioceses and the local church.

I will give you a whistle-stop tour of the Council’s Report. If you have not yet read this or the Church Commissioners’ Report, I encourage you to do so. I will focus on some of the actions the Council took that were not in original plans as we had to change our priorities in order to support the Church’s response to the many challenges of the pandemic. I ask for your forgiveness as I am bound to miss something that some of you feel I should have flagged. I will start by expanding on what Loretta said about this slide, showing how

Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council work together to support dioceses and local churches, mainly through grant funding but also through some nationally provided services.

This pie chart shows that the new but planned Strategic Transformation funding at 11% is designed to support dioceses wishing to undertake a change programme to develop a platform for the Church's sustainable growth but have insufficient resources of their own to do so. Lowest Income Communities funding at £26 million - its purpose is to support mission and ministry in low income areas. The national Church works with dioceses to ensure this happens.

The new item for this was that the Lowest Income Grant was paid early and full in 2020 and, indeed, in 2021 to help dioceses' cashflow. This was important support and was well received, particularly as in some dioceses parish share payments fell significantly at the start of lockdown. How does this support local churches? The largest cost for a diocese is the monthly payments for clergy stipends, pensions and housing.

Transition funding at £8 million was also paid early. New for 2020 was the Covid-19 Sustainability Fund and, obviously, the big change was the pandemic and the financial challenges that it brought. £35 million was made available for 2020-21 to support dioceses and local churches. £15 million was awarded in 2020 with 24 dioceses receiving grants. This is an example of the Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council working well together after listening carefully to the needs of the local church via the dioceses and responding to them.

New again was Ministry Support at £8 million. This is new funding to meet training costs for the increased number of ordinands and to support dioceses with the incremental cost for the additional curates. Strategic Development funding at £23 million supports dioceses in making strategic investment in change programmes that produce good growth and the other item at £8 million includes digital services and the Giving Strategy.

Grant awards require careful governance. Some of you may wonder why grants are not just made directly to local churches. The awards do have significant impact on local churches, but are mainly awarded through dioceses who have the local strategic and missional overview to understand the best approach in their local context.

The pie chart shows where Archbishops' Council income comes from. Church Commissioners provide the largest amount. 22% comes from the dioceses and 11% come from other sources. For example, the Cathedral and Major Churches Grant comes from Government. The bar chart shows how the money is spent over the Council's nine objectives and you can see the increased expenditure against 2019. The largest amount of money is spent on ministry, which is the grey box; evangelism, which is blue; and Resources for Churches is the green, which you can see had the biggest increase in 2019.



Moving on to the next slide and moving on from the money flows, we now move on to the Archbishops' Council's activities during 2020 which were designed around three priorities and the nine objectives listed here. We need to remind ourselves - who would have imagined at the beginning of 2020 that we would be talking about lockdown, self-isolation, Covid-19 and that every one of us here and in our dioceses and local churches would be considering the Church's missional response to a pandemic. The plans had to be adjusted and refined in response to this.

I will now give you some highlights for each of the nine objectives. For evangelism, sports ministry. 27 missional initiatives came from seven pilots and a sports leadership programme has started. During 2020, our first ever national virtual services were held and continue today. These reached into people's homes via telephone or online. For many, these cannot replace meeting and worshipping physically, but there are so many stories about how people have accessed the Church for the first time or reconnected with the Church during pandemic via these systems.

Digital Church in its many forms will continue to play an important part of our mixed ecology in the future. Some of the other activities that support our evangelism are supported in the Questions pack that were not covered yesterday. Discipleship. Two examples of a national Church resource which have supported the local church in mission and discipleship: the use of apps from Church House Publishing increased phenomenally. They were used seven million times in 2020, a more than threefold increase from 2019.

The Daily Hope phonenumber was launched for those without internet. To date, there have been more than half a million calls from over 55,000 people. Ministry. Lay ministry research was conducted during 2020 for the Lay Ministry Data Project. So far, more than 100,000 lay ministers in more than 1,300 lay ministry roles have been identified. This shows the diversity and importance of lay ministry across the Church of England.

Clergy are vital and valued. During lockdown, a Clergy Wellbeing Study was conducted. The study highlighted the clergy's concern over access to buildings and implications for worship. They were also concerned for personal health and the health of their families. On a positive note, clergy welcomed consistent contact and support from senior clergy. Ordinands in training. 560 ordinands will complete training in 2021 and 591 people were recommended to ordained ministry. This was the highest number in 13 years. 54% were women and 10% were UKME.

An Online Discernment Process was developed to temporarily replace the three-day residential Bishop's Advisory Panel. This was achieved from a standing start in very short timescales. Common Good. The Archbishops' Housing Commission Report focused on how the Church might help address the key challenge of the British housing crisis.

Loretta has already mentioned ways in which the Church Commissioners are considering how to respond to this and, later today, Synod will have an opportunity to engage with ongoing work in this area. Environment. In February 2020 General Synod set an ambitious target for the Church of England to become carbon net-zero by 2030 with work starting at all levels to develop an action plan and resources to achieve this.

Education. The National Education Team and the National Society continued supporting our 4,700 Church of England schools and the approximately one million children who attend them. A new key piece of legislation governing DBEs received Final Approval from Synod and there were questions about this yesterday. The Faith at Home campaign was launched, intended to make prayer and discussion about faith a household habit. Weekly videos from home, school and church were provided. So many valued these materials during lockdown, particularly when families were home schooling.

Resources for Churches. Across the Church, more than 550 churches and cathedrals received pandemic-related Government grants totalling around £50 million. This included £10 million of Culture Recovery funding secured by the Council to support capital repair projects in 68 cathedrals and major churches. Church Near You became a strategic platform for the church in 2020. Multi-platform resources were produced for the church to use for Lent, Easter and Christmas services.

The National Giving Strategy includes expanding advice for parishes, encouraging digital giving and providing training for clergy and laity. We saw the launch of Generosity Week with new resources being provided to support local churches in response to the fall in church income during lockdown. Safeguarding. A session comes later this morning with an opportunity for questions. Clearly, this is a vital part of the Archbishops' Council work. However, in brief, we worked with the Catholic Church in England and Wales to launch the Safe Spaces helpline. We launched the Survivor Support Scheme to provide support to survivors with urgent and immediate needs.

Safeguarding training and development was redesigned and will be delivered across all dioceses. Importantly, we began to work to deliver on the recommendations of the IICSA Report, which were fully accepted by the House of Bishops, Archbishops' Council as well as this Synod. And we began work on the development of independent oversight of the National Safeguarding Team.

Governance. Meetings continued and happened more frequently, invariably online, to address the challenges of pandemic. Legislation was passed and Standing Orders changed, which meant Synod could transact key business online. This was significant and enabled Synod to continue to function in what turned out to be a longer period of restrictions than we would have imagined even a few weeks ago. Let us hope and pray this can change over the coming weeks and months.

The Emerging Church Group. Synod will be engaging with two aspects of this tomorrow. However, from the middle of 2020, the five groups have been shaping and developing the work and in many cases group members are doing this in addition to their “day job”. Church for all people. We are grateful for all the important work of the Racial Justice Taskforce ahead of the Archbishops’ Commission to address racism. British Sign Language was introduced into national broadcast services. The publication of *Living in Love and Faith* resources was launched.

Dioceses, deaneries and local church are now starting to explore these resources and how they might engage fully with these. This partial snapshot begins to demonstrate just how much was planned and how much was delivered in response to the challenges we faced as a Church in 2020. It was quite an extraordinary year for us all. It illustrates how Archbishops’ Council, Church Commissioners and the House of Bishops worked together to respond to the challenges and support dioceses and worshipping communities in their mission and ministry during that unique year, but also to prepare us for the future, whatever it may hold.

All of this has been achieved with national teams led by William, Gareth and John notionally from Church House, and David, Malcolm and Andrea from Lambeth and Bishopthorpe Palaces. In common with many, they all had to move quickly to largely working from home and through the challenges of lockdown. Thank you to all of you who played a part in the work of the Church Commissioners and Archbishops’ Council who are detailed in this Report. The panel of Commissioners and Council members now look forward to your questions.

*The Chair:* Thank you very much. There was a lot of information there and members will be pleased know that the presentation slides will be made available to us. We now move, as has been said, to questions. We have got 15 minutes in order to do that and so short questions will be appreciated. I will be taking them in groups of three and then the Bishop of Manchester will be fielding the team to give the answers.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* My question is based on the note on page 75 of the Church Commissioners’ Annual Report which shows unapplied total return of £5.1 billion at the end of 2020, a figure that has risen by £1.3 billion over two years. In Oxford, we have applied total return to our glebe investments and set an annual withdrawal rate of 7% of the total value of the investments. This has released funds for our diocesan strategy and enabled mutual support donations to other dioceses totalling £1 million over four years. I believe also that other dioceses could usefully adopt total return and similarly release funds, including perhaps also for mutual support. Given that, legally, the whole of the £5.1 billion on page 75 ---

*The Chair:* Could we have the question, please, Julie?

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* --- is expendable, what are the parameters used by the Church Commissioners in determining how these funds are expended?

*Revd Bill Braviner (Durham):* The nation is so high on the agenda of the Church and we all want to see more people coming to be blessed by God and to know God but, as we resource and plant new churches and grow new disciples, we have to remember that John Wesley was probably right in his view that the last part of a person to be converted is their wallet or their purse. The many more than 10,000 well-established churches in parishes up and down the country are places where mission and evangelism happens on a huge scale and that is affirmed by all the statistics that have been shared during the pandemic about what churches are doing in their communities.

Has the Archbishops' Council any plans to use some of the SDF or other funding to directly support large numbers of parishes with some extra resource which could be used to enable many places to have a little bit of extra paid lay ministry, such as a youth worker, administrator or whatever, thereby releasing parish clergy and others from some of the limiting factors which constrain their time and the energy and the support that they have for mission and ministry? And, if we do not have such plans, could they be developed?

Seeds grow best when they are scattered. Might not comparatively little resource in each place make a bigger difference to the Church overall, enabling us to make a bigger difference to the communities, the people and the nation that we serve?

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* Two short questions. First, Loretta mentioned yesterday - and she has had such astonishing success with her team and we are very grateful - that personal parish and diocesan investment may be possible alongside the national investments that are taking place. With such astonishing success, I think everybody would be interested in that.

Secondly, as my former colleagues suggested, I think the mission field for digital evangelism has grown exponentially and I would be interested to know what grants might be available to dioceses for equipment, technical support and the necessary licences for this to continue.

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker):* I wonder, Loretta, perhaps you could begin by responding to Julie's question and then maybe we can go back to the Archbishops' Council for Bill's and Penny's.

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio):* The Commissioners obtained a total return order in 2012 and it enables us to apply a total return approach. It ensures that our investments can focus on maximising total return and we can keep distributing whether or not we have a good year or a bad year.

Our distribution strategy is based on the total value of the fund, therefore, and not just the unapplied total return. After first allowing for all forecast pensions expenditure, we then, on the advice of the actuaries, calculate the maximum level of distributions that can be paid on a long-term sustainable basis. That takes into account the total size of the fund expected to be needed to meet those pension obligations, forecast future investment returns, the outlook for inflation and a target growth rate for future distributions.

All that ensures that we balance the needs of beneficiaries today and in the future. It has enabled us to distribute, or promise to distribute, a record £930 million in this triennium and a projected £930 million plus inflation in the next triennium, so within six years over £1.8 billion.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* Can I respond to Bill's question from the SDF perspective. It is a really helpful question and it is one I did try and answer some time ago at Questions when a question around dioceses versus parishes was raised about direct granting. As Maureen said, the key thing is that we see dioceses being the key actor, as it were, in how to see the strategy and development.

If you look at the figures, a lot of our posts in SDF are actually for laity: a lot of lay posts, all sorts of lay posts. We also had SDF bids where we have encouraged local support to parishes through providing bureaucratic support through what I could equate to a GP practice manager. We do have experience of this. It is a really helpful question. I think it is a developing process and I am grateful for that directive, Bill.

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker):* And Penny's question, is that back to Maureen?

*Ms Maureen Cole:* I think we are going to have Mark Sheard answering it.

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio):* Thanks very much, David, and thanks, Penny, for your question, a great question. One of the few upsides of Covid is that it has encouraged us to embrace the digital revolution even more enthusiastically than perhaps we were doing. In Maureen's Report, there were various highlights of things that have been done on a national basis. Already, there are a number of resources that are available for parishes, things like the *Go Chatter* videos that enable you to produce personalised videos et cetera, and the Digital Labs that the digital team in Church House is rolling out. I would encourage you to engage with those wherever you can. They are fantastic work. I also know there is further development being planned in terms of how we can build on this learning and so on.

In terms of help with things like equipment and so on, that probably is best still addressed through the diocesan mechanisms. Parishes work with dioceses and, if it is appropriate, dioceses as a whole can apply for grants or support in any one of the ways in which the Archbishops' Council is able to support dioceses.

That is probably all I have got to say, but do go back and I would encourage the whole of Synod to engage with some of the wonderful work that is going on in this area. Thanks very much. I will be quiet and let other questions come.

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker):* Thanks, Mark. I can certainly say here in Manchester that our Digital Evangelism Officer, who has been in post for about three or four years now, has made a huge step-change.

*The Chair:* We have got time for another couple of questions.

*Ms Josile Munro (London):* What we budget for demonstrates what is important to us, whether it is at home or in church. Please, can you explain to us why the disappointing decision was made not to fund diocesan racial justice officers as recommended by the Taskforce? Given the current budget situation, could we not have made some interesting ways of incrementally progressing by funding either half or a number of, if not all, the dioceses' racial justice officers. I wondered why we could not have been more thoughtful about how we might get progress on this and show the direction of travel.

*Revd Tiffer Robinson (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* It can feel as though existing parish ministry is being left behind in favour of new SDF projects, however worthy they might be. It is, therefore, really encouraging to see that sustainability grants of £15 million were made to 24 dioceses last year on top of LICF and there is £20 million set aside for this year to subsidise the Stipends Bill, essentially. Can we have an assurance that such funding will continue at such a level or higher in the future and ask that it might be better publicised that the wider Church is putting their money where their mouth is to help struggling parishes and dioceses feel supported as they seek to fund the cost of even a baseline of stipendiary ministry?

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker):* Thank you. I think, Jamie, you are going to take Josile's question and then I wonder whether Mark, as a member of the Strategic Investment Board, you would like to pick up on Tiffer's.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* Thanks, Josile. Yes, thank you very much. A very difficult area, is it not? I think the first thing to say is that this is last year's work that we are looking at today, what we have been doing in the last year. You are asking about the future. The future, as we have heard already from the First Estates Commissioner, is going to be difficult possibly, certainly in the next three to five years. What is key is when we come to look at the budget for 2023-25 as we look ahead. We have the Triennium Funding Group that does that.

I think what we are saying is, at the moment, the money in this current triennium to 2022, in a sense, is already being used up in all the ways we have heard, not least to sustain dioceses in this coming year over Covid and to continue the work that has been started:

key work on safeguarding, digital and so on. The question is when we come to look together at the 2023-25 budget, we have to take into consideration everything that needs to be on the table.

My own personal view is it is not completely off the table, but it needs to find its way onto the table in a way that has to go against all the other things that, as Tiffer has just made a comment about, are significantly important to the Church. I think we have to express our regret, as the Archbishop did, where we have got to. My own view is that we have to keep talking and keep thinking and looking but we cannot, unfortunately, offer any certainty at this moment in time, not least with the current and future financial position of the Church.

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio):* David, I understand that you asked me to answer Tiffer's question and Tiffer will understand this very well, I think, given where he is based. Tiffer, unfortunately, at the crucial moment of your question, here in the wilds of Suffolk, my internet froze, so I got as far as the first part about you were talking about sustainability and approval of that but I am afraid I lost the second part of your question. That is the downside of remote working and digital. I do not know if it is possible to just unmute again so that you can repeat that for me, please.

*Revd Tiffer Robinson (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Just very quickly, can we have an assurance that the Sustainability funding will continue at the same or even higher level in order to give a boost, really a morale boost, to parishes and dioceses so that their efforts to keep stipendiary ministry going are being supported by the centre?

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio):* I think we will come on to budgets and so on in the next part of the presentation, but what I can give you an assurance on, Tiffer, is sustainability of current ministry is absolutely crucial for us. I think that is probably the best answer I can give you at this stage.

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker):* I can probably add that the £35 million that was set aside last year for Sustainability funding for dioceses was not all spent in year 1. We know that the Covid crisis is continuing and dioceses are continuing to experience shortfalls in money this year and we are expecting to have further applications for that fund coming in during the course of this year.

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio):* I think we have set aside £20 million this year, have we not, David?

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker):* We have, indeed, Mark, yes. There is that money for dioceses to apply for.

*The Chair:* Thank you very much. I apologise that we have run out of time. The Clerk to the Synod is very happy if members want to send in any questions that you still have

because this scrutiny is an important part of our role. If you have got outstanding questions then please do send them in, but this brings this particular item to a close and I want to thank everybody who has contributed in any way. We now move to the next Items, 14 to 17.

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 10.02 am.

## **ITEM 14**

### **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL BUDGET 2022 AND PROPOSALS FOR APPORTIONMENT 2022 (GS 2213)**

*The Chair.* Good morning. We now move to the Budget and Apportionment item on the Agenda. For this, you will need Order Paper II that has been issued this morning. If you have not got access to that, the material that we will be dealing with is equally clearly itemised in the Agenda itself on pages 6 to 7 if you would prefer to refer to that.

The procedure will be that you will need GS 2213 and I will call upon John Spence to speak to Items 14 to 17. He will speak on the totality of those items for up to 15 minutes. Following that, he will move subsequent items formally without a speech. I will give further instructions about speech limits and so on when we get to that stage. I would like to just begin briskly with inviting John Spence to speak to Items 14 to 17. John, you have up to 15 minutes.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* My dear friends, good morning, and I must say my first learning of the day is to make sure that I liaise better with Maureen to avoid duplication and replication, but we will get there. Can I just pay tribute to Loretta and Maureen for their Reports. Loretta, I will deeply miss working with you. The NIBs Report from you and Clive last night was utterly brilliant and I hope that we are going to distribute it.

My job is to bring before you the Archbishops' Council Budget for approval. I felt it important that I should share some wider dimensions of the Church economy and, as such, there is more detail than I can accommodate verbally or can put on slides that you would be able to read, which is why there are some additional notes. But they are just that; just some notes, not a narrative. Of course, the impact of Covid was truly about the loss of life, loss of community, the loss of relationships and the loss of liberty.

My task is to talk about finance but it is always in that context of that more appalling dimension. In 2020, parish share declined by 7% on 2019. We saw that across the Southern Province and the Northern Province. In the Northern it was 9% down, in the Southern 6% down. With parish share bringing in last year £315 million, that is 67% of diocesan finances, so it is very significant.



On top of that, of course, dioceses suffered from the loss of investment income and parochial fees, while parishes, of course, were also losing all those other aspects of rental income, property income, fundraising events and so on. The range in the fall of parish share was very considerable. No diocese saw an increase. While nine dioceses saw a decrease of less than 5%, three saw decreases of more than 15%, a really very significant number, and it must be having a very troubling effect on the whole finances of that diocese.

You have heard already the scale of the responses people had to the crisis that faced them at parish and diocesan level. About 30% of all diocesan staff were furloughed at some point. Several dioceses had over 50% of their staff furloughed. Rather sadly, 90 curates across ten dioceses were furloughed at some point or another and over 2,000 staff across cathedrals. Sadly, there were redundancies, predominantly in services around hospitality and facilities. With many vacancies not being filled, we have seen a very significant reduction in overall diocesan head count, though the full numbers are not known to us.

You have heard already about the response both in terms of grants and cashflow with £14.9 million given out to 24 dioceses through the Sustainability Fund. This was brought into being by bringing together elements from other funds viring across elements from other funds to create this, and you have heard about the £20 million still available for this year. You have heard about the cashflow it aids both from the Commissioners with taking grants upfront and borrowing from the Stipends Fund and in the work that we did with Archbishops' Council around LInC funding and transition funding. Where are we now?

Well, I regret to say that at the half-year stage parish share is now down 10% on 2019. Not surprisingly, it was down considerably in the first quarter financially by 10%. This is interesting because what we are worried about is that finances worsen as the lockdown continues. In April and May, as churches began to open we saw a modest decline overall. I have not yet got the complete June numbers but you can see that the pattern remains very similar. Again, we have this extraordinary range because, actually, in five dioceses we have seen an increase so far in 2020.

But, again, we have a series of dioceses, I think nine in total, with declines of over 10% on 2020. There is a significant worsening on last year, four of those in the Northern Province and five in the Southern Province. That feels a very serious number to me. More positively, of course, as we have heard, we have seen the wonderful reimagining undertaken at parish and diocesan level all over the country, churches transforming their community focus, going out as great sources of inspiration into their communities and wonderful new ways of worship and digital mixed ecology.

I do commend to you the ongoing blogs performed by the Strategy Development Team who bring to life for you case studies of this work going on in practice and we will come back to the Giving Strategy later. Loretta and Maureen have explained the number of

funding streams available in 2020-22, but I do have to express a worry. The Strategic Transformation Fund for Dioceses, originally £45 million - though we have had to divert some of that to Sustainability - was announced two years ago in July 2019.

So far, we have deployed £6 million of that fund for capacity, but only one diocese has so far been able to bring forward its strategy for funding: £5.6 million for Sheffield. I do worry that our wonderful bishops and diocesan teams are so strained dealing with the problems of today, they are finding it difficult to create the strategies of tomorrow on which the whole of this must fix. This can never be Church House having a strategy for the Church. This has got to be about us facilitating and enabling the diocesan strategies across the country.

We are working with 20 dioceses now who are at various stages of strategic development, but it is very clear to me that only a small part of the £30 million still remaining will actually be spent in this triennium. There is a similar picture on the Strategic Development Fund where £170 million had been granted up to the end of 2020 but only under £50 million had been spent. We do expect to catch up. We always knew that it would take time for the money to be spent, although the delays have been greater than we expected and that has been exacerbated by Covid.

We are now reviewing every single project to understand its viability and sustainability in a post-Covid environment. The independent review of SDF, which Synod was promised would happen, is taking place in the second half of this year with an independent Chair of great significance already identified, though I do not think I can name him yet. That work will get underway. You have heard already about the important areas of ordinands and curacies.

We do have the funding streams available for the additional ordinands' funds and through Strategic Ministry Board for the funding of additional curacies. This has been a great success story. While we did not quite get to the 50% growth I imagined way back in 2015, we are now seeing a sustained level of ordained clergy across the country. It is critical that this be continued as we know there will be a peak in retirements in the post-Covid world. It is critical that we refresh the incumbents across our parishes where there is a very clear correlation between stipendiary priesthood and the amount of mission going on, however much laity is engaged as well.

Of course, we are seeing a renewed desire for increased levels of chaplaincy across the country as we reach out to remind England of the importance of Christ. That is one of the areas of uncertainty as we look ahead. Looking ahead brings various areas of uncertainty. We are yet to understand fully the financial implications of rolling out the Vision and Strategy.

The Governance Review that you know about is due to report in the autumn and we are still working out the full implications of the Transforming Effectiveness programme of which you will hear more where we have to consider how the savings will be captured but

also how much will have to be invested for those savings to be released. Across the wider economy, we have seen the massive impact of Covid. If you look at April 2020, GDP was 25% down on the end of 2019. By April 2021, it was only 4% down. In other words, the economy had grown by 27% in a year.

Who can tell what the picture will be like for the Church of England as we reopen and re-engage? How many of our worshippers will return? How many new disciples will come to us? It makes all the work of renewal so critical as we now move out of the lockdown of Covid. That is why I come back to the Giving Strategy. This is a major area of investment in which we are all engaged. £7.6 million from the centre, but, with diocesan funds matching it, it takes it to well over £10 million.

One element is the diocesan advisers. 23 have so far been appointed. I really hope the other dioceses will come forward so that they have that dedicated resource to help parish priests, who may never have thought part of their vocation was inspiring generosity, to do their job along with laity in leading generosity. The digital piece you have heard about at length. The Contactless Giving Strategy, was rather knocked off course when churches closed but has been repiloted in Southwark and Carlisle and we have done work with the Parish Giving Scheme to sustain the ability for online giving.

The third priority under this is training. We have created a great suite of training mechanisms and training resources. There are training sessions available, webinars, along with the digital team. I would observe that I see a very considerable range in participation between different dioceses. I do encourage people to make sure that your own diocese is taking a full part and role in all these different aspects available to it.

We come to the budget itself and the approvals you are asked to give. First, to approve the expenditure budget on those items relating to the apportionment. This is why I asked for approval of a budget of £52.6 million, which is very different from the numbers Maureen displayed. That is because they include the Strategic funding elements the Archbishops' Council utilise from the funds from the Church Commissioners. That is a 2.9% increase, powered by the need for the investment and safeguarding across the recommendations of IICSA being implemented, the move towards full independence and the creation of the long-term redress scheme and the creation of the new Racial Justice Unit.

Alongside that, we have funds from Government for their work on freedom of religion and belief and from the Clewer Sisters for modern slavery. All of these elements come together. The funding we receive from the Church Commissioners, the Corporation of Church House, the Allchurches Trust and other sources are hugely appreciated as it enables the work to carry on however much the constraints at diocesan level are. I have already pointed to the uncertainties, predominantly relating for 2022 at least, to the Transforming Effectiveness piece. That is why you will be asked to have a further update report from us in November.

But you are asked to approve the apportionment table. We committed that this would be the same in 2022, which is 1.6% lower than 2020 - so the same as 2021 but lower than 2020. We hope we may be able to come back with further reductions depending on what we discover about the outcome of the Transformation Effectiveness proposals currently underway. That £52.6 million I mentioned will be funded by apportionment of £32.5 million, approximately 63% of the total budget.

If I remind you that ten years ago it was over 90%, you will see how much we have been able to retain or save the dioceses from increased financial burdens by going out to our other partners whom we greatly value. Having said this, however, we have only been able to do this by utilising £2.4 million of Archbishops' Council's reserves - that is £0.4 million more than last year and it is a number that we cannot sustain.

Finally, I present before you the four recommendations that you will be asked to approve at the end of the questions' session: to take note of GS 2213; to approve the expenditures as listed there; to approve the apportionment table; and to request a further update at the November Synod. I look forward to answering your questions.

*The Chair:* I will ask you to move Item 14 in a moment but let us, first of all, have questions and comments.

*Revd Dr Philip Plyming (Universities & TElS):* I declare an interest as warden of Cranmer Hall, Durham, and, therefore, someone indirectly supported by the Vote 1 budget that we will be voting on later on. I want to begin these comments by expressing my thanks to the Synod, to the Archbishops' Council and the dioceses and parishes for the ongoing commitment to ministerial training within the Church of England.

The overall budget of £17.5 million represents a significant commitment to the over 1,300 ordinands who are training in different contexts up and down our country. It supports theological educators such as myself seeking to resource a diverse and, in my experience, wonderfully encouraging group of women and men to serve as priests and leaders of mission and ministry in our land. I also want to thank the Archbishops' Council for the additional funding for curacies which John Spence has just mentioned.

But, let us be clear, £17.5 million is a lot of money. We all know the financial pressures dioceses and parishes are under. Commentary in recent weeks has highlighted the costly and lengthy nature of ordination training and it is right that this budget, as with every budget area, comes under scrutiny. Let me say why I think this is a strategic and necessary investment of precious resources. It is very simple: it is theology. When I say "theology", I do not say that as a career academic who considers theology the exclusive preserve of libraries and lecture rooms.

I speak as someone who, after training at Cranmer 20 years ago, served in local churches for 16 years and was involved in traditional and pioneering forms of mission including planting for new congregations. For me, throughout, it was the theological depth of my training that really played out. Theology matters. Yes, we need priests who can lead well, embracing diversity, navigating change wisely and setting a healthy safeguarding culture. Yes, we need priests who can see missional potential in the familiar and the new. Yes, we need priests who know themselves well and can handle power with wisdom and accountability.

TEIs across the sector are constantly reviewing and amending our training pathways to reflect these and other priorities, some of which come at bewildering speed. But what we most deeply need are priests who know God well, who through a period of sustained and rigorous training and study have developed a deep and profound understanding of the simplicity and mystery of the Gospel, who are rooted in a prayerful and growing appreciation of the beauty of Christ and the work of the Spirit, who are able to drink deeply from and communicate powerfully about the breadth and length and height and depth of God's love. Because from that place, in my experience, two vital things can, must and do happen.

First, priests lead and engage in God's mission in all its forms, not simply as a series of techniques, hugely valuable though missional leadership and Church growth insights are, but within a clear theological framework of how God is at work in God's world. Mission is getting both more urgent and more demanding and, yet, our deepest need is not the latest tactic but a bold and humble confidence in the God who calls us to live and be the good news of Jesus Christ. Second, priests are enabled to resource lay people in the mission God is calling us to. In our various debates about lay ministry and discipleship, this point is so often overlooked.

So let me be clear. When the Church invests in training clergy, it is not seeking to create a cast of highly educated people who keep their theological learning to themselves but, rather, people who teach and equip and release others to worship and serve our living God. As the Archbishop of York put it yesterday, "Priests to serve a priestly people". I want to thank the Archbishops' Council and this Synod for their ongoing commitment to supporting the training of the future leaders of our Church.

I hope that as the next Synod comes to consider the funding of theological training through the RMF review, it retains that level of commitment and does not think that more can be done with less. After 12 years on Synod, I am not standing for election again, but I am glad that the RMF process already referred to in Question Time will receive significant scrutiny in Synod. This area of expenditure is not only materially significant but strategically vital. Theology matters. Thank you once again for the Synod and the Archbishops' Council support.

*The Chair:* We are on a five minute speech limit as the normal Standing Orders set out, but I would encourage all speakers to be as quick as they can so that as many people as possible have an opportunity to speak. I will take two more contributions before going back to John Spence for comment. We are going to do all comments and questions in batches of three throughout this session.

*The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin):* I want to thank you very much for the commitment that is being shown and given to dioceses up and down the country, but I want to say very quickly that what we are experiencing in terms of a serious shortfall in most of our dioceses is not just about finance. I want to underline that what we are seeing actually reflects a spiritual crisis within our Church. What do I mean by that? I believe that, when we have grown confident Christians or confident disciples of Christ, then we will see it impacting positively on our giving.

We need to be a Church that is not only teaching - and this is not just about the clergy, it is also about those in lay leadership - but we need to teach and we need to live generosity. It needs to become a way of life. I also think we need to think again as a Church about how we can continue to have a system whereby we say parish share is voluntary. It makes no sense to me whatsoever. We need to grapple with that and address that.

We also need to grapple with situations where we have leaders drawing stipends and who discourage their congregations to give because of so-called theological points of view. On the one hand, I want to say thank you for the support that comes to our churches and our dioceses, but I also believe that there is much work to be done in tackling those areas.

*Mr John Freeman (Chester):* I simply wish to place on record, as Rose has just done, our sincere thanks from the Diocese of Chester and everybody else for all the help we have received from the Church Commissioners and the Archbishops' Council during this season of pandemic. They all deserve a big pat on the back.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you, Chair, and, Philip, thank you all that you have done in Synod over your years of service. Nobody could disagree with what you have said. I very much hope that, through the Ministry Council, the RMF process will find ways in which we can at once ensure the relevance and cogence of all the theological development because it is absolutely critical we have that at the core of our offering while at the same time enabling the viability of the sector. Our very best wishes to you.

Rose, the questions you raised are great ones. The notion of how you move into a more consistent application of generosity is one which I am sure the House of Bishops will be best placed to lead on. I will observe that, while the Church system is under huge financial pressure, until 2020 - and I have not seen the latest numbers - actually, parish reserves had increased over the decade and one does wonder, if parish reserves are for a rainy

day, maybe that rain has arrived. John, thank you for your appreciation. We all appreciate your wonderful loyal service to Synod.

*The Chair.* Thank you, John. We are still commenting on the Report as a whole with questions and so forth.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Revd Canon Ruth Newton (Leeds):* I wanted to thank Canon Spence and the Archbishops' Council and acknowledge the levels of challenges that you have been dealing with, but I still feel the need to say this. Money is the sacrament of seriousness and it differentiates between the many things that we say are important and those we believe really are important and it underscores the difference between what we think is desirable and what we consider essential.

Budgeting, particularly in tough times, is always a matter of prioritising and choosing between the good and the good. The budget that you have presented is no different. It shows what the Archbishops' Council believes to be essential. I thought that rooting out institutional racism was essential and that working for racial justice was a priority because we, as a Synod, resolve to continue with great effort and urgency to stamp out all forms of conscious and unconscious racism.

I heard the Archbishop of Canterbury admit that this Church was guilty of institutional racism and I watched *Panorama* and witnessed how the reputation of the Church was damaged in my parish and I heard the pain on the part of UKME people. That is why I found it yesterday so difficult to hear that the recommendation contained in *From Lament to Action* for each diocese to have a racial justice officer, not forever just for five years, was not going to be implemented and even harder to hear the Archbishop of York say that this is because there was not money because of the need to reduce costs in diocesan and national administration.

It was obviously hard for the Archbishop to say that too. It is hard because money is the sacrament of seriousness. Yes, the cost of a racial justice officer for each diocese is a little eyewatering, but we spend eyewatering amounts on things that we consider important: safeguarding, for example. I would suggest that there is some parity when it comes to recognising where we have been wrong, naming toxic cultures and seeking not to inflict harm.

We drew money down because we wanted to be a growing Church, but do we also want to be a just one and is it possible to be one without the other? I am sorry, but it is not enough to say in response to *Lament to Action*, "We will do something but we think we could work out a way to do it cheaper", or, "We are going to do lots of things but just not this", or, "We have heard the recommendations but we have got a better plan", or, even, to promise jam tomorrow. It is not good enough, not in a Church which has admitted to

institutional racism, not after a long history of recommendations being made and then ignored and not in a Church which has committed to listen to the voices of UKME people.

*The Chair:* I am sorry, you have come to the end of your time, Ruth, and so I have to stop you there.

*Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester):* Thank you, John, for your normal very informative and detailed Report. My intervention is simply a question about a matter that has not been mentioned either by yourself or by the previous speakers. That is what your general view is of the impact both in the short-term but also in the longer term of inflation on both the Church's investments and on our ability to spend money and fund different projects in the ministry of the Church. I am very interested to hear what discussions and your own views are on the impact of inflation.

*Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark):* I am the Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee. Canon Spence has rightly talked about the financial stress that we are seeing across the whole of the Church economy at parish, diocesan and national level. I think there are three key issues that arise from John's presentation.

First of all, this is a matter that is an issue for the whole Church. We need to focus our financial resources on what matters. As we have heard from an earlier speaker, what matters to some obviously varies from what matters to others. Answering that question as to what we are about is almost the hardest issue in sorting out budgeting for the Church.

Fundamentally, it seems to me that what we are about is continuing our Gospel ministry and mission. This must mean a focus on the frontline at parish level. That does mean that Synod needs to be cautious in pressing for expenditure on many, many other matters across the piece when resources are tight.

Secondly, we also need to focus on growth. I completely agree with what the Bishop of Dover was just saying that actually if we focus on growth in bringing people in our communities to faith in Jesus Christ, and then teaching them about giving as part of discipleship, that growth in the worshipping communities across the country will go considerably towards resolving the financial difficulties that we face.

Finally, we do need to move away from replicating everything we do 42 times across the country with dioceses which have vastly different financial conditions and levels of historical assets. The numbers and roles of dioceses needs to be radically considered. Nettles need to be grasped in this area through the current Transforming Effectiveness and Governance Reviews.

A final point. The timing of bringing this budget to Synod is driven by legal requirements and it is quite clear, as John has outlined, that this is premature this year, as was the case



last year, and a revised budget will come to Synod in November. I do think it would be sensible for the Business Committee and others to consider whether this legislative requirement should be changed so that the budget needs to be considered in the year preceding the budget year rather than necessarily at the July group of sessions.

*The Chair.* I will go back to John Spence for his comments. After that, depending on time, there may be opportunity for a few more contributions. I will reserve judgment on that.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* I do hope we can. I will try to keep this brief. Robin, as an economist by background, I think all economists are unsure as to how long the inflationary bubble that is going to happen will last. Clearly, if it was to last a long time it would have a major detrimental impact as it would eat into the distributions from the Commissioners.

Carl, thank you, I think after the Governance Review will be the time when the legislative pieces can be looked at, but your intervention gives me the chance to thank you and all members of the Finance Committee, David White and all members of the finance team, for the superb support you give me.

Ruth, back to you. The concern of General Synod is well heard and was echoed within Archbishops' Council. It is true that there is a question of affordability. 42 racial justice officers would cost well in excess of £2 million per annum for five years and those funds were not available to us. As trustees, we have a fiduciary responsibility and the recommendations came forward very late in the budgeting process. But, actually, the debate was not just about affordability. It raised questions of where are we on other items of diversity. Should we have full-time officers around justice on areas of sexuality or disability or on other issues like the environment? Were we right to mandate that for the Church across 42 independent dioceses? There was the question of is one in each place the right answer where, if we look at the nature of our dioceses, the size of our dioceses, it is very different?

You have heard Carl talk about replication. We learnt in safeguarding early on that just having somebody safeguarding in each diocese was not necessarily the best model and that maybe it would be better to look at regional things.

The Archbishops' Council accepted all but five of the recommendations which it could validly accept out of the 47 that were there. We have not rejected this. We just need time to think about how we might do it. It is not about finding a better way, Ruth. We understand the need. We understand the competing demands. We have our fiduciary responsibilities. But this will remain on the table as to how we best go forward.

*The Chair.* We are getting very tight for time. I think there is room for one more contribution on this item.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Revd Sue Rose (Bath & Wells):* There are two things I really want to bring to your attention. I am the DDO in my diocese and, therefore, you will be unsurprised that I am particularly focusing my thoughts on the people who are coming forward for ordained ministry. We are hugely grateful for the support that is given both by dioceses and the national Church for all those who are training for ministry. When RME was introduced, we were assured there would be sufficient money for all ordinands to access the most appropriate courses for them, even if this meant accessing higher cost pathways than the RME age formula suggested.

In Bath & Wells, we sought to honour this, but we now find ourselves having to supplement that block grant with diocesan funds and being told additional funding is no longer available. At the same time, I am conscious that other dioceses retain ring-fenced block fund surpluses as a result of consistently choosing lower cost pathways for their ordinands. Can I ask, is there any mechanism being considered to retrieve such ring-fenced surpluses and perhaps redistribute them to dioceses that would use them or to use them for funding in other ways people who need training?

Secondly, the other thing is we are all delighted that there has been an increase in the number of people coming forward for training, but I notice in the budget there is a reduced amount being put forward from the central funds for supporting that in the years ahead. I would just like to ask whether, in fact, there will be enough money to support people coming out of training having sacrificially gone into it to have curacies, stipendiary curacies, as they were sponsored for in the years ahead and will that commitment continue as there is a lot of concern amongst our ordinands training as to whether or not there will be curacies for them?

*The Chair:* I am turning back to John Spence to comment on that, thank you, and then I will invite him to move Item 14.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* Sue, thank you, and let me reassure you, yes, there is a mechanism for us to retrieve block surpluses which are not going to be utilised. That is being looked at now by Chris Goldsmith and the Ministry Council team. We would look to rebalance that. Quite clearly, if certain dioceses do not have such surpluses but actually have deficits, Chris can consider how that can be addressed.

The funding decline, just going forward, is merely a reflection of the forecast of numbers given the numbers in the system. We are very clear that we want to, as we approach 2023-25, give high priority to the funding of curacies. It is, of course, vital. If you are going to invite people to inspire by vocation, come forward for ordination, they must have confidence in a stipendiary curacy at the end of that time. So, yes, that will remain a high priority as we enter the discussions this September for the 2023-25 triennium. I could not

ignore what Philip said at the start, what the Archbishop said, and then not seek to find the best ways to fund that going forward. Madam Chair, if I may start by moving Item 14, that this General Synod take note of paper GS 2213.

*The Chair.* I am now going to put Item 14 to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried, 256 voting in favour, three against, with four recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 15**

*The Chair.* I now invite John Spence to move Item 15.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you, Chair. I move Item 15, the budgeted expenditure of the Archbishops' Council, as set out in your Order Paper.

*The Chair.* This item is now open for debate. On my screen there are a quite a number of people who want to speak throughout this session and so we will keep the limit at two minutes throughout.

*Revd Brunel James (Leeds):* I am concerned in the presentations that we have had that there seems to be a disconnect. When people talk about renewal, growth and mission, they do not understand that being an inclusive Church where all ethnic groups and all global majority people feel welcomed and affirmed is absolutely core and strategic. There is a massive opportunity for us. We have got to get outside our self-created cosy circle of serving posh white people and serve the whole country.

England, the football team, are putting us to shame. English football is famously racist, but the England management under Gareth Southgate have challenged that culture and they have created a new united group of players who are absolutely world class and loads of those players are Windrush grandchildren. Raheem Sterling was born in Kingston, Jamaica.

Why is not the Church doing the same thing? Why are we not world class with a true multicultural talented team at the top? We have missed that opportunity. 45 years ago, *Faith in the City* said what we needed to do and we did not do it and we have not done it and we have not done it and we urgently need to do it. When is the Church of England going to wake up to the opportunity that we have missed and keep on missing? When are we going to be a Church not just for posh white people but for the whole nation? A new, non-racist England is winning on the football field but it is not visible in the life of the Church and it needs to be urgently.

*Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells):* I am not standing for Synod next time and I will miss the “John Spence Show”, so thank you, John, for all that you have done over the years. You will not be surprised at what I am about to say. I am more than happy for our Church to give a grant to the mission agencies to support their work. I have always been very supportive of the mission agencies themselves. However, I do have a particular concern over the way that it is labelled as being “for mission agency pension contributions”. Pension contributions should be paid for by the responsible employer.

I have argued that, rather than doing this as we do, we should have a fixed amount of, say, around about £500,000 to be included in the grants budget. It was separated out as Vote 4 by an historic mistake without a Green Paper supporting to show the financial implications to General Synod. This is a thorn in the side of the way that we do things.

As I will not be standing for Synod next time, this is my last opportunity to make a plea for this change. I have been told on every other occasion that I have asked for this that it would be looked at and I do not want this historic issue to be forgotten and left unresolved.

*Revd Preb. Sarah Schofield (Lichfield):* If I may, a personal thanks. I was a member of Archbishops’ Council for five years and, John, you were unfailingly helpful and supportive throughout that time, so thank you. But you will not be surprised that this is going to be a difficult question. Given that good staff retention is part of good stewardship, retaining experience and avoiding expensive recruitment, when female and BAME staff resign from national Church roles, as a number of senior officers have in the last few years, do interview exits happen and do they consider whether gender ethnicity or other characteristics, protective characteristics, were a factor in the departure of these female staff?

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you, Chair, and again I will take them out of order. Tim, farewell to you, my friend, my fellow ugly sister in our 2015 end of Synod cabaret production of *Cinderella*. I promise you - and David White is listening - that this will be debated at the next Finance Committee meeting, and that is all I can do. Sarah, I can give you reassurance, actually, yes, we do undertake exit interviews now.

What is more, all the trustees sitting on the Joint Employment and Common Service Board and the Board of JECSB Limited have recently undertaken a wonderful piece of training on unconscious bias and how we can ensure that things might come across as bias from those who are listening are not on our lips, in our actions or in any ways. There is a very great focus now on the values proposition within Church House. We do have a diverse team of staff and Loretta, in her presentation, pointed to the much higher levels of staff satisfaction where we separately measure both minority ethnic groups and disability groups. We are aware of where the differences are and we will work on them.

To Brunel, I understand again this issue, but I must say there is a much better picture I can paint here. Strategic Development funding has always been directed to poorer and

more diverse communities which, sadly, include more people from the global majority and we have already, in the light of the Racism Report, amended the guidelines for future strategic development grants not just to be focused on poverty, on young people and on urban, but also to take into account the degree to which they are reaching minority ethnic groups. I know that that will be repeated when the longed-for diocesan strategies come forward.

A poorer, humbler, bolder Church has to be bold in the areas of greatest need and all the areas I have discussed just there, the youth, the poverty, the urbanity where there is lower levels of priesthood and the racial mix, will always be characteristics in that place.

*The Chair:* I think there is time for one or perhaps two more questions.

*Ven. Luke Miller (London):* I want to take the opportunity to thank parishes in my archdeaconry for digging very deeply into their reserves over the last year. Really, the question I would like to ask is around the model that congregational giving sustains the Church. I think that this is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow we never reach. The reason for that is that, as the Bishop of Dover has said, discipleship lags and, therefore, people give a little later than they start coming.

Increased numbers mean increased costs. A thousand new churches: how many more archdeacons are we going to need to look after that? Maybe only one, but we are going to need quite a lot of safeguarding and other investment. Thirdly, the dependence on the middle class is what flows from that and it decreases our diversity because we depend on those who are able to give and have resources to do so.

To increase our diversity and increase the size of our churches, it seems to me that we need to take steps for re-endowment of the local churches trading property investment such that they have an income which enables them to be able then to do their work of evangelism and mission. We do need grants that will cause growth. Do not get me wrong, we need more churches, we need more church planting and we need a diverse economy and ecology.

But we need to endow all of our forms of Church such that when you got out of bed in the morning your basic costs have already been covered. That will then give you the results that you have from your giving. It is much better and much more interesting for people to want to give to something they can see and so please give me your money so that I can go out and evangelize. I think that this will, far from encouraging complacency and indolence, be a spark for growth for our local churches and I hope very much that we can move to a model of endowment rather than simply chasing after a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow that we never reach.

*The Chair:* There is a considerable complexity in that comment and so I think we will go back to John Spence and then we will consider moving on to the next stage of voting.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* Luke, it is not either or, is it? Hunting for the pot of gold, we have known for many years we are actually getting further and further away from it as those who are committed to regular giving have grown older in age and declined in number. If you remember presentations from the past I have made, we have seen how that was flattening and had begun to decline even before Covid. That model has been unravelling over time.

All the increased costs of complexity of management in today's world, quite apart from safeguarding all the other standards that are required, make the whole cost of management far greater than it used to be. Yes, we need to be one Church, actually. We need to be a whole Church understanding how we best use all the resources of the whole Church.

I know the Church Commissioners would agree with saying to me that there are no Church Commissioners' funds. There are Church Commissioners' responsibilities. The funds they manage so brilliantly are the funds of the whole Church and, as we enter the 2023-25 triennium, we must work out how we best deploy those so that we can, indeed, empower everyone. But, equally, it is not either or. The Giving Strategy has to be the piece.

I only need to look at the disparities of average giving across parishes and dioceses which have no relationship to the amount of poverty in that community to tell me that there is an enormous opportunity to inspire generosity between those who are already committed worshippers in this Church so that we can, indeed, fund and emblazon the evangelism of this country.

*The Chair:* I am now going to put Item 15 to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried, 278 voting in favour, two against, with seven recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 16**

*The Chair:* I now invite John Spence to move Item 16.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* I so move Item 16, which is the apportionment table, for your approval.

*The Chair:* That item is now open for debate but, actually, I see no yellow hands or hands of any other colour coming up on the screen. In that case, we can move directly to the vote. I am now going to put Item 16 to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried, 277 voting in favour, three against, with five recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 17**

*The Chair.* I am now going to invite John Spence to move Item 17.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you, Chair. With your leave, before I do so, when Sarah Schofield spoke she thanked the Archbishops' Council for their fellowship during her time on that body. I omitted to thank Sarah for all that she brought to our deliberations with the very positive and unique perspectives that so added to all our thoughts. So, thank you, Sarah.

I so move Item 17, which is that you will request an update at the November group of sessions. Just to be very clear, at that time we will bring you a revised budget with more of the uncertainties I have described this morning resolved, at which apportionment will be no greater than it is today. If it is possible, there will be a reduction but I cannot predict at this time.

*The Chair.* Item 17 is now open for debate.

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* In February 2017, the Synod passed a motion confirming that matters which are purely administrative are no longer subject to the principle of subsidiarity. What this means is that every effort should be made to deliver those functions in the most efficient way, which generally means centrally. Archbishops' Council was tasked with making this happen. I do understand that we will be hearing more on Monday about Transforming Effectiveness but, for now, what I would like to hear is whether we are going to have an updated estimate of expenditure in the autumn which will include a statement of investment being made to introduce administrative efficiency throughout the Church so that we stop, as Carl Hughes was saying, duplicating matters which are purely administrative across 42 dioceses.

*The Chair.* I see no other raised hand so I will refer back to John Spence to comment on that before we proceed to the vote.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* Gavin, thank you. You have been very consistent on this theme and I think you know that several of us share your frustration that it is not going faster. One of the workstreams within Transforming Effectiveness, of which you will hear more, is working with dioceses about areas in which we can move to a more collegiate or joined-up way of working and there are some quick wins there. Some things will take longer.

I do point to the digital team as a great example of how a national body of expertise has empowered, going back to Luke's point, parishes in their work and I hope the Giving Strategy people can achieve the same goals. Ultimately, there have to be better ways of organising ourselves than replicating and reinventing wheels 42 times and I am confident that, with the leadership of the Bishops and the Transforming Effectiveness programme, we will start accelerating in that direction.

*The Chair:* There are no other expressed desires to speak and so I will put Item 17 to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried, 294 voting in favour, none against, with one recorded abstention.*

*The Chair:* That brings this item on the Agenda to a close. The sitting is now adjourned until 11.30. There will be a screen break, beautifully timed for mid-morning coffee of course. We will see everyone back in action at 11.30, thank you very much.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 11.30 am.

## **ITEM 18**

### **GENERAL SYNOD ELECTIONS 2021: SEAT ALLOCATION (GS 2214)**

*The Chair:* Welcome back, Synod. We are now at Item 18 on the Agenda, the General Synod Elections: Seat Allocations. For this, you will find it useful to have the Order Paper for this morning and also GS 2214. I now call on Canon Robert Hammond to speak and to move Item 18. He may speak for up to ten minutes.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* In February 2020, General Synod agreed the allocation of seats to dioceses for the next quinquennium. The allocation of seats was based on the electorate as at 31 July 2019 using the data collected from and confirmed by the diocesan secretaries. At the April 2021 group of sessions, Synod passed an amendment resolution to reflect the error in the electoral roll numbers provided by the Diocese of Lincoln for February 2020.

As a result of this, further interrogation of the allocation of seats took place which highlighted an error in the allocation of seats. I am very grateful to Nigel Bacon from Lincoln for pointing this out. I am very sorry about this error and both the Secretary General and the Head of Research and Statistics at Church House have offered me their apologies for this mistake.

Briefly, the error was in the application of the method by which fractions of seats are dealt with in the division of the total number of seats among the dioceses. The error involved those dioceses that had been provisionally allocated the minimum three seats being



incorrectly excluded from a subsequent part of the process that allocates the balance of seats after minimum allocation requirements are met.

The divisor method has now been applied again correctly, ensuring that the dioceses who were provisionally allocated the minimum number of three seats were not excluded when it came to allocating the balance of the seats. The result is that a small number of dioceses who had previously been allocated three seats should now be allocated four seats and that has, therefore, impacted some other dioceses with a larger seat allocation.

For this reason, we are presenting a further motion to correct the issue and provide the correct seat allocation for dioceses for the election to General Synod. I beg to move this motion standing in my name.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I wish to support the motion but also to express concern, some of which I expressed in April when the previous amendment resolution was brought to Synod, about the inaccuracy of some of these figures and the need on a second occasion now to make amendments. Part of the problem I think is the complexity of the formula which is used to ensure fair allocation across all 42 dioceses.

It may be that that needs to be looked at to see whether it is still fit for purpose, but the fundamental point surely is that we do perhaps need to have some external check or third party check on the calculations once all the data has been inputted from dioceses. There are two points I would like to make and suggest to Robert Hammond that the Elections Review Group, which will be of course re-established for the new quinquennium by the new Business Committee, should be looking at.

The first of these is to look again at how to ensure that the figures which are returned by each dioceses for electoral roll number is accurate. That, of course, goes back to the question of whether individual parishes in each diocese return, as they are required to do under the Church Representation Rules, their annual electoral roll numbers. Of course, the vital number is that in the year before the quinquennial election because it is those numbers that the calculation of seat allocation is based upon. That is the first point.

The second point is this. Were dioceses, in fact, asked to confirm their electoral roll numbers before the April debate? We had a correction, of course, from Lincoln which threw up the issue of an overallocation of lay seats to that diocese, but a number of the figures in the schedule were suspiciously indicative of estimates with round numbers at the end of the numbers. I appreciate that it is a problem, of course, for the national Church to gather accurate numbers from all the many parishes across the whole country but, on the other hand, we are concerned here with representative democracy and ensuring fair representation across the whole country.

I would like the Business Committee to ensure that the Elections Review Group looks at these issues early in the quinquennium so that, hopefully, we do not have this problem arising again in the future.

*Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Representation is always a hard thing to call but, putting in extra checks and balances outside of diocesan and parochial levels, I am sorry, it just actually says that diocesan secretaries and PCCs are not trustworthy. If we do not fill in our forms, we should not be expected to receive representation. I speak as someone in a diocese that is tragically underrepresented on electoral rolls. It is up to us to get our house in order. We know that we should have an additional lay representative but we do not because we have not done our work. I really do not believe that we should put an extra onus on the Business Committee and other parts of General Synod because we have not done our homework.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford):* I am particularly interested in where the Channel Islands' electors are to be and whether that is properly reflected under Salisbury. Although congratulations to Nigel Bacon in drawing this to light that there was an underrepresentation, it does strike me that we do need, as David Lamming has said, an external audit of it to be certain that we have got the numbers correct. This is really crucial and I think it is regrettable that it has only come to light with only a few more weeks of this Synod, technically being prorogued on Monday.

I would ask the Election Group to carefully review again just how these divisions were worked out in the first place on the fractions and also a reassurance of where the Channel Islands is now fitting in and whether they - hopefully not - have had any reduction. I know we have Tim Barker and we have David Robilliard already there and I do not want them to be forgotten, but are we confident that this system is correct? Also the proportionality between the Provinces of York and Canterbury seems to be getting, shall we say, wider between the two. I, obviously, would support anything that gets the process right with my experience as a former Member of Parliament.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I wanted to thank those who have spotted this mistake. However, I wanted to make a plea - and this could be my last opportunity at Synod - for the next Synod to consider how it draws up its representation. We are the Church of England. We are meant to represent the whole of England and everybody in the Church of England and everybody in the country. It is their Church. We are not congregational. I worry that we even have to ask electoral numbers from each church and we then send numbers proportionately. We should be looking to have representation that is equal in every area so voices of young people are heard equally in every area because we have older people in our churches and so we want to widen ---

*The Chair.* Sorry, Mr Margrave, this is not in order. It is not to do with the matter under debate, I am afraid.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Not a problem, thank you.

*Mr David Robilliard (Channel Islands):* This is just to answer Canon Bruinvels' point. The Channel Islands do not count within the figures of any diocese. The two lay representatives from Guernsey and Jersey, one from each island, form special constituencies, as do the deans. One of the island deans has a seat but we do not form part of any diocesan figures.

*The Chair.* I see no one else indicating they wish to speak and so I now call on Mr Hammond to reply, please. He has up to five minutes.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Thank you for those comments and questions. Very briefly, David Lamming, your internet was breaking up a couple of times but I think I got everything that you said. I think the key thing is that the Elections Review Group will look at all of those points that you made. I think that is for the Elections Review Group to deal with that. Andrew Dotchin, thank you, I think I agree.

Peter Bruinvels, again the Elections Review Group will look at some of those issues. You make some interesting points about overall representation that I think are sort of slightly outside the scope of this. David Robilliard, thank you for covering the Channel Islands' point that Canon Bruinvels made. I think that is covered in footnote 3 on page 9 of GS 2214 as well. Sam, as ever, you make some really interesting points about representation and that is an ongoing discussion as you know.

*The Chair.* I am now going to put Item 18 to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried, 265 voting in favour, two against, with eight recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* That ends this item of business and we move straight on to Item 19, which is safeguarding.

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 11.46 am.

## **ITEM 19 SAFEGUARDING**

*The Chair.* We now move to Item 19, Safeguarding. Members will need GS 2215 for this item and I invite the Bishop of Huddersfield to give his presentation.

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* I will be giving this presentation jointly with the Interim National Director of Safeguarding, Zena Marshall. You will have a PowerPoint presentation coming up on the screen and we are also following GS 2215. Zena and I are very pleased to bring to you today this update on some of the main aspects of the work currently being undertaken by the National Safeguarding Team in conjunction with the National Safeguarding Steering Group.

This is a relatively brief Report, partly because much of what is happening was already covered in our Report to the April group of sessions in GS 2204. As I have said before, we will continue to apologise for and learn from the Church's failings over safeguarding but, at the same time, we are now, quite rightly, entering a season of action. There is far more to be done, of course, but this Report outlines some of the steps we are taking on the way.

Underpinning all of this is the importance of our engagement with survivors whose insights will be a vital part of shaping all our future work in safeguarding. The main thrust of today's Report concerns what is being done to improve the quality of the Church's safeguarding work and to make our churches safer and healthier places for all. This is just a snapshot, but we hope it will give you a clearer idea of where we are heading.

As the first slide indicates, we will be speaking about some of the main projects and workstreams which the NST is currently leading. What I also want to say is that our aim is to help people see safeguarding as an integral part of the mission of the Church. Safeguarding is, of course, partly about stopping bad things happening and about how we respond when they do. It is also about enabling our churches to become places where people are enabled to flourish and grow into the fullness of life that God intends for us all. Safeguarding is at the heart of the Gospel because it is about expressing God's love and care for every single human being and enabling all people to experience that love and care more fully and more deeply for themselves.

As you will see, we have grouped our remarks under the five headings in the Report though in a slightly different order. These are: policy developments - outlining some of the main changes currently underway; the post-IICSA safeguarding programme and the projects within that; including especially independent oversight of the Church's safeguarding work and the National Case Management System; and, then, finally, Safeguarding Sunday, which is a new initiative aiming to raise the profile of safeguarding across all churches nationally. I hand over to Zena.

*Ms Zena Marshall (ex officio):* Thank you. Safer recruitment and people management guidance. We are committed to promoting a safe environment and culture across all Church bodies for all, including children, young people and vulnerable adults. An essential part of this commitment is ensuring that all those who work or volunteer with children and vulnerable groups are suitable for the role that they carry out. We know

many places are already doing much of what is required and this guidance aims to make it as simple as possible for everyone to understand expectations and apply them in their environment.

By doing so it creates and maintains a safe and supportive environment that inspires trust, enabling individuals to thrive and grow and have the best experience of Christian life through the work of the Church. In order to help Church bodies implement this new guidance, a supportive implementation plan is in place which includes a new e-manual, practical assessment tools, workshop sessions, drop-ins for HR and safeguarding staff, Microsoft Teams forums and an online training pathway which will be launched next week. This will all lead into the next five months to be implemented in January next year. Lots of work has been done on these three policies, including wide consultations with victims and survivors, dioceses and cathedrals.

All three of these new policies will be presented to the National Safeguarding Steering Group by November for approval. Implementation plans will also be developed, like the safeguarding recruitment policy, to support dioceses and parishes to implement these policies and changes. Responding to, Assessing and Managing Allegations against Church Officers' Policies is undertaking large scale revision. This policy will draw clear distinctions between allegations of direct abuse and allegations where there have been failures to follow the safeguarding practice. These two clear pathways will look quite different and address different sets of issues.

As part of this revision, we are engaging with victims and survivors and those people who have been respondents to learn and help us develop this policy. This policy will also address issues that have been raised at Synod in relation to the role of the core group and issues in relation to the conflict of interest policy. The e-policy will also be ready later this year and a more comprehensive conflict of interest policy will be taken to the September National Safeguarding Steering Group.

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* As we reported to the April group of sessions, the Church of England fully accepted the six key recommendations of the IICSA Report. Our response also went further than this as we made commitments to establish independent oversight of the Church's safeguarding work and to set up a redress scheme for victims and survivors, about which we will say more in a few moments. It is a huge undertaking to deliver the required change across all of these areas on a national scale and I am very grateful to the Archbishops' Council for their commitment to resourcing the work that will be needed.

I would also like to express my thanks to my colleagues in the NST for their dedication in putting together a comprehensive plan and programme structure to ensure the cost-effective and efficient delivery of the different workstreams. Synod, I think it is important to acknowledge the commitment of both the NST and their safeguarding colleagues in our dioceses and cathedrals who are all working to help make our Church a safer place

for everyone. We all realise that the issues and situations that they are dealing with are complex and fraught, often reflecting the awful things that have happened to victims and survivors at the hands of the Church.

The welfare of and response to survivors is clearly our colleagues' main concern. As Lead Bishop, I would ask everyone to remember that in their dealings with them. Turning to the specifics of the National Safeguarding Programme, this comprises eight different workstreams which are listed on the slide. None of this will happen overnight, but what is being put in place is a highly organised and professional set of structures that seek to ensure that deep and lasting change is brought about in the months and years ahead. All of this will be done in co-operation with our dioceses and cathedrals and with the involvement of survivors in the design and delivery of each of the projects.

Zena and I would now like to highlight two of the workstreams in particular; firstly, independent oversight of safeguarding and, secondly, the National Case Management System. The setting up of an independent structure for overseeing the Church's safeguarding work was one of the key ways in which the Church of England has gone further than the specific recommendations of IICSA, though it can be seen as a logical response to the main thrust of the Report.

The work that is underway at present, led by Malcolm Brown and done in consultation with survivor groups, focuses on the appointment of a small Independent Safeguarding Board which will then help to shape and develop a structure for overseeing, in the first instance, the work of the National Safeguarding Team. As our Report states, recruitment to this Board is underway and is being undertaken by an external search agency.

Initial interviews are scheduled for August and it is planned that the Board will commence its work in the autumn. We cannot say much more than that at present because it will be largely for the Board to determine how it will proceed. It is, after all, independent, but the principle is clear: to ensure independent oversight and accountability for the Church's national safeguarding work.

*Ms Zena Marshall (ex officio):* The much awaited National Casework Management System will deliver a casework management system to cover all dioceses, cathedrals and the National Safeguarding Team. The new system will support effective safeguarding practice, facilitate smoother information sharing between the churches and provide a strategic overview of types and number of cases.

Earlier this year, we undertook a competitive procurement process and selected a recommended supplier for this system. This recommendation was approved by the Archbishops' Council in May along with the project budget. Contract negotiations with the preferred supplier are now well underway with a phased roll-out expected to be on schedule for autumn of this year.

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Finally, we would like to draw Synod's attention to Safeguarding Sunday to be held on 10 October. This is an initiative launched some time ago now by the independent safeguarding charity, Thirty One: Eight, which we are very pleased to support and to join in with in a more proactive way this year. A whole range of excellent resources will be available both via Thirty One: Eight and on the Church of England website and we hope that as many churches as possible of all denominations will take part in one way or another.

This is an opportunity to bring safeguarding into the heart of the Church's life in the kind of way to which I was referring at the start of this presentation. As I said earlier, safeguarding is not something peripheral to the life of the Church. It is at the heart of the Gospel because it is about God's love and care for every single human being and especially for the weak and vulnerable. Safeguarding Sunday is an opportunity for every church to reaffirm its commitment to being a place of safety and of human flourishing where every single person can be enabled to experience the loving care of God and the overflowing grace and compassion of Jesus Christ.

Synod, safeguarding is about people coming to share the abundant life that Jesus came to bring. That is the heartfelt desire that underpins everything that our colleagues in the NST are doing, as I know it is the desire also of those who work in our diocesan and cathedral safeguarding teams and in countless parishes up and down the land. Synod, we are delighted to have the chance to bring this presentation to you today and we look forward to working with you to see all of this through and to turn these plans into reality.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Bishop Jonathan and Zena, for that. We now have the opportunity to ask some questions. The clue is in the title there, so I will be looking for questions, please, from you. We are going to take them in groups of three.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* I would like to ask you about a concern that I have about what I would describe as the weaponisation of safeguarding. I have at the moment five clergy who are in touch with me who are in difficulty because they took safeguarding seriously. I know of an email where it was said, "If he carries on like this he will make us all miserable". When safeguarding is being misrepresented in that sort of way, we really do have a serious problem. Safeguarding is not only about doing justice for the victims - of whom I am a passionate supporter - but also the clergy. All clergy are just one allegation away from a nightmare.

I am still hearing a case, if I can quote it, where an email has gone out that says, "Our role is not to seek the truth but to believe the victim". Whereas I know that when we get to the top of this, when we get to the designated officer and to the president and the deputy president, we get dealt with very well. Our cases are superbly dealt with. But lower down the food chain there is still serious failure and serious conceptual difficulty. I just wonder what you can do about that, particularly in the core group situation.

Because safeguarding is about vulnerable people. It is not people who self-identify as vulnerable. It is about people who are vulnerable, children and people who have got a real vulnerability. If people say, "I am a vulnerable person, therefore you must deal with me on that basis", they are not a vulnerable person, they are a trap for clergy and I am really worried about making sure that you get these conceptualisations of what safeguarding really is.

*Canon Peter Adams (St Albans):* Thank you, Bishop Jonathan, for your Report and thanks to the team for the ongoing progress. I do note that one of the significant criticisms that IICSA made was in regard to our communication and especially what they term "reputation management". I note in the document that guides the response to safeguarding, published in 2017, the inclusion of a national or diocesan communication officer in the core group managing the case. This is fully understandable and totally necessary. One assumes such people are, whether they are diocesan employees or other, totally online, on message and so on.

However, it has become clear that in some of our safeguarding cases, external agencies, particularly PR companies, are being used by dioceses on such cases. Can you help me understand whether in such cases it is appropriate for them to sit on core groups, whether they would be required to have appropriate background checks, DBS, et cetera, safeguarding training and, indeed, particularly importantly I would say here, what pastoral and indeed theological guidelines are they working by and are given to them.

*Revd Canon Patricia Hawkins (Lichfield):* I speak as somebody who is totally convinced of the need for this at every level and would like to start by expressing my thanks to those of you who are working so hard. I also speak as a parish priest who finds it easy to feel overwhelmed by keeping up-to-date with all the very necessary changes that are being rolled out.

Mine, really, is perhaps more of a plea rather than a question and it is very pragmatic that, as things change, we can work at ways of flagging up for hard pressed clergy what is changing. Perhaps a model might be the Coronavirus guidance that has been on the Church of England website where it has been very easy to see: this is what has changed from what you were working at. So, really, a plea as things are rolled out to help us navigate our way through the changes.

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Thank you for those three questions. Martin, I will respond first and Zena may well wish to come in with some specific comments as well. The point you have raised about the impact of safeguarding proceedings on individuals, both respondents as well as victims and survivors, is a crucially important one.

Zena has made reference to that already in the presentation on the slide relating to Responding to, Assessing and Managing Allegations against Church Officers and she



may well wish to say a little bit more about that in a moment or two. I think the general point I would want to make is that, whether it is with regard to individual cases or indeed with regard to different classes and groups of people, we are very well aware that there is a risk that people will want to use safeguarding to further their particular cause.

I can assure you that the National Safeguarding Team and all of my colleagues have no desire to be part of any kind of mission creep in that kind of way. When it comes to working through different issues from different groups of people, we are working with a number of groups at the moment to be very clear about when is something safeguarding and when is it not, and that is really important.

Peter, with regard to your question also with regard to core groups, again further specific guidance on the operation of core groups is in preparation at the moment and Zena may well say a word or two about how that is going to be coming back to the NSSG with regard to who should be involved in core groups, clarifications over things like conflict of interest, clarifications over on what basis people are there and what kind of guidance they operate under when they are there.

Pat, thank you very much indeed for your question. We are very conscious of the pressure under which parish clergy are operating at the moment, as indeed are diocesan colleagues. It is a huge time of change in the life of our Church and, in particular, in the whole area of safeguarding. I do hear what you are saying. I know that my colleagues put out a regular newsletter about the ongoing work of the National Safeguarding Team, but your point is well made and everything that we can do to work with diocesan colleagues and through them also with parish colleagues to help flag up what is coming is really helpful.

We are certainly trying to do that also on the level of change that affects dioceses at the moment so that some people have an idea of what the work plan is over the next year or two. Zena, I do not know if you want to come in on any of those specific points as well.

*Ms Zena Marshall (ex officio):* Yes, I will just pick up on a couple of points. Thank you for those questions. There was a question raised from Martin in relation to vulnerability. The new Safeguarding Children, Young Person and Vulnerable Adults Policy will clarify some further detail of vulnerability definition. I have got a thumbs up, that is really good. Peter, your question about communication. Yes, comms officers do attend core groups but they are not a decision-making person on the core group. They are there for a specific reason and there are national comms guidance that they adhere to.

Pat, a really good point, and this is where we are really conscious about when we are bringing in new policies, like I have explained, around the new Safer Recruitment Policy, that we give you a long lead time in terms of being able to manage and implement the policy and give you the tools to be able to do it like that, so workshops, drop-ins and give

you the support that you need to implement the policy. A really good question and we are very conscious to give you the support that is required.

*Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester):* Thank you, Bishop Jonathan and Zena, for an excellent presentation. Bishop Jonathan, you rightly speak of safeguarding as being in the richest sense about human flourishing and the body of Christ. Many LGBT+ people have had bruising and shattering experiences in the body of Christ. As we travel forward, how will the National Safeguarding Team play its part in integrating appropriate learning from LLF into the life of the Church?

*The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Julian Henderson):* I am grateful to Jonathan and the team for all that they have done and the progress they are making. I have two questions about the National Case Management System, which is obviously going to be an invaluable source of information. It is going to depend, I imagine, in order to be accurate, on a lot of input from dioceses around the country. I just want to make sure how the system is going to be monitored to be an accurate record and, secondly, how is it is going to synchronise with existing diocesan systems and databases?

*Ms Josile Munro (London):* Thank you very much for the Report, it is a really helpful Report. One of the key issues, and you heard it reflected by a previous questioner, is that lots of small parishes find it difficult to appoint parish safeguarding officers. Obviously, it is becoming much more a job where people need to really keep an eye on the changes. I wondered if the group has any thought on how they might support the encouragement and development of parish safeguarding officers to ensure that all parishes have lay people sharing the burden with the clergy on this matter?

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Thank you very much indeed for those questions. Rachel, thank you very much for your question. I can assure you that already the NST has been working with colleagues in the LLF process. There is a huge amount of learning there. We are very much aware of the particular challenges and vulnerabilities faced by members of the LGBTI communities. We are working through on that level.

Can I just also mention that we are also in conversation with members of the Windrush Group and we are also conversation with members of the Accessible Synod Group. We are looking at the particular challenges and issues that are faced by members of those different communities and how we build that into the way in which we go about doing our safeguarding work. This is part of a wider set of issues that we are very much aware of. Thank you for that question and any input that friends have from those difference constituencies to us we are very much keen to hear from you. With regard to Julian, I am going to defer to Zena to answer that specific question.

*Ms Zena Marshall:* There has been lots of input on this project from dioceses and cathedrals in terms of what is actually required and what is going to be useful in terms of

the data that we record and collect and how we share that. We also have started this week a data migration specialist who will be looking at exactly that issue of how we convert our old records to this new system, so that is very much within the scope of the project.

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Thanks, Zena. Josile, I will come to you also. Absolutely, we are very conscious, in particular in these challenging times, of the difficulties faced in small parishes with regard to recruiting officers of all sorts. We hope, of course, that parishes and, indeed, dioceses will recognise the priority and the importance of identifying people who can serve as parish safeguarding officers. It is a hugely important role. In multi-parish benefices, there is also the possibility of having someone who is a benefice safeguarding officer who may be able to exercise that responsibility over several parishes.

Nevertheless, the important thing here is about working with colleagues in the dioceses through the diocesan safeguarding teams. We are enormously grateful to them for all the work they are doing and especially with regard to the training and development of all those involved in safeguarding and working with parishes to help identify and support those people who could fulfil those roles. It is a challenge. We hope everybody sees it, and I think everybody does see it, as a priority. We are keen to do everything we can to work with dioceses to support them in their work with parishes in order to fulfil that commitment.

*Mr James Cary (Bath & Wells):* Is the Bishop of Huddersfield aware that on 1 October - of course, he is aware - nine days before Safeguarding Sunday, the Church of England commemorates the life of Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, a pioneering social reformer, especially in the protection of children? Is not Safeguarding Sunday an opportunity to celebrate the life and work of this reformer but also Maria Mills, a humble Christian housekeeper who provided a safe space - if I can use that term - for the Earl as a young boy growing up in a very Dickensian situation and nurturing him and his Christian faith that drove his desire to build the Kingdom of God? And could not our history help inspire change in the culture of safeguarding in the Church of England?

*Revd Canon Rosie Harper (Oxford):* Thank you, Bishop Jonathan, very much for that presentation. Gosh, there is a shed-load of work going on. Zena alluded very briefly to work being done on the matter of conflict of interest and I am wondering whether you could be a little bit more explicit, particularly in the areas of insurance, which I know, and I am sure you know as well, survivors are very concerned about, and also in the area of ecclesiastical lawyers, of whom there are a very small number who seem to be working quite often in a very sort of closely associated way. There definitely seem to be serious conflict of interest matters going on in the obscene hounding of the Dean of Christchurch, Oxford and I think this is a matter that is of very great relevance today.

*Mrs Joan Beck (Southwell & Nottingham):* I heard Zena say that the NST was going to do some work on vulnerability, particularly around vulnerable adults and a suitable definition in a Church context rather than the legal definition which is not necessarily applicable to Church. I just wondered if the NST at the same time could give some thought to some guidance for churches and parish safeguarding officers in relation to capacity and the overlaps between capacity and vulnerability?

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Thank you for those questions. James, thank you for that plug, both for Safeguarding Sunday and for two great heroes of Anglican Church history: the Earl of Shaftesbury and Maria Mills. I am sure many people will want to, indeed, rejoice in their legacy and heritage. If that is part of what is done to promote safeguarding on Safeguarding Sunday and in that season, I would be delighted.

Rosie, thank you for your question with regard to conflict of interest. Zena may be able to say a little bit about the specifics, but work is going on with regard to a more detailed conflict of interest policy and the proposal is to bring a specific paper back to the NSSG this autumn. I cannot, of course, comment on specific cases - that is always the case - but we recognise the importance of these issues. We are very well aware of how much concern there has been and those issues are very much on our horizon and on our radar.

Joan, thank you very much for your question with regard to vulnerability and capacity. That is something I share. From my own personal experience, when my father was in his later years and experienced dementia there were all sorts of challenges with regard to capacity. I recognise those. That is a specific issue within the area of vulnerability.

The issue we are facing - colleagues will be aware of this - is that in the statutory guidance that the Church has we use the language of “vulnerable adults”. The statutory guidance in the statutory sector is more in terms of “adults at risk” and it is a matter of working through those different things. But it is a very important issue and no doubt will increasingly be important as we face challenges over mental capacity and vulnerability. Zena, anything you want to add in particular?

*Ms Zena Marshall:* Just to add to that in terms of Rosie’s question in terms of National Safeguarding Core Groups, conflict of interest is discussed at the beginning of every single core group and conflicts are recorded and, if appropriate, that person is asked to leave the core group. That is absolutely happening within the National Safeguarding Team.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* I am very grateful for all the work that is going on. What a long way we have come from a few years ago when some of us were having to petition hard to even have a debate on safeguarding, so I want to thank all those for the work that has happened. My question relates to the Independent Safeguarding Board. I am very glad to hear that this has been out-sourced to the Green Park agency, but I am wondering

why we did not have an open and public appointment process as we used to do at least with appointed members to Archbishops' Council. By confining it to people who are approached, are we guilty perhaps of not making it as independent as it could have been? I would also like to know who is on the appointment panel and how we can ensure there is true independence there, please.

*Revd Brunel James (Leeds):* Bishop Jonathan was kind enough to mention the Windrush Group and that he has been in touch with us. In that dialogue, he mentioned specifically that the Parish Safeguarding Handbook lists racial abuse as something that should be dealt with as a safeguarding issue because this can prevent people who are vulnerable from being left unprotected. I just wondered if the Bishop could reassure us that that area of safeguarding will be clear and prominent and people will understand that they have protections that they can look for.

*Revd Mike Smith (Oxford):* Thank you, Bishop, for an uplifting presentation. It is disappointing that this far into our safeguarding journey we still do not really have a co-ordinated approach to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding at a local level. There is much work, thankfully, going on at national and diocesan level, yet the majority of our safeguarding work goes on at local level. How do we know, for example, how many parishes actually implement their safeguarding policy or conduct safer recruitment and, therefore, keep people safe? Can I ask for more work to develop a robust national tool to monitor the effectiveness of local safeguarding work all across the Church?

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Thank you very much indeed for those questions. Jayne, with regard to the appointment process, I think I will ask Zena in a moment to speak a bit more about the specifics of that. I can tell you I am not involved and no bishops are involved in the appointment process and that was a decision that was taken. It was very important that it was not seen that we had a steering hand on the tiller, but I will ask Zena to comment on that. Zena, can you say a little bit more about the Board? I do not know how much you can say about that, please.

*Ms Zena Marshall (ex officio):* Obviously, I have had nothing to do with this either because it is independent, but I can assure you that the people on the Board are independent from the Church but have some knowledge of the Church, which is quite important, and we always have two survivors or survivor representation on that Recruitment Board as well.

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Is there anything you can say about the issue of open recruitment versus search?

*Ms Zena Marshall (ex officio):* No, I have not actually been involved in this. It was Malcolm Brown who led on this project. I can certainly take that away, Jayne, and get back to you.

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Brunel, thank you very much with your reference to my contact with the Windrush Group. You will be aware that I wrote back to the Group just a week or two ago to follow up on their initial contact and the questions raised. We are very much committed to working with the group and indeed also with the Taskforce and the Racial Justice Commission and so on to work through what this looks like, the particular challenges faced by those of global minority heritage in relation to safeguarding.

There is an ongoing conversation, a further conversation to be had and work to be done, but there is absolute commitment to that, as I mentioned earlier on in the presentation, along with a number of other groups who are raising these important questions for us. Mike, thank you for your question with regard to the monitoring of what goes on at the local level. Again, I think I am going to defer to Zena to comment on that.

*Ms Zena Marshall (ex officio):* Two things. Thanks, Mike, a really good question. Lots of parishes do use a parish dashboard that was developed by the Coventry Diocese, which I think most people find really helpful. I do not know if your diocese use that, but we can certainly put you in touch if you do not. We also took a paper to the NSSG in late June in relation to our audit framework that we will be bringing in quite soon as well. This is something that is one of our workstreams that we are working on, Mike.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* A huge thanks to Zena and Jonathan and everyone behind them. I am prompted by Rosie Harper's question to reflect on the conflict of interest that can easily develop in a culture when professional services are regularly appointed without review. In many organisations, charities and others, the process of compulsory tendering for professional services is one way of avoiding the developing of perhaps too cosy relationships. I wonder, as the work on conflict of interest goes on, some thought might be given to looking at that in relation to the way we tender for insurance services and legal services which would give some reassurance, I think, to many that there is not too cosy a relationship between the Church and those who provide them with these services.

*Revd Canon Elaine Chegwin Hall (Chester):* It is of huge importance to have a redress scheme for victims and survivors. My question really is might there be a similar scheme or provision made available to those clergy who have had public allegations made against them which have turned out to be unfounded?

*Mr Michael Stallybrass (York):* My concern is very much around bullying. Having witnessed and been very saddened by some very severe clergy on clergy bullying, clergy on laity bullying, laity on clergy bullying and even laity on laity bullying, I am just wondering how much this topic is covered in the new learning pathways.

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Simon, thank you very much for your question. You have raised a specific issue with regard to the development and

application of conflict of interest policies. I am sure we will take that away and it will be considered in the context of developing those policies.

Elaine, thank you for the point you have made with regard to the redress scheme. That is a big question. It is an important question. I want to acknowledge and recognise the huge impact that allegations can have on members of the clergy. The impact on them personally, their families and their ministries can be enormous. The whole question of Responding to, Assessing and Managing Allegations against Church Officers was mentioned earlier on. I think that is part of that wider question. How we care for people who face allegations which prove to be unfounded is a hugely important question and we need to take that up within the context of developing that new policy.

Mike Stallybrass, thank you for your question with regard to the issue of bullying. Again, I am going to defer to Zena in terms of how that is covered in the new pathways. What I would like to say is this is one of the challenges we are facing in a number of areas that we are looking at at the moment: when is something a safeguarding matter and when is it about bullying and harassment? We need to have a nuanced and comprehensive way of handling those different elements within them. Again, I will come back to Zena if she has anything to add to any of those three questions.

*Ms Zena Marshall (ex officio):* I will just add something to the question, Mike, in relation to the new learning development pathway. This is not about teaching procedural steps in relation to if you receive an allegation. It is a very different type of learning about discussion, a healthy discussion about safeguarding issues. I do encourage you, if you have not done it, please engage with the programme. I know I have had some conversations quite recently with a Synod member who I can see right now about how helpful and insightful that development programme is. I, please, do encourage you to get involved and do the package.

*Mrs Margaret Sheather (Gloucester):* Thank you, Bishop, for another heartening Report demonstrating the momentum that is now behind this agenda, as other people have already identified. My question relates to the proposal for Safeguarding Sunday, which I note has originated outside of the Church but also that it clashes not only with Prison Sunday but also with Homelessness Day and World Mental Health Day - something of an overload perhaps of special days on one date.

In the light of your comments, Bishop, about the long-term nature of the safeguarding programme, in producing resources for parishes who take up the Safeguarding Sunday initiative, can you emphasise that the safeguarding agenda is for the whole year not just for one special Sunday? The risk of that identification for some people may be quite high.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* May I start by thanking both of you, Jonathan and Zena, for the very helpful update and also to note that we have now, I think,

established a safeguarding item as an embedded item on each group of sessions of Synod and I hope that will continue going forward into the new quinquennium.

My questions relate, first of all, to paragraph 3.1 of paper GS 2215 and the appointment of the members of the Independent Safeguarding Board. One of the issues that was a matter of concern following the IICSA recommendations was how the independence of that Board could be guaranteed. I am pleased to see from paragraph 3.1 that the members of the Board will not be employees of the Archbishops' Council. However, I am presuming that the Church will be funding their emoluments or salaries or whatever means of payment they are going to receive. I wonder, Bishop Jonathan, whether you could indicate the basis upon which they are to be engaged to ensure their independence.

My second question relates to two other outstanding Reports which we are awaiting later this year, namely the Makin Review on John Smyth and the Lessons Learnt Review on Devamanikkam. I wonder, Bishop Jonathan, if you are able to give us an update on when those Reports can be expected to be published and also whether you have any understanding of the likely impact of those Reports on the future work of the National Safeguarding Team?

*Dr Michael Todd (Truro):* Despite all the good work that has been done, cases still arise. Both survivors and the wider public often look for a resolution, ultimately, in legal processes, either secular or ecclesiastical, but for various reasons this is not always possible and survivors are left without the satisfaction that they have at least been heard. How will the National Safeguarding Team seek to fill this gap and perhaps look to empowering a trial of the facts, which at the moment is not possible?

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Margaret, thank you for your question. Yes, a clash of dates, there do seem to be so many of these different Sundays. In terms of the practicalities, we were effectively buying into what Thirty One: Eight are already doing but, your case is absolutely right, safeguarding is for the whole year not just for one Sunday. If parishes are already, for instance, committed to one of those other very important and worthy causes, there is nothing to stop them using those materials on some other date. But your main point is absolutely right, the aim is not just to virtue signal that, "Oh, we have had a day, a Sunday, on safeguarding", but to embed it in the life of the Church.

David Lamming, with regard to your question - well, you slipped two in there - the legal basis of the payment of the remuneration for the members of the Board has set the lawyers working long and hard with towels over their heads to work out how best to do that. I understand that they have come up with a formula for doing so, so that the people are not employees but they can be appropriately remunerated. Zena may be able to say more about the technicalities, but it is a specific point that has been addressed in this and I gather a solution has been found.



With regard to an update on those two particular reviews, in regard to Smyth - let me deal with that first - colleagues will be aware that a good deal more information has come out. People have come forward over these last few months. I do not think anybody could have imagined how much work there has been.

The challenge is going to be to work out how we deal with all of that information but, effectively, it could be without end. What we are working on at the moment is how do we process this information and how do we make a decision about when the process should be concluded? I really do not want to say more about that because it is a very sensitive subject in particular for survivors, but I can assure you we are working hard to identify the best way forward with that and we will be seeking to do that with survivors in order to make the right decisions. Obviously, we are in the hands also of the independent reviewer, Keith Makin, and his colleagues but we are very conscious of the impact of delays. On the other hand, we are also wanting to get it right.

Similarly, with regard to the Trevor Devamanikkam review, the reviewer's work has been delayed to some extent by Covid, by access to materials and so on. The intention again is to identify how much work needs to be done. We are waiting for a further update on that. Both of these two reviews will have significant impact on our future work going forward. The shape of that is, of course, to be determined once we have actually got the reviews in place.

Mike, thank you for your question. We absolutely hear what you are saying. Again, we cannot talk about individual cases, but I am very well aware of the huge impact on survivors when they have not been able to achieve some kind of a legal resolution which draws a clear line and they get an outcome and a result from that. Again, the whole question of how we work with survivors in the context of the redress scheme, redress is not only about money, it is also about affirmation, being heard, being listened to, receiving different kinds of therapeutic or pastoral support and so on.

We recognise the weight of the issue you have raised and the importance, in particular, of victims and survivors feeling they have been listened to and heard even if a legal process has not been possible to conclude. One of the issues we are looking at with regard to the redress scheme is how we, if possible, as far as possible, move away from an adversarial scheme to one which enables us to support survivors in that kind of way so that they genuinely feel heard and listened to and responded to even if it has not been possible to reach a legal conclusion. Zena, anything you want to add?

*Ms Zena Marshall (ex officio):* I would just add on to the Lessons Learnt Reviews, absolutely, we are very conscious that the impact that this has on victims and survivors and their engagement in these reviews, but what we also need to be conscious of is that we need to learn. We need to learn from these reviews and we need to implement those recommendations to ensure they are embedded in our future works so the same mistakes do not happen again. So, yes, it is really important that we absolutely get this right.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Within the wider culture, one increasingly encounters the misuse of the language of safety where people claim that points of view which they find challenging make them feel unsafe. What effort or what steps will the National Safeguarding Team take to make sure that that kind of thing is not manifested within the Church of England or at least is not manifested successfully within the Church of England?

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* It is very sad that the culture of personality has overwhelmed some people's personal judgments. What is the perception of the difficulties in having more lay people particularly involved in ministry, particularly those without any ministerial training?

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* Prudence, yes, we are very conscious of the way in which the language of safety or, if we can put the label safeguarding on it - this came up in one of the earlier questions - can that be used to forward someone's concern and so on? There is a clear distinction. Safeguarding is about the abuse of children and vulnerable adults, adults at risk. It is not the same thing as healthy, robust disagreement with people who hold profoundly different views. There is a spectrum. We do need to be aware of that as well. The point you have made is well made and one we are very much aware of.

Penny, thank you for your question. I think I hear some of the earlier business of Synod coming into that. I can assure you that, as far as we are concerned, whether ministry is offered by ordained people or lay people, the same standards of safeguarding will be applied across the board. Zena, anything you want to add?

*Ms Zena Marshall (ex officio):* No, that will be covered in the new Managing of Allegations Policy as well, different pathways in terms of whether they are clergy or lay or church officer or volunteer, et cetera. That will be covered, Penny.

*The Chair:* Thank you. We are enormously grateful to you, Bishop Jonathan and Zena, for handling all those questions. I am also grateful to the members of Synod who have asked questions in the way you have done because we have got through a tremendous number in this hour. That brings this item to a conclusion and this particular sitting to its conclusion. Synod will resume at 2 o'clock. Please enjoy your lunch.

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 2.00 pm.

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, everyone. We have a busy programme starting from now until 3.30 on Standing Orders. I need to give a little bit of explanation as to how we are going to proceed and what documentation you will need. First of all, you will need GS 2198 (Updated). The other two key papers you will need will be the First Notice Paper

which sets out the various changes that are coming from the main speaker, Geoffrey Tattersall.

You will also need Order Paper III, which was issued at I think lunch-time today, which gives you some other proposals that have been put forward by David Lamming. You will, I am afraid, need to switch between the First Notice Paper and the Order Paper III in order to keep an eye on what you are actually voting about, but I will remind you of which one you need to be looking at as we go along. As you will see from the documentation, there are several proposals which can be taken as deemed. It has been agreed that some of the amendments are for deemed approval. No notice has been given of a wish to debate those items and they are, therefore, deemed to have been approved.

The items remaining to be debated as brought forward by Geoffrey Tattersall are Items 39, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 51 and they are all itemised in some detail on the First Notice Paper and then we have some from David Lamming which are on Order Paper III.

When we get to the point where people can make contributions, there will be a three minute speech limit from the outset for contributions and I would beg people to be both forensic and focused since we have a great many things to get through with a lot of procedural votes and all the rest of it.

## **ITEM 39**

### **57TH REPORT OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (GS 2198 UPDATED)**

*The Chair.* I am going to start now by asking Geoffrey Tattersall to speak to the 57th Report of the Standing Orders Committee (Updated) and then I will go on to ask him to move Item 39.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* Before I deal with Item 39, I think it is important to set out what lies behind the updated 57th Report of the Standing Orders Committees. This Report primarily addresses the way in which we conduct our legislative business. That is important because paragraph 6 of the General Synod's Constitution set out in Appendix D to the Standing Orders, which I am sure you are all intimately aware of, defines the functions of the General Synod as making provision by Measure and Canon, that is primary legislation, or by order, regulation or other subordinate instrument authorized by Measure or Canon, that is secondary legislation.

Accordingly, although the General Synod is inevitably the forum for debates on many issues, it should not be forgotten that it is primarily a legislative body. This Report from the Standing Orders Committee addresses three principal questions. First, how effective is the existing procedure whereby General Synod scrutinises and passes primary legislation? Secondly, to what extent such procedures either encourage or discourage

participation by members of Synod. Thirdly, to what extent such procedures instil confidence in the Synod and the legislation it produces in other bodies such as Parliament, dioceses and parishes?

As far as the Committee is aware, there has been no overall review of these legislative procedures since General Synod came into being just over 50 years ago. An overview of the procedure for passing Measures and Canons from first being considered by this Synod to its approval by each House in Parliament and subsequently receiving the Royal Assent is set out in the diagrams set out after paragraph 4 of our Report. It is, of course, adapted from parliamentary procedure.

I will not rehearse paragraphs 6 to 8 of our Report which set out some concerns about the amount of time within the Agenda allowed for legislative business and the General Synod's lack of effective engagement with such business. Some such concerns were directed to a recently passed Measure where a significant policy issue, recognised as such by the Steering Committee, failed to be debated on a poorly attended debate which derived from the operation of the 40 member rule.

Of more concern is that, when considered by the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament - and in this context I speak as Deputy Chair of the Legislative Committee - voting numbers for Final Approval are required to be given and they frequently show that only about half of the members of each House vote in favour of Final Approval. The Standing Orders Committee believes that it is crucial that General Synod should exercise its legislative function well with the maximum possible participation of its members.

General Synod's role is far too important to be confined to enthusiasts. It is the responsibility of all members. The Standing Orders Committee also believes that it is important that time is spent proportionate to the issues involved and that time is not used unnecessarily to merely further the process of giving legislative effect in respect of policy decisions which the Synod has already taken or are otherwise uncontroversial. It is in that context that the Standing Orders Committee puts forward its views in paragraph 11 onwards of its Report.

Of course, you will have noticed, and the Chairman has already observed, that many items have been deemed for approval unless a debate was called for and there has been no debate called for. I do not need to explain the substance of all those many amendments which are explained at various points in the Report. In respect of all the other amendments which we are now going to consider, I want to make it clear that it is open to Synod to agree or disagree with what we propose. But, as we make clear at paragraph 63 of the Report, these proposals are not our final thoughts on the Synod's legislative processes. We will continue to work on these issues and will welcome any contributions from members as to further improvements which might be made.

With your permission, Chair, I turn to consider Item 39 on the First Notice Paper.

The background to this is that Standing Order 51(5) already provides for deemed First Consideration so that, where the Business Committee consider it would be appropriate, a Measure or Canon can be deemed to have received First Consideration without debate and it is automatically committed to a Revision Committee, although if 25 members give notice there must be a debate on First Consideration. Item 39 takes the position a modest step further and allows First Consideration to be given between a group of sessions.

Paragraph 20 of the Report explains that the reasoning behind this proposal is that, in an appropriate case, it could significantly reduce the overall time for legislation to complete all its synodical stages. As paragraph 22 of the Report makes clear, members of Synod would be notified that a draft Measure or Canon had been laid and that the Business Committee had determined that it was suitable for deemed First Consideration and that it would stand committed to Revision Committee unless 25 members gave notice that they wished for a debate to take place.

If no such notice was given, the Revision Committee could begin its work forthwith and we think that is a very sensible proposition. I thus commend to the Synod and move Item 39.

*The Chair:* Item 39 is now open for debate. I see no one indicating that they wish to speak. Formally, I refer back to you, Geoffrey, if there is a further sentence you wish to offer up but, otherwise, we will then move to the vote.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* No, I do not want to say anymore.

*The Chair:* Thank you. In that case, I am going to put Item 39 to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried, 235 voting in favour, one against, with three recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 96**

*The Chair:* We now turn to an item which will be addressed by Mr David Lamming. The detail of what he is going to speak about is to be found on Order Paper III, which is where you find eventually what you will be voting upon. I will invite him to speak. He is going to speak on Items 96 and 97 together because one is consequential upon the other. Technically, under Standing Orders he has ten minutes to speak, but I hope he will manage to present his case in a considerably briefer fashion than that bearing in mind the amount of business we have to get through this afternoon.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Yes, I am sure I can do this comfortably within less than ten minutes. Madam Chairman, members of Synod, the two amendments which I am proposing, Items 96 and 97, are, as the Chairman has just said, set out on page 1 of Order Paper III.

The principal amendment, Item 96, is to insert a new paragraph into Standing Order 54 relating to the membership of a Revision Committee for a Measure or Canon. It will provide that no business may be transacted at a meeting of the Revision Committee unless the majority of members attending the meeting are members appointed under paragraph (1)(b), and I will come back to what paragraph (1)(b) says in a moment.

The Explanatory Statement expands that a little bit by saying that, "... this amendment would ensure that, at any meeting of a Revision Committee, the majority of those attending must be appointed members rather than members of the Steering Committee". As you have rightly been told, Item 97 is consequential and so we do not need to move to Item 97 unless Item 96 is passed.

These two amendments were before Synod in April until the 57th Report of the Standing Orders Committee, GS 2198, as it then was, was pulled from the Agenda for want of time. I mention that first since I will need to comment later on the response to the amendment contained in paragraph 28 on page 7 of GS 2198 (Updated). That paragraph gives reasons why the Standing Orders Committee does not support this particular proposal. May I, however, acknowledge and thank the Committee for accepting two other proposed amendments of mine, one to Standing Order 59 that is included among the amendments that Mr Tattersall is proposing - it is Item 45 when we get to it - and the other, Items 74 and 76, having received deemed approval.

Let me explain what has motivated my proposal. In 2019, I made submissions to the Revision Committee for what was then the draft Diocesan Boards of Education Measure, now the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021, the Measure having received Royal Assent on 29 April this year, just a week after we last met. I attended the two meetings of the Revision Committee on 4 November 2019 and 3 December 2019.

Standing Order 54 currently provides as follows, "Revision Committee: membership (1) The members of a Revision Committee for a Measure or Canon are - (a) the members of the Steering Committee *ex officio*, and (b) such other members of Synod as the Appointments Committee appoints. (2) The members of a Steering Committee may not form a majority of the membership of the Revision Committee".

The Revision Committee for the DBE Measure comprised 11 members: five members of the Steering Committee *ex officio* and six members appointed by the Appointments Committee, including the Chairman, Clive Scowen. The second meeting - that is the December meeting of that Committee - was very poorly attended with just the Chairman, Clive Scowen, and three members of the Steering Committee present. Indeed, Clive

Scowen queried at the outset whether there was a quorum requirement for a Revision Committee and was assured by the Legal Adviser present that there was not and so the meeting went ahead and completed its business. My simple point is this. Standing Order 54 provides that, "Members of a Steering Committee may not form a majority of the membership of the Revision Committee".

That surely is undermined if a meeting can validly be held when the majority of those present are Steering Committee members who clearly, by virtue of effectively their description, have as their principal objective to secure the passage of the Measure through the legislative process. As the Explanatory Note to my amendment states, the amendment would ensure then that the majority of those attending must be appointed Revision Committee members rather than members of a Steering Committee.

There is, in fact, a precedent for this in the new Church Representation Rules. Members may recall that when the Church Representation and Ministers Measure, to which the new CRRs were going through Synod, one of the revisions that we made to the CRRs was to insert what is now Rule M15(2). It is a rule intended to ensure that there will always be a majority of lay members on a parochial church council.

It was an amendment, members of Synod may recall, that was made in the wake of some rather I was going to say dodgy procedure, but I better be careful about the language I use, in relation to a church in Central London where a large number of clergy had been appointed to the PCC, had been licensed to the parish, thereby became *ex officio* members of the PCC and were able to outvote lay members.

Rule M15(2) was inserted to ensure that that could not be repeated. It would not have been perhaps effective as a precaution to ensure that there was always a lay majority on the PCC without a supplementary provision relating to quorum and, indeed, there is. Rule M27(2) provides, "A meeting of the PCC is quorate only if the majority of the members present are lay persons".

There we have it, members of Synod, there is that precedent within the CRRs, within legislation that we have passed within this quinquennium, that supports the amendment that I am putting forward to the Standing Order.

Can I turn, finally, to the reasons that the Standing Orders Committee give for not supporting the proposal. Those of you who have got GS 2198 (Updated) to hand will find it towards the foot of page 7 of that paper at paragraph 28. What the Committee say is this: "The Committee does not support the proposal. It considers that it would result in practical problems where members are unable to attend meetings at short notice and could have an adverse effect on the timetabling of legislation. It would also give an effective veto on the consideration of legislation to a small number of members who could prevent the Revision Committee stage from proceeding simply by choosing to absent themselves from meetings".

There are two substantial points there, members of Synod. First of all, it is going to be very rare, I suggest, that the situation is going to occur again that occurred in December 2019 for the Revision Committee of the DBE Measure. It is not something which is likely to happen. I think it has only happened once in this whole quinquennium. But we are a legislative body and should we be allowing legislation to proceed in circumstances where it is not being properly scrutinised by the very Committee that the Synod has appointed to carry out that function? That is the first point.

The second point is this. Is the Standing Orders Committee really saying that an appointed member of the Revision Committee would deliberately absent him or herself from the meeting in order to spike the Committee and prevent it meeting in order to achieve an objective that was contrary to the purpose or the overall purposes of the Measure? That is counterintuitive, I suggest, members of Synod. It is contrary to the whole culture of what we have been talking about over the last couple of years in relation to how Synod does its business.

Of course, now that we are able to meet on Zoom, if there were such a cancellation of a meeting because of very late notice - and, of course, notice can be given at quite short notice by email or by telephone that somebody is suddenly ill or has missed a train - then, of course, a meeting could be summoned by Zoom if it were vital that that meeting were held in order to ensure that the business of that Measure was not unduly delayed.

For these reasons, members of Synod, I would ask you to support the amendment at Item 96, which I formally move. I do not think I need to say anything further about Item 97. It is entirely inconsequential on Item 96.

*The Chair.* Item 96 is now open for debate and I am going to begin by asking Geoffrey Tattersall if he would wish to speak on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee first.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* The proposal by Mr Lamming would ensure that no business could be transacted at a meeting where the majority of members were not the members appointed. I resist that on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee. In April, Mr Lamming proposed this but, of course, it had not been put before the Standing Orders Committee.

The Standing Orders Committee has now been able to consider it and unanimously agrees that we should resist this for the reasons which I am going to give. It is correct that, of late, there have been some poorly attended Revision Committees and the occasion to which Mr Lamming refers, the DBE Measure, was one particular case. However, it is often the case that, because the existing practice of the Appointments Committee is to appoint members who outnumber the Steering Committee by one - and that happened in the DBE case - members of the Steering Committee are often in the majority when matters are voted upon.



The membership of Revision Committees is dealt with by Standing Order 54 to which Mr Lamming alluded. Although the members of the Steering Committee are *ex officio* members, the Appointments Committee appoints other members and it is expressly provided, of course, that the Steering Committee shall not form the majority. However, how many members are appointed to the Revision Committee is a matter for the Appointments Committee. It is required to appoint such number as will form a majority. How many it does is a matter for that Committee.

You will see from paragraph 30 of our Report that the Standing Orders Committee expressly recommends that, in future, the Appointments Committee appoints greater numbers to the Revision Committee than hitherto has been the case and, indeed, that it should give consideration to some Revision Committees taking the form of grand committees.

Item 41, which we will deal with next, is a proposal that members' attendance should be contained in the Report of the Revision Committee so that members of Synod can see the level of attendance, particularly by the appointed members.

The Standing Orders Committee considered but rejected the introduction of a quorum requirement for Revision Committees. It believed that this would unnecessarily delay the transacting of business by Revision Committees. The difficulties with Mr Lamming's proposals are that they might well call unnecessary delay in that it could mean that members set off to travel to London, as I do from Wigan and others do from other places far away, only to discover on their arrival that because the appointed members had not attended in such numbers as to form a majority no business at all could be transacted even if it was non-contentious.

This could, of course, happen at a late stage without forewarning of absence when it is too late to forewarn of your absence. We make the point, perish the thought, that appointed members who did not support the proposal could indirectly exercise a veto by absenting themselves.

*The Chair.* There is a time issue here, I am afraid. Thank you for those comments. Item 96 is open for debate. The speech limit is three minutes and I do ask people to exercise constraint because we are very pressed for time.

*Canon Margaret Swinson (Liverpool):* I am Chair of the Appointments Committee. I think it might be helpful if members understood the process that the Appointments Committee undertakes. We do, when appointing Revision Committees, seek advice from those officers who are servicing the Committees as to what size of Revision Committee is appropriate, both in terms of its complexity and the sensitivity of the business concerned. We will continue to do that and we will also bear in mind the comments that have been made here, but we have also been mindful of cost and efficiency of meetings. The

Appointments Committee is hearing what is being said and will bear that in mind regardless of the outcome of this particular amendment.

*The Chair.* We have a point of order from Clive Scowen.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Chair, I am just slightly puzzled. Is there not a requirement for members to indicate that the debate should continue, having heard from Mr Tattersall?

*The Chair.* I am advised that that provision does not apply to a Standing Order debate in this kind of way.

*Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells):* I think I heard from Mr Lamming that he is fearful of something happening if we do not pass this amendment. Personally, I am not happy with those things that restrict. I much prefer permissive amendments rather than restrictive amendments. But I also thought I heard him say, in defence of why he wanted to do it, that the sort of thing he is trying to guard against is so rare that it will be unlikely to happen again and so I do not see why we should waste too much time on this and dismiss it straight away.

*The Chair.* I will take one further contribution before I will consider a motion for closure because we have a tremendous pressure of time here.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* I support David's proposal. It is designed to ensure that a majority of members at any meeting of the Committee are those who represent us. Support the proposal if you want to retain control. Resist the proposal if you are willing to cede control to *ex officio* members. The very rare possibility of non-quorate meetings, which is the argument put against David, is the tail which should not be permitted to wag the dog. May I encourage you to support David's amendment.

*The Chair.* Conscious as I am of the pressure of time here, I would like from the Chair to put a motion for closure. I now put the motion to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried, 172 voting in favour, 66 against, with 14 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* The motion for closure is carried. David Lamming's response, please, to the debate so far.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Thank you, members of Synod who have contributed. Thank you, Maggie, for noting that the Appointments Committee will take account of what has been said in the debate whichever way the vote goes. Thank you, Stephen, for your support. That is indeed the position that, as a Synod who elect the members of the Appointments Committee who then duly appoint the members of the Revision Committee, those members who are appointed are representative of this whole

Synod, it should not be the position that they can effectively be outvoted simply by not being present in circumstances that I have outlined.

I do not think I need to say anymore. I have given the parallel position that there is with the Church Representation Rules that provides the suitable precedent. I would simply say, in closing, please support this amendment which ensures proper democratic and representative scrutiny of legislative business.

*The Chair:* Thank you. I am going to put Item 96 to the vote now.

*The motion was put and lost, 115 voting in favour, 139 against, with 18 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* The motion is lost and, consequently, Item 97 falls because it is contingent upon Item 96.

## **ITEM 41**

*The Chair:* We move now to Item 41, the content of which you will find on your First Notice Paper. If you switch back to your Notice Paper, you will find on page 4 the information about Item 41. I call upon Geoffrey Tattersall to move Item 41.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* As I have already indicated, this amendment simply provides that members' attendance should be recorded in the report of a Revision Committee so that Synod will know whether there was a poor attendance by appointed members so that members of the Steering Committee might have constituted a majority in crucial votes. I thus move Item 41 standing in my name.

*The Chair:* This topic is now open for debate. I see no one wishing to speak. Formally, I refer back to Geoffrey, but I imagine there is nothing further that you wish to say.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* No.

*The Chair:* I put Item 41 to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*This motion was put and carried, 254 voting in favour, four against, with seven recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 44**

*The Chair:* We move now to Item 44. You will find the detail for that again on your First Notice Paper and I call upon Geoffrey Tattersall to move Item 44. My understanding is he is likely to speak to Item 45 along with it.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* Yes, Madam Chairman, it is convenient to deal with both of them together. These two provisions would allow a Revision Committee to adopt a neutral position as to the merits of an amendment and to indicate that, whilst it does not positively support such an amendment, it wishes the debate to continue on the amendment so that the 40 member rule would not apply. This happened in the DBE Measure where the Revision Committee did not support the amendment but wanted it to be debated by Synod but, of course, there were not 40 members standing and, therefore, there was no debate. The Standing Orders Committee believes as a matter of principle this should be the case for the future. Item 44 is a substantive amendment. Item 45 is a consequential amendment. I move both Items 44 and 45.

*The Chair:* Thank you. Item 44 is open for debate.

*Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford):* I am in dilemma because, although I may not agree with what the Revision Committee is making a recommendation on, it does help us to have a steer as to what they are thinking. Am I to understand that we will lose that? I take the point that it is quite proper on many occasions to have another debate on an amendment or whatever it may be, but it is still useful to get a guidance even if I may not listen to it. Is that to be ended? It is very unusual to be neutral I think. You normally have a view one way or the other. Certainly, in politics, I am afraid you had a view. I suppose it is a Church of England perhaps way of thinking but can that be explained more, please.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Just to respond to Peter Bruinvels, the answer to his question is no. There will be three options for the Steering Committee. They will be able to say, "We resist this, we do not want you to pass it", or they can say, "Yes, we are happy to accept that". What this introduces is a middle position which says, "We do not feel able actively to support it but we really think this is an important issue which we think Synod ought to debate and we will live with whatever you decide". Yes, they have a view but there are three possible views they can express rather than two.

It is in that middle position that the 40 member or the 25 member rule, as we hope it will become, would not apply. Had that been the case on the DBE Measure, the important question of whether it was appropriate for a DBE to be an unincorporated body could have been debated and decided by Synod. We have learnt from that experience that it is important to have this middle position available where a Steering Committee is not content to say, "No, we think we should get rid of the unincorporated body". They want Synod to take the decision and this is what this would enable.

*Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford):* I think what we are trying to do is also establish the principle that this is a legislative body and we must give due time for serious legislation to be debated. I am conscious we are short on time now and so, once again, we are having the options for General Synod to discuss this with their uncertainties and their queries. For instance, the recording of absent members of the Committee, it would have

been good for there to be a provision for explaining absence like a late train or poor connectivity, as we have just seen from our Chairman. Please, can we just give the time that is necessary for the subject to be well discussed.

*The Chair:* I see no other hands raised and so I refer back to Geoffrey Tattersall to comment, please.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* Two things. Firstly, Mr Bruinvels' point has been very well and comprehensively answered by Mr Scowen. The second point is that if it takes longer to do something better, then I think that is the way we should go. That is actually the purpose behind this amendment, that actually if it means that we have to disapply the 40 member rule in a particular case where, actually, the Revision Committee want to adopt a neutral position, then so be it. We will take longer but we will do it better and that is why we should support Items 44 and 45.

*The Chair:* I am now going to put Item 44 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried, 252 voting in favour, six against, with four recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 45**

*The Chair:* Consequently, we move to Item 45 which has already been moved. If you could move it formally, please, and then we will move on to debate on that and voting on it.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* I so move.

*The Chair:* Thank you. That is now open for debate but I see no hands raised. We can put Item 45 to the vote, which I now do.

*The motion was put and carried, 255 voting in favour, four against, with three recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 46**

*The Chair:* We now turn to Item 46. I call upon Geoffrey Tattersall to move Item 46.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* This amendment seeks to reduce the existing 40 member rule, i.e. that an amendment, if resisted by the Revision Committee, lapses unless 40 members stand, to 25 members. The rationale for this is twofold. First, the 40 member rule was introduced at a time when the size of Synod was considerably greater and the size of Synod has been subsequently quite significantly reduced. At that time, the 40 member rule was not amended. On reflection, it probably should have been.

Secondly, if legislative business continues to be thinly attended, the 40 member requirement can be difficult to achieve, as recent events have demonstrated. If we want our legislation to be properly scrutinised, we may have to put up with slightly more debates on amendments, but it is important that legislation represents the views of the majority of the members of Synod and Chairs of debates now have sufficient powers to curtail debate and move for closure where appropriate.

Synod will note that no amendment has been proposed in respect of this item so that the choice is between the existing 40 member rule and the proposed 25 member rule. You will note paragraphs 49 and 50 of our Report. The former encourages facilitated conversation between people proposing similar amendments to reduce their number and the time that Synod spends in dealing with them. The latter provides for a succinct and independent analysis of what an amendment achieves or seeks to achieve which has taken place without the need for an amendment to the Standing Orders, which is already in place and I hope the Synod is already finding helpful. I move Item 46 standing in my name.

*The Chair:* There is a point of order from John Wilson.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* I wonder if it is possible to have an update as to the countdown when we are voting so we have got an idea of how much longer we have got in order that we can change our vote if we wish to.

*The Chair:* The answer to that is yes.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* Thank you.

*The Chair:* Item 46 has been moved and so it is now open for debate. I see no hands raised so we can move directly to the vote then.

*The motion was put and carried, 253 voting in favour, eight against, with four recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 47**

*The Chair:* I now turn to Geoffrey Tattersall to move Item 47. For those of you following at home, we are still working our way through the detail on the First Notice Paper.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* The genesis of this amendment was an amendment which Mr Lamming had proposed in the debate which was to have taken place in April which, of course, did not take place. At the time, the Standing Orders Committee had not considered the wisdom of this proposed amendment and, therefore, if there had been a

debate I would have urged Mr Lamming to withdraw it so that the Committee could consider it and its implications.

However, because the debate did not take place in April, the Standing Orders Committee has now had the opportunity to consider it and Mr Lamming knows that I am offering him more positive news. This is dealt with at paragraphs 51 to 52 of our amended Report. You will see that the Standing Orders Committee agrees that the mover of an amendment at the Revision stage for a Measure or Canon should have a right of reply and that the absence of a right of reply is unsatisfactory.

It will allow the mover of an amendment to respond to points raised in the debate on the amendment and to correct any misunderstandings which may have arisen during the debate. I stress that it is a right of reply which the mover of an amendment may feel, in all the particular circumstances, it is not necessary to exercise. I move Item 47.

*The Chair:* Item 47 is now open for debate. I see no one raising their hand and, consequently, it would appear that we can move directly to the vote on Item 47.

*The motion was put and carried, 261 voting in favour, none against, with two recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 51**

*The Chair:* I turn to Geoffrey Tattersall to move Item 51.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* This is a discrete point which only applies when the Final Approval stage is taken at the same group of sessions as the Revision stage. Standing order 64(2) currently provides that, if 40 members object, Final Approval cannot be sought. This is a very unusual provision because Synod normally decides matters of procedure. It was a provision which I was personally acutely aware of when moving all the legislative stages of General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020 in one day last September.

Had 40 members objected, we would have been required to hold a second meeting to seek Final Approval on another day. The Standing Orders Committee have concluded that there is no justifiable reason why 40 members should have a procedural veto on Final Approval being sought. However, you will note that Item 51 expressly provides that Final Approval cannot be sought if the Chair objects or if the Synod as a whole decides to object. I thus move Item 51.

*The Chair:* Item 51 now open for debate. I see no hands raised and so we can proceed directly to the vote on Item 51.

*The motion was put and carried, 258 voting in favour, four against, with three recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 98**

*The Chair.* I direct your attention now back to Order Paper III, issued at lunchtime, because we move to take Item 98 and Mr David Lamming will speak to that, please.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I can be quite brief, I think, in relation to what I say about this proposal. It is not uncommon for those answering oral supplementary questions to say that they do not have the requested information to hand or that they will provide an answer later in writing.

I found, when looking at the Report of Proceedings for November last year, three examples. I think the persons concerned who promised such information were the Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich, the Bishop of Leeds and Dr Eve Poole. Indeed, at the Questions session last night, although we only got through 48 questions, there were no fewer than five occasions when the person responding to the supplementary questions said they would provide the information later to us in writing. It was not immediately to hand.

The purpose of this amendment is very simple. It is to ensure that all Synod members will have access to answers to supplementary questions that the person answering is not in a position to answer or answer fully during the Questions session. The wording, in fact, mirrors that in Standing Order 117(3), which ensures that there is a permanent record of answers to questions between groups of sessions when the Business Committee operate that particular provision to allow questions to be asked and answered between groups of sessions.

The Explanatory Statement, I think, says it all. The amendment would ensure that where the person answering a supplementary question commits to providing the member concerned with a subsequent written answer, the text of that written answer must be included with the official Report of the Proceedings. I move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair.* The matter is open for debate. I turn first to Geoffrey Tattersall to speak on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* I have already informed Mr Lamming by email that I will accept this amendment. Although it has not been considered by the Standing Orders Committee, I have no doubt it is appropriate that I should do so even though it will involve more work for the Synod staff. However, I am sure that Mr Lamming will recognise that it is better that amendments are referred to the Standing Orders Committee first and considered by them rather than being raised from the floor of Synod for the first time. It



just makes life so much easier if they are considered in a careful and considered way, but I accept the amendment.

*Dr Chris Angus (Carlisle):* I have no problem at all with the intent behind this. It is clearly a good thing. The only thing I would query is that the condition that sparks this is the person saying they will provide an answer, but we then go on to say that the answer must be included in the annex to the Report of the Proceedings. What happens if there is no answer?

*Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford):* I find this good news and I am grateful to Geoffrey for accepting it, but practically there is going to be a time issue to get that answer through for the annex. When I was in the House, we used to get written answers or they would say they would write to the Member, or my Honourable friend, and I think in some cases it is right that everyone should see those responses.

I welcome it, but I am just wondering how it will be - I hate to use that word but Chris Angus has mentioned it - forced to deliver it by a certain length of time. It always seems to me in Question Time the quicker that you get the responses the more imperative and the more effective and the more detailed that reply is. Answers in the old days were written and there were tables and you could not possibly read out the whole table. I welcome it but I am just wondering on the leeway time to get it ready for the annex, but the more informative and more detailed responses we get the better.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* I am sure I remember at least one occasion on which I was told by the person responding to my question that I would be provided with an answer and then never received one. Of course, if I had wished I could have then brought that up again in the next group of sessions, but I think that this requirement will provide an incentive to make sure that any promised answers are, in fact, forthcoming even if the answer is just that the information was not available or whatever. I think it will reduce the probability of answers being promised and then not delivered, so I am very pleased to support this.

*Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester):* I wonder if this could apply to answers to unanswered supplementaries which have been timed out. Several times I have asked a question and received an unsatisfactory response and wanted to ask a supplementary and not been able to and not had anywhere to go to ask it again. I wondered if this could apply to supplementaries to questions that have not been aired in the chamber.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* I fully understand what is behind David's proposition and I would support it. I would say that there will be challenges on occasions, as Peter Bruinvels has indicated, where it will be very difficult to comply with all the requests in the answer within time for the annex to be published and, as David Lamming knows, I stand responsible for one such answer which he is still waiting for.

On Lisa's point, I can only say for myself that, if there are questions asked of me that are timed out in General Synod, you are very welcome to contact me separately by email and I would have thought that was true of my colleagues. I am happy to propose it. I would just say to all members that there are occasions where you ask us questions at a level of detail that we could not really ever be expected to answer verbally. The more you can give us prior notice of such questions, the more open we will be able to be with you on the day, which is surely the best piece, that we minimise the number of questions we cannot answer verbally.

*The Chair.* I see no one else with their hand raised to speak and so I go back to David Lamming for his comments.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Thank you for all those who have spoken in this short debate. First of all, answering Peter Bruinvels' point, the Report of Proceedings does not get produced quite as quickly as Hansard, which is I think an overnight production. There will be, I am sure, in each case adequate time, probably at least a month if not more, for an answer to be provided to the Secretariat to be included with the Report of Proceedings.

If someone does not get an answer that they have been promised, then my view would be it is their personal responsibility to chase it up with the person concerned, just to send, perhaps after a couple of weeks, a polite email reminder saying, "Have you got the information?" or "Are you able to get the information that you promised me at Synod a couple of weeks ago?" I think that is the answer to that point.

I am not sure that the concern that Lisa Battye has raised can be properly dealt with in this way. I think there has only been one occasion. Was it the first occasion we had a remote meeting when we were asked to provide the actual supplementary question in advance as well as indicating that we wished to ask a supplementary? Otherwise there would be no record of the supplementary question. I think it could be very difficult to include within a Report of Proceedings for the Synod what was, in effect, simply a private exchange of question and answer between a Synod member and an officer of the Synod.

John, I take your point about prior notice being given. I am sure all members of Synod have noted that and if they wish for detailed information it obviously is helpful if the request can be provided in advance to the particular member of the body who is answering that question. I think that probably answers all the points that I need to respond to. Again, thank you for the debate.

*The Chair.* Thank you, David. We can now proceed to voting on Item 98.

*The motion was put and carried, 252 voting in favour, 14 against, with five recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* That brings this item of business to a close. As members will have noticed, that means we have finished early. Would anybody have guessed that on a Standing Order sequence like this? However, we did and so we will now proceed directly to the screen break. The sitting is adjourned until 15.35. We are coming back earlier than the timetable indicates. The sitting is adjourned until 25 to 4, so please come back promptly for that.

THE CHAIR *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 3.35 pm.

## **ITEM 20**

### **LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH: PASSING THE BATON (GS MISC 1284)**

*The Chair.* Good afternoon, everyone. We come to Item 20 on the Agenda, which is a presentation by Bishop Sarah, the Bishop of London, and Dr Eeva John, on *Living in Love and Faith: Passing the baton*. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity for questions as the Business Committee has determined this under Standing Order 107(3). I invite Bishop Sarah and Dr Eeva to speak to us.

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally):* Dear members of General Synod, dear friends, I want to begin by thanking you for the part you have played in the three-year journey of producing the *Living in Love and Faith* resources. I want to thank you for encouraging the communities and the dioceses you represent to engage in learning together. I want to thank you in anticipation of your part in encouraging the whole Church to contribute to the Church's discernment of a way forward in relation to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

One of the first tasks of the Next Steps Group was to help embed the Pastoral Principles in all of our interactions with one another. I have said before the Church is not so much an institution or organisation as an intricate body of relationships: Christ taking the form of a body of believers, the body of Christ.

The image of the body reminds us that each part of the body needs to be motivated by charitable love, seeking the help of the body rather than our own glory. There is no more excellent way. However, our actions at times continue to hurt, damage, scorn and exclude people. If our actions, however well meaning, cause harm, distress, emotional, mental and spiritual anguish, we need to think again. We must create cultures which are open, safe transparent and accountable. We must recognise our own authority and power and how this could be misused and become coercive, bullying and controlling. We must learn how each of us as individuals, and as church communities, can become safer places in which all can flourish without fear: where prejudices are acknowledged, oppressive silence is broken, ignorance is addressed, hypocrisy is admitted and power is not misused.

As you know, the Pastoral Principles are already embedded in the *Living in Love and Faith* course. Recognising their significance, many churches asked us to develop a separate Pastoral Principles course that groups could use before exploring the LLF resources. We were glad to do so. The Pastoral Principles course was published in April, and I commend it to you and your church communities. These principles and the guidance we have written about creating braver and safer spaces for learning well together have been a vital part of our work, as we have sought to encourage Church-wide engagement in a way that bears the fruit of the Spirit, and so reflects the reality of Christ's love among us.

*Dr Eeva John (ex officio)*: I know that you had hoped to be in a different place as this quinquennium draws to a close. Instead of bringing the process towards a conclusion you find yourselves having to entrust the next and final stage of the LLF journey to the new Synod that will be inaugurated this November.

Back in February 2017, Archbishops Justin and Sentamu wrote a letter following the Synod's memorable take note debate. In it they said this: "How we deal with the real and profound disagreement - put so passionately and so clearly by many at the debate - is the challenge we face as people who all belong to Christ.

"To deal with that disagreement and to find ways forward, we need a radical new Christian inclusion in the Church. This must be founded in Scripture, in reason, in tradition, in theology and the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it; it must be based on good, healthy, flourishing relationships, and in a proper 21st century understanding of being human and of being sexual.

"We need to work together - not just the bishops but the whole Church, not excluding anyone - to move forward with confidence.

"The way forward needs to be about love, joy and celebration of our common humanity; of our creation in the image of God, of our belonging to Christ - all of us, without exception, without exclusion."

Radical new Christian inclusion in the Church. A memorable and, for many, a troublesome phrase. What is it signalling? What is it promising? I would like to suggest what this phrase has meant and what I hope it will mean as we move from engagement in learning together to discernment and decision-making. *Living in Love and Faith* is about inclusion, inclusion that is described as radical, new and Christian.

Inclusion that is radical, because it is far reaching in its scope, excluding no one. There are no others. We are all human. Equally human, equally loved by God, equally and together made in God's image, equally and together frail sinners in need of redemption; and, in the Church, equally and together, new creations in Christ. That kind of inclusion is (and will be) uncomfortable for all of us, at different moments and in different ways. But

let me be clear, in the context of LLF that it is an order of magnitude more uncomfortable and costly for our LGBTQI+ friends in Christ. So, I want, first of all, to thank them especially for bearing the cost of taking part in the LLF process.

Inclusion that is radical because it is about agreeing to explore the roots of all our differences about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, not privileging one view or another, but seeking deeper understanding of them all. Inclusion that is new because it involves the whole Church in learning together, not just bishops, experts or even members of General Synod, but everyone who finds their spiritual home in the Church of England. Inclusion that is new because the bishops - the Church's teachers of the faith - are appealing to the whole Church to join them in this process of discernment and decision-making, listening to what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Inclusion that is Christian because it draws on our shared faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the faith that is uniquely revealed in the Scriptures and in God's gifts of reason and wisdom, shaped by the Spirit. Inclusion that is Christian because it calls us to be kind and gentle-hearted as we seek and find Christ in one another. Inclusion that is Christian because inclusion is not something we create, or even bring about in our own strength, or through clever argument or impassioned debate. Inclusion is a gift. It is Christ who has given us to each other. It is Christ who is doing the including and it is in Christ that we are called to be one.

You will have seen from the General Synod Misc 1284 paper that Church-wide engagement is well underway. We have reached 5,500 clergy and laity through diocesan taster events and feedback from these events has been positive. There is genuine enthusiasm to engage. Over 300 people have taken part in a national facilitation course helping to create safer and braver spaces for the *Living in Love and Faith* process, and many dioceses are rolling this facilitation training out locally. Many groups have already met on Zoom and have done the *Living in Love and Faith* course together, and they report that it has been an enriching experience, and many more are planning their engagement this autumn.

The listening to the whole Church process is also underway. We hope that people will complete the online questionnaire and will be inspired to offer creative responses as well as individuals and as groups.

At the end of this holistic listening process, the findings will be gathered, analysed and published, and they will show whether we have succeeded in being inclusive in relation to geographical and socioeconomic contexts; in relation to age, ethnicity, relationships, sexualities and genders. And we hope that the findings will show us new insights that have emerged as a result of our learning together. These findings will be reported back to you, back to the whole Church, and will feed into the transparent process of discernment and decision-making which will be concluded in November 2022.

I am praying for moving from engagement and listening to discernment and decision-making has been established and agreed, as described in the paper that you have received.

However, many have told us that their churches are not ready to engage this autumn. The impact of Covid has taken its toll. We are listening to this important feedback as well as to the voices of those for whom this process has already been too long. We are exploring whether it is possible to extend the period of engagement and feedback without compromising our commitment to reaching a clear way forward by the end of 2022.

That is the end of the slides.

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally):* Our prayer is that LLF will be a hopeful process; a process of actively looking for new insights and new possibilities, choosing to discern the movement of the Spirit within the whole Church rather than indulging in a debate among the few. I hope that as you pass the baton to the new Synod you will pass this invitation on; this invitation to be radical, new, Christian and inclusive in the way of dealing with our differences and diversity.

LLF is about love and faith. It is a process that is underpinned and propelled by hope; hope that the very way we engage will be a testimony to the reconciling love of Christ in a divided world.

But there is another word that the Archbishops letter includes which we have not used very much. It is the word “joy”. I believe that as we explore these questions across the Church we could rediscover the joy of the Gospel and the empowering presence of God, who can draw us closer to one another, and to Christ.

*Dr Eeva John (ex officio):* We would like to offer every member of General Synod the opportunity to pass the *Living in Love and Faith* baton on to the new Synod. We are not asking you about your hopes for what the outcome will be of the process, but we are asking you to share your deepest heartfelt hopes about the way in which the discernment and decision-making will unfold. How will Synod reflect the character of the Christ we embody in our life together as a Church?

I am about to put a link to a short questionnaire for you to complete. It will only be there for this evening and it will be closed by the end of today. Your responses to that questionnaire will be anonymous. We will then gather those responses, hopefully from all of you, and share an analysis of them before passing them on to the new Synod in November this year.

Finally, in closing, I would like to add my personal gratitude to you for the privilege of sharing the *Living in Love and Faith* journey with you. It has been an adventure through which I, for one, have learned so much. Thank you for teaching me.

*The Chair.* Thank you very much. We come now to the chance for members of Synod to ask questions. A gentle reminder: please remember this is an opportunity to ask questions rather than make a speech. Also, please aim to make them as succinct as possible so that we are able to get through a number of questions. I will take questions in batches of three, and then Bishop Sarah and Dr Eeva will respond accordingly.

*Mr Jon Walker (Leicester):* I would just say how welcome that Report was and that update on both the LLF process and also the attention you have given to handing on the baton. I have been a new member of Synod just for this year, so I was not part of that historic decision in 2017 and the subsequent setting up of the LLF. I want to say thank you to the Synod and all of you who were members at that time. I cannot tell you that for those of us who were not part of the process what a wonderful message of hope that decision and that process sent out across the Church, that we might become a place that is truly welcoming and affirming to all. Thank you very much.

My question is this: what can all Synod members do in the months until the first meeting of the new Synod that will most support the continuing process of LLF and help to avoid any loss of momentum?

*Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester):* First, can I offer my heartfelt thanks to both Eeva and to Sarah for that presentation, particularly to you, Eeva, for your incredible work, costly work. In the light of the recent announcement that the House of Bishops/Next Steps Group wishes LLF to undertake more work on gender identity, what reassurances can be given to trans people and their allies that not only will trans and non-binary people be key leaders in that work, but that non trans identities are open to interrogation, too?

*Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* The question is in two parts. One brief part is: do you think it is at all helpful or permissible for members of this Synod to describe voices in the video on LLF as transphobic, and seek to silence them?

My main question, Eeva, is about your comment that no particular view will be privileged. Professor Douglas Campbell is a major voice in New Testament studies and has recently published a book on Pauline ethics. In it he says, quite unapologetically, Paul does not really know what he is talking about, he does not actually live out the Gospel he proclaims; therefore his comments on sexual ethics are wrong and to be disregarded. Another quite popular view is that Jesus was a human of his time and was a racist, for example, who had to learn from a Syrophenician woman not to be racist. If we are going to not privilege any particular viewpoint in terms of biblical interpretation and reading of biblical ethics, how are we going to square the differences between these views and other more mainstream views? Is it possible and should we consider them all equally?

*The Chair.* Back to Bishop Sarah and Dr Eeva for your responses, please.

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally):* Thank you, John, Rachel and Ian for your questions. John, on the new Synod in terms of your support, I think for me there are two things. One is how Synod members help us to build a culture where we treat each other well which models how as a Church we make space for people with differing beliefs and theology. That is the first thing. How do we really live out the Pastoral Principles and enable people to feel safe in terms of expressing their views, enabling us to break the silence which often comes because of fear? The first thing is about how we model the Pastoral Principles.

The second one is to spread the word about the materials. The materials are, I think, very helpful, and we have had a lots of positive feedback from people who have been engaged in them. The second one is to spread the word, and for people to engage in it in a way that they feel safe.

Rachel, in terms of the work that we are doing around trans identity, I know that we cannot do this if we do not involve people who would identify as trans. I know that. I also recognise that this is an area which can involve emotions and can cause hurt. We are very mindful of that. We would want to work with those who identify as trans to see, in a sense, how we set this agenda out. For me, it really is about the need for us to improve our understanding. This is partly about how we, in a sense, reduce our ignorance. Whatever we do will always be done in partnership with others; those better able to speak than certainly I am. Eeva, I do not know whether you want to pick that up or speak to Ian's question.

*Dr Eeva John (ex officio):* Thank you, John and Rachel, for your very kind words; that is very encouraging. Absolutely, we have not really described what our further work is, and it is about reducing our ignorance, as Sarah said. It is also about recognising that this is work that involves all of us not, just trans people. We want to absolutely make sure that we gather our information as widely as we can, but especially listening to transgender people whose situation in the way that these conversations are happening in society is very difficult, and, I acknowledge, very painful. We want to inform ourselves in order to help this conversation be less painful and better informed.

Thank you very much, Ian. That is a great question, really good. My first response to that would be that, in a sense, the *Living in Love and Faith* book has kind of sifted out slightly less left field views, particularly in relation to Scripture. But I think the second thing that we learned, the *Living in Love and Faith* Group which put the resources together, was that all of us around the table in a group, which was very diverse, take Scripture very, very seriously. You do not hear flippant comments about Scripture and about being able to set it to one side. In that sense, I completely take your comment. I guess I would say that there is a sifting, but what I meant was more that we take the different serious interpretations of Scripture seriously, regardless of where they stand on these questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. Thank you for your question.



*The Chair:* So, to the next batch of questions. Please keep your questions as succinct as possible.

*Mrs Angela Scott (Rochester):* It was a privilege to be part of the initial LLF conversations these last few years on General Synod, and I thank the House of Bishops for its comprehensive report. I hope that all parts - and I emphasise all parts - of the Church of England will take part in the next wider engagement, diocesan, deanery and parish conversations. I was very saddened that some parts of the current General Synod membership opted out of our conversations and, as a result, their voice has not been heard adequately. How can we encourage them to engage by listening to us?

*Mr Simon Friend (Exeter):* The debate in the last session of Synod has been necessarily academic and theological in many respects, and, therefore, the word "love" has resided pretty much in the mind, and our adversarial nature of conducting Synod keeps things pretty much in the mind. I wonder how we can move that word love from our heads to our hearts for the next session of Synod, and how we can begin to truly express Christ's love in how we deal with this debate.

*Revd Canon Alistair McHaffie (Blackburn):* I am very grateful for Bishop Sarah's introduction reminding us of the importance of embedding Pastoral Principles in the LLF process because the ongoing problem, and it will be an ongoing problem, is that whether progressive or conservative, there is a tendency to vilify or dismiss those on the other side of the argument.

My question is how can we continue to ensure that people speak to one another in a respectful way and treat one another in love the way that we should? I am not just thinking of members of the Synod; I am thinking of lay people in the church, clergy, and in particular bishops, who I think have a particular responsibility as role models and as of significant influence. How do we make sure that these Pastoral Principles are embedded in way that we are talking about and to one another?

*The Chair:* Back to Sarah and Eeva for your responses, please.

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally):* Thank you for your questions. There are some common themes there. Alistair, I think the issue about how we engage with one another also is rooted in Simon's question around love. What flows from there is the issue about engagement as well. I know that people at times are concerned about being engaged. Some of them are frightened about being engaged. That is because, however much work we do as the Next Steps Group to suggest how places may be safe, places are not always safe. Through the training of facilitators and the work of advocates, we can ensure the places where the LLF materials are discussed are safer, but of course we do not always have control on the environment around that.

I go back to the need for us to live out the Pastoral Principles. At the moment we have 383 participants according to my participant list on Zoom. Can you imagine if 383 of us began to model the Pastoral Principles in Synod but also outside Synod, and how much that may catch fire? We are very good, are we not, at passing gossip with bad news? How about beginning to pass gossip with good news that we can speak well of each other, and that I pay attention to my power and the way in which I can potentially be coercive and abusive, and, therefore, create a safer space for you. I think there is real potential in this Synod to begin to model the Pastoral Principles. Of course, we are only able to do that when we are confident of our love; the love of God that is seen through Jesus Christ.

I go back to the image of the body. I think Paul used the body very explicitly because it is an image that demonstrates my connectivity to you and your connectivity to me, and how, as we are built to maturity with Christ as the head, we have to ensure that we love each other. Is that not a great model: we could love each other although we have a different view? Therefore, in the potential of that we create safer environments for people.

It is our challenge as Synod, as 382 now - somebody has just dropped off - to recognise and model that love. I think the Pastoral Principles are at the heart of those answers to those questions. Eeva, would you like to add anything?

*Dr Eeva John (ex officio):* I completely agree. I noticed particularly, Angela, your anxiety, which I share, about people who might want to opt out, who have perhaps already decided that either there is nothing here to learn or to discuss, or that it is not safe enough to do so. My heart is partly broken when I hear that said. It is about modelling and it is about then sharing our experience of becoming safer spaces ourselves in the groups, the church communities of which we are a part, and that becoming contagious. I do not think we can persuade, but perhaps we can make it contagious as people hear about the rewarding experience it is opening ourselves to one another that they might also catch on and join us.

*The Chair:* Moving swiftly on to the next group of questioners, please.

*Revd Jenny Gillies (Chester):* I actually put my hand down because the question I wanted to ask was about safety. I have been through this process from the beginning. I have done two Shared Conversations sessions, including with Synod. I was also a participant in the trial taster day online in my own diocese. In every case, and not as somebody who has a particularly extreme view and who is a little undecided about my views, I felt verbally battered by at least one person in those groups, and in every case it was an ordained person. I found it an extremely difficult experience and one which I am still working on to recover from. I have become one of those people who feels I do not want to be part of it any more. You have said some things about what you can do, but I wish that the language talking about a safe space was modified. I notice, Bishop Sarah, you did that, you talked about safer spaces, so thank you.

*Revd Dr Jason Roach (London):* Thank you, Eeva, for your humility and patience and grace throughout this whole process, for which I am sure we are all very, very thankful. Thank you to Bishop Sarah as well for all that you have been doing in recent months and, in particular, the open door policy that you have had towards different groups of clergy and lay people who are concerned about the process, and who are wanting to sit down with you and discuss that, and not just to discuss it once but on an ongoing basis. My question is to what extent is that kind of relational ongoing listening characteristic of your colleagues in the House of Bishops?

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* I am very conscious that as I ask these couple of questions, if I may, there is a very different world going on with a very tense championship final point being played in Wimbledon right now, which is where the eyes of the world are at and where they look with horror often at what we are doing.

First, I want to thank Eeva and Sarah for work they have put in unstintingly, Eeva in particular over the years, to bring us to where we are now. I know it has not been easy and I want to thank her for the way she has sought with humility to guide us through all this.

My first question is an awkward one but what assurances can you both give us that we will not see a repeat of what happened in 2017 where after the Shared Conversations, which we had across all the dioceses and we had fed in, as you are encouraging us to do again, all our thoughts, all our discussions, we got a Report from the House of Bishops that was completely out of kilter with the thinking across the Church. That is where we are now with LLF, thankfully, but what reassurances are there that we will not repeat that process?

For the second question and, Bishop Sarah, I am going to come to you. You talk about joy, and I would slightly reproach you on that. We have a long way to travel before we get there. We need lament; we need apology; we need reconciliation. The LGBT community feels that they are constantly being asked to love those who are abusing them, and that in itself is abusive. There is transphobic and homophobic rhetoric, even in these questions coming from people, which we are not even allowed to call transphobic and homophobic. I would remind people of the definition of that. It is views that are seen as transphobic by the person they are aimed at. Until we recognise the harm and, indeed, the abuse that is being meted out, I do not see how we can get to a point of joy, so what is the reconciliation process you see us going through, please?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally):* Thank you again for your questions. Jenny, I specifically use the word “safer” spaces. We have worked hard with the LLF material to enable those spaces where it is considered to be safer. I recognise that not everybody will want to engage because they will not feel that it is safe, and, absolutely they should not. We are not forcing anybody to do anything.

I also go back to the fact that I hope that we begin to get a better understanding of not just being able to create safer spaces within those environments that we can have some say on, the facilitated groups, but much broader within Christian conversation that we create those spaces that are safer. That is whether it is in Synod, whether it is on social media or whether it is in our own churches. That is a journey because part of that has to understand what safer looks like. I mean this for everybody. Whatever our sexual identity is, whatever our theological belief is, that spaces are safer. I agree with you, Jenny, we are on a journey, and I am sorry to hear that you at times have experienced difficulties, as others will have no doubt.

Jason, thank you for your comments. I would underline the thanks that have generally been given to Eeva. She has been a star in what she does, and I am constantly in awe of her.

The heart of your question was relational, and, of course, this is all about relational. I am confident that my colleagues in the House of Bishops have a commitment to being relational. I am confident that they also are modelling the Pastoral Principles and have open doors in that way. I am sure that they would want to support me in what we are doing.

Jayne, if I come first of all to the issue of joy, joy is not about happiness. Joy - like hope - is a root in God. I agree with you that we have a long way to go. That is why joy is my hope really. It is down the road, but I agree with you that we have a long way to go to create an environment where we treat each other better. I have said before that I do believe we need to create a culture which is not racist, is not homophobic, is not transphobic, and which does not discriminate against women. We do that in an environment where we have a range of different theological beliefs, because that is the nature of the Church of England, and we have a way to go. I think both Eeva and I recognise that at times those from the LGBTQI+ community have suffered, for which we are sorry.

In terms of reassurances about the process, Jayne, I cannot give you complete reassurances, but what I can say to you is that the Next Steps Group is working very hard to ensure that this is a process where we hear from the breadth of the Church of England. We are working hard to begin to look at a process around how what people feed back to us is then heard by the House of Bishops and how the House of Bishops take that seriously in their role as teachers and leaders of the faith begin to come back to this Synod later in 2022.

I have been encouraged by the way that the process has been put together. It is a relational engagement, and I would hope that we will capture and hear and listen to what people are saying. That is my hope. That may or may not be a reassurance to you, Jayne, but I am working very hard to see that we are in a different position than we were in 2017.

Eeva, I do not know whether you want to add anything else to that?

*Dr Eeva John (ex officio):* Just two tiny comments on that process and about not repeating 2017, where I could not agree with you more. I would say that the process we are planning is much more iterative. It is not as if all of a sudden we finish engagement and Synod is landed with some recommendations from the House of Bishops. We hope that it will be an iterative process of responding to initial thoughts. I hope that will absolutely be quite different.

Also, I just want to say that one of the privileges of running facilitation courses is that there is a real recognition as a whole people of God - clergy, bishops and all of us laity - that this is a formational process of learning to become more self-aware of our ignorance about what we can say or how we can behave that can impact so badly on others. It is increasing our self-awareness. It is a formational process of becoming better disciples of Christ. In some ways, that is a side product of *Living in Love and Faith* that I hope will spread far and wide.

*The Chair:* I am fully aware that there are a number of people who would also have liked to have the opportunity to ask questions. Unfortunately, time is up. Time is against us. A particular thanks to Bishop Sarah and Dr Eeva for all that you have shared with us this afternoon, and to fellow members of Synod for your questions. That concludes this item of business. We will move to the next item on the Agenda in a moment. Thank you, everyone.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 6.17 pm.

## **ITEM 500**

### **SPECIAL AGENDA I: LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

#### **DRAFT LEGISLATIVE REFORM (CHURCH COMMISSIONERS) ORDER 2021 (GS 2194A)**

*The Chair:* We come to Item 500 and Item 500A for which members will need the Draft Legislative Reform (Church Commissioners) Order 2021, GS 2194A, the Explanatory Note GS 2419X, the Report of the Scrutiny Committee GS 2491Y, and the Notice Paper of course.

First, I shall ask the Revd Paul Benfield to move Item 500A "That the draft Legislative Reform (Church Commissioners) Order 2021 be referred back to the Scrutiny Committee for further consideration of the whole of the draft order". Then I shall ask the Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury to speak in reply. If he indicates that the Archbishops' Council does not support the motion for referral back, the motion will lapse unless 40 members indicate by means of a green Zoom tick that they wish the

debate to continue. I now call on the Revd Paul Benfield to move Item 500A. He has up to five minutes.

## **ITEM 500A**

*Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* Chair, this is a historic occasion. It is the first time that a motion to refer a draft Legislative Reform Order back to the Scrutiny Committee has come before Synod. It is not difficult to understand its effect. If my motion is passed, Synod will not consider this draft order and it will go back to the Scrutiny Committee for further consideration. The Scrutiny Committee may then amend the Order in any way it considers appropriate and issue a further Report to Synod for consideration at a future group of sessions. I do not believe that the LRO procedure is the correct procedure to be used for the reconstitution of a major Church of England board. I would refer Synod to the report of the Scrutiny Committee which shows that there was a considerable division of opinion in that Committee about both the appropriateness of the procedure and the contents of the draft Order.

Significantly, in paragraph 60 of the Report, we read that only five of the nine members of the Scrutiny Committee considered that the draft Order fulfilled the requirements of the Standing Orders for an LRO at all, in respect of one of its provisions.

In paragraph 61 of the Report, we read that the Committee divided four votes for and five votes against on the proposal to remove the ten-year maximum service of an elected Commissioner. Similarly, in paragraph 67, a proposal to remove Article 2 of the order, which deals with those appointed or elected to fill casual vacancies, was defeated by five votes to four.

Had this been a Revision Committee for a Measure rather than a Scrutiny Committee for a LRO, when the matter came before Synod for revision, members could have put down amendments to the draft Measure on the floor of Synod and Synod could have voted on and decided these contentious matters, but under the LRO procedure, there is no provision for Synod to vote on amendments. The decisions on these important and controversial points are to be taken by the nine members of the Scrutiny Committee, two of whom are appointed by the Archbishops' Council, which is promoting the Order. Synod has, in effect, delegated the decisions to the nine-member Scrutiny Committee. Synod can either approve the draft Order in its entirety, with all its defects, or reject it in its entirety, and thereby lose its good parts, such as Article 6 dealing with procedural revisions and Article 7 dealing with the Lambeth Palace Library. There is no provision for Synod to amend an LRO.

When the Legislative Reform Measure 2018 was before Synod, we were told that LROs would be used for matters which did not justify the full legislative procedure of a Measure. An LRO was used very appropriately to amend and simplify the complex time limits under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 which were uncontroversial.

This LRO seeks to reconstitute a major board of the Church of England which is answerable to Parliament. We are told that this order removes burdens to efficiency and good governance, and that is why this procedure is being used. But surely all legislation should remove burdens to efficiency and good governance. Just because a proposal achieves those aims, it does not follow that the proposal should necessarily be enacted by LRO. My fear is that if this Order is approved as it stands we will find that this becomes the normal way of legislating, with Synod simply rubber-stamping what the Archbishops' Council and Scrutiny Committee have decided, with no opportunity for Synod to amend it.

We could reject the whole Order. If my motion is not passed, I give notice that I will vote to reject the whole order, but a better solution would be for us to refer the Order back to the Scrutiny Committee so that it can reconsider some of the more contentious parts and either amend or remove them. My principal reason for arguing this is, as I have explained, because this procedure is not the appropriate one to be used for these controversial changes.

There is also another reason. At the moment there is an ongoing review of governance of the Church of England. We are told in the Business Committee Report that the Report of the Governance Review Group will come before the next Synod in November. So, why are we altering the constitution of the Church Commissioners before that review has reported. That review may well recommend further changes to the Church Commissioners. I urge members to show by means of a green tick that they wish debate on this motion to continue. If the debate does continue, they will hear speakers address the contentious matters contained within it.

I beg to move that this draft order be referred back to the Scrutiny Committee.

*The Chair.* I now invite the Prolocutor to speak on behalf of the Archbishops' Council in reply. He may speak for up to five minutes.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Colleagues, Synod should be grateful to Fr Benfield for giving it the opportunity to test its appetite for the use of Legislative Reform Orders. With such a new power, it is important to test whether Synod is willing to use the powers available to it to make these Orders to the fullest extent, as is the view of the Legislative Reform Committee and the majority of the Scrutiny Committee, or whether there should be a more limited scope of use, as Fr Benfield believes. It is right that this appetite should be tested when it appears to some that an Order goes beyond the power available to the Legislative Reform Committee. Thank you, Paul.

Fr Benfield argues in his speech, as he did before the Scrutiny Committee, that this LRO goes beyond the scope of the Legislative Reform Measure for a number of reasons: that it touches on constitutional matters, and therefore requires proper parliamentary scrutiny,

presumably by virtue of a Measure. He also argues, as he did before the Scrutiny Committee, that the proposed Order removes rights from people that they might reasonably have expected to have.

I think it is right to explain to Synod that there is something of a misunderstanding abroad about the 2018 Legislative Reform Measure not being used for controversial matters. In fact, that is not the case; rather, the Measure itself sets out areas which would be controversial and therefore not within the *vires* of the Committee. The point Fr Benfield makes, of course, on the grounds that he outlines is that our order is *ultra vires* - and I shall return to that in a moment. If you are a Synod member who thinks that the Measure was never designed for matters that could be considered controversial, I should correct that misapprehension and suggest that this is not grounds for supporting Fr Benfield in this debate.

In response to the specifics, I draw Synod's attention to the Report of the Scrutiny Committee, both in terms of the arguments made by the majority and the clear legal advice we were given by our own legal advisers. In short, we accepted that the advice that the matter in the Order did not touch on the relationship between the Church and the State in any meaningful way. The Order leaves the roles of officers of the state well alone. Having laid the Order before Parliament, the Committee accepted that Parliament had been provided with the information necessary to it to object if it felt its rights were being infringed. We have heard nothing from parliamentary staff on this matter. We can safely assume that the matters of governance that our Order addresses, while important and legitimate matters for debate, do not fall outside the scope of the Measure in constitutional terms.

The Committee also does not accept the argument that has been made that this Measure infringes rights. It is the view of the Committee that the Order before Synod today, if debated, would not remove the right of General Synod to elect Commissioners, but it would change the length of time those elected by General Synod could serve. That seems to us not to materially affect the right of this Synod to elect Commissioners.

The role of these Reform Orders is to reduce burdens, so make improvements to governance in line with best practice and remove burdens of less effective governance. The Commissioners themselves are very keen to improve their governance, to improve efficiency, and we want to help them in the simplest way we can. Some might argue that removing the ability for someone to stand for more than two consecutive terms removes a right from them, but in this it should be noted that (a) someone who has served ten years may be re-elected after a five-year gap and (b) it must be questioned whether, in balancing the rights of individuals, the Church and affected persons, that such a right can reasonably be expected to be held by an individual, which is what the Measure says.

But perhaps the most convincing argument for me is what we might call the ExxonMobil argument. If the Commissioners are to hold companies like ExxonMobil to account, they



will likely come under increasing scrutiny in short order about their own conduct of business and life. Their governance should be as good as possible and this Reform Order makes that possible in the quickest and most efficient way. The effect of passing Paul's motion will be the likely delay of legislation, and it will probably be required to be brought back by a Measure.

The Legislative Reform Committee brings this Order to you today confident that it is within our right to do so and that there is nothing to be anxious about should the Order be made today. We therefore, in gratitude for its appearance, ask you to vote against the motion in the name of Fr Paul Benfield.

*The Chair:* Canon Butler has indicated that the Council does not support the motion and, therefore, it will lapse unless I see 40 green ticks by members indicating that they wish the debate to continue. I am seeing well over 40 green ticks, so the debate will continue on this item. The hands I am seeing up now are to debate Item 500A and I will call Sam Margrave followed by Morag Ellis.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* First, let me thank Fr Benfield for moving this motion and his powerful arguments, which I endorse fully. I wish to build on his points, with other reasons for referring this Order back, and highlighting what I am asking to be considered.

In particular, I found the proposal to relax the requirement for all lay Commissioners to be members of the Church of England particularly upsetting. The reason given for the change is insulting and hurtful, because it is suggested there is difficulty finding high-calibre candidates who are both Anglican and BAME. This makes me angry because we have such talented people in our Church. We only need to look at the "Panorama" programme earlier in the year to know that BAME people are too often ignored and overlooked already for those who are in Church of England. This change is not needed. What we need to do instead is to use the gifts of those already among us.

Synod, the Commissioners hold the purse strings for the Church of England. We heard about their work this morning. These changes matter. Do not be fooled. There is no explanation as to why these changes are needed right now. Why such urgency? There is no theological justification for the change. We do need a proper process to reflect on our NCIs, and governance and diversity, but something similar to the CNC work. These plans put too much power in too few hands, and we have seen what this does to our Church. It feels rather like a blatant power grab in the middle of a pandemic. The Report confirms that changes could tip the very balance of power in favour of the Archbishops and staff. These arrangements we have now have been in place for well over 80 years and have worked well.

My concern is that the Archbishops want to bring forward controversial decisions and are getting rid of any effective challenge or pushback. We need experienced strong voices in the room for fight for us and our parishes.

Only 38 people replied. We cannot rely on the consultation that has taken place. Time limits will cause Commissioners to lose corporate memory overnight, at a critical time. Changes to by-elections will end proportional representation, effectively. Simplification was about ensuring legislation was understandable, not to re-organise governance structures. This is a misuse of powers. We were also promised no controversial decisions or governance changes while Synod met online. I remain very concerned about these proposals for the reasons I have set out. I would ask that we take the opportunity to send this back and we recognise Fr Paul's arguments and the arguments that are to come, because we can do better than this. We need to give proper time to reflect on the governance of one of our most important organisations within the Church of England. We need to ensure that lay people, in particular, are Anglicans, that we encourage Church members, not bring people in from outside because we do not tend to recognise the brilliant value and gifts of those we already have.

I would support Fr Paul's motion and I would urge you to send a clear message that this is not acceptable. We need to wait for the governance review and we do not need to bind the next Synod. We need to let them see the governance review and make a decision.

*The Chair:* I have a number of people indicating they wish to speak so I will be putting a three-minute speech limit on from outset. Next please, Morag Ellis.

*Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor):* I recused myself from the Scrutiny Committee looking at this because I am also a Church Commissioner as well as holding my judicial post, but there is no reason, I am advised, why I should not contribute to this debate. I urge Synod to vote against Fr Benfield's motion, and I will briefly outline reasons for that.

There is, first of all, nothing in the legislation which requires the provisions of a Legislative Reform Order to be uncontroversial. If there were, then quite possibly virtually nothing could ever go through under one. But the main point is it is not a legal requirement. The issues here are administrative efficiency and unnecessary barriers.

I do not accept the proposition that changing the arrangements for serving as a Commissioner as an elected General Synod representative is a matter of constitutional significance. Moving to a position where they were no elected General Synod representatives would be of constitutional significance, but the drafting of the LRO does not interfere with that arrangement, and so it does not fall foul of that requirement.

Next, I do not accept that there is an accrued right to be elected to serve as a Commissioner just because you are a member of General Synod. So, at most, all that Synod members have is a hope of being elected, not a legal right to election. What the LRO is seeking to do here is simply to manage the Commissioners' internal workings.

Briefly on the merits, I agree with what the Prolocutor has said about that, but it does seem to me that it is very important that we comply with what is absolutely conventional modern governance practice, and also to look to widen opportunities for new people to be elected to the Commissioners and have the opportunity to serve and to put themselves forward for election on a level playing field as opposed to being against very, very experienced Commissioners, which has the effect of not providing such a level playing field because of incumbent advantage. If the governance review recommends more changes to the Commissioners then those can be considered separately and dealt with at the due time. Thank you very much, Chairman, for allowing me to speak.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I support Fr Benfield's proposal and agree with him that most of us did not anticipate the LRO procedure being used for such major and controversial changes as this. Like him, I think it would be far more appropriate for this sort of legislation to be done by Measure, for the reasons that he gave and the scrutiny that we would get, which I am afraid even the Scrutiny Committee, of which I am a member, is not able to give because of the length of the procedure.

I accept, as the Dean of the Arches says, there is nothing in the legislation that says it cannot be used for uncontroversial purposes, but I do not agree with her that everything is controversial, and it has already been mentioned that the previous LRO was exactly that: it was a change which was almost entirely uncontroversial.

I also accept there is no right to an election, but there is currently a right to stand for election, and that is the point that is being made, I think, about affecting established rights.

There are two particular reasons I have for supporting the reference back. Article 2 imposes, as has been mentioned, a limit of ten years, or a two-term service, for elected Commissioners. As you will see from its Report, the Scrutiny Committee was divided five/four on this. The Scrutiny Committee consists of a chair, three members elected by the whole Synod for five years, of whom I am one, three members appointed by the Appointments Committee for the consideration of a particular Order, and two members appointed by the Archbishops' Council to promote the Order.

In this case, a majority of the independent members, including all three of the members elected by the Synod, wished the term limits provision for elected Commissioners to be removed from the Order. The reasons for that were that we believe that Synod should be free to elect whomsoever it wishes as a Commissioner. If it wants to re-elect a long-serving and very effective Commissioner, it should be free to do so. *Ex officio* commissioners, bishops and estates Commissioners are not limited in that way, nor of course are the staff and officers. So, the term limit has the unintended consequence of disturbing the balance of influence between elected, *ex officio* and appointed members, and influencing the influence of the staff. Thirdly, the loss of long-serving members loses corporate memory and the wisdom which comes from that.

The second issue with which four of us were concerned was the proposal also in Article 2 that members elected to fill a vacancy should serve a full five-year term instead of the remainder of the term of the Commissioner whose departure had caused the vacancy. The problem with this is that over time it would mean that each elected Commissioner would be elected separately on a different occasion. There would be no quinquennial election for all the elected Commissioners. Those quinquennial elections by STV produce a diverse group of Commissioners representing different shades of opinion, as well as, potentially, a range of ages, ethnicities, and so on. If each one is elected separately that will not happen.

*Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury):* I too was one of the three elected independent members of the Scrutiny Committee and we reviewed this procedure.

When the Scrutiny Committee was being set up and the shortened procedure was being considered, we were assured that it would not be used for substantive matters. My concern here is not with anything except that this is a hugely substantive matter. First of all, it undercuts the franchise of people elected to General Synod. Why would it be the case that you could limit the number of terms to be served as a Church Commissioner? I understand the case that has been made in connection with the Archbishops' Council, but I do not think the same considerations apply.

Secondly, this is not a question of administrative efficiency only; it is about the right of Synod to elect who it wishes to stand as a Church Commissioner and represent it, of course not bound by any considerations except the ones that the individual seeks to bring.

Finally, we all know that you have to be knowledgeable and experienced in that circumstance in order to have any valued input. Without these elected representatives, we lose the very thing that this procedure proposes to remove from us, which is those people who know where some of the skeletons are hidden. I think it is very regrettable. I am one of those four who objected to this. I do not think that the legislative reform procedure should be used in this case, it should be referred back.

*The Chair.* Next Jamie Harrison and Bishop David Walker. Then I am intending to call two more people before testing the mind of the Synod on closure.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* I am member of Archbishops' Council. Like Simon Butler, I am pleased that Paul Benfield has brought this before us because I think it allows us to discuss, in some depth, the issue of legitimacy and of process here.

Those of you who were at the April Synod will remember my amendment to the CNC legislation, which suggested moving from endorsement to reception, in other words to send it back, and I think you will agree that the work done by the CNC Group was extremely helpful in reforming and refining that.

However, I am not minded to ask for that today for a number of reasons. The first one is around governance. Mention has been made of the governance review, which we hope will come to Synod in November, but any changes to the governance will inevitably come face-to-face with the 1998 National Institutions Measure which of course is in the legal Measure. Any real changes to our governance structure will take a number of years, possibly until 2023 or 2024, to come through the Synod in the normal legislative process. To say this is going to have an effect on that is really not relevant in the timescale.

There are some urgencies here in the timescale of governance. We are aware from the Charity Commission and its guidance that it wants to see the regular turnover of trustees and others involved in such work. I would be sorry to lose the sense of urgency here because, as others have said, the outside world is looking at our governance structures now, particularly in relation to the work of the Church Commissioners.

Also, if you go to GS 2194Y, the Report of the Scrutiny Committee, you see some really very good people in Synod terms, some very experienced people on that Committee; people who would be hard to beat, actually. Although we have already heard from some people who have not been happy with the outcome, we have to ask ourselves was the process fair and proper in how the Committee actually operated, and I would suggest it was. We know we will never get 100% agreement on everything. There was a balance there and the balance was discussed and voted on, and this is the outcome of their Report.

To me the question of process is acceptable. It may not be to you: that is for you to decide. On legitimacy we have also heard from Morag Ellis the importance of being able to be controversial and, indeed, dealing with these matters not affecting our constitution. Again, I would say that there is reason to say this is perfectly legitimate work, as Simon has also stated.

On balance, I am content that this is a legitimate process. It has been through consultation and deep discussion, and much more scrutiny in many ways than much of our other work, so I would be very sorry to see this, in a sense, thrown back to the Scrutiny Committee, and, of course, there is no guarantee that even if they came back with something else, we would not be having this same debate in six or 12 months, and we still go back to a Measure.

I would rather the Synod had a chance to debate Item 500, which I hope will follow this, and either receive it or reject it. I would be asking you, please, not to vote on this occasion for Fr Paul's motion.

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker):* Members of Synod, I too am glad we are debating Fr Benfield's motion. However, it would be deeply regrettable if we did not also have the opportunity to debate the substantive motion this afternoon. This LRO has been through proper public consultation, and the paperwork makes clear it has been

carefully considered on numerous occasions by the Legislative Reform and Scrutiny Committees. A majority of consultees supported all aspects of the LRO and the responsible committees have agreed it should proceed.

I, too, strongly support the whole Order, but I am going to focus my remarks on one aspect that has been brought out in this debate already. That is the proposed limitation of members' tenure provided by Article 2. I have to declare an interest. I am a serving Commissioner and I will be directly affected by this proposal, but I will enthusiastically vote for it if we are allowed to proceed to that this afternoon. That is not just to get myself out of what is at times a demanding role.

I sit on all kinds of bodies and it is absolutely standard for my tenure to be timed out eventually. Trustees of other bodies do not have unlimited tenure. I think of the housing association, the trade body I have served on, the police ethics panel that I chair and various charities. It is very hard to argue that the Church Commissioners should be the exception. Indeed, the Commissioners themselves acknowledged this several years ago when we adopted a policy that appointed members should not serve more than ten consecutive years. This is about regularising that for the other elected members.

We have 27 members on our board. Each can serve up to ten years, supported by a dedicated staff team and first-rate professional advisers. My role and that of the Deputy Chair of the Commission are appointed to such by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and although elected by the House of Bishops, most of the bishops are elected. I see how vital the balance is between continuity and turnover. We need intelligent succession planning. We need to bring in new members. They question us, cause us to see things from new angles, challenge the status quo, and sometimes they strengthen that status quo, actually, by challenging it.

Members of Synod, the points I have raised here need proper debate, but that will not be helped, as others have said, by referring this Order back to the scrutiny stage. If Synod members do not believe it should pass, they can, as Fr Benfield indicates he will do, vote against it in the main debate. This Order is about improved governance through increased efficiency, and the most efficient thing we can do this afternoon is support it here and now. I therefore urge members to reject Paul Benfield's motion and support the motion in Simon Butler's name.

*The Chair.* I will just say that I am intending to give plenty of time for this amendment because then people can rehearse arguments here that they might otherwise want to make in the next part, so I will be calling a few more people.

*Mr Martin Kingston (Gloucester):* I want to urge you, please, to reject Fr Benfield's motion. The reasons for doing that are, substantially, those which have just been put to you by Bishop David Walker. I should declare an interest that I am a member of the Governance Review Group and so involved in all aspects of that review.

The focus of my concern is the time periods of the Church Commissioners' tenure. This proposed amendment to the rules comes at an important time from Synod's point of view, when we are striving to be a more diverse body. We are striving to look more diverse and to be effective in that regard. We have to face the fact that many outside the Church have an image of our governing bodies as consisting of roomfuls of grey-headed and predominantly male people occupying positions which they have occupied for decades. Term limits are intended to change that image.

These are hardly draconian. Ten years is not draconian. Term limits have real advantages. They bring new members with new and fresh thinking. They bring with those new members new connections and they bring with them new skill sets. In short order, term limits of the kind that are proposed here, and which we desperately need to be endorsing, bring very many advantages. This is not intended to sound ungrateful to those who have faithfully served over many years, but the reality is that it looks almost tribal, does it not, to carry on endorsing the same people in office?

There are objections, objections which I suspect lie behind some of what Fr Benfield is urging: objections that you cannot learn the job in five years. I invite you to go out anywhere and say in any context that you cannot learn how to do a job in five years. It is, frankly, risible. If you cannot, it means that you are not trying or not being effective in what you are doing.

Loss of corporate memory has been referred to. There is, with great respect, not a scintilla of objective evidence that a term limit of ten years results in any loss of corporate memory. On the contrary, all the evidence points to the fact that term limits are hugely beneficial.

At a personal level, the Gospel calls us to be continually refreshed and not stuck in a rut. We need that corporately as well and we need to demonstrate by our rejection of Fr Benfield's suggestion of a referral back, both in our debate and in our acceptance of what this LRO is proposing, that we are determined to be more diverse; to move away from the possibility of a headline that says following a debate of this kind that the Church has once again voted ---

*Mr Ian MacDowell (Chichester):* May I pose this as a question: do we want the best people, however we define that? Of course we do. I am unconvinced that we should impose a time limit on service. Why would we want to constrain the members of the new Synod in their choice of who they can elect? If they feel there should be a time limit of ten years, they can reflect that in their votes. We should surely leave Synod members free to exercise their judgment so that they can vote for the people they think best suited for the roles. We have, I think, to support or reject this Order in entirety, and I do not want to reject it all, so I support Fr Benfield's proposal and believe we should refer it back.

*Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark):* In his response to the procedural motion, the Prolocutor has helpfully explained why this item is not legally problematic. He has identified the misunderstanding that seems to exist here that Legislative Reform Orders are only for entirely uncontentious matters - if such things even exist in the Church. The legal advice to the contrary is very clear but, actually, I want to go beyond that and say that these proposals are not very controversial anyway.

Back in April Synod approved a Legislative Reform Order, which, among other things, dissolved the Pensions Board and replaced it with a much smaller one, and introduced pre-selection into the election process. Previously Synod has passed the Cathedrals Measure which, among other things, changed the composition of cathedral chapters and provided for Charity Commission co-regulation of cathedrals.

The changes covered by the LRO before Synod today are much less radical than these examples, but are entirely sensible. I note that the various proposals received majority support in the consultation phase, even though we all know that objectors tend to respond more readily than supporters in consultation exercises. I also wonder whether any of this would be considered in the least bit racy by the wider Church membership. Removing unlimited tenure, broadening the perspective of a trustee body, modernising its working practice - I suspect most would wonder why it was not so already.

With significant help from the Church Commissioners, we passed the far-reaching Cathedrals Measure in order to ensure that cathedrals are in line with best practice elsewhere in the third sector, which is precisely where they and all other Church bodies should be. And now here are the Commissioners asking us through this sensible package of proposed changes to help them improve their own governance. We should say yes and encourage them to get on with it, and for this reason I will be resisting this proposal that Fr Benfield has made.

*Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln):* I am an elected member of the Scrutiny Committee. Synod, my speech essentially addresses one part of the proposed Order. May I just say that I support the motion of Fr Benfield. The part that I address is about term limits for elected Commissioners. Should candidates be disqualified from standing at an election after ten years' service and not be eligible for election until another five-year term has passed? The changes affecting elected Commissioners ultimately limit voter choice. Should voter choice be trammelled and, therefore, not exercised to its fullest extent?

I made similar representations at the April group of sessions regarding reforms to the Pensions Board Legislative Reform Order. Then I made the point that there was a constitutional dimension to that proposed Order, and I want to be clear about what I mean by that. Which parts of our ecclesiastical legislation should be subject to this fast-track reform procedure? Is General Synod comfortable allowing this process to make fast-track changes to representative bodies, especially those that have an elected component as well, or should it be done in the traditional way?



Synod has to consider the part it plays by being prepared to lay down markers about the types of legislation that are proposed for fast-track reform. It is about shaping the relationship between proposals for fast-track reform and the whole of General Synod. That is what I mean about the issue of having a wider constitutional significance. It is still open to Synod to reject this order by voting in favour of Fr Benfield's motion sending it back to the Scrutiny Committee. Synod is not bound to accept this Order despite the majority having concluded those parts of the Legislative Reform Measure 2018 have been met.

So Synod, on those points I would ask you to support this motion and return it to the Committee.

*Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio):* In declaring my interest as a Commissioner, I really want to thank Simon Butler and the Legislative Reform and Scrutiny Committees for their hard work in turning the Church Commissioners' initial question into this draft Order. It follows from that remark that I want to urge Synod to resist the request to send it back to them.

There are a number of things that Synod should debate, and I hope endorse, without delay. I would be especially disappointed, even though I am an outgoing Commissioner, if Synod were not given the opportunity today to support Article 5, which would enable a limited relaxation of the rule which says that all Commissioners must be members of the Church of England.

I recognise that this proposal has raised some eyebrows, and that some people have wondered how a non-Anglican could possibly bring the requisite commitment. That is an important debating point.

As the Chair of the Assets Committee may I say this? The fact is we need deep, deep expertise in a wide range of investments in a globally diversified portfolio. Referring the matter back will not alter the fact that the impact of the current disqualifications on our diversity profile is very real and that the need to change it is really pressing. For example, far too often we identify exceptionally well-qualified UKME professionals with great passion for our work and the mission of the Church, and they are excluded. Whereas someone quite passionless may apply provided they tick the C of E box. That is not theoretical. That is my real and repeated experience. I can also tell Synod from experience on both sides of the interview table that anyone who makes it through the Crown and Archbishops' exacting recruitment processes absolutely will have demonstrated their commitment to our mission. I hope nobody will delay this Order because this proposal raised an eyebrow. It would have raised mine four years ago, but now I strongly believe it raises the bar in terms of candidates' commitment.

Neither would referring this Order back for further scrutiny alter the complexity of the economy and the investment markets with which Article 3 aims to help us keep pace by allowing additional expertise to be brought in without increasing the number of Commissioners or disturbing the elected membership. Nor would referring this back help us practise what we preach to investee companies as the National Investing Bodies, as Simon Butler mentioned, and Clive Mather noted powerfully when Synod passed the Pensions Board LRO in April. We should be debating those points. I do not see how handing the matter to a new Synod will help. It certainly will not alter any of the facts I have described or remove the administrative burdens and inefficiencies which the Order seeks to remove.

I therefore respectfully encourage colleagues to vote against Fr Benfield's motion and support the main motion in Canon Butler's name.

*The Chair:* Before I call Stephen Hofmeyr, I am conscious I would like to hear a few more speeches in favour of the Reverend Paul Benfield's motion, so please would you lower your hand if you are against it so that I know who to call.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* What is this debate about and what is it not about? This is not a debate about whether the proposed legislative reform is or is not appropriate. It is a debate about whether an appropriate vehicle is being used to bring about reform. There are undoubtedly some important issues of principle within the proposed reform which are not substantively uncontroversial. As a consequence, this is not the right vehicle for bringing about reform, and that is the issue before us. If rubber-stamped we will set an unfortunate precedent for the future. May I please encourage you to support Fr Benfield's motion.

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* Having been a Church Commissioner and a member of its Assets Committee for virtually all that time, for 18 years, I think I have some background knowledge to be able to say something about this matter. I have also spent the past 40 years working in the investment industry, and, as a result of that, I was made Deputy Chair of the Assets Committee in 2014.

I would like to argue strongly that this proposal to limit term periods should be sent back to the drawing board. The key thing Church Commissioners need on the Assets Committee is professional investment expertise. I appreciate, as Loretta said, that the co-opted members may provide this, but if there is insufficient elected membership who are professionally knowledgeable, the governance becomes reliant on appointed officials who may not have a full appreciation of the Church's priorities. There are very few elected members of General Synod who are professionally knowledgeable about investments.

If these term limits are imposed, it will result, in my view, in a serious reduction in the quality of governance. I appreciate that this may be intended to increase diversity. It may be extended to tick boxes on corporate governance, but I would say that professional

knowledge on investments is too important to be ignored in this area. The Church Commissioners have produced excellent results over the last 20 years, but I fear that that will be seriously jeopardised and put at risk if these provisions are imposed.

I therefore ask you to support Paul Benfield's motion to refer this back to the Scrutiny Committee so that that particular aspect can be removed. I really feel it is absolutely essential that we maintain this investment expertise within the elected membership of the Church Commissioners.

*The Chair:* The speech limit is now two minutes. I call on Tim Hind and Stuart Fyffe, and after that, I will be proposing a motion for closure on this item.

*Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells):* I was a nominated member on the Scrutiny Committee. I am not at all sure that Fr Benfield's motion will achieve what he wants to achieve. All his starting arguments, and many of the arguments that he made during the Scrutiny Committee proceedings, were about the legitimacy of the Legislative Reform Order, so I suspect that sending it back to the Scrutiny Committee will not actually change that because the legal advice has always been that this particular reform was suitable to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee. I therefore wonder whether he would be better served by having a full debate and then having the outcome of that debate decided by Synod, which I presume is what he wanted in the first place.

*Revd Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle):* I have an interest in this matter as one who served on the Revision Committee for the Legislative Reform Measure as it passed through Synod. I am personally somewhat undecided on Fr Benfield's motion, but I do care about the use of this Measure and its appropriateness. I just want to offer an insight into the intention behind the Measure that might help Synod members decide this point.

The Prolocutor is quite right that it was never intended that the Measure would only be used for uncontentious matters, but we did consider an amendment that would have required it to apply only to burdens that were excessive or significant. We rejected that proposal because it would have the effect of magnifying the importance of the matters to which the power was directed, and thereby increase the significance of the power itself. What we said in the Committee is, "The purpose of the Order-making power was to make it possible to remove burdens that were not important enough to raise weighty policy considerations". I think that might be a helpful guiding principle for Synod members to have in mind on this question. Is it important enough to raise weighty policy considerations?

Secondly, just on the applicability of the Measure generally, I wonder if it would help us in future if the Scrutiny Committee, when putting these things before us, could offer us a summary reminding Synod of the purpose of the Measure and stating in the case of each proposed Order, first, exactly the burden it is addressing, secondly, how the Order removes or reduces that burden and, thirdly, why they consider it not important enough

to raise a weighty policy consideration. I hope that insight might help Synod members to make up their mind in the remaining seconds of this debate.

*The Chair.* I would like to now put a motion for closure on Item 500A. That will be done by the Lumi voting mechanism. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on a motion for closure on Item 500A.

*The motion was put and carried, 277 voting in favour, six against, with four recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* I have a point of order from Sam Margrave, so I will take that before I ask Revd Benfield to reply and he will have five minutes then. Sam Margrave, please, your point of order.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* There was a bit of a delay with the point of order box.

*The Chair.* I am sorry, would you repeat that, please?

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I asked for a point of order before the vote but I am happy for you to continue.

*The Chair.* Thank you, Revd Benfield, you have five minutes to respond to the debate.

*Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* The Prolocutor put words into my mouth. He said that I was arguing that the use of this procedure was *ultra vires*. I did not argue that. I simply said it was not appropriate. Therefore, the views of the learned Dean of the Arches are largely irrelevant because I think she was addressing the legal arguments as to whether it was legally possible to use this procedure, and I would agree that it is. My argument is that it is not appropriate. It is not appropriate because of the sharp division on these important matters. As Mr Scowen pointed out, the elected members of the Scrutiny Committee were all opposed to the imposition of term limits.

Jamie Harrison seemed to suggest that I was saying the process has not been fair and proper. Again, I am not saying anything about that. The Scrutiny Committee Report reads perfectly well. What I am saying is that this is the wrong process. I would agree with Stephen Hofmeyr, who said this will set a dangerous precedent for the future that we want to be mindful of.

Debbie McIsaac said we are talking about the rights of Synod. If Synod is happy for our legislation to be passed in this way with nine people deciding on majorities of five to four then so be it. I would urge that we do send this back to the Scrutiny Committee.

Ian MacDowell, do we want the best people? Yes, of course we do. Gavin Oldham has argued that therefore the imposition of term limits may not be appropriate. Do we want a

more diverse body? Yes, of course we do, but are we saying, as Sam Margrave argued, that there are no minority ethnic people or other minorities in the Church of England? This seems an incredible proposition. We need to remember that the Church Commissioners will decide to some extent where the money is spent, and for members who are not members of the Church of England to be deciding that seems slightly odd and extraordinary.

I do not have time to go through everybody's speech. Andrew Nunn referred to the Cathedral Measure, and therein lies the weakness of his argument, because the changes to the constitution of cathedrals were made by Measure, not by a Legislative Reform Order. I would argue the same thing should happen here, if it were to happen. There are some good points in this Order which, if it is sent back to the Scrutiny Committee, can be retained. It can remove or alter other parts, and we can end up with a better Legislative Reform Order than we now have.

I urge that it be sent back. If not, we must vote the whole thing down.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 500A to the vote. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 500A using the Lumi voting platform.

*The motion was put and lost, 140 voting in favour, 144 against, with 16 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 500**

*The Chair:* That means Item 500A has not been carried and we move to Item 500. I call on Canon Butler to move Item 500 "That the Draft Legislative Reform (Church Commissioners) Order 2021 be approved". He may speak for up to nine minutes.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* That is probably the closest vote ever. I am going to cut my speech short because many of the remarks have already been made in the earlier debate. The Commissioners' aim in this Order is to increase the efficiency of the work and bring the governance of the Commissioners into greater alignment with best practice. The proposals before you could be brought under three headings: first, the balancing of skills, experience and perspectives; secondly, the removal of certain inflexibilities; and thirdly, the removal of practical and physical inefficiencies.

Turning to the details of the Order, there are a number of proposals which aim to bring best practice into the governance of the Commissioners. The Order would give appointed Commissioner members and non-Commissioner members the ability to serve for five-year terms rather than the present three-year terms. This brings their service into line with the terms of office of elected Commissioner members. This is an important change because, given the reappointment of members after a term of office is not guaranteed, it is fair to allow them time to learn the complexities of the role, the culture of the

Commissioners, and to bring their specific expertise and contribution to the work of the Commissioners before asking them to reapply.

The Order would also introduce, as has been rehearsed already, an overall ten-year limit of tenure before a Commissioner was required to take a step back. The Council believes that this will ensure a good balance between experience and fresh perspectives, and is in line with widely-acknowledged best practice. It also mirrors the changes that Synod agreed to the Pensions Board in April. 70% of those who responded to the consultation supported this proposal. Nothing in this Order prevents a member who has previously served for ten years from serving again after a five-year break. If I may simply respond to Mr Oldham earlier, of course there are plenty of other people with the sorts of skills and expertise that he referred to that are out there and we are keen to see offer their gifts to wider Church.

The Order gives the Commissioners a number of permissive powers which they will be able to use their judgment over. Permissive powers allow for flexibility and creativity and are often very useful to a board when it senses there are gaps in knowledge or experience, or where a different set of lenses will be useful through which to view the work of the board in question.

This Order permits the Assets Committee to increase the number of lay members from six to eight. This will not affect the number of Commissioners overall and it will leave the Committee's elected clerical and lay membership untouched. The Commissioners hold an increasingly diverse portfolio of assets and on a small Assets Committee the power in this Order will give the ability of greater depth and breadth of experience to be added to the Committee. Nominated Commissioners will be able to be recruited with a view to appointing them to the Assets Committee and thus increase its efficiency. Over 80% of respondents in the survey supported this proposal.

The Order also removes the disqualification of certain diocesan officials from becoming Commissioners, subject, of course, to the will of the electorate of the appointing body. Many more clergy today hold some form of diocesan role which unreasonably limits the pool. Synod will be aware that Commissioners no longer have the direct funding relationship to dioceses which they once did, which was in the background to the former disqualification. It is the view of the Commissioners and the Legislative Reform Committee that a diocesan perspective could be a valuable one, taking, of course, care to manage well any perceived or actual conflicts of interest.

The concern expressed by a minority is that of perceived centralisation. However, given this is a permissive power, and that those who work for the dioceses would, if appointed as Commissioners, be required to act in accordance with the legal requirements placed upon them as Commissioners, and as charity trustees, the Council is confident that the fear of greater centralisation is a risk easily mitigated, just as it is a claim often made.

We have seen in elections in this quinquennium the way in which excellent, well-qualified candidates from this Synod have been prevented from standing because of their disqualification, and we wish to remove this unnecessary barrier.

The third permissive power gives a limited relaxation of the requirement for all lay Commissioners to be members of the Church of England, and Loretta has already spoken of that. This has demonstrably undermined the Commissioners' attempts to increase board diversity with those high-calibre candidates to which she referred earlier, particularly from appointing candidates from a UKME background.

The practical reality is that the great majority of Commissioners would continue to be members of the Church of England and the Order guarantees this, while being open to the possibility that members of other denominations with specific skills or technical expertise could add significant value to the Commissioners' work. The wording matches the way in which members of other denominations can be entered on the electoral roll of a parish. Synod can be assured that rigorous recruitment will continue.

The final area of attention in the Order is to make some practical adjustments to the Measure in the light of emerging technological opportunities, which have been clearly necessary during the pandemic. The Order permits remote meetings, deals with issues of correspondence procedures and also makes changes to the charitable objects of the Commissioners which will permit other church bodies' use of the facilities at the new Lambeth Palace Library, particularly for archiving and document storage.

Synod, it is often said, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it", which reflects the view that tinkering with things is not always conducive to best outcomes. None of what is proposed today should reflect any belief that the Commissioners are not well governed. The existing Commissioners discharge their duties with diligence and efficiency. But good governance, like good ministry, requires ongoing reflective practice, and it is the view of the Commissioners, backed by the Council through its Legislative Reform Committee, and supported by the evidence of the statutory consultation, that the proposals in this Order before Synod today do remove such burdens to efficiency.

We hope that by fixing these perceived deficits this order makes possible for even more effective decision-making and removes some barriers which prevent the Commissioners from being even better at what they do in governance terms than has been possible up to now. They are limited and sensible proposals in the name of good governance. I move that the Legislative Reform (Church Commissioners) Order 2021 be made.

*The Chair.* Item 500 is now open to debate. The speech limit will be two minutes for the first speaker and then we will go down to one minute. I call on John Spence please and then David Lamming.

*Canon Dr John Spence (ex officio):* I want to warmly endorse this package. This is typical of the culture of continuous improvement that David Walker and Loretta have instilled. I previously served as a Church Commissioner for a limited term of nine years and know that by the end of that time I was coming to the end of all useful things to say. I was always inspired by the new presence coming in with the continuous turnover of expertise; new people bringing new ideas, bringing improvements to our governance and to our efficiency in managing the Church resources.

I actually serve in a limited period for this role as Archbishops' Council Finance Committee Chair. I think limited periods are very useful, but it is the overall package here that I commend to you: a wide range of improvements which will make the Church Commissioners still better servants of the Church of England.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I would like to support the arguments being put forward by Loretta Minghella in relation to the proposal in Article 5 to widen the people who can become Church Commissioners, to extend them beyond members of the Church of England. But that does raise a question, which I would be grateful if Simon Butler could answer in his reply, as to what constitutes a member of the Church of England for the purpose of this order.

In paragraph 91 of the Scrutiny Committee Report we read this: "The members considered it would be possible for someone who is not a member of the Church of England, however that should be understood, to develop an understanding of the Church of England's law, constitution, document," et cetera.

We do have in Article 5(2) a requirement that a majority of the members of each Committee constituted by or under the Measure must be members of the Church of England, so it does matter what a member of the Church of England is for this purpose. Perhaps I could just remind Synod that when the Church Representation Rules were being considered a couple of years ago we were provided by Alexander McGregor with a note about membership of the Church of England which included this in the conclusion: "From the foregoing it is apparent that the concept of membership is rather a loose one for the Church of England ..."

*The Chair:* Thank you, that is time. I have a point of order from Kathy Playle.

*Mrs Kathy Playle (Chelmsford):* Please may we have a vote by Houses for this item?

*The Chair:* Thank you. That is a call for a vote by Houses when we come to vote. We will carry on with the debate.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of one minute.



*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* I really welcome this proposal, which will improve effectiveness and regeneration through its focus on diversity and its focus on best practice in governance. In some respects, it mirrors the work that the Pensions Board has been doing, which was approved by Synod in April.

In some respects, it is quite different. Let me just highlight three important things for me. One is adding extra appointed members of the Assets Committee, which I believe is genuinely strategic; secondly, the changes in respect of virtual meetings, Zoom et cetera, which is, frankly, essential; and, last but not least, allowing other NCIs access to the new Lambeth Library, which is both really helpful and quite delightful. I commend this motion to Synod.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* I declare an interest as a member of the Legislative Reform Committee and the Scrutiny Committee for this LRO. I find myself somewhat bewildered, to be honest, by the amount of controversy that this seems to have brought out. This is simply sensible. We need the Church Commissioners to be at the gold standard of governance, and term limits are very much part of that. Ten years is quite enough to get up to speed and be extremely useful. After that perhaps you lose a little usefulness.

Also, and I do not know about you, I love working with people from other denominations. This has been shown to be a limiting factor if we limit to the Church of England in increasing diversity. We have to increase diversity, therefore we need this clause. Please support this LRO. It is simply sensible.

*The Chair:* The speech limit remains one minute. I am minded after two more speeches to move a motion for closure on this item.

*Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough):* I would simply like to revert to the question that was raised at the beginning of the earlier debate as to whether this is an appropriate method of legislation as opposed to something that is legally possible. Those of us who have been on Synod a long time are accustomed to a division between uncontroversial business being dealt with in a Miscellaneous Provisions Measure and controversial business being dealt with in a formal Measure which gives Synod members the opportunity and ample time to debate and to discuss business that may well be controversial, business that does affect constitutional matters.

As we have seen today, Synod is not universally satisfied that an LRO is the appropriate method of dealing with this, so I would appeal on this occasion for this LRO to be defeated today so that matters can be done properly and in a way that respects the democratic rights of Synod to analyse these issues. On the board, the clergy and laity are represented by seven people out of 27. That in itself is profoundly --

*The Chair:* Sorry, time.

*Revd David Fisher (Salisbury):* I am a comparatively new member of Synod and I have to say I find it extraordinary that I am sitting here listening to a proposal made - and this is without denigrating anybody who is not a member of the Church of England and, indeed, however wide you draw the definition of who is a member of the Church of England - to allow non-members of the Church of England to be members of this most essential board. That is all that I wish to say.

*The Chair:* I now put a motion for closure on Item 500. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod using the Lumi platform.

*The motion was put and carried, 268 voting in favour, 11 against, with four recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* That was carried, so I will call on Canon Butler to respond once I have dealt with a point of order. Peter Breckwoldt, please.

*Revd Peter Breckwoldt (Salisbury):* I would like to ensure that there is a call for a vote by Houses on this important matter.

*The Chair:* Noted, thank you.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Synod, it looks like we are going to have a vote by Houses, and let us just deal with naming what that effectively means. A significant number of members of this Synod are convinced that this order should be defeated and are using the procedure most likely to succeed in that. I need to explain to Synod that the decision to do that is, effectively, the nuclear option. We go back to square one and it will be factored into the wide amount of legislative business that we have to face. Sitting where I do as Chair of the Legislative Reform Committee, people are queuing up to send us huge and complex pieces of legislation in the next quinquennium, and should you defeat this order today this will be one further thing, and my fear is that it will get pushed down the list of things to do in a very crowded legislative agenda.

None of the issues will go away. There will be more time and expense. If I were to tell you the amount of time the staff have spent on this, and the amount of work that has gone into it, it would be a significant step for this Synod to decline to accept this order. I ask you to think about the consequences of that, and whether the principles at stake are significantly great enough to be able to justify that.

Turning to specific issues, John Spence made the point so well that everyone needs to find time to step away. Stepping away enables boards to refresh and gain greater experience. David Lamming, a person who signs a declaration subscribing to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and supports the charitable objectives, who is not a member of the Church of England, will be eligible. What it means to be a member of the Church of England is a far wider and deeper question and is not relevant to this particular item.

The other points have all been aired. I think we just need to vote. Synod, I do not very often find myself anxious that a step is about to be taken that might be extremely regrettable, but I ask you to think very carefully about whether this is the time to defeat this by a vote by Houses.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Canon Butler. We have had a request to vote by Houses. I need to see 25 people indicating they would like that by a green tick. I am seeing lots of green ticks, well above 25, so we will proceed to a counted vote by Houses. I direct that the bell not be rung on this occasion. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 500.

*The vote on Item 500: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 22, against two, with two recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 80 in favour, 40 against, with five recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 79 in favour, 61 against, with five recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.*

*The Chair:* Item 500 is carried and this concludes the item of business.

We adjourn now and resume at 6 o'clock. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *Revd Zoe Hemming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 6 pm.

## **RESPONDING TO THE HOUSING CRISIS: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH (GS 2216)**

*The Chair:* Synod, we now come to Item 22 and our last item of business for today. In a moment, I will ask the Archbishop of York to introduce the presentation, after which he will then speak to and move the motion. We have heard quite a lot about the diversity of voices and the importance of that, so may I encourage perhaps shyer members of Synod to consider putting their hand up to join in with the debate that we might have on this, to give yourselves a little bit of time to be thinking that through. I now hand to the Archbishop of York to introduce the presentation.

### **ITEM 21**

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I bring apologies first from Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani, the Bishop for Housing, who is literally in the middle of moving to her new home - my old home - in the Diocese of Chelmsford.

In her absence, I am delighted to be introducing this session on the Housing Commission. This is a great opportunity for the Church of England to be good news to our nation, and particularly in our poorest communities. As we recover from the pandemic, it is vital that central to the process of rebuilding our society is a physical rebuild - to provide decent

homes for the estimated 8 million people in England who live in unaffordable, overcrowded or sub-standard housing.

The Church has always cared about housing. In 1061 an Anglo-Saxon noblewoman Richeldis de Faverches had a vision in which she was instructed to build a replica of the house where Jesus grew up and where Mary received the message that she was to be the mother of the Lord. She built that house in Walsingham. So in this country, if you go on pilgrimage to our best-loved and most-visited shrine to our Lady, you will visit a little holy house. This house reminds us of the heart of the Christian faith, God dwelling with us in Christ, but also of God's just purposes for the world, which include everyone having a place to dwell. Households, homes, communities - they matter to God and so, of course, they ought to matter to us.

The *Coming Home* Report offers a compellingly positive and distinctive Christian vision for housing. We set the bar of our expectation high. We hope that this Report will shape public debate about housing, as well as our own practice - that housing should be sustainable, safe, stable, sociable and satisfying.

In brief, a good home is a place that enables us to live in harmony with the natural environment, a place where we feel safe and is affordable, so people can put down roots and be part of a community.

Unfortunately, for too many people do not have this. Many thousands have no home at all. We can and must do more as a nation to right this injustice. And we want the Church to be part of the solution, using our resources - our land, buildings, assets, and people - and the vision of the Gospel itself to help create truly affordable, high-quality homes and communities where people want to live. As Jesus, Mary and Joseph enjoyed the life of an earthly home, we want that for all people.

I am now going to hand over to three members of our Housing Executive and Advisory Teams to give you a bit more detail about our plans. First, the Revd Lynne Cullens, who was one of the Commissioners on Housing, Church and Community. She will talk about what is going on especially at local church level; then Ben Preece Smith, who is on the Housing Executive Team. He will talk about his experience as Diocesan Secretary in Gloucester, taking a more strategic and missional approach to the management of church land; and, thirdly, Nick Pollock, who is leading the Executive Team on secondment from the Duchy of Cornwall. He will talk about a sustainable model of strengthening and building community with homes that are affordable for all.

We are really blessed to have such an experienced team lead on this work, and, let me say, at no additional cost to the central Church. I want to express particular thanks to the Diocese of Gloucester for its financial and in-kind support for this initiative. Thank you and over to Lynne.

*Revd Lynne Cullens:* Thank you, Archbishop, and good evening General Synod members. When we began life as a Commission in April 2019 we were tasked with bringing together a distinctively Christian Church-led vision for housing, as Archbishop Stephen has just said. But we were convicted as a Commission of the fact that human flourishing in all its fullness lies not just in the construction of units of accommodation, not just in the building of houses, but in the building of community. That is where, as Church, we felt we were unrivalled experts. Building community is what we do and we do it very well indeed. Rooted in communities nationally, with hearts for the vulnerable and a passion for justice, our intervention in the housing crisis can be like no other.

We found back in 2019 that churches across the country were already wonderfully engaged in this work, in bringing a distinctively Christian approach to the meeting of housing need within their communities. The Commissioners' job at parish level, therefore, was merely to amplify and celebrate the great work being done, to extend an invitation to all parishes to consider their call to meet such needs and to provide the support to enable them do so in a number of ways.

To those who are parish clergy here, please know that this is not about giving folk like you and me more to do. It is about providing the means to see what we do differently and, if we feel there is housing need within our parish that we can meet, to have a range of effective risk-mediated approaches to doing so; to enable us to apply the assets we have, built or otherwise, to meet the housing needs of the marginalised and the vulnerable. We have created a range of resources that are off the shelf for churches to use - theological resources plus inspiring stories and a host of concise jargon-free guidance on all aspects of Church-led development and missional engagement with housing. All those resources are now to be found on the Housing Justice website. If you have disseminated them already, thank you very much, and if you have not as yet, please do consider adding the Housing Justice link to your next mailshot. As a parish vicar myself I think you will find that what is there is hugely practical, refreshingly brief, and with a range of approaches to suit pretty much all contexts.

Now as an Exec and Advisory Team we are getting so many stories coming to us each week from your local parishes, stories with truly transformational outcomes. I am going to share one with you now. I was in conversation earlier this week with a parish priest from London. His is a small church with limited resources. He describes his parish as, wait for this, "Wonderfully average; there's really not much remarkable about us at all". I love that. The priest is also a chaplain at the women's prison nearby, and he became increasingly concerned about the women he came across there. They were women caught up in criminality from backgrounds of huge vulnerability, and on the receiving end, most of them, of violence and abuse most of their lives. He felt that these women had very little chance of rehabilitation on release because they had no positive affirming network or community and, more pragmatically, many of them had nowhere to live.

His parish had a curate's house so they decided to act in this. In his own words, they prayed and they took a leap of faith. They invited Home into Action, one of our Commission partners, to meet with them, and they established the house as a place to receive up to two women on their release from prison. The parish was so delighted, they paid for the salary of the empowerment worker to support the women housed there. The parish have now had their first tenant living in their house for a month this week which is wonderful. When I asked how the experience had been, that priest responded by saying that they are undergoing what he called reverse mission. I asked what that meant. "You see," he said, "we set out to change things positively for her and, in fact, it is we who are changing. You go out to do mission for others and God ends up doing something quite wonderful for you".

The woman living there feels the Church has already changed her life significantly just one month in. They are now awaiting the arrival of tenant number two. The effect of working on this project has been so positive on the congregation, on their relationships with agency partners and with the community that they are now looking to extend the number of houses that they have and the number of women they support. Fabulous. One story. One story from hundreds that could be shared, not just a story of housing, but a story of love and hope and justice and restoration; a story of a parish being good stewards of the assets bestowed on them by God and thereby growing His Kingdom. A story of the Christian distinctiveness we can bring to housing that, with the grace of God, can be transformational for others and for us too.

There are 40 such stories from churches around the country on the Housing Justice website. We are here today to ask for your support so that more stories of transformation and restoration can be written in God's hands and shared across the country. Thank you so much for listening and I am going to hand over to Ben now to tell you more.

*Mr Ben Preece Smith:* Thank you, Lynne. What Lynne has just described, the mission of building of homes, hope and community with the most marginalised people in our society is the basis, the head and the heart of the vision set out in *Coming Home*.

As is often quoted, mission is to find out what God is doing and join in. Just as Lynne said, God is doing marvellous things through churches building homes and communities across this country.

Fifteen years ago I was seconded from Gloucester to help draft the first consolidation of the Church of England, which came to this General Synod in early 2006. Inspired by these long-term changes in the Church, I returned to set to work with others on identifying issues that needed a generational level change of approach. The outcome of this work included the setting up of the Parish Giving scheme which, as you probably know, is now shared across the country.

In listening to what was happening at a local level in our diocese, it was clear there was a missional opportunity sitting, waiting, in our built heritage.

Back in 2007, proposing the DBF got involved in this mission, I wrote this: “There are reasons sacred and profane for undertaking this proposal. The DBF and the wider diocese is blessed with a rich property inheritance. However, the changing nature of society, the Church and its ministry, means that more and more of this inheritance is becoming redundant - housing, churches and even schools. Our current approach to these redundancies is to follow the standard charitable governance approach from assessment assets and to maximise financial return without speculating. This is good practice and has been beneficial in securing the finances of the DBF where many have seen this inheritance vanish. This proposal is in part to treat these redundancies not as the remains of past mission but as the potential for future mission. By shaping the future use of these sites, and acting positively on issues that affect contemporary society, the Church can, by action and example, promote Christian values and ideals to the wider community. The Church now has an opportunity to leave a tangible legacy in meeting the needs of today’s society by providing affordable homes to those that otherwise cannot afford them, facilities for communities and a positive statement on how to build environmentally sustainable housing”.

We had seen what God was doing through people like Lynne and asked the diocese to join in. They did. A new development company was set up, targets were set for financial returns, social housing, community benefit and housing environmental sustainability. We have worked with this approach for over a decade. It has gone well. Our initial financial target was to make a profit equivalent to the site sold with planning permission. We have made almost double that. We sought to build more affordable housing than market housing on our land. We have: around 50 affordable homes to 30 open market homes. We have an order book now of around 550 homes in planning or about to go in, with around 45% affordable housing on them across the various sites. We have built to the best environmental standards we could, including replacing five grim and draughty vicarages with highly efficient Green Guide parsonages. We have donated over £1 million to local mission projects. Through Bishop Robert of Tewkesbury, we are leading joined-up planning conversations in the county, focusing on community. This is not finance or mission, but finance and mission. God has been good.

We have learnt a lot about planning, construction, tax, organisational structures, specialisation, financing and the peculiarities of different types of law we never knew existed. We have learnt this work takes patience, faithfulness, skill and determination. We have learnt how brave the parishes were that pioneered this work. My morality and that of my mother has never been more questioned than when doing this work.

With this context, you can hopefully understand why my diocese was so excited by *Coming Home*. It is a brilliant, articulate, theologically rooted clarion call for the Church to join in nationally with what our parishes are doing.

We who have benefited from this mission are keen to help resource others to do so. We have so far offered a bishop, a diocesan secretary and finance for this next stage. Further support to resource the wider Church has already been agreed in principle, if there is a clear need and an opportunity of continuing. I am bowled over by the range and depth of help others have offered, too. It is a really exciting coalition of faithful people to be involved with. In just a few short weeks the connections, learning and ideas we have gained have repaid us manifold.

I am convinced that, as with PGS, this is a mission that we, the Church, should and must do together for the benefit of those most in need. We are in need. This is for us as much as for them. It requires the gifts and skills of all parts of the body of Christ working in harmony to be done well, but when done well this is Kingdom-building - literally.

Nick will now explain how much has happened since *Coming Home* and what support is needed to continue slowly but surely on this wonderful journey.

*Mr Nick Pollock:* Ben, thank you. Indeed, the Executive Team started four months ago in March to implement the recommendations of the Housing Commission's Report. We continue, as Ben has said, to see a really positive response to the Report and the five values, with offers of help from across government departments, charities, innovators, industry, affordable housing providers. But what is really telling is that people are really struck by the fact that we want to use Church land to facilitate the provision of genuinely affordable housing and community infrastructure. This is a really strong missional message. I very much hope that Synod will endorse this.

The story that Lynne told of a woman leaving prison to be housed by the local parish tells a story of renewal and transformation. Enabling people with local connections to stay in the parish, even if they do not have the financial means to do so, through the provision of genuinely affordable housing can also bring renewal and transformation, and it can build and sustain community.

We are actively engaged in working with around 15 dioceses, including proposals for affordable housing, housing the homeless, and modern-day alms houses for key workers. We are exploring a number of options to create revenue, money in, from housing. Far from imposing additional financial burdens, these proposals have the potential (already realised in Gloucester) to generate additional resources for the Church. For example, if the Church wants to retain affordable housing, revenue will be provided. This could help, for example, community work in the parish. As Lynne has said already, we want to reduce the burden on parishes and dioceses by developing good practice and providing a skills base that will be available to all. We are already doing that through the work of the very small Executive Team of three, all of whom are on secondment, so there is much more that we could be doing.



We think that clarity is needed on what is permissible and what is possible in law, so that we can help the Church in responding to housing need, particularly insofar as it affects the poorest and the most marginalised, and in providing a sustainable future for many communities. This is about providing places to provide rootedness and connection; a Christian presence in every community.

I might also add that the Housing Commission worked very closely with a firm of agents to produce a geospatial map with ArcGIS which has documents and maps of churches, vicarages and glebe lands. The mapping system helps dioceses take a portfolio approach to estate management. The mapping platform is already informing discussions around land and collaborating with other partners, including councils.

Taking a portfolio approach to stewarding land can help in creating places that build community, managing land for the natural environment and meeting our net zero carbon strategy, net zero 2030. What is built will comply with all relevant building regulations. These are focused on sustainable development and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. We can meet the needs of the poorest and the most marginalised through investment in housing and the natural environment, leading to environmental net gains and improvements in mental and physical health, and build strong sustainable communities. Thank you.

## **ITEM 22**

*The Chair:* Thank you. Before I invite the Archbishop of York to speak to and move Item 22, I thought it was only fair to pre-warn those wishing to speak that the speech limit will be two minutes from the outset, so perhaps you want to start trimming your speeches.

I now hand to the Archbishop of York. You have up to ten minutes to speak to and move Item 22.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you and many thanks to those who have presented to us.

A few words to introduce the motion itself. Firstly and crucially, this motion explicitly recognises that “addressing housing need and strengthening communities is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Church of England”. The Church Commissioners have a commitment to the UK Stewardship Code and to managing its strategic land portfolio in a way that takes full account of the social and environmental as well as the financial benefits of new developments. We believe it is vital that the national Church leads by example. If the recommendations in the *Coming Home* Report are implemented then we expect to see many more truly affordable homes being built on Church-owned land and a shift toward developments that give a much higher priority to community infrastructure and environmental sustainability.

Thirdly, it asks members to acknowledge the guidance note prepared by the Church House Legal Office clarifying the legal position in relation to the disposal of Church land. This makes clear that there are many situations where dioceses and parishes are already permitted to sell land at less than its full market value if it means that it can further the mission and ministry of the Church of England in other ways, including through the provision of affordable housing or community spaces. We want to encourage this by clearing up any misperceptions or confusion concerning charity law.

Fourthly, and I kind of hope this might be the focus of our debate, this motion seeks permission to explore changes to the legal framework for the management, use and disposal of Church-held non-operational land. In particular, we want to give consideration to introducing new powers that will give dioceses additional flexibility to use their land for broader missional purposes where there are currently restrictions on this, for example, on glebe or ex-benefice land.

None of these changes will force dioceses to use their land in a particular way, but they will give them the freedom to do what they believe will contribute most to furthering the mission and ministry of the Church in their area. This is not about giving away Church land or selling it off to make money. Wherever possible, we would like to retain ownership of our land and assets to meet housing need, build stronger communities, work in harmony with the natural environment and generate long-term income to sustain and expand the work of the Church. Just to be absolutely clear, we are not asking this Synod to vote through any legal changes at this stage. We are simply asking permission to consider this further, with a view to coming back to Synod in February 2022 with a set of specific proposals. As we begin this debate I hope and pray we can focus on the big picture and send a positive message about the Church's determination to tackle the issue of housing need for the poorest and most disadvantaged in our society.

*The Chair.* This item is now open for debate.

*The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Rachel Treweek):* I often refer to the Jesus Christ Kingdom story of the tiny mustard seed, but we miss the point if we think it is a story about growing into a huge tree. It is a story about what that growth enables. The birds in the air come and find their home in the branches. The tiny seed enables a hospitable welcome and home without having any say about which birds come and nest there. And the story that Christ tells appeals to our imaginations.

What is before us today is a dream of that big tree, and I hope we will affirm it, but we do need to pay some attention to some small seeds of the Kingdom of God vision, if this Kingdom of God vision is to be realised. What is before us is about connection and relationship locally and between dioceses. What we are talking about today connects with the paper we have seen *Mutuality in Finances*, because when we look at what we have across our dioceses, it is not simply about money; it is also about land. At present, that land is owned by thousands of different owners. Furthermore, we talk about mission-

shaped church and mutuality, yet much of our legislation does not help us live either. Again, this debate links with a motion being brought on Monday around the Mission and Pastoral Measure.

I am aware that there are so many pressures, not least financial ones, on dioceses at the moment but, as Archbishop Stephen said, this is not about forcing anyone to do anything they do not want to. It is also not about burden. It is about saying yes, so that people who are able to bring their passion and expertise can do so to help in dioceses where perhaps they feel they do not feel they have the capacity. I am proud of our Bishop's Council who said yes to putting money into this, but it is only one tiny part and we have heard of that from Lynne.

Back to the mustard seed and the small yeses. Please can we say yes to requesting the Archbishops' Council to consider the need for legal change. With God's blessing, we can transform some very ordinary water into some exquisite-tasting wine.

*Revd Tim Goode (Southwark):* We are called to be the church for the poor. Over 50% of people living in poverty in this country are either disabled or living with someone who is disabled. Quite simply, there is not enough accessible social housing. In the latest English housing survey, only 14% of social housing provision met the four visitability standards - level access, flush thresholds, ground-floor toilet, wide doorways and hallways - let alone accessibility standards. Two-thirds of wheelchair users living in social housing are living in accommodation that does not even meet the four visitability standards. Once we include privately rented and owner-occupier homes, the picture is even worse, with only 6% of all homes classed as visitable. The present quality of social housing, therefore, is causing terrible isolation and loneliness with disabled people, including permanent wheelchair users, living in confined, limited and often inaccessible spaces which in turn puts huge stress and strain on their primary relationships and on their ability to participate well within the workplace and their local community.

Could I therefore calling on the Archbishops' Housing Commission to please seriously consider ensuring that any new social and affordable housing provision on Church land does not just match visitability standards but matches accessibility standards or lifetime home standards? This would not just enable more disabled to people to live fuller lives, enabling more to participate fully within their community, but it would provide a housing provision where people of all ages and abilities were able to inhabit for life, allowing for natural and unforeseen changes of circumstance, allowing people better to stay within their communities where they have lived and served, and where their support structures are to be found.

What is the Church's role? By committing to building and supporting social and affordable community housing.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Tim, your time is up, I am afraid.

*Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield):* Listening to this, this is just brilliant as far as I am concerned. This is where the Church of England should be making a difference to all in our communities. But just one word of disappointment in there is that often the more modern dioceses, as we know, are poorer, and are therefore at this moment in time due to many factors having to sell land simply to survive. What I would like to say is it is a massively important and wonderful thing to do, but I would really urge that the 42 dioceses work together and do not do things 42 different ways, but support each other particularly in the poorer dioceses where affordable housing is perhaps needed even more than anywhere else. It is really encouraging to hear this.

*Revd Canon Jeffrey West (Oxford):* A few years ago I had the responsibility of helping to make recommendations for the provision of rural affordable housing in the Cotswolds, and that left me realising the importance of the political agenda which is associated with this and the importance of engaging effectively with both national and local government. We need to provide housing that is affordable in perpetuity, and that means addressing the issue of the right to buy. We need to ensure, as we were told earlier, that housing enables people to stay in their local community and benefit from the social capital of their established network. We need to engage with the local planning authorities at the stage when developments are being initially planned to make sure that commercial developments nevertheless enable the development of sustainable communities. That is a political as well as a financial investment agenda.

*Mrs Enid Barron (London):* Before I heard the presentation of this motion, I was going to ask if it would be used to help meet another crisis, an even more serious one, the climate crisis and the ecological crisis. Having heard the presentation of this, I am really heartened. I wholeheartedly support the need to address the housing crisis, but it does sound like this will be used as an opportunity to build to the highest environmental standards.

I have a couple of questions. Where the Church is actually building new housing will that environmental consideration come into materials and methods of construction, as well as the way the house will be used, by having good heat conservation and so on? Also, if the land is sold, can there be some requirement that whoever builds the houses works to high environmental standards? We also need to ensure there is provision for green space and trees, which are terribly important to the wellbeing of the people who will be living there, as well as to the environment, and really important to the community. I thoroughly support what is proposed, and if it can be strengthened in every possible way to ensure that we also look at the climate and the ecological crisis so that we try to address all these serious issues together. Thank you for such heart-warming proposals.

*Revd Bill Braviner (Durham):* I want to wholeheartedly support this work and this whole area of mission and ministry; it is so, so important. I would make a plea, as have previous speakers, about housing needing to be suitable. The five Ss that are in the *Coming Home* report are excellent, but I think we need to have an overarching requirement that housing

needs to be suitable. It needs to be accessible. It needs to be affordable. It needs to be decent. It needs to be available and it needs to be capable of being lived in as things change across life. I would really encourage the Church to use every opportunity under this Report to make progress on this area, and particularly not to lose sight of the possibility of including things like sheltered accommodation and care homes in this. I think that is an area the Church could get into and make a big difference, but this is an excellent move for our national mission.

*Mr Simon Friend (Exeter):* I am a developer and have been building homes for the last 25 years. I am also chair of trustees of a homelessness charity. I welcome this report, but I have some reservations on the details of the motion. Building homes and bringing land forward for development is extremely complex.

I do not have time now to go through each point, but I would like to pick out point (b) under the motion. We are asked to acknowledge that the Legal Note clarifies the legal position on disposal of land. I do not think the Legal Note does clarify this matter at all. Indeed, Item 14 of the Legal Note states: "If selling the land at less than the highest obtainable price would have a material detrimental impact on the charity's ability to meet its legal obligations and/or further its core charitable purposes, it is unlikely that the charity trustees will be able to conclude that the proposed transaction is in the best interests of their charity ..."

This raises the very real question of what is core charitable purposes? Is it, as this motion presupposes, that responding to the housing need is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Church of England? This could set up a conflict for dioceses which want to resource mission and ministry through funding of ministry posts. There could be a very real scenario where trustees are asked to choose between funding affordable housing or clergy posts or other needs. I do not raise this to condemn the motion. I support this motion but it is complex.

Finally, the Gloucester Diocese model of creating a development company for delivery of social housing is very inspiring and impressive, but development is a high-risk business. Local authorities in my area have done the same and when they lose money, which they have done, they go back to the taxpayer to bail them out. Who will bail out failed diocesan development companies?

*Canon Janet Perrett (Ely):* We have a charities trust in the parish where I live in the countryside. Its aims are educational, but, in order to maximise the income we have from it, we have negotiated a grant and a system with a community land trust whereby we are building 12 affordable houses which will be heated by ground sourced heat, they have sockets for electric cars, and we are even thinking of getting swift boxes put in the top of the houses. This is being done so that we maximise the income for our educational and training charities for the next 130 years. It is working very well indeed and we are very optimistic about it. It is a way of using a charity fund, the parish charity for education,

which has broadened our scope and enormously enhanced what we are able to do in the parish.

*Mr Andrew Gray (Norwich):* Having set up the Homeless Taskforce, it will come as no surprise that this has my wholehearted support. I wanted to make a couple of points. One is to Nick Pollock, which is that through the work of the Homeless Taskforce we have managed to assemble an interesting coalition of people, both with money and with expertise, and would be happy to put those at the disposal of the Housing Commission if they wish.

The other point I wanted to raise was a point raised by Simon Friend around a clarification on a legal point. It is very helpful to have the clarification from the Legal Office, but there is one slight danger from that that I just want to throw into the mix. There is a danger that it might reinforce the idea that you have a choice between selling the land at maximum commercial value or selling it at below value, and it is giving you the green light to do the latter.

In actual fact, you do not really want to be selling land off at all if you can possibly avoid it. The Church has a culture of doing that but a lot of comparable organisations like Oxford, Cambridge, the Crown Estates, the Duke of Westminster's estate, very rarely sell the land, and nor should the Church. If you want to make it available for social housing and for alms housing, what you do rather than sell it is to put the land into a special purpose vehicle and do a partnership with the developer where you keep the land and you perhaps refinance it and lease it with a pension fund over a long-term period. What that means is you always maintain ownership of that land. It is simply that you are releasing it for development purposes. I wanted to raise that point because we have to be careful about thinking we have a stark choice between selling at open market value or selling at discount. There are other options that are available. That said, I very much support this and I hope you will too.

*Ms Josile Munro (London):* I really welcome this Report and I think it is fantastic and it is really part of what we should be doing as a church. One of my biggest concerns is about affordability. Clearly, housing, especially as I come from London (but it is true of a lot of places in the south) is very expensive and has led to lots of people having had to move out of the city and move far away from their jobs, especially as keyworkers. It has also led to people being much poorer because it is taking a high percentage of their wage. I think what is really important is we have to be very clear about what affordability is, and that would be different things in different places, and it will be different to different people. It is really important that we batten that down. Lots of people talk about affordability, but the houses are not affordable. We need to make sure that the rents are affordable and we definitely look at who we are targeting it to.

*The Chair:* Point of order, John Wilson.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* I wonder, Chair, if you would consider a motion of closure on this item?

*The Chair:* I appreciate that. I am minded to hear just one or two more before we test that. We are coming close to that point though, so thank you.

*The Bishop of Truro (Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* I am very pleased to follow Josile's very helpful intervention. I want to pick that up from a different perspective and speak particularly about the impact of an entirely unregulated market here in Cornwall caused not entirely, but very substantially, by the massive purchase of second homes. There is no doubt that second home owners contribute a lot, and Cornwall has a rich tradition of hospitality and welcome, but second homes are having a devastating effect on the wider community, hollowing out towns and village centres, and pushing local people to the edge of town. There are now up to around 20,000 second homes in Cornwall and that constitutes around 15% of the housing stock, if not more. That is having a devastating effect, denying homes to local people, ramping up house prices massively and producing a real crisis in the rental sector. There are now 16,000 people looking for council housing in Cornwall, around 3% of the population, and there are 41 properties that are currently available. Cornwall Council is very likely soon to declare a housing emergency. As a Church we have a voice and we have assets and we need to use both to address this very serious crisis.

*The Chair:* After George Newton I propose that we test the mind of Synod on a motion of closure.

*Revd George Newton (Guildford):* I am a shy member of Synod, so thank you for calling me, Chair. I am enormously encouraged by what looks like is being proposed here. It is enormously practical, pastoral, prophetic - parallel I see to what the Pope is calling for as Land, Lodging and Labour for the most marginalised.

Where I am going to come from here is slightly left field. My concern is that if this is the limit of our response, we are being reactive to the situation rather than looking at the cause. We have heard of one cause, second homes in Cornwall, but probably the most significant cause of the housing crisis surely has to be the breakdown of the family unit over the last generation or two which has been accelerated, often therefore needing two houses for what used to be one.

As the Church of England, we are here for our nation. We have been here for centuries and we hopefully will be until the Lord's return. We love the people around us and we recognise the real importance of loving and secure families. We can be part of the solution to that as well. We can be practical, pastoral and prophetic here.

Could I call on the team, or perhaps the next constituted Synod after November, to look seriously at helping all the relationships, particularly between parents, but within families,

because we come there with a passion, a pastoral expertise and a presence right around the nation. That, of course, in the long term will make a significant difference, not just to housing but other areas under extreme pressure, such as schooling, mental health and the prison system.

*The Chair.* We will now have a motion of closure on Item 22.

*The motion was put and carried, 214 voting in favour, 17 against, with no recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* I now invite the Archbishop of York to respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you very much, and thank you everyone. I share the frustration that I know is held by many that we did not have more time for this work, but, Chair, thank you for getting so many voices in.

I am not quite sure where to begin, but I think I want to begin with the things that Bill Braviner and Tim Goode were raising. Bill introduced a sixth S - suitable - building on what Tim had said about making sure that there are accessibility standards as well as other standards. I am sure that has been heard, because that is so much a part of the prophetic witness that we offer in this area.

To Simon Friend, who raised a number of really important questions in a really helpful and positive way, I am sure some of the details of this can be and will be picked up when we get to legislation, but it is important to be reminded of the risk that is involved in some of this, and also what our core charitable purposes are about. I am sure if Bishop Rachel had more time to speak, she would also have been able to give us more examples of what had been happening in the Gloucester Diocese. Let me take this opportunity again to thank her, to thank the Diocesan Secretary in Gloucester and the Gloucester Diocese for the way they have been leading the way on this issue.

Josile Munro raised the question of affordability and this is something that is obviously central to this work, but also something that we are involved in speaking with Government about. Thank you, Andrew, for the work that you are doing and the way that you have led on issues of homelessness with the Church of England and with the General Synod. It was good to hear you speaking about other options that can also be considered.

Eleanor, yes, as far as possible we want the 42 dioceses to work together, not least because we do know that in some of our poorer and newer dioceses these issues are most urgent.

Then several speakers, Enid Barron in particular, but others, raised environmental issues, and also spoke about the need for green spaces and for trees. We will be seeking to do



this to the highest environmental standards. It is something where we want to lead the way, but, of course, this is something the Government are asking all of us to do, in all developments.

Finally, because there is not a chance to respond to everything and time is short, George, thank you for what you raised at the end. It is my belief and experience that building communities is the best way of supporting families. Yes, of course this is about the houses themselves, but it is about homes, and it is about communities, and when we build communities, we actually find we are able to support families, and, of course, we are also able to live out that important Gospel imperative that we belong to one another and that we are called to live in community with God, and with one another.

It is for these reasons that I hope we will enthusiastically vote in favour of this motion and take this important work forward as a sign of our wider mission to the nation.

On Monday we will talk about the vision and strategy for the Church of England. We want to be a Jesus Christ-shaped Church, which means shaped by the Five Marks of Mission. That is the heart of our vision and strategy and this is the practical outworking of it, the cash value. What does it mean to be a missionary disciple? It means to make a difference in the world, and this is one of the ways the Church of England can take the lead.

*The Chair:* I am now going to put Item 22 to the vote using the Lumi voting system. This will be a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 237 voting in favour, one against, with three recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* Synod, that concludes our business for today.

May I remind you that we now move to closing worship, which will be led this evening by Rebecca Swyer. Following evening worship, the Archbishop of York will dismiss the Synod with a blessing.

*Revd Canon Rebecca Swyer (Chichester)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

## **Full Synod: Third Day Sunday 11 July 2021**

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker)* took the Chair at 2.15 pm.

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, members of Synod, and welcome back. We begin our afternoon proceedings with worship, which is led for us by Canon Graeme Buttery.

## **WORSHIP**

*Revd Canon Graeme Buttery (Durham)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

## **SPECIAL AGENDA I**

### **LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

#### **ITEM 501**

#### **DRAFT CHURCH REPRESENTATION RULES (AMENDMENT) RESOLUTION (GS 2217)**

*The Chair.* Synod, I hope you have had a good Sunday so far. We come now to Item 501, which is the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2021. Members will need GS 2217 and the accompanying Explanatory Notes GS 2217X. In a moment, I will call Clive Scowen on behalf of the Business Committee to move Item 501A, which is the preliminary motion that the resolution be considered. This will provide an opportunity to make general comments about the resolution or to raise specific points which do not relate to the amendment on the Order Paper.

If the preliminary motion is carried, we will then move on to the amendment. Members who wish to comment on the amendment should not do so in the preliminary motion but should reserve their comments for the debate on the amendment. Once the amendment has been dealt with, Mr Scowen will then move the approval motion at Item 501B. In order for that to be carried, there must be a majority in each House of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting. I now call upon Clive Scowen to move Item 501A, that the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution be considered. Clive, you may speak for up to ten minutes.

#### **ITEM 501A**

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* At the 2019 group of sessions, during the debate on Final Approval of the draft Church Representation and Ministers Measure, the then Chair of the Business Committee, Canon Sue Booy, announced that she had invited the Elections Review Group to undertake a consultation on Rule M8(5) of the new Church Representation Rules which introduced a limit of two consecutive three-year terms for parochial representatives of the laity on deanery synod from the beginning of 2020.

Many members felt able to give Final Approval for the Measure because of the assurance that Rule M8 would be reconsidered. The Elections Review Group consulted on a range of seven options with the members of General Synod, diocesan secretaries, diocesan and deanery lay chairs, rural deans, PCC secretaries and the National Deaneries Network. 928 responses were received, probably the largest response ever received to

a national consultation undertaken by the Church of England. Analysis of the consultation showed that over 600 of the 928 favoured a change to Rule M8(5).

The option with the most support was to reverse the default so that there would be no term limit unless the APCM voted to impose a two year limit, but a significant number of other respondents preferred that the APCM should have a discretion as to how long any term limit it decided to impose should be in that parish's case. Putting those two options together satisfied the wishes of a clear majority of the respondents. Although the personal views of the members of the Elections Review Group were quite diverse on this point, all agreed that we should do our best to honour what has been said to us in such an impressive set of responses.

In February 2020, the last time we met properly in person, we asked Synod to approve in principle the proposal that Rule M8(5) to (7), in fact, should be amended to remove the default time limit and, instead, to give the APCM the power both to impose a term limit in that parish, if it saw fit, and also to specify what the term limit should be if it resolved to impose one with the freedom to take into account service prior to the rule coming into effect.

Whereas no one would be affected by Rule M8 until 2026, APCMs, should they so wish, could agree a limit which would disqualify a member from serving a further term from 2023. On a vote by Houses, Synod approved that proposal with the House of Laity voting in favour by 128 votes to 16 and majorities of over two-thirds in the other Houses. We had hoped to bring a Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution to give effect to that decision to the July group of sessions last year but, of course, Covid intervened and only now has it been possible to find time for this business.

In the spirit of the new Church Representation Rules, the resolution before us this afternoon would remove the top-down restriction in the current Rule M8 and replace it with a flexible freedom to be decided on at local level to impose whatever term limit meets the needs of that parish. This is done by paragraph 2 of the resolution which replaces paragraphs (5) to (7) of Rule M8 with these new paragraphs:

“(5) The annual meeting may by resolution decide that a person who serves as a parochial representative of the laity on the deanery synod for the whole or any part of each of a specified number of successive terms of office may not be nominated for election under Rule M6(1)(a) to serve as such for the whole or any part of the term of office immediately following the last of those terms.

“(6) A resolution under paragraph (5) may not apply to a term of office –

(a) which began before 1 January 2020 ... or

(b) which the person concerned is serving as a result of having been elected to fill a casual vacancy.

“(7) A resolution under paragraph (5) may be amended or revoked by a subsequent annual meeting or special parochial church meeting”.

For completeness, I should mention that paragraph 3 of the resolution, which is not concerned with deanery term limits, has taken the opportunity to correct a drafting error in Form M1 by amending the form of notice of the APCM so as to include a space for the time at which the meeting is to be held. I am sure members will agree that that is a sensible and uncontroversial change.

Members will have noticed on the Order Paper an amendment to be moved by the Chair of the House of Laity. It concerns a completely different matter which he will explain when he is called to move it. Having consulted with the Chair of the Business Committee, I intend to accept that amendment which seems to us to be both sensible and urgent. On behalf of the Business Committee, I move that the draft Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2021 be considered.

*The Chair:* Item 501A is now open for debate. The speech limit is initially five minutes.

*Can Tony Allwood (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I am speaking in support of this motion from the viewpoint of a lay chair of a deanery synod. Our synod normally meets three times each year and, as a former deanery lay chair, now diocesan lay chair, I know that after nine meetings of the triennium I would not have had the experience or built up the network of friendships to give me the confidence to offer myself as a potential lay chair. How much less likely would it have been if three of these nine meetings were cancelled due to Covid?

Generally, one three-year term is just not enough to learn to do the job and that is all you have under the current rules. However, passing this motion enables individual churches to set the appropriate term limits for their particular circumstances. This places responsibility at the local level and helps them to feel some small degree of ownership within the Church of England structure. Many deanery lay chairs across my diocese have voiced their concern about this matter and they, with me, strongly encourage you to support this motion.

*Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark):* Synod, I speak to you having rushed home from a lively church service and the following attempt at a socially distanced church picnic in Kennington, near the Oval, in London. We are a good sized congregation with over 100 church family members. We laugh and we muddle on together but what we are not as a church, nor even a PCC, is familiar with the rubric of either deanery, diocesan nor General Synod.

I say that despite being that person, yes, the one who has proffered Synod related explanations, proffered agenda points and, yes, even proffered Synod related PowerPoints to almost anyone willing to listen. Our hugely diverse UPA parish is able to

elect three reps to deanery synod and, yet, for a good portion of the decade that I have served on deanery synods, I have been the only person put forward.

As Tony has just highlighted, time served does give one better experience to be able to do the job. While one benefit of this is I have been able to build up experience, knowledge and support my deanery far better over the last decade, it does mean that currently our representation is myself and our two churchwardens.

My plea is that, in this election year, deanery synods are especially important. We have put forward two of our most overcommitted members to prevent the places remaining unfilled. Yes, I could encourage my APCM to pass the resolution so the two term limit does not apply to our parish as things stand but, Synod, I fear they hear more than enough of my attempts to communicate other aspects of our work as a General Synod, that of the wider deanery and, indeed, the work of my diocese.

I understand the importance of turnover and new ideas and a diverse Synod, but there is something to be said for experience and having actually filled the places too. If by some miracle we reach the point of having a bun fight for deanery synod places, I shall truly celebrate, step back and suggest that they then may wish to consider imposing local limits on term lengths for our representation.

But, until that joyful day comes, please let us allow deanery synod reps like myself, who have got on with the job for a number of years now, to continue to do so without requiring us to navigate further hurdles through term limits. I urge you to support this preliminary motion.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Canon Peter Adams (St Albans):* I do not actually welcome this amendment. Like Tony before me and Rebecca, I too am a lay chair for Luton deanery in St Albans Diocese. Previously, as vice-chair I worked closely with our area dean, their deputy and my vice-chair to revitalise our deanery synod to provide an effective missional presence, strengthening parish ministry in a town where many parishes struggle.

I consider the deanery is a vital level of activity in this time and no less so than during the pandemic when we now recover, reshape and discover anew the call of God for us as his Church. Deaneries in St Albans Diocese are encouraged to be a key part of diocesan missional strategy. Our experience as well is that we can be a good sized group to work hard, honouring each other, working well across our traditions: traditional Catholic, liberal Catholic, evangelical and charismatic.

For that to happen, I am convinced we need good representation, long-term enough for people to build good relationships, gain experience and step out in leadership but always revitalised by new members. I suggest to you this amendment will serve us in that and

urge you to vote for it. However, let me just say as diocesan lay chair, which I am too, I know this is not everybody's experience of deanery.

Some deaneries struggle to come together to find purpose or unity. If this would be a reason for you, members of Synod, to vote down this amendment, can I encourage you to give the deanery a chance and talk to the National Deaneries Network or, indeed, myself about how to work to change that.

*Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells):* I have just stepped down from being the lay dean of my deanery and I have noticed that, for those who do not wear our collars the other way round, we need encouragement to be involved in Church politics unless we get the bug, as Rebecca suggested earlier. I have been involved in one way or another for 45 years and I was lucky enough to be elected as lay chair of deanery synod in 1984 for a period of about seven years in total after only serving one term, but that is not the case for all.

I was also nudged into standing for diocesan synod after only one year of deanery synod membership. As a result, I have been *ex officio* on deanery synod since 1982. This means that, technically, I have not been a parish representative elected to deanery synod purely for more than one year. Many, especially in rural communities, need a longer run-up to fulfil their potential and it is vital that General Synod is not packed full of activist members with no good grounding in parochial or deanery life. By the way, no, I am not having a dig at the House of Bishops for once.

To nurture quality candidates for serving our Church, we need opportunity to be given to people to stand, serve and experience the joy of life in our Church outside of their parochial boundaries. I have been privileged to serve as vice-chair of both the Pensions Board and the House of Laity.

I do not know whether being forced to retire from deanery synod in 1990, when my children were growing up and my work life was becoming more difficult, might have caused me to concentrate on other things. I am glad I did not have that disincentive. I bow out of Synod grateful for all the opportunities given to me and I ask you to vote for the motion and remove this restriction on terms.

*Mr Michael Stallybrass (York):* First, I want to say that I fully support this amendment but, actually, I am speaking now because I wish to bring to the attention of Synod a concern over the way that this or other necessary amendments can be brought forward to Synod for proper consideration. There is another significant problem with the CRR and I know that some members of Synod were actually expecting me to have tabled an amendment to this motion to address it.

I wish to explain why I am not doing so but, first, to talk about the problem. That problem is the lack of any provision for PCCs to have reserved business. It may seem an obscure point but I have received strong encouragement to pursue it from a surprising variety of

sources. Indeed, this is now the fourth time that I have formally raised this issue in Synod, as well as in other ways, and at no time have I been told that my concern is either misplaced or irrelevant.

The first time was in July 2017 during the debate on the proposed CRRs. In the summing-up of the debate, the Chair of the Revision Committee agreed that the points I had made were significant and promised that my request regarding reserved business would be considered before final drafting.

*The Chair:* Mike, I am not sure this speech is really relevant to the matter under debate. I think I am going to have to bring you to a close.

*Ms Mary Talbott (Europe):* Speaking for the Diocese in Europe, what we call our archdeaconries, or your deaneries, because of the geographic restraints, often only meet once a year so this term limit really puts a restriction on the number of times that any individual will be able to stand. I very much support the amendment.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Revd Preb. Stephen Lynas (Bath & Wells):* I had not intended to speak but, as soon as Tim Hind did, I thought other things needed to be said. Tim and I have disagreed on this before. I just want to point out, as gently as I can, the inconsistency of the General Synod. I know we do it quite often but we are certainly doing it on this.

Yesterday, we all nodded and applauded at the discussion about Church Commissioners' trustees serving a restricted number of terms in order to bring in fresh blood in order to improve diversity and make the Church Commissioners as good as they can be and now here we are with a succession of speakers telling us, "It is really important that you take five years to learn the ropes, folks, before you can proceed any further".

It is hugely inconsistent. As a priest, in a sense, it is not my business what the laity do. I want to pay tribute to Clive Scowen and his gang for having the patience to try and sort this out. I also admire the speaker who came on earlier - I am sorry, I did not get her name - who talked about the rejuvenating effect of being involved in Church affairs. But let us not pretend, please, Synod, that turkeys voting for Christmas is a great way to organise who belongs on particular committees.

I am with the Church Commissioners on this, and I do not say that very often, that you need a turnover and you need to encourage people who can come in and discourage people who have actually done their time.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* Let me begin by declaring an interest. I am a deanery lay chair. On the last point, I will deal with that first on consistency. Of course, there is no restriction on clergy. Can I please ask that clergy listen to the laity on this. We need

a two-thirds majority to get this through. You have heard consistently from the lay people what the will is of the laity.

General Synod has done an admirable job in reforming and updating the Church Representation Rules. Thank you, Synod. This afternoon we come to address one final aspect of the process and you have already been informed what the issue is and what is being done to address it.

My reason for speaking is to thank the Business Committee, the Elections Review Group and Synod on behalf of local deaneries for listening to the voices of those of us in parishes and allowing a consultation and review process which has revealed that most who responded are in favour of the proposal before us. It puts the decision-making in the parishes.

Please, may I ask you to support this motion. I was in contact yesterday with our diocesan synod lay chair and he joins me in inviting you, please, with the necessary two-thirds majority in each House, to approve the resolution and bring the process of reform to a satisfactory conclusion.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* Before I start, members should be aware that I am a member of the National Deaneries Network. Chair, members of Synod, we have heard that the new Church Representation Rules limits lay members to two terms - that is six years. The term limits do not apply to clergy or bishops, only to lay people. The amending resolution will allow APCMs the flexibility to impose term limits of variable lengths according to local circumstances. That is two, three or four terms et cetera. The default will be no limit at all.

Brothers and sisters, we have already said that that we want this change - and if you want an ice cream you can hear him going by! - and we come now to the final step, to the formal vote to approve the amending resolution. However, it needs to be passed in all three Houses by a special two-thirds majority and so there is no space for complacency. Now is the time to step up and vote for this amending resolution to remove these term limits.

If these term limits had applied to General Synod, imagine the impact. Not only would there be an outcry about free and fair elections and representation, but take a look around the virtual chamber to just see how many members would not be here. Many of these members we have come to rely on and value their experience, expertise and knowledge, and General Synod would be poorer without them. Why then impose these restrictions on deaneries when more and more dioceses are coming to rely on deaneries as central to moving forward their mission and ministry?

Much of the work of deaneries is undertaken by lay members. Experienced lay members are key to underpinning the deanery and the continuity and the working out of its mission



and ministry. Chair, this is not just a lay issue. Approving the amendment is a positive step for all members of Synod to show their support for the whole people of God and, in particular, those concerned with the flourishing of deaneries in the mission and ministry of the whole Church. I do hope that you will support and vote for this amending resolution and we can remove these term limits.

*The Chair:* After Paul Ayers, members of Synod, I am going to need to test your mind on the closure.

*Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds):* I just want us to hear and think about what Stephen Lynas has said. In many places where you have longstanding members of Church government bodies, it can be very hard for those who wish to come through as new blood to unseat them. People are very reluctant to do that and in some ways it is easier to have a norm of term limits which a PCC or an annual meeting can amend, rather than to have a norm of unending term limits which it requires a special resolution of the Church meeting to change.

I agree with what Stephen Lynas said that if term limits are a good thing then we ought to be cautious about getting rid of them. I speak as someone who has been on General Synod for far more decades than is good for anybody but, then again, so have many of us here and so have many of the people who have been consulted. I want us to hear what he has said and consider it.

*The Chair:* As time is going on, I need to test your mind on the closure on Item 501A.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chair:* I now invite Clive Scowen to reply to the debate. Clive, you may have up to five minutes. Perhaps you might not need all of that five minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Thank you to all those who spoke supportively of this proposal. I do not think I need to say much in response to most of those, if they will forgive me. Just to say to Tim Hind, snap, I too have been *ex officio* on my deanery and my PCC since 1982. This rather brings out the point of this, that it is only parochial representatives of the laity who are caught by the time limit.

Those of us who are members of other bodies, diocesan synod, General Synod and so on, serve *ex officio* with no limit of time at all and so it is very inconsistent. What we will get, as a result of this amendment going through is the power for the APCM to take action if it is necessary. In those parishes where people are queuing up to serve on the deanery synod, it may well be necessary to pass a resolution to impose a term limit and that is what this resolution provides for.

But that is not the experience of most parishes. Most parishes find enormous difficulty filling their places and a default time limit makes it that much more difficult. However, Paul Ayers and Stephen Lynas both referred to the supposed merits of term limits. Well, not all of us were cheering yesterday for the term limits on the Church Commissioners, but there is a real difference.

Church Commissioners are trustees and the current governance doctrine is that it is important for trustees to turn over regularly. Members of deanery synods are not trustees. They are representatives of the laity and it is a very different role. But it is open to dioceses to provide for good practice. I am aware that in Southwark Diocese there are documents which suggest that people should consider their position after some time and so there is a culture encouraging both lay chairs and parochial representatives to consider whether they should continue, but that is very different from telling them from on high that they must not continue.

What we are proposing is very much in the spirit of the new Church Representation Rules, which is all about empowering local parishes to do what suits them and suits their local circumstances and that is what this will achieve. Thank you, Stephen Hofmeyr, for your thanks and I am sure my colleagues on the Elections Review Group and Business Committee have heard that and appreciate that. Thank you to John Wilson for your efforts through the National Deaneries Network in getting change on this without which I think the Elections Review Group would have not had much purchase on the situation.

Finally, Mike Stallybrass, I am sorry you were not able to complete your point, which is an important one. The Business Committee has given some brief consideration to the importance of this and they have authorized me to give an undertaking that the Business Committee, whoever is on it, will take this matter forward. It will probably be referred to the new Elections Review Group.

What we promise to do is either to bring a proposal to implement all or part of what you are asking for, or bring a paper to Synod explaining why that is not considered appropriate. Proper consideration will be given to this by the appropriate body and, certainly, your views will be very valuable in bringing that about. Whether or not any of us get returned to Synod in the autumn, this will be taken forward and your views, whether still a member of the Synod or not, will be sought out for that. I hope that helps to deal with the proper concern that you have raised. Chair, I ask the Synod to agree to consider this resolution.

*The Chair:* I, therefore, put Item 501A to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried, 261 voting in favour, 17 against, with five recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 504**

*The Chair.* We now come to the amendment at Item 504. We have heard Mr Scowen indicate that he will be supporting this amendment and so I call on Dr Jamie Harrison, the Chair of the House of Laity, to move Item 504. You may speak for up to five minutes.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* I am also speaking as Chair of the House of Laity in this particular context, having had this matter drawn to our attention. I am sure members of Synod will have read Item 504 and also the Explanatory Statement and so, in one sense, I do not think I have a huge amount to say. We are conscious of the significance of the whole Covid era and the suffering and difficulty of it.

In that context, my amendment is dealing particularly with elections to and qualifications for electors, and for candidates in this case, in the forthcoming autumn election to the House of Laity. Those of you who have been looking at the Church Representation Rules will see at Rule 50 a number of requirements and qualifications for those seeking to be lay candidates in this election.

As noted in the wording of the amendment at paragraph (2) of Rule 50, there is a requirement that such candidates will have taken Holy Communion on at least three occasions in the previous 12 months with a note of “the relevant day” triggering this. The relevant day for us is tomorrow because that is the day of dissolution where we dissolve - not literally but metaphorically, I suppose - the 2015-2021 Synod. Really, we would be looking back for 12 months from tomorrow and we would expect, normally, under this Rule, and require, prospective candidates to have taken Holy Communion on at least three occasions.

As much as I know of the doctrine, you know, as a whole range of people in the room, the last year has been pretty catastrophic, not least for those who have sought to be in their churches, to be sharing in the Holy Communion and so on. Therefore, there are a number of people who have had to shield, quite correctly, over the last 12 months and it is those folk in particular who would wish to stand who would be disqualified unless we can pass this amendment and then, of course, go on to pass the full motion later in the Synod this afternoon.

As I say, the effect of my amendment relates purely and completely to Covid-19 and to the Coronavirus Act 2020. It is not beyond that. In the future, we may decide that this is something we want to look at again but, today, this amendment is purely in relation to Covid shielding of those prospective candidates who would otherwise be disqualified. I am sure that members of Synod will want to support this. It will be good to hear something about that.

This is an urgent matter. If we get this through today, we need to get it to Parliament, I think, on Wednesday to get it through in time for the election. Let us hope we can do that

- I hope we can - and so I move the amendment, Mr Chairman, standing in my name at Item 504.

*The Chair:* I call on Mr Scowen to respond, if he wishes to, and, again, for not more than five minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I shall not need that. It was interesting that, within five minutes of my having read Dr Harrison's amendment on the Order Paper, the phone rang and it was one of the clergy from one of our larger churches in London asking me if anything was going to be done about this problem. This is something that has exercised and is causing or would cause problems if it were not addressed in the forthcoming election in some places. Again, on behalf of the Business Committee, we are very happy to accept this amendment.

*The Chair:* As you have heard, the amendment has been accepted. I can see one or two people indicating they would like to speak.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* I am hoping for your help with this, please, because I am affected by this myself. Having chaired a parish council for two years with eight staff, some of whom have vulnerabilities and having had our civic centre used as a testing centre, I have been in a bubble with the staff of the parish council. This has meant I have not been into church - as in the building. I have been isolating myself in this way simply to help as much as I could in my own community and provide community support. This has meant I have only had Communion twice myself and my church has services of the Word as well as Communion services. Once a month, we have Anglican Communion. I am now in some difficulty having only had a service of the Word today. If this is not passed, I am stuck to stand again for General Synod and I would want to do that if I am able.

*Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield):* I really want to wholeheartedly ask the Synod to support this. We have had many occasions during yesterday and Friday to consider people of disability or, in fact, who have had to shield for many other reasons. I think it is very important that we acknowledge that for many people - and Penny has just put her finger right on it - many churches have not even been open and, therefore, the Eucharist has not been accessible. I do think on this particular occasion we need this change. We need it now. The Chair of the House of Laity has clearly said we are in a really tight timeframe here and so, please, can I ask all Houses to support this fully.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* It is very quick, Chair. I support this. I raised this some time ago with both Jamie and William Nye and they responded, as did the Legal Office. I

just want to extend my thanks to all of those who have worked so hard to bring something forward. I was affected by this myself. Fortunately, thankfully, the Bishop of Ebbsfleet visited me in the week so I have managed to achieve all three Communion. However, many will be affected by this and we are a Church that wants to be more diverse. I just want to thank all of those and also be thankful that, thanks be to God, Penny, hopefully, will be standing again. I hope that you will all support it.

*Mr Philip French (Rochester):* I would myself be affected by this if we were not to pass the amendment, having both been on the clinically extremely vulnerable list and also worshipping in a parish where, for a variety of reasons, we have had limited opportunities to take our Communion. That is not why I am making this speech. I am myself intending to stand down.

I am really concerned about the risk of democratic deficit in these elections. The Church of England and its representative democracy is tired by 15 months of Covid. To give you an anecdote, we have recently had elections to diocesan synod in the Diocese of Rochester. I am the only person, lay or ordained, from my deanery synod to be elected to the diocesan synod. In these circumstances, we absolutely need to resist putting any impediment in the way of people who might wish to stand for election to General Synod. I urge everyone to vote for this amendment.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* I support this amendment, but I think we should note that it is a shame that we will have so many people who are relying on this. I appreciate that the clinically vulnerable will be, but had our bishops been more on the front foot in the early stages of the pandemic and agreed that we could have Communion with individual cups as a temporary measure we may not have had to had so many people who are relying on this to stand for election. I just wanted to register that point.

*The Chair:* Members of Synod, I do now need to test your mind for closure on Item 504.

*The motion was put and carried, 273 voting in favour, 11 against, with seven recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* I, therefore, invite Dr Harrison to respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes, if you need them.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* Thank you very much to all the speakers. Obviously, Penny and Philip were both very moving in their experience of exclusion, in a sense involuntary exclusion, from the possibility of having Holy Communion. That, for all of us, is a deep sadness. Liz picked that up with her awareness of what shielding means. As you all know, this pandemic is not over. It is going to run for quite a while. We just have to keep hoping, praying, getting vaccinated and encourage others to be vaccinated too.

Debbie also highlights the complexity of this in different traditions of the Church, in different parts of the Church, the way the Government has brought in legislation or very severe guidance. I am delighted to thank, at this moment, Bishop Sarah for all her work in trying to guide us through this. None of us have been happy and we have just had to do what we felt under God was right. I am very conscious that this is very timely but also urgent.

The only option, I am afraid, is to use the Samuel Margrave option, which is to find a bishop quickly to give you Communion three times in the next 24 hours. This is probably impractical but it is just worth considering. Sorry to be flippant. This is a very serious matter. I very much hope that we can support this amendment and support the whole motion, because this is part of that motion and if we do not support the whole motion this will go down.

*The Chair:* We come to put Item 504 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried, 273 voting in favour, one against, with two recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 501B**

*The Chair:* I now call on Clive Scowen to move Item 501B, that the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2021, as amended by Item 504, be approved.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* As several members have already pointed out, in order to pass the resolution requires a two-thirds majority in each House. Since the term limit in the current Rule M8 applies only to lay people, I ask the whole Synod to vote to give effect to the clear will of the laity expressed in the consultation responses and the overwhelming vote in the House of Laity in February 2020.

I plead with any clerical or episcopal colleagues who might be tempted not to vote because this is a lay matter to recognise that, in order for the laity's will to prevail, they need your help. Without a two-thirds majority in each House, the clear wishes of the laity will be frustrated, as indeed will those who would otherwise benefit from the amendment that we have just passed. I commend this resolution to you and ask you to approve it.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Revd Dr Jeremy Sheehy (Manchester):* I simply wanted to express a sadness that the only two clergy voices heard have both been against this amendment and I encourage members of the House of Clergy to vote for it. There is inappropriateness, in any sense, in horses voting for turkeys to keep Christmas and I would have preferred to have heard more lay voices, but if there are only two clergy speaking one way I want to speak in the

other. We need a balance of lay and clergy in deanery synods and not to pass this will affect that.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of one minute.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I raised a question earlier this year about the problem that has been addressed by amendment at 504, in particular in relation to the advice that was coming out from the centre about spiritual Communion. The indication was that spiritual Communion would not qualify as Communion for the purposes of CRR Rule 50. The amendment which is being proposed and now passed is very timely and I urge, therefore, all members of Synod to vote for the amended resolution in its entirety.

*The Chair:* Mr Scowen, would you like to respond to the debate and, if so, as briefly as you can.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* It will not take very long to say thank you to Jeremy Sheehy. I was myself thinking that it was a pity not to have heard from any clergy in favour of this, so I am very grateful for your support and I am sure you do actually represent a huge number of clerical colleagues. Thank you, David, for your support for the amendment. Let us all move together to pass this resolution.

*The Chair:* We do now come to a vote on Item 501B. I remind members that, in order for this item to be carried, it must be passed with a majority in each House of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting.

*The vote on Item 501B: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 25, against one, with one recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, 127 in favour, four against, with one recorded abstention. And in the House of Laity, 143 in favour, two against, with no recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.*

*The Chair:* The motion has, therefore, been carried with the necessary majorities in every House. The resolution will now be laid before both Houses of Parliament pursuant to the Statutory Instruments Act 1946. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this item of business and that closes this item.

THE CHAIR *Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 3.27 pm.

## **ITEM 502**

### **DRAFT ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICES (TERMS OF SERVICE) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (GS 2218)**

*The Chair.* We now come to Item 502, that the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 be approved. Members will need amending Regulations, GS 2218, and the Explanatory Notes GS 2218X. Can I invite the Archdeacon of Canterbury to move Item 502. She has up to ten minutes.

*Ven. Joanne Kelly-Moore (Canterbury):* The work we do together today on this item is to make amendments to Regulations that I believe are helpful and are also consequent on our unanimous support for the Cathedrals Measure 2021. The draft Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 will make the following amendments to the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009.

First, in Part 2, implement a number of recommendations in the Cathedrals Working Group Report 2018 which relate to residentiary canons. These are amendments made in principle by the new Measure and reflect the executive and oversight relationships between residentiary canons, the dean and the bishop in the new Measure. These changes must be done, however, in these Regulations which relate to terms of service and could not be done by the Measure itself.

Secondly, in Part 3, we enable stipendiary officeholders in these Regulations to enter into salary sacrifice arrangements. Thirdly, in Part 4, we amend the 2009 Regulations to gender neutralise the references to bishops.

First, in Part 2, relating to residentiary canons, of which I am one, as some of you may recall from Synod in July 2018 the CWG Report recommended that a number of specific functions relating to residentiary canons who do not hold diocesan appointments should be transferred from the bishop to the dean.

A group, including bishops, deans, residentiary canons and cathedral administrators, were consulted on how the recommendation proposals in the CWG Report should be implemented, particularly in light of the governance changes in the structure of cathedrals made by the 2021 Cathedrals Measure. As a result of some careful thought, Regulation 2 provides that most of the changes will apply automatically only to qualifying residentiary canons who are, first, Commissioners' canons whose stipends are paid by the Church Commissioners and, secondly, any other residentiary canon whose entire stipend and housing are paid or provided by the cathedral.

However, given our diversity and to provide flexibility to individual cathedrals, Regulation 2 also provides the possibility of an opt-in which chapters can agree on an individual basis in relation to a specific residentiary canon. The functions transferred from the bishop to the dean for qualifying residentiary canons are set out in Regulations 4 to 7. These are:

(a) the provision of suitable training, other than safeguarding training which remains with the bishop, and the provision of time off work to undertake it;



(b) the granting of special leave of up to three months. The dean will need to inform the bishop when granting special leave for a residentiary canon and the granting of any further period of special leave by the dean requires the bishop's prior written consent;

(c) the determination of a dispute about the time spent on public duties other than those relating to the office of a residentiary canon which will remain with the bishop unless, of course, the dispute is with the dean;

(d) residentiary canons will need to provide a sick note to the dean, as well as the person nominated by the bishop; and

(e) where there are concerns about a residentiary canon's health, the dean rather than the bishop will be able to require a residentiary canon to have a medical examination. The diocesan bishop will also now need the dean's agreement before making a direction for a qualifying residentiary canon to continue in office beyond the age of 70.

Regulation 3 inserts a new requirement for the dean to carry out an annual review with each residentiary canon who is an executive member of the chapter in relation to the exercise of her or his cathedral duties. This is the only new provision which relates to all executive residentiary canons rather than to qualifying residentiary canons as it supports section 12(7) of the Cathedrals Measure 2021 which requires cathedral clergy to be accountable to the chapter through the dean.

It is important to be clear that the annual review between the dean and each executive residentiary canon relates to the executive cathedral duties and is entirely separate from the Ministerial Development Reviews (MDRs) which bishops will continue to be responsible for for residentiary canons as part of their general episcopal oversight of all licensed clergy. All these changes I believe are a helpful part of the flourishing our of cathedrals and those who minister there as part of the mission of our Church.

Part 3 of these draft Regulations are about salary sacrifice and, in particular right now, electric vehicles. A salary sacrifice scheme is where an employee gives up the right to part of the cash remuneration due to them in return for a benefit in kind, such as additional pension.

The draft amending Regulations also make provision for clergy officeholders to participate in salary sacrifice schemes by providing that the amount sacrificed counts as stipend for the purposes of Regulation 11 of the 2009 Regulations. This is required because Regulation 11 provides that clergy officeholders holding a full-time stipendiary post are entitled to receive an annual stipend which is not less than the National Minimum Stipend (NMS). As a result, such clergy are unable to participate in salary sacrifice schemes because the sacrifice involved would usually take them below the threshold of the NMS.

Although a Government ban on the sale of petrol and diesel cars is due from 2030, salary sacrifice schemes can at present make the leasing of electric vehicles much more affordable. It is understood that some dioceses have already set up such schemes for their employees, but full-time stipendiary clergy officeholders cannot participate at present because of the legal entitlement to receive not less than the National Minimum Stipend.

The National Environmental Working Group has agreed that reimbursable clergy travel should be included within the scope of the Church's net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and so wishes to encourage clergy actively to lease electric cars but, in order to make that affordable for clergy, a salary sacrifice scheme is needed.

The proposed change to the 2009 Regulations will mean that the amount sacrificed counts as stipend for the purposes of Regulation 11. It is not restricted to electric car lease schemes, but is a general power making it possible for salary sacrifice arrangements to be made in other circumstances as well that might be beneficial for clergy officeholders in the future.

Thirdly and lastly, and very briefly, in Part 4 - which I trust is welcomed and in need of no explanation - references to bishops are gender neutralised by these amending Regulations. Chair, I move the approval of the Ecclesiastical Offices Terms of Service (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

*The Chair:* Item 502 is now open for debate. You have up to five minutes.

*Revd Canon Andy Salmon (Manchester):* I wanted to just briefly talk about Part 3, the salary sacrifice relaxation of rules if you like. I warmly welcome this, but point out that in the current climate emergency moving to electric vehicles is a good thing but moving away from using motorised vehicles completely or where appropriate is even better.

I wanted to put in a plea that we look again at the cycle to work scheme which clergy at the moment are not allowed to apply for. Allowing clergy to purchase a bike, including electric bikes for slightly longer journeys, could make a big difference to a lot of clergy. At the moment, the issues are not quite the same because the problem with the cycle to work scheme is that clergy are deemed to not travel to work because we work in our homes - and here I am working in my home - but it does not seem an impossibility that we could talk to those in charge of the cycle to work scheme and find a way around this. There must be a way of doing it. Although I support this Measure completely, I want to go a bit further. Let us get clergy cycling as well, please.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* It is quite interesting that in the Church of England, I feel as though I am forever learning. Although I was aware of salary sacrifice schemes and also aware that there was an NMS I had never actually put the two together. When I was a parish treasurer, we had a non-clerical employee within our parish who used child care vouchers. I think this can be very useful to anyone with a young family, particularly

including clergy, and I am delighted that this will now be enabled. Having listened to what Andy Salmon just had to say, I also reflect that when I was parish treasurer we did not reimburse bicycle expenses and maybe this is something that needs looking at further.

*Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester):* Can the salary sacrifice scheme not apply to part-time stipendiary staff?

*The Chair:* I see no one else indicating that they wish to speak and so I invite the Archdeacon of Canterbury to respond to what she has heard.

*Ven. Joanne Kelly-Moore (Canterbury):* I am really grateful for the support of Andy, Julie and Lisa, all leaning into the salary sacrifice scheme. Andy, thank you for pointing out the current anomaly with the cycle to work scheme. What I am assured of is for those dioceses who like to work on this anomaly locally, because the cycle to work scheme does not cover at work, it is all about to and from work, the Commissioners would be very happy to work with dioceses if they wanted to develop schemes and work on this and work it up. Encouraging that as a member of the Environmental Working Group here at the cathedral and our diocesan one, we would want to lean in and work on that with you.

Lisa, to come back to your query, the way we would do that is we would need some further amending Regulations to the 2009 Regs because it is currently benchmarked as the minimum is based on a full-time stipend. That is a question and conversation we could continue because part-timers already get less than the NSM. It does not apply here, but I think that is a conversation that we could really come back to given the changing face of the Church and how we are all working together. Thank you for raising that point. Perhaps business for the next quinquennium.

This is largely work concurrent with our new Cathedrals Measure, but it also has opened up something wider which has been educational I think this afternoon and encourages us all to think about the environment. I take Andy and Julie's encouragement to get on your bicycle. It is healthy and good for the planet.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 502 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried, 261 voting in favour, 11 against, with four recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* Uncharacteristically, Synod, we are running ahead of time and so enjoy your 20 minute screen break before this afternoon's business continues.

THE CHAIR *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 4.06 pm.

## **ITEM 23**

### **THE NATURE OF ORDAINED PUBLIC MINISTRY (GS MISC 1285)**

*The Chair:* Welcome back, everyone. I hope you are feeling refreshed and ready for the next part of our afternoon together. We come to Item 23 on the Agenda which is a presentation by Bishop Tim, the Bishop at Lambeth, on the Nature of Ordained Public Ministry. I would like to flag up at this stage that after the presentation there will be an opportunity for questions, as the Business Committee has determined this under Standing Order 107(3).

Bishop Tim has assured me that if we run out of time this afternoon, it will be possible for you to send your questions to him and Martin Seeley, the Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich. Without further ado, I invite Bishop Tim to speak to us.

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton):* I am very grateful indeed for this time given by the Business Committee and, as Rachel just said, I am very keen to hear comments, questions or observations about what I am presenting in the paper I wrote and what I am saying now. As Rachel said, just to underline, if there is not enough time, then please feel free to send emails either to me or to Bishop Martin (not that I have warned him), who was also involved in the conversations we are having.

In essence, it is clear to me from the work I have done over the last two years that there is a need for a new Clergy Discipline Measure and the next item of business will introduce a proposal for a new Clergy Conduct Measure. However, I want to make it clear that simply changing the CDM will not address so many of the issues I have heard clearly raised by very many people who have spoken over the over the last two years or more. Rather, I believe that if we simply change the discipline Measure then we will not have addressed the underlying issues which do need addressing. Those issues are about the role and nature of ordained ministry and the way we relate one to another.

I am pleased to say that Martin Seeley, as Chair of the Ministry Council, is already beginning to address these matters. Having listened to the very many sad, complex and far from straightforward stories from many, many people I am clear that, whatever we do, or do not do, to the present CDM, that will in no way address the very serious issues which exist. I have been working on matters relating to the CDM for two years and, in fact, if I am honest, it is a sad reality that for the four years I have done this role as Bishop at Lambeth a great deal of my time has been spent on matters that, on the surface, are to do with discipline.

In fact, I believe the real issue is a lack clarity and definition and that, while we have a sense implicitly of how things are meant to work, we need to be much clearer and explicit. If there were a clear framework and shared explicit understanding around the ordained to support, encourage, affirm, develop and, yes, when appropriate, challenge, provide supervision and ensure good practice, then we could engage with each other appropriately and well. So, while a new discipline Measure is essential, it is not sufficient. There is a need for a far wider piece of work or perhaps several pieces of work which address the issues around the role and nature of ordained ministry.

Let me try to put it to you this way. It is an extraordinary privilege to serve as an ordained minister in the Church of God. For those who have recently attended ordinations over the last couple of weeks, you will have heard these words: "In the name of our Lord, we bid you remember the greatness of the trust in which you are now to share: the ministry of Christ himself, who for our sake took the form of a servant. Remember always with thanksgiving that the people among whom you will minister are made in God's image and likeness. In serving them you are serving Christ himself, before whom you will be called to account. You cannot bear the weight of this calling in your own strength, but only by the grace and power of God. Pray therefore that your heart may be daily enlarged and your understanding of the Scriptures enlightened. Pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit."

It is truly remarkable the gift that those of us who are ordained are given, and the gift that we give to other people. As many hundreds of newly ordained deacons and priests, shining and sparkly, begin their ministerial life, they will encounter many good news stories. They will have much joy and a huge amount to bring to God in prayer and to share with others the good news that God is at work in so many ways. We can never forget the greatness of the trust in which we share. That means we need to keep on reminding one another that we can never do this on our own, and that not only means we need to keep focused on God, it also means we need to keep aware of our interdependence on one another. You cannot bear the weight of your calling in your own strength. Ministry is such good news. It is limitless, not limiting, and brings joy to the minister, and to so many other people. Those who are ordained are signs of hope and signs, symbols and walking sacraments of God at work in God's will.

It is because of this that I share with you my reflections. There is so much good news in ministry and joy in being with and alongside people at some of most special times in their lives, praying with them and opening the Scriptures with them and offering the sacraments to, for and with them.

It is for this reason that I think we need to look again at the role and nature of ordained ministry. We are in danger of losing the joy and the trust and the ministry of Christ himself and the sacramental reality of being with people for God. Why are we in danger? Because I believe we are not explicit in the way we support each other and in understanding the frame of reference that is around us. There are ambiguities and many apparent gaps and misunderstandings in how we understand what we are about and whose responsibility it is either to support or challenge, and how we relate to each other, and how we hold each other to account.

I am clear that you can have a wonderful all-singing all-dancing bells and whistles Clergy Discipline Measure (or, as I would suggest, a Clergy Conduct Measure) and it will make no difference at all unless we go back to basics and renew and clarify our understanding

of who we are, and why we do what we do, and how we work together - and I stress the together - to build up the body of Christ.

If you have not read the Report produced by the Sheldon Hub, then I encourage you to do so. If you have not yet listened to the stories told by so many people about the way they feel they are treated and all that has happened to them in churches - yes, churches, you know, those places where we preach the word of God and pronounce the good news that God loves us all, and yes, churches in which, sadly, the dysfunctionality and the artificiality that pervade so much of our life together are often the experience of people - then I encourage you to listen more carefully.

There is, of course, no one answer to all the issues and problems that are around us today. I am not suggesting for one minute that given we are all - well almost all - human beings that we will not be fallible, frail, sinful and full of mistakes. Nor am I suggesting that we can somehow arrive at a magic solution. I am also well aware that in talking about the role and nature of ordained ministry, we are discussing some of the core elements of our life together. There are different views about ecclesiology and theology lived out daily in our Church. It is one of the gifts of the Church of England that we hold together a range of views and expressions of how God reveals God, and how we shape the Church to be faithful ministers of word and sacraments.

There are though some clear reasons why I think it is right to review, define and make clear some of our practices and the frame of reference regarding ordained ministry and how it is supported and understood. That which many of us hold implicitly in our heads needs to be made more explicit.

How do we support, and I mean properly support, those who give their lives sacrificially to the service of the Church, who become the public representatives of the Church of England? How do we ensure there is a proper, well considered and theologically coherent framework that provides a series of areas of support and development for those in ordained ministry? And why is it that this appears to be the norm in other walks of life and yet not in the one that, above all, understands the need for accountability (how you give account for the hope that is in you) and understands the crucial need for interdependence?

How ridiculous would it be for the church of God - the church of God, ladies and gentlemen - to be the body that appears to hold up the clergy as the dominant model, that of the hero leader who can often appear to be unaccountable? That cannot be the model that we want our clergy to live out. Yet whatever the underlying model or models, there will be different models implicit from our theological standpoints and our understanding of how organisations operate and humans behave, even if we can make that or them clear, then, having held them up, surely we need to ensure that there is the proper support, accountability and understanding of responsibility.

Surely it is necessary, first, to be assured that our public representatives are fit to practise, and then ensure that throughout their ministry they are given the necessary tools both to do the work and to be supported. And yes, of course properly challenged and developed as they do their work, and to be clear about what is expected of them, and the standards by which we are all expected to live and minister - the work of God no less.

As is so often the way, so many other walks of life, occupations and yes, I use the word, professions have so much to teach us. Other secular organisations understand the need to care for those who work for them, and to help them develop in their work, and to support them in the variety of ways needed to ensure they can work and their life can flourish in their work. Yes, so many secular organisations understand the need for accountability and responsibility, and put in place structures that are not about blaming, neither are they about shaming, but rather the structures are about recognising the need to prepare people to do the work they are called to do and provide the variety of the resources needed to support them: to ensure that there is a series of measures in place to do the things that are necessary to assist, encourage, affirm and develop those who are involved in their life, who work for them in their enterprise.

We are called to be the body of Christ, which recognises our interdependence and recognises the need to support, affirm and develop those who give their lives to the body of Christ, and for the actual incarnation of it, which we know and love, to be the Church of England.

As I have said in the paper, we live in an age when litigation is all too easily perceived as an apparent answer to difficult conversations when matters of safeguarding and data processing must be faced squarely, fully and properly, and where to safeguard the public representatives of the Church there is a need for more work to be done about how we minister and how we care for each other.

As I have listened to so many people over the last two years, it is crystal clear to me that whilst many people focus their concerns on the CDM, and those letters themselves sound like nails being hammered in by many, the issues raised were to do with much broader issues. I am clear that if we do change the CDM to some other Measure without looking at the broader issues, and without committing to some other much more significant changes, we will not have achieved very much at all, and we will not have heard, let alone responded, to the voices that are loud and clear to me.

The relationships between clergy and their bishop, and clergy and laity, are complicated, if not to say complex, living as we do in a society that is quick to litigation and slow on forgiveness, keen on individual rights and almost silent on (break in audio), and more and more tangled. We are not being fair to the people we ordain, and perhaps especially to those most recently ordained. We do not equip them with enough clarity as to what it means to be public representatives of the Church of England. We do not affirm them sufficiently in their role and ministry, and we do not put enough resources into developing

them and encouraging them and supporting them in all they are called upon to do. Nor do we as bishops take a lead in living out mutual accountability as clearly as we should.

I believe we need a stronger, better and clearer framework, and I think we need to be bold in talking about ministerial standards and realising the expectations that are placed on all of us.

All of this will take time to make systemic changes, and that does not take into account the vital further work that needs to be done to complete a further review of how safeguarding and discipline matters work together and the crucial area of how we support lay people and protect each other from the inappropriate behaviour of lay people to and by other lay people and clergy.

However, I make no excuses for concentrating in this paper on the ordained ministry. Of course, I realise there is vital work to be done to support lay people and the wonderful growing numbers of lay people who are taking a lead in various aspects of Church life, local and wider than that. I know there is much crucial work to be done to support and understand how we hear the voices of those who tragically have been and are abused by the Church. We simply do not provide them with the support and accompaniment they need when they are able to speak out.

I do think, as I say in the paper, that both those strands of our life together need more work, but for now, in this session, I want to concentrate on the ordained. All I have said, even if it is accepted by you and others, will take time to put into practice.

My final thought is that we can begin now and we can begin here - yes, here in this Synod. Surely it is possible for us to consider how we treat each other, how we hold each other to account, how we think of each other and how we behave towards each other.

The word "culture" is often bandied about. I have done a lot of it myself. What I think it means is how we are to and for one another, and surely that is a key ingredient of being Christian. May we understand how our actions, behaviours and words affect and impact others, and strive to become those whom God has called us to be, for none of us understands how great is the trust that has been given to us. It is none other than the ministry of Christ himself.

Intriguingly, today is the Feast Day of St Benedict. The rule of St Benedict begins with the word "Listen". I believe we need to have the courage to listen carefully to each other. It is perhaps a fascinating paradox that those who choose to become monks and nuns live with many rules and regulations around them and yet some would say they are the most liberated disciples of Christ. What is it that apparently prevents us in the Church of England from embracing a structure which will liberate and not constrain?



I look forward to your responses and pray you will forgive any unhelpful comments I may have made. I am very clear there is much work to be done to support not least those we have recently ordained and from whom shines out the good news that Christ is alive.

*The Chair:* Thank you very much indeed. We have a point of order from John Wilson.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* I apologise for interrupting this particular item. It was really a question, and I have asked it several times: can we have a list of Chairs, please? I am sorry to break into this particular item, but if we could have a list of Chairs it would be very helpful, thank you.

*The Chair:* We have heard that comment, John. It is not technically a point of order, as you know. Anyway, it has been noted.

Let us move swiftly on because, in the same way as has already happened in this group of sessions, there is now the opportunity for members of Synod to ask questions. Like yesterday, a gentle reminder: please remember that this is an opportunity to ask questions rather than make a speech, and please aim to make them succinct. That will assist in helping to hear as many voices as possible in the time available to us. In order to facilitate that, we are going to time the questions. Thus a guiding red light will come on after two minutes. I will take questions in batches of three and then Bishop Tim will respond accordingly. Thank you for that. The first question, please from Thomas Seville followed by Rebecca Swyer and Lis Goddard.

*Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities):* Thank you very much indeed, Bishop. As far as content is concerned, I think this is one of the most exciting and important Measures to affect clergy in this group of group of sessions. I welcome its broad direction of travel very, very warmly indeed. The Bishop has alerted us to the amount of work which this will entail and the amount of serious thought.

My question relates to language. In paragraph 17, Bishop, you note: "... we can and should frame our life using our language and values", and then you go on to note that the "language of secular bodies appears to be closer to our foundational thinking than our own". Not surprisingly, that is expressed in much of the way in which your proposal is expressed, and I recognise the need for that. How do we get to use, basically, "Christ speak" to give account of the discipline (that is the conduct under God) of our clergy?

*Revd Canon Rebecca Swyer (Chichester):* In a review, will consideration be given as to the significance of priests and bishops remaining deacons, which goes way beyond occasionally the shifting of a few chairs? Rather, in relation to the exercise of power and authority, what does it mean for them to remain servants of God, sharing in the ministry of Jesus Christ the servant in a servant church? Also, in consideration of how clergy might be considered fit to practise, will you draw on the experience and wisdom of IME2 officers who are already working with their diocesan bishop to assess and sign off curates

as to how far they have inhabited Holy Orders and whether they are fit to practise beyond the end of curacy?

*Revd Lis Goddard (London):* Thank you, Bishop Tim, for your helpful paper. I would particularly like to ask a question in relation to your conclusion (d), in particular the issue around how matters that are identified as lay people misbehaving towards clergy are identified and processed. As you know, the Transformation Steering Group has been drawing attention to this area for some time. It was one of the focus areas of our consultation day in November 2019.

The anecdotal evidence we have collected suggests strongly that clergy women are more likely than clergy men to be subject to what you frame generally as misbehaviour, and what we frame more specifically as harassment and bullying behaviour. For example, one diocese in IME4-7 asked their curates to keep a diary, and in one cohort all the women reported incidents of harassment and bullying, particularly by laity, and fellow clergy, whereas only one of the men reported such an incident. Would it be possible, therefore, for some research to be commissioned not only into the context in which this behaviour is occurring but also who is subject to it, noting gender and ethnicity, and also noting how dioceses have handled it or failed to do? Could the national Church commit to a wholesale review of the outdated Dignity at Work policy, including the provision of harassment advisers, which is good practice elsewhere in the workplace?

*The Chair:* Back to you, Bishop Tim, for your responses please.

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton):* Colleagues will understand I will try to keep my comments as brief as possible because I am aware a lot of people want to speak, and I have had a chance to speak. Thank you for all those questions. In a funny kind of way, I think one and two to my mind were connected.

Thomas, thank you very much indeed for your comments and your question. It is clearly crucial that we have the confidence to use the language that we know is the language we want to use. I am reminded of a story that my colleague, the Bishop of Ely, told us about when they were doing some work on getting a provider to do some leadership development. The provider asked what it was they wanted and the Bishop said they wanted to focus on growth, and when he explained a bit more, the provider said, "I think what you are really interested in is transformation, not growth". That is just another example of the way in which often people beyond us appear to be using our language in a way that we should be using it ourselves. I think the way we do it, just to put it very simply, I suppose, is we begin understanding what is our own language and we begin using it. Again, having referred to the rule of St Benedict, there is much that could be done if we go back and look at some of our foundational documents.

That links up with a very good point that Rebecca made about deacons. We often say once a deacon, always a deacon. What does that mean and, in particular, what does that

mean in terms of our behaviours and our language? Your very important point, Rebecca, about IME2 people and how we link up with those things, for me leads on to what I have said in the paper, which is about honesty and about doing what we know to be the right thing rather than avoiding difficult conversations. Yes, exactly, working with the people involved at the coalface.

Lis, thank you very much indeed. I cannot promise on behalf of the national Church all that you are wanting me perhaps to promise, but certainly the Dignity at Work policy is a particular specific of the kind of thing I had in mind where, if we had that overarching framework, we could then see how the various matters work together. I certainly think there is room for much more research, as you are suggesting, into looking at why people get harassed and bullied, and getting that data together is a very important piece of the jigsaw.

*The Chair:* I would like to remind everyone at this point because lots of hands have gone up, and it would be good, as I have said already, to hear as many different voices as possible, to please keep your questions succinct.

*Revd Canon Mike Booker (Ely):* My own experience of several years working in theological education seems to me to give clear evidence of competence often when people are starting out in ministry, but the challenge comes at a later stage. Often that challenge is there well before the language of complaint or discipline is appropriate. It is more subtle than that. I would like to ask whether there is a specific reason for the use of quote marks around the word supervision in GS Misc 1285? Does it imply a hesitancy about moving towards universal trained and insured professional supervision for clergy as is found in other caring professions?

*The Bishop of Leicester (Rt Revd Martyn Snow):* I want to say thank you for this paper, Tim. It is really helpful to have this wider discussion. I certainly agree with the premise that we will not be able to reform the CDF Measure without having this particular discussion.

My question, however, relates primarily to lay ministry. I am grateful for the mention of lay ministry within this paper. I co-chair the Lay Ministries Advisory Group with Dr Paula Gooder, an arrangement which very deliberately is set up to model partnership working between clergy and lay, would you agree that we need to ensure that work around lay ministry needs to be done at the same time as work around ordained ministry? This is not a zero-sum game, as in when we emphasis one form of ministry we are often heard to be denigrating another form of ministry. Rather, any review of ministry in this sort of way needs to be holistic, so we need to start from the point of view of the ministry of the whole people of God from which the specific ministry of the ordained is derived.

*Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds):* I want to agree very much with Lis Goddard and with the Bishop who has just spoken, about looking at the whole people of God. Would you agree that

the issue of bullying or just general bad behaviour by laity against clergy and against each other really needs more addressing? I think I first spoke about this when Dignity at Work came out in 2008.

Do you agree that whereas the laity have the full ton of bricks to bring down on the head of clergy who they want to complain about, clergy have no such recourse when they are badly treated by laity, nor do laity when they are badly treated by each other, other than going to the extent of taking out injunctions and so on, which would be a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Do you agree that we need at least something like a volunteering code of conduct that has real consequences for the breaching of it? If PC World or the NHS can put up posters saying, "We don't tolerate any abuse of our staff", the Church ought to be able to do at least as well if not better.

*The Chair:* Back to you, Tim, for your responses.

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton):* That was very helpful, all three. Mike Booker, the reason why the word supervision is in quote marks is because when I have used it I have often been questioned by people as to what I mean by it. I understand there are various different understandings of supervision. For myself, I go on saying, even as I now come towards the end of my active ordained ministry, that I am surprised that we are the only one of the caring professions not to have compulsory supervision. I understand it in the way that you set it out and I personally would think it is a crucial element of this bigger framework that I am talking about.

Martyn, thank you very much indeed, and Paul Ayers. You both made comments about lay people. I suppose, rather pathetically, what I would say is I completely agree with both comments you are making, but I had to start somewhere, as it were, and I think there is work to be done in focusing on ordained ministry. I would add only one other comment. I completely accept, Martyn, the really good work you are doing with lay ministry. I think it was David Lamming (I am sure it probably would be) who yesterday raised the question about what it means to be a member of the Church of England.

One of my concerns about the lay issue is that I have had many people speak to me over the last two years who are not lay officers, not lay ministers, they go to church. That is who they are and they have been bullied. How on earth do we begin to get some framework around that? I think this is a crucial piece of work, as I have said in my paper, but I hope I am not just passing the buck when I say I think it is another group of people who rather urgently need to begin to take up that work.

*The Chair:* The next group of questioners, please.

*Mr David Coulston (Europe):* I speak from the laity point of view and I speak as a diocesan lay chair and as someone with a lifetime of experience in industry and public sector management. I would like to support the comments that have been made regarding the

matter of, shall we say, recalcitrant laity. I agree with Bishop Tim that this is probably a separate stream of work. We lost the opportunity in 2000, 21 years ago, to take this matter further when the Churchwardens Measure was passing through Parliament. I am well aware from my discussions with other diocesan lay chairs that there is a problem in many places. We are only too aware of the devastating effects of bullying and harassment on clergy and their families and congregations. I would urge that this matter be taken forward.

My question, in a sense, Bishop Tim, is can we actually identify a means by which we can take this very important matter through to conclusion?

*Mrs Sarah Finch (London):* My question is about mutual accountability. Recently I have been very impressed to hear about a group of friends, all clergy, who meet a few times a year and ask each other all sorts of questions. The result is that they are accountable to each other. Does the Bishop think this is a good idea and, if so, how could this be encouraged?

*Revd Dr Philip Plyming (Universities & TElS):* Thank you, Bishop Tim, for your very helpful presentation and I think timely challenge. As someone ordained 20 years ago this year who now teaches Christian leadership, I concur entirely with your assessment that the expectations around public ordained ministry, and its place within a wider leadership landscape and its culture, have changed substantially. I think your work is vital and I am delighted to see it going ahead.

My question has two parts. First, are you aware that however uneven the knowledge of the guidelines for the professional conduct of the clergy in the wider Church, a significant number of TElS, my own included, find it a profoundly helpful core text as we help students prepare for public ministry, so we would welcome further work based on it.

Secondly, given the work outlined in paragraph 29 of your paper will clarify and in some places amend our understanding of the weight of ordained ministry, what gives you confidence that the Resourcing Ministerial Formation review (currently underway) will take full account of this work as it prepares proposals for amending support of theological training?

*The Chair:* Back to you, Tim, for your responses.

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton):* Thank you, David, for your comments. I completely understand that the lay issue is a massive one. Without trying to be irresponsible, again, I would be looking for volunteers to step forward and say they would be willing to take this up. I do think it is a very complex area because, as Martyn Snow was saying, there are some specific issues around lay ministry and around people who hold office. There is then a much wider series of issues around how lay people respond or deal with each other. I hear what Lis Goddard is saying and I hear what you

are saying and what other people have said. I think it is crucial and urgent. I simply do not think it is possible to do everything at once, so I am looking for volunteers and I am happy to hear from them.

Sarah, thank you for your very good example. Again, just going back to what Fr Thomas said, one of the other people we have been talking to recently from the secular business world pointed out very helpfully to me something I should have known a long time ago, and that is the difference between accountability and responsibility. I think what you are saying for me, Sarah, is it is perfectly possible now from today for groups of us to sit down and say, "I share some responsibility for my own behaviours. I want to talk with you about how these things operate". Before any system changes are happening, examples like yours, Sarah, could happen all over the place. That does not prevent, however, some of the systemic changes that need to be happening being brought in in due course.

Philip, thank you very much for your comments. I completely understand what you are saying in the first place about guidelines. When we get on to the CDM later, it is interesting to me to note that many registrars and tribunals and other people use the guidelines in a way that I do not know that all clergy understand they are being used. It is great to know, as I do know, that many TEIs are using them. As I hint and trail my coat in what I have said, I think they should be reinforced. A lot more work needs to be done on them. I would see them becoming not just the guidelines but the standards by which we lay out from the beginning what it is we are expecting of each other. Thank you for that.

Your second question is very well put. I am not totally confident, but I am confident that if we think about the issues we are talking about now under Resourcing Ministerial Formation, we get an honest conversation between ecclesial leaders and those who are working in the TEI world, to ensure to we are being honest with each other about the expectations and the aspirations that are in all our minds at the moment.

*The Chair.* There are a few more people who I would really like to hear from and to give them the opportunity to ask their questions, so the more succinct everyone can be, we can make that happen.

*Canon Shayne Ardron (Leicester):* This is very timely for the changes that are happening in the Leicester Diocese at the moment. I want to jump ahead a little to look at how we can embed some of the things you are working on across the whole of the Church, because, as you say, a lot of the problems are happening within parishes. We had this problem with the Five Guiding Principles that people on the ground did not know about them to be able to live and work with them. How do we try to embed this within the parishes, not just within teaching the clergy, and that being within the TEIs? This is part of the skills of leadership, but also the skills of following, and surely some of this could be embedded within some of the discipleship work so it is not just one stream. How can we share this out across different areas?

*Revd Simon Talbott (Ely):* Bishop Tim, thank you for the Report that you have put together and thank you for the time that you have taken as well. Having been part of that conversation in a small group, it has been very welcome.

The particular point I would like to pick up and ask a question on is on paragraph 26 of the Report around the definition of the issues such as complaint, misconduct and serious misconduct. Could you say a little more about that in response to that specific question?

*Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester):* Thank you, Tim, for a terrific presentation. My question I guess is theological/linguistic. To what extent, Bishop, do you feel that we need to rediscover, somewhat counterintuitively, a much richer understanding of the word “profession” or “professional” for both clergy and for lay people, given that the notion of profession and professional finds at least some root in the notion of profession of faith? To what extent do we need to learn to discover to be people who profess our faith as clergy and as lay people?

*The Chair:* Thank you very much, everyone. Back to you, Tim, for your next lot of responses, please.

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton)* Thank you, Shayne. I think what you are saying is vital. Ongoing education, development right throughout is crucial. Slightly tangentially, in a way, one of the things that Martin and I have been talking about is what might be the foundational value system that we might use. For me, the values outlined by the Pastoral Advisory Group, those six pervading evils, to me feel they could be things we could use much more in our parishes and in our ongoing regular life, but what you are saying, Shayne, for me is very much about how we encourage clergy and laity (it is not by any means the sole preserve of the clergy) to have that ongoing dialogue, understanding, debate, and to go on learning, to be people who understand that we are teaching and learning, as the LLF process is about.

Simon, thank you. It gives me an opportunity to say I will be saying a bit more about this in the debate in a few minutes' time. I am clear that the crucial piece of work we have to do to bring the CDM back before Synod in better shape is precisely around definitions. As I have written in my paper, I think we need to be clearer about our definitions. I will say a bit more, but if you have a spare moment this evening, if there is nothing good on television, if you go to the website of the Diocese of Melbourne and look at its scheme about clergy conduct, interestingly it starts off with page after page of defining the terms. It seems to me crucial that we do indeed define our terms but understand there needs to be some porosity about the reality of what is happening having defined the terms in the first place.

Rachel, thank you so much for what you said. For myself, I could not agree more with you. I am surprised that as Christians we have some suspicion about the word

“profession” and I am intrigued to know what the Christian roots of the word “amateur” might be if that is the opposite of the word profession. For me, there is a very interesting chapter written in the guidelines all about profession, and it would seem to me as Christians, again going back to what Fr Thomas said, we need to rediscover the language that was given to us that we should have the confidence to use ourselves.

*The Chair:* Moving on to the next three and then that may be it, I am afraid, for today.

*Mr Jon Walker (Leicester):* Thank you for the most encouraging paper possibly that I have read in my one year on Synod, and for your great presentation; a real lift on a Sunday afternoon. What I wanted to ask you is will the scope of the proposed work include considering the view that there is, or should be, no distinction between ordained and lay people? We are all similarly but also differently called to be part of the Church, the people of God, and many of the issues and contortions that your paper seems to be trying to address arise, in my view, from an artificially created difference that is neither scriptural nor theologically sound. Either we believe in the priesthood of all believers or we do not. Either we believe in the priesthood of all believers and practise it or we do not. I would be interested in your view on that. I picked up in your presentation when you talked about the ordained as walking sacraments. For someone who has encountered God sacramentally through vast hordes of lay people, I cannot understand why the word ordained was in there.

*Ven. Luke Miller (London):* Three nested questions very quickly. First of all, Bishop Tim, thank you very much for the work that you have done on this. I think you will be well aware that it touches on a whole wide range of other things to do with what it is to be a cleric, and will that also be taken into account? I am thinking of things like housing, stipend, which has a theology packed around it and is distinct from remuneration, or should we move towards being remunerated with all that means, officeholding, time-limiting of appointments, and so on.

My second question flows from that because work on that area will touch on what it is to be an Anglican. It is an ecclesiological issue. It is possible to remain in some ways independent within the Church of England. We are a church which is very devolved and we therefore have the rich diversity of opinion that we all value so much. It is possible to remain in critical solidarity because there is a certain independence the clergy have, or at least some of them. How will this work impinge on that, particularly given the frustrations in a world where we are looking at strategic priorities, and we would very much like to be able to move slightly quicker than some of those checks and balances allow us to? Personally I am in favour of the checks and balances, but how does that work?

My third question, therefore, is will the very necessary and deeply important ecclesiological, theological and sociological (in some ways) investigation that this will require be given the resources that it needs, both in terms of the human resource, the



diversity of opinion that will be needed in the room and also the time, money and effort that will need to go into it?

*Revd Charles Read (Norwich):* Unlike Luke Miller, I am not an archdeacon so I only have two nested questions. The first is I wonder whether it would be possible for there to be compiled a list of documents that dioceses have which share good practice in the area? In the Diocese of Norwich we have what we think is a helpful document called *Dignity in Ministry*. When we were working on this and it did not have a title, it was known informally as the diocesan harassment and bullying policy, until somebody pointed out that they hoped we were working on a policy to stop harassment and bullying and not encourage it. It is called *Dignity in Ministry* and it applies to all the people in the diocese, clergy and laity. I suspect other dioceses have similar documents. We also have a document we have produced for LLMs, for readers, which is parallel to the professional conduct of the clergy guidance. It would be helpful perhaps if we could all know what each other is up to. Would that be possible?

My second question is with my other hat as a TEI staff member. Just occasionally, sadly, in TEIs we have to raise some alarm bells about candidates for ordination. Thankfully very occasionally, we meet resistance from bishops and DDOs, who do not want to hear the questions and issues we are raising. Would Bishops Tim and Martin be able to have a word with their fellow bishops and DDOs to take the concerns of TEIs more seriously when we are flagging up concerns about ordinands?

*The Chair:* Back to you, Tim, for the last time this afternoon for your responses.

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton):* Thank you, Jon, for your comments. I fear I am going to ruin your Sunday afternoon by saying I think there is a distinction between ordained and lay, otherwise we would not bother or ordaining anybody. I think there is a distinction. That does not in my mind take away from the reality that we all believe in the priesthood of the whole people of God. The two things for me are not mutually exclusive. There is a distinction but I think, therefore, it needs even more work to be done on what that distinction means and how it operates. Again, I suppose I am laying out my understanding that we need to do much more work on clarifying and defining what these things mean.

Thank you, Luke, for your questions. I think in a sense they are somewhat related to each other in my mind, at least the first two are. Of course, if we look again at the nature and understanding of ordained ministry that could have a consequential impact on issues like housing and stipend, but it does not need to. Obviously, what I am doing now is setting out a personal view. This is in no way taken up by the wider Church of England. You are right to raise those questions, but I think they would form part of the ongoing conversation.

Your second point about what it means to be an Anglican, again I would probably want to challenge slightly and say are you content with the word independent? Is it not interdependence we are looking to be and to do, and is there not some way we are actually related to each other whereby we cannot exist without each other? If that is the case, what does that mean, how do our relationships work out in practice?

Your final point, Luke, is a very good one. Clearly, we have heard in this group of Synod sessions that we are always asking for more resources to do everything, and we cannot do everything; we have limited resources. But I would say, would I not, as a personal comment again, that it seems to me that this is a really crucial matter, and therefore I am sure that Martin and others will be looking at how we want to resource it in due course.

Charles, thank you for your comments. I think sharing good practice is crucial. Your idea of compiling what already exists is crucial. Again, so often in the Church of England we seem to reinvent the wheel when we do not need to. I think that is a really good idea we can take forward.

Charles, I have episcopal colleagues but, of course, they never listen to a word I say, so I am not sure it is very helpful for me to talk to them about the points you make. But, of course, yes, we need again to enter into difficult conversations with each other and, just as you have raised the point you have raised, Charles, I am sure bishops would sometimes want to raise comments about other parts of the organisation where they do not always get the traction they want from those parts of the organisation. What that tells me is that we need much more open, and honest difficult conversations with, for and to each other.

*The Chair.* Thank you very much for that. I am aware that several more members were hoping to ask questions. Unfortunately, time has caught up with us so we will have to leave it there for today. Please do remember though that you can send your questions to Bishops Tim and Martin if you wish to do so. Particular thanks to Bishop Tim for all that you have shared with us this afternoon, and to members for your questions.

That concludes this item of business. We will move to the next item on the Agenda, Item 24, in a moment. Thank you very much, everyone.

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 4.57 pm.

## **ITEM 24**

### **PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATION TO REPLACE THE CLERGY DISCIPLINE MEASURE 2003 (GS 2219)**

*The Chair.* We move to Item 24 which is proposals for legislation to replace the Clergy Discipline Measure. Members will need to have to hand GS 2219, which is the Report of the Lambeth Working Group on the Clergy Discipline Measure.

Before we go on, a question was asked about the panel of Chairs list. You can find that on the website under OP4. It is also under “Other docs” on the app, so I hope that you can locate that particular listing if you are wanting to know who the Chairs are.

Looking at Order Paper IV, you will see that there is a following motion that Simon Talbott has laid before the Synod. In order for us to debate that following motion, I am going to be looking to you, members of Synod, for a motion of closure of the main debate so we can move on to that. Have that in mind if you are keen that we discuss Simon’s following motion.

We are going to begin though with the main motion and I am going to invite the Bishop at Lambeth, who hopefully has managed to have a quick cup of tea in between items, to speak to Item 24. Bishop, you have up to ten minutes to do so.

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton):* I am Bishop to the Forces for this particular performance.

During the 13th century, the sometime Archbishop of Canterbury John Peckham said that there were seven Great Evils from which the church in England suffered. The third of these was the lack of any effective disciplining of the clergy. The system, he said, was plagued by a process that was too complicated and too disparate. Inquisitors would roam parishes and would report back on almost anything that they considered was amiss. Would-be reformers found themselves thwarted by appeals to Rome, a process that took so long that by the time the decision was made most had forgotten what the point was in the first place.

Fast forward 800 years and another Archbishop of Canterbury asked me to chair a Working Group looking at the reform of the Clergy Discipline Measure. It has been a privilege and not a little hard work to do so. In its work the group has heard from people with a wide range of perspectives. These have included survivors of abuse, those who have been respondents and complainants in CDM proceedings, those with professional, legal and safeguarding expertise, bishops involved in administering the CDM and those with experience in non-ecclesiastical regulation. I am hugely grateful to all those who have engaged with us.

I want to repeat what I said earlier today and that is the privilege I have had to listen to many people; and it makes it clear to me that we need a new Measure. At the same time, it is also crystal clear that the awful experiences of so many will not be helped simply by a new discipline Measure. I hope members of Synod will not imagine that this one Measure can in any way solve the many issues that need addressing.

As I note in the Report before you, I wish to pay real tribute, as well to the members of the group that worked with me, to two groups that have done so much work in this area

in the past year: the Sheldon Hub and the Ecclesiastical Law Society's Working Party on the CDM. May I say a huge thank you to Edward Dobson who has done a huge amount of work in this area himself. His presence and what he is doing has moved things forward tremendously in this whole area already.

Behind these proposals that are put before you today are five key principles: the allocation of complaints and the allegations of misconduct to separate tracks; secondly, the imposition of statutory duties to ensure professional support is in place for survivors and complainants and effective pastoral support for respondents; thirdly, the early investigation of all complaints and allegations of misconduct; fourthly, independent oversight of disciplinary functions with an emphasis on professional training for those administering any aspects of the Measure; fifthly and finally, the proper resourcing of diocesan and national bodies to ensure the efficient determination of complaints and allegations of misconduct.

I am not going to go through each of these in detail, but I would like to address Synod on two areas that I regard of primary importance. First is the real need for a system that separates misconduct from complaint, to put it at its simplest. Many of the conversations I have with complainants do not raise matters of misconduct but rather talk of pastoral breakdown, misjudgment or error.

As early as 1996, when the CDM was still eight years away, there was recognition of the need for a procedure where what were called grievances could be heard without the need for the formality of discipline. A detailed system was proposed but not included in the CDM. This was a mistake and we must recognise that and correct it.

What we propose today is the simple separation between misconduct and complaint. We propose that complaints, and I must credit the Ecclesiastical Law Society here, be dealt with locally by an assessor or assessors. These assessors would receive proper training and support. In determining those complaints, the outcome will focus on the pastoral rather than the punitive. It is noteworthy that since 2006, 45% of all complaints brought under the CDM have been dismissed or subject to no further action. Often this is not because there is no legitimate cause for complaint but rather because the subject matter was not deemed serious enough for a formal disciplinary procedure. That leaves the issue unresolved for all involved and, in my experience, is partly why so many people are deeply unhappy about this.

Our proposal seeks to address this. Allegations of misconduct will be immediately sent for early investigation to the office of the designated officer. Such an approach will, of course mean the complaint and misconduct must be clearly defined. As I mentioned earlier, and I am grateful for the follow-on motion, I think we need to be clear about this, I have been struck by some other your jurisdictions, for example, the Diocese of Melbourne in Australia, who give a long list of clear definitions contained within their legislation and

guidance. The detailed work has to be done. It is not there at the moment but it needs to be done. I understand that and I want to underline it.

The key work for the Implementation Group is precisely to do that work of definition. We have considered carefully proposals promulgated by others for a middle route of less than serious misconduct. We are also acutely aware of the stress and anxiety highlighted so well and clearly by the Sheldon Hub, and others, that comes from being subject to a formal legal process. However, in most cases we do not believe that there can be a proper distinction between different types of misconduct prior to the investigation. The substance and seriousness of an allegation can change and does change throughout investigation in either direction of seriousness.

Furthermore, we must recognise that at times misconduct does take place that, although unlikely to result in a removal from office or prohibition, is nonetheless serious and must be treated as such. In the realm of safeguarding especially, any other course of action would be contrary to the public commitments the Church has already given. As such, where there is misconduct, we do not think it is appropriate that it be dealt with by the assessors but should be referred for formal investigation. It is, I admit, a difficult balancing act, but it is one that any fair system of discipline must tackle. That is not to say that things will simply proceed as they do now. I have highlighted the need for early investigation and Synod will note our proposals that both complaints and allegations of misconduct are allocated to their track quickly, cutting out the current lengthy diocesan stage of the proceedings. Delay and inaction are the cause of so much anxiety in the present system, and we must and can do better on that front.

Further, the Implementation Group will examine the feasibility of enshrining within the Measure a provision that a respondent would only be removed from office once the bishop or tribunal was satisfied that their fitness to exercise their public ministry was impaired. I am aware that in some quarters misgivings have been raised about this approach. We have certainly heard those. That said, I am also sorry that our proposals do seem to have been misunderstood by some. I am sure there are varied reasons for that. We have, of course, lost so much in the past year by way of proper human interaction. A planned in-person discussion event for this Synod could not happen. I hope that in the future it will take place.

The second area I would want to emphasis is that of continued training, development and oversight. Systems of discipline do not operate in a vacuum. They are dependent upon the expertise and experience of those who administer its functions. What has struck me in my conversations over the past 18 months or so is those who have key roles in the CDM - bishops, archdeacons, DSAs and many others - only deal perhaps with one or two cases per year. Whatever the shape of the new Measure, those same people will continue to have a role. Accordingly, we must ensure that training, continued professional development and oversight is embedded with our culture around discipline. In this, we

recommend that the Clergy Discipline Commission play a much greater role taking on those these principles as the central functions of the Commission.

In the 13th century, it took Pope Innocent III to call his great Fourth Council of the Lateran in order to cure what he called the “immorality and worldliness of the clergy”. In the Church of England we do not yet have councils in that sense but rather prefer implementation groups and revision committees. As we have acknowledged, as I acknowledge now clearly, there is still detailed work to be done, but there is a real commitment to proper reform. Whilst an ordered Church must have discipline, that discipline must be rooted in the principles of the Gospel, in reconciliation and in justice. I am sorry for the times when the Church has fallen short of that. What I would say is that already with the operation of the current Measure there are clear improvements. The proposals for reform before you build on that work.

I would also add, as I made clear in the last item, that any changes to processes around discipline will not solve many of the problems and issues that have been raised by so many people. Whatever discipline process we have, we need to make further changes to the wider understanding and frame of support around all clergy. Please do not make the mistake of trying to address real and significant issues around culture and relationships by focusing too closely on the wrong processes.

I look forward to your comments and helpful contributions. I do hope that you will take note of this matter so that we can continue to progress with this crucial area of our life.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Bishop. This item is now open for debate. May I remind members please that we are debating this item and not the follow-on motion, so I would be glad if you would address your comments to this particular item. I am going to call first the Dean of the Arches followed by the Prolocutor of Canterbury. You have up to five minutes.

*Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor):* Thank you very much, Bishop Tim, and your Working Group for all that you have done on this. I strongly welcome the Report in general. I have some points to make about some of the detail, a bit of which I will do today, and it may be that other parts can be taken offline, as it were.

First, I would just like to note under paragraph 20 of the paper, where the importance of training for all involved is stressed, one of the IICSA recommendations, that the Ecclesiastical Judges Association has already been thinking about this, together with the designated officer, Mr Edward Dobson, and we are keen to be involved particularly with the training of potential new tribunal chairs as a way to aid diversity in recruitment but also to assist tribunal chairs generally to do their work.

One other matter to mention in this debate briefly is this, and it arises out of paragraph 41 of the paper and the flow chart at the end where the question of the role of the President of Tribunals is raised concerning the question of whether her or her deputies decide that

matters should go forward to tribunal. In the flow chart there is a reference to their reports on that matter being confidential. I would ask that that be reconsidered very carefully and that those reports ought not to be confidential, first for reasons of fairness to the parties involved, next for reasons of general transparency and openness - further important commitments which the Church made to IICSA and to others - and lastly, for openly building up a library of decisions in order to help achieve consistency of decision-making and to inform all involved in the new shape of the process.

Thank you very much again to the group. I look forward, with my fellow judges, to being involved as this work is taken forward. Thank you.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I want to add my thanks to those of the Dean of the Arches to Tim for the open and generous approach he has taken throughout this whole piece of work. I hope the debate will continue in that vein as well. I regret that, in some ways, this matter has become a little polarised. I have always found him open and receptive. In that vein, I rather regret the language that we see in the ELS briefing paper about “resistance at all costs”. The Working Group is not a wicked group of institutionalised people who do not understand what is at stake for individuals; they are simply trying to develop the best possible and fairest approach to the unfortunate reality of the necessity of discipline. I hope this debate will bring unity and consensus over direction.

A complaint of misconduct is always traumatic and the process involved needs to be designed to minimise the trauma involved. The Working Group, I am delighted to say, recognises the central role that triage has to play. The major problem with the CDM is one-size-fits-all. I have supported a number of people through the CDM process and anyone encountering it can easily fear the worst possible outcome. My partner is a head of casework in his Civil Service department, and he tells me that in secular discipline a respondent will be informed early in the process if the allegations (if made out) could result in dismissal; what we are calling serious misconduct, although why we cannot simply use the gross misconduct phrase like everyone else perhaps ought to be explained.

In our setting I think a similar approach needs to be taken. Triage needs to clarify, subject of course to due process and the possibility of further disclosure of misconduct, whether somebody is facing the possibility of removal from office or deposition or not. At the very least someone facing a serious outcome might conduct their defence in a very different way knowing that, and those who are not facing one might avoid the expense of lawyers as well as being reassured that they are not facing a loss of role.

I too am grateful to Sheldon for their research highlighting the trauma that the CDM causes, and any replacement should have processes which minimise it for the respondent. Where I think that we who are subject to clergy discipline, potential respondents as we all are, should be wary of the Sheldon research is its lack of attention

to the trauma of complainants. Where I am cautious of the discussion, as it has been framed in the vigorous online campaign that various partners have embarked upon, is the way its focus is firmly on trauma for respondents. Any discipline process should minimise trauma all round. The disciplinary process must not unreasonably privilege the minimising of trauma to one party at the expense of inflicting more on the other.

The replacement of the CDM needs to be more just and caring of respondents. You would expect the Prolocutor to say that and the proposer of the Clergy Covenant to hammer that point home, but we must not replace it with something that comes to be seen as the Church looking after its own. The pendulum must not swing the other way, especially in the light of the belated progress we are making on safeguarding.

I would like to warmly welcome Tim's point about definitions. We were talking over lunch about this, and the first question that Paul asked me was: "Where are your policies? Where are your policies?" The more definition we have, the more policy written down, the easier it will be to work. I hope that the Implementation Group will be undefended on the proposals which end up being in the final direction of travel.

I may be minded to support Simon's motion later on, despite some problems that can be teased out. I will be asking that we vote on the two clauses of the CDM separately.

Whether it is CDM or ELS or Lambeth Working Group proposals that emerge from today, ultimately, it is the way that those who administer the disciplinary process conduct themselves that really matters. Bad workers blame their tools. We need more focus on practice, not legislative instruments, going forward. We should remember that failure to do this well is costly - emotionally, financially, psychologically and missionally. I would welcome clarity in what emerges about the consequences of failure to do just this. Failure to handle discipline well should be much more clearly a disciplinary matter itself. I welcome this debate and its potential outcome.

*His Honour Judge Peter Collier QC (Vicar General of York) (ex officio):* I declare an interest in that I chair the Ecclesiastical Law Society Working Party which reviewed the Clergy Discipline Measure and has suggested in some detail what a new Measure might look like. I should say that we have issued no briefing paper and I do not know quite why the Prolocutor should have thought we have. Whatever it was, it was not issued by the ELS.

May I begin by urging Synod to take note of this report and to send it forth on its legislative journey so that sooner rather than later we do have a new Measure. It would be a mistake not to take note, as to do so would seriously delay any change to the current Measure. I know of no one who does not want to change as urgently as possible the current procedures. Standing Order 105 makes it clear that taking note is not to be taken as committing the Synod to the acceptance of any matter in the Report, so let us please take note.



Twenty-five years ago in 1996, there was a report to Synod entitled *Under Authority* which Synod was asked to take note of and send on its legislative journey. It then took seven years to produce the CDM. In the work that was done by that Working Group they recognised that once you have “weeded out the frivolous, malicious and inconsequential complaints, what is left is a number of quite legitimate complaints, most of which we believe will be fairly minor. As it will be in no one’s interests to activate formal disciplinary procedures for fairly minor complaints, a simple procedure to handle these effectively is required”.

Please note the three different groups they identified in 1996. It was not, however, within their remit to provide such a procedure for the lesser complaints. They did, however, tag a proposal in an appendix. Fr Stephen Trott moved a motion to ask that the legislation would include that other procedure. On that occasion, his motion was welcomed by the platform party, but, for reasons that are still unclear, as the years went by that fell from the agenda and was not included in the Measure that we now have. Because the implementation of the 1996 Report did not result in a separate system for serious and less than serious misconduct, every complaint now launched is by way of a disciplinary complaint. So it is that when a complaint is laid under the Measure against a cleric, it may be something that would never end up with loss of home and livelihood even if proved, but the cleric can have no confidence about that and becomes not only anxious and distressed but may have to shell out money to lawyers for advice and assistance to protect their position. Sheldon have recounted many of their stories and we have to change all that.

My concern about the paper before us is that it is drawing the wrong distinction when it distinguishes between complaints and misconduct. I think it is linguistically confusing. I complain about your misconduct. Your misconduct might be very serious, it might be less than serious, or it might just be that I have a whinge or a grievance about something that you did.

The distinction that the Implementation Group needs to work with is not between complaint and misconduct but between serious misconduct and less than serious misconduct. It is serious misconduct that should follow a track not dissimilar to the current one, although there are many things about that system which need changing, but that is for another day. It is the principle that needs to be focused on initially. Obviously, you also need a separate track dealing with the matters that are less than serious. The following motion does put the focus there. My hope is that if the platform does not welcome it that Synod will pass it, and on this occasion we will not let it slip in the way that we did 25 years ago.

May I apologise to Bishop Tim if I gave the impression there was no engagement between ELS and the Lambeth Group. As he knows, we met briefly on a couple of occasions for an hour, a handful from each, and we identified the differences of approach. But we did

not explore, engage or challenge each other's respective positions. It is that sort of process that will result in the best possible system as we go forward on the legislative journey that hopefully begins today.

*The Chair:* We have a point of order from Simon Butler.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I do not wish to detain Synod, but I want to point out to the Vicar General that I have a paper from the Sheldon Hub in the name of Mr Sam Maginnis for the ELS Working Party dated July 2021, specifically referring to the language of "resisting at all costs". I just want that made clear for the record.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Simon.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Bishop of Bristol (Rt Revd Vivienne Faull):* It was my own induction to the Diocese of Bristol which enabled me to understand some of the distress that many of my clergy were experiencing because of what they had observed of the distress of two or three particular members. It made me start to reflect on the Clergy Discipline Measure and a journey with the ELS (I declare an interest) in discovering what we had committed ourselves to in the past and where we needed to go for the future. I am very glad that the work of the Lambeth Group - and so many thanks to Bishop Tim - and the campaigning and research by Sheldon and the ELS proposals seem to be converging. I look forward to further convergence.

There is one particular detail I would like to address because it concerns particularly the role of the diocesan bishop under the new proposals, stage 1, paragraphs 22, 23, and 24, and the proposal for the allocations of cases by the diocesan bishop. I can see this proposal tries to rectify one of the deficiencies of the current Measure and the advice to bishops not to get too closely involved in the detail of cases.

The result has seriously hobbled diocesan bishops by restricting the possibility of either testing the facts or finding a way to informal conciliation, and yet the proposal for the diocesan bishops to allocate cases can build in risk and mistrust. For the complainants, there will be a lack of transparency. How will they know the basis for the bishop's decision? How will they have confidence that the bishop will not be biased against them? The bishop's decision is crucial, not least because it will give access to legal aid. The bishops will have their own concerns about the potential lack of trust in their role and their performance and they will undoubtedly find they have significantly extra workload. They may refer the matter to the registrar, but with continuing pressure on controlling costs this permissive provision may be squeezed out. I would ask that the Lambeth follow-on group looks again at the proposal for stage 1, that there might be a short independent assessment of the case with recommendation to the bishop and allocation thereafter

between tracks, all of this to be published and reviewed so that from the start of the process trust is built and our common life is built up.

*Revd Canon Debbie Flach (Europe):* Thank you to Bishop Tim and all involved in the work so far, not only on this item but that referred to in the previous item. I am quite concerned that in GS 2219 the work done separately by Sheldon and the ELS has not been integrated into the Report that you have made of proceedings. In paragraph 6 you say you acknowledge the work done by them, but you do not say that it has been integrated and will form part of the ongoing Implementation Group, and I think I would like to hear something about that, please.

I would also like to know whether the investigation and triage of cases is going to be independent. What about legal aid for either those unable to pay their legal costs or who find themselves embroiled in very long cases? For me it is vital that we try to get this right. Even I was not on Synod 25 years ago, it has only been 16 years, but I would like to make sure that our line of travel ensures that whatever comes out of this work is more humane and simply commend this work to you that has been done by Sheldon and by the ELS so that it is integrated into whatever work goes forward.

*The Chair:* Mark Emerton for his maiden speech. Mark, as it is your maiden speech, I am going to allow you up to five minutes, but you might not need it. I will then call Joyce Jones.

*Mr Mark Emerton (Portsmouth):* Thank you for the indulgence of some extra time which hopefully I will not use. The first comment I was going to make was to welcome the Report. I agree absolutely that we should take note. It is an important area and obviously a lot of hard work and careful thought has gone in, but that does not mean that there is not more work to be done to improve it. I had thought of various comments I was going to make, many of which have been made by the previous speakers, all of whom have said some very sensible things.

I just wanted to echo two points in particular. First, the substantive points made by Peter Collier, which I would echo, on the question of what is meant by complaint or misconduct, which I will come back to in a moment, but also the very important points made by Simon Butler as to all of the various people who are necessarily involved in the disciplinary process. Because, of course, there are problems with the system at the moment. It is slow. It is not always fair to the clergy. It is not always fair to complainants and it does not always support the needs of discipline more widely. It is important to balance all these things within a system that works sufficiently well for everybody.

I was very pleased that Bishop Tim went back to the seven Great Evils and recognised that at least one of the evils may be still echoing around and he acknowledged the various inputs.

In my remaining time I must just make some comments about expertise, about a particular issue and on the way ahead. I should say, like Bishop Tim and others, I have also looked at how *Under Authority* was eventually turned into the Clergy Discipline Measure. It was a very good Report, but the process of getting to the Measure perhaps did not work quite as intended, and we do not want to fall into that trap.

So far as expertise is concerned, I speak as a member of General Synod looking perhaps at disciplinary procedures through the lens of an experienced lawyer who has seen them work in other professions, including caring professions. They are not always perfect and they do not always apply directly to what we need in the Church of England, but there are some useful lessons, and there is a great deal of expertise around amongst lawyers and others, people who have seen disciplinary systems work or sometimes not work, who can bring that expertise and experience to bear. I know there are others within General Synod who have that experience and we may or may not be hearing from them today.

I wanted to rehearse the point that others have made that that experience was tapped into via the Ecclesiastical Law Society Working Group Report, which I have read and I think is a good Report, and, although it is acknowledged, perhaps there are one or two points that need to be considered a little further in taking this forward to legislation.

On the substantive point about what is a complaint and what is misconduct, although Bishop Tim has helpfully explained his thinking there, I have to say, taking perhaps a wider view as a lawyer and looking at how the system should work for all, I entirely agree with Peter Collier. I think all these disciplinary systems, if you take, for example, the General Medical Council, the General Dental Council and other statutory disciplinary systems with tribunals, have a properly constructed system that allows for no further action - and that does not mean there is not a problem to be addressed, but not a disciplinary problem - what you could call serious or gross misconduct which may or may not involve some form of suspension or removal from office, and then a whole range of matters in between which can be dealt with usually relatively informally in a way that acknowledges misconduct but without blighting somebody's career or causing unnecessary stress. It is in that area where I think I would agree with Peter Collier that the proposals do not work as well as they might.

I think it is important that we go back and try to get it right. We are not talking about Simon Talbott's motion. I think the points he makes are valid, but they do not necessarily need a separate resolution. What is important is we carry this forward as quickly as possible but take the time to do it properly, acknowledging that where the draft comes up with a system that does not work as well as it should, we need to discuss and think very hard using the expertise available to make it as good as we can. I would urge everyone to take note, but that is not the end of the matter at this stage.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* Prolocutor for York Province. I would like to say that whatever Measures we have in place, the situation will not improve until there is a change of culture, which means that both complainants and respondents are treated with compassion and offered effective support. I know the guidelines say that this should happen but when we read all the reports, sadly, this does not always happen. I think often people are either afraid of being seen not to take the complaint seriously enough or afraid of going the other way. We need compassion, humanity and boldness in dealing with complaints, and to provide proper support so that both complainants and respondents are able to engage with the process properly and be treated with fairness and justice.

*The Bishop of Guilford (Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I too am very grateful to Bishop Tim and the work of the Lambeth Working Group. I think they have done a really good job and I would encourage us to take note of this report as a positive, although not final, next step. In particular, I welcome the proposal to draw a clear distinction between general complaints and specific allegations of misconduct. However we define those, that makes a lot sense. I am fully in favour, of course, of a bank of trained assessors to deal with complaints and the emphasis on the need for as speedy a resolution as possible where there is alleged misconduct on the basis that justice delayed is justice denied.

From my sometimes rather agonising experience of operating this Clergy Discipline Measure, especially in the last seven years as a diocesan bishop, I have recognised both the huge toll that CDMs can take on clergy wellbeing and that of their partners and families and the damage that can be done to individuals and whole communities on the blessedly rare occasions where there is serious misconduct on the clergyperson's part. I also share the view of a number of contributors earlier this afternoon that we need to look to a more effective code of conduct to deal with situations where clergy themselves face bullying and controlling behaviour that is wholly unacceptable. Getting the balance right between the various parties is extraordinarily important and in that regard I think GS 2219 is certainly a step in the right direction.

I think the major point which requires further clarification, and Bishop Tim acknowledged this a little earlier on this afternoon, is the only paragraph in the Report that is printed in bold, paragraph 27, which refers to safeguarding-related cases. There are, of course, cases which are clearly safeguarding related: allegations against a clergy person suggesting improper conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult. In such situations it is clearly vital that the safeguarding process runs alongside the disciplinary process, although the relationship between the two could be clarified further.

But what about situations where, for example, the complaint relates to an alleged addiction to alcohol or drugs? On the one hand, there may not be a specific allegation that the addiction has caused damage to those who are vulnerable, young or old, but clearly there is a real danger, and if the allegations have any truth to them the individual concerned is broadly risky, both in the sense that virtually all we clergy minister among

children and vulnerable adults, and, in the broader sense, that such a person getting behind the wheel of a car may cause untold damage to the vulnerable or (apparently) invulnerable alike. This is not a theoretical or technical point, it is very much borne out of experience, and I think we do need greater clarity here as this important work continues.

*Ven. Gavin Kirk (Lincoln):* As an archdeacon, I find myself bringing complaints against clergy, often on behalf of parishioners, and also supporting clergy who are facing complaints brought by others. The thing I hear most is frustration and I often see the trauma at the length of time even relatively straightforward complaints take, so I urge Synod to take note of this Report and get things moving.

There are, however, two complexities inherent in these proposals which need addressing. The first has been alluded to by several, the distinction between a complaint (although I prefer to call it a grievance) and behaviour amounting to misconduct. It is going to be difficult, I think, to define what sort of behaviour amounts to what type of misconduct. The Prolocutor of Canterbury has made the point with admirable clarity, but the vague definitions of the current Measure really do not cut it.

My second worry is at what stage of the process is it decided precisely what complaint or what allegation of misconduct is being faced. It is tempting to assume that every discipline matter is clear-cut at the outset, but, in my experience, that is very rarely the case. As an investigation unfolds, the situation can often appear very different from its initial presentation. The allegation could become more (or less) serious, so there is going to be this period of time during which such matters are clarified through investigation.

Members of Synod, I think an absolute priority must be given to reducing that period of time to the absolute minimum for the sake of all those involved in these processes. This is going to need properly resourced training and supervision for all those involved in that work.

*Revd Canon Elaine Chegwin Hall (Chester):* In common with other people, I just want to acknowledge the huge body of work done by the Working Party of the Lambeth Group. We can only benefit from what we have read and pray for the positive impact that it might have on those concerned.

However, when I was looking through that I noticed that out of the 17 participants of that Working Party only two seem to have come from the Northern Province. I wonder why that might have been the case. As further work is being done by the Implementation Group, can steps be taken, please, to even this out to include more representatives from the Northern Province?

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds):* I am very strongly in favour of taking note so that further work can be done. Various points I think need work. As has been said, it is going to be very hard work to define the difference between more or less serious misconduct. I notice the Working Group was very heavily weighted with people from the safeguarding world, but very many complaints have nothing to do with safeguarding. There is a danger that people think that if they play the safeguarding card that trumps everything else and would enable them to be taken more seriously.

I wonder if many people are going to be satisfied with an informal process. Usually people come forward because they want to make a formal complaint. In paragraph 30 I wonder if bishops need to respond personally to every complaint, even the informal ones. I wonder if they could be triaged and only escalated to the bishop where necessary.

In paragraph 31 I would like to know a lot more about who these assessors are that are envisaged. If a complaint does not amount to gross misconduct, does it need to be referred to the bishop, and who are these panels of assessors and how would they be resourced and paid for? That leads me to think whether other sources of resolution are being bypassed. The paper does not say much about area deans or archdeacons. You might expect me to say this, but they are people who have a bank of experience in dealing with complaints and, I would say in the case of archdeacons, not just bringing complaints but also dealing with those they receive.

I do want to say three cheers for paragraphs 33 and 34 which are focusing on outcomes rather than penalties. So many times a key question to a complainant is, "What do you want? What needs to happen?" There are times when a truthful answer to the question, "What would satisfy you?" would be, "Nothing would satisfy me. I'm just upset, angry, furious, outraged and I don't want to be satisfied". It is important to tackle this early on. It can mean that complainants refuse to make a formal complaint but continue to broadcast their case far and wide, which is very damaging to the respondent. And finally ---

*The Chair:* Sorry, you have run out of time now. We now go to Andrew Cornes. I am really interested in a motion for closure so that we can, if you want to, move on to the following motion, but I am in your hands, Synod. We will first hear from Andrew Cornes.

*Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester):* I agree with the Bishop of Guildford that the Working Group's proposals are a step in the right direction. I also agree with the last speaker that because of an initial focus on safeguarding they seem to underestimate how disastrous the current CDM has proved to be .

Two examples. An incumbent with a fine track record of innovative leadership made one misjudged remark in a sermon that upset a parishioner. The vicar wrote to his bishop who replied he was sure the vicar would be able to deal with it. An incumbent has three seniors from whom he might expect pastoral support: his or her bishop, archdeacon and

rural dean. The archdeacon, not the parishioner, took out a CDM against him. The bishop fell silent. The rural dean was told to deliver the official accusation against the vicar and then when she did so she was not allowed to speak with him. After an agonising wait, he received a rebuke and some training, but seven months later he is still traumatised, definitely wants to leave the diocese and is wondering about returning to secular work.

The other example is that of one of the finest and most fruitful incumbents in the Northern Province. A CDM was taken out against him and he has been suspended for 11 months. I understand he has now been completely exonerated, but he is so bruised that he has just resigned. The Working Group proposals feel (to me at least) like helpful tinkering when what is needed is a more radical and urgent overhaul. With the CDM as it stands we are constantly shooting ourselves in the foot.

*The Chair:* I have a point of order from Neil Patterson.

*Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford):* You asked for a motion for closure and therefore I offer it to you.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Neil. That has my support. Does it have the support of Synod? We need to find out. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on this motion for closure on this debate.

*The motion was put and carried, 266 voting in favour, 22 against, with four recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried and thank you for others who put in a point of order. I now call on the Bishop at Lambeth, the Bishop to the Armed Forces in this instance, to respond to the debate. Bishop, you have up to five minutes to do so.

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton):* May I thank all those who have spoken. I think it has been a very helpful, useful and positive debate. I am grateful to everybody who has spoken. I would say at the outset that I am very clear we are asking you to take note of this. We are under no illusions: there is more work to be done and that goes along the lines that various people have spoken about.

Morag, thank you very much indeed for all you are doing, particularly the wonderful work you are doing around training and with the Ecclesiastical Judges Association. I might also just at this moment pay tribute to the President and those who work with her. I suspect we are one of the very few organisations which has an independent judge at that point who comes in and helps us in our decision-making, and I think we are incredibly well served by the present President and all that she does. I note the point you make about confidentiality, Morag, and we can look at that again, although, as I am sure you are aware, it is complicated.



Simon, thank you for all you have said, and for your kind words. Again, you and many others, and this is a point that has come through with many speakers, I completely accept, as I said in my introductory speech and as I said in the item before this, there is more work to be done on definition. Again, going back to what Fr Thomas said, I think a lot of this afternoon has been around language, and I would say to several other speakers I think we need to try to understand whether there is a difference between verbs and nouns and in making definitions, whether we are clear about how we are using language in all this. There can be a difference between complaining and making a complaint. That is just one example I would use.

Peter, thank you for all you said. I would like at this point to let Synod know that I have asked Peter if he would consider being a member of the Implementation Group and he has said that he is willing to do that. Again, I am sorry there seems to be a view abroad about some distance between us in some way. We have taken on board many of the ideas that the ELS has put forward, and I would very much myself like to see Peter part of that group going forward.

I would just say as well as that, of course, it is really good that so many lawyers are helping us in that regard, but it is very important indeed that we do not leave it only to the lawyers. I wonder looking back over the CDM whether that may have been part of the difficulties before, so we need other people to play a part. Having said that, I am grateful especially grateful for what Mark Emerton said and can imagine that we will be looking, Mark, to see whether you might be willing to be a consultant for us in some way, even if you would not want to be too fully involved.

Debbie, I think I have tried to say already that I can assure you we are working closely, particularly with the ELS, and we have taken their views on board. For example, it was their suggestion about assessors. Just coming on to what Paul Ayers asked about who are these assessors. Good question, Paul, and we do need to do some further work. As you will no doubt know, in all dioceses there is a range of people who help under a number of different headings, but I think people like area deans could well be part of that cohort of people who could work in this way. Again, we need proper training and resourcing for anybody who is getting involved in this, a clear definition of terms, and, in some sense, trying to work out what we are trying to do.

Andrew Cornes, I would say the example you gave is precisely the reason we have problems at the moment. I certainly do not underestimate in any shape or form the difficulties we have at the moment. I think exactly the matter you brought forward is the kind of thing that would be deemed to have been a complaint and therefore dealt with in a completely different way, as it should have been.

I am enormously grateful to all those who spoke. I am sorry if I have not mentioned your particular name and your contribution. It was very important. I have made fulsome notes. I can simply assure members of Synod that we are under no illusions that we have much

more work to do. We would like to do it as quickly as we can. We did wonder about whether we can try to come back in November. If we can that is great, but clearly that is up to the Business Committee, not ourselves.

I would like to ask members of Synod to take note of this debate and this motion. I am completely committed to saying there is not only much more work to do but it is crucial work that we do in association with the earlier conversation that I was very grateful for as well.

*The Chair:* I now put to Synod the motion “That this Synod do take note of this Report”.

*The motion was put and carried, 299 voting in favour, four against, with five recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 99**

*The Chair:* We have decided to take note of this Report and can therefore take the following motion, Item 99 on the Order Paper. I invite the Revd Simon Talbott to speak to his motion. Simon, you have up to five minutes to do so.

*Revd Simon Talbott (Ely):* May I offer my thanks and appreciation to Bishop Tim and the Working Group for their Report under GS 2219 and their engagement with many groups in a listening mode.

I have to declare an interest as I bring this motion to Synod. I am a member of the ELS, although not a member of the Working Party on the CDM. I am also a member of the Executive Committee of the Church of England Clergy Advocates (CECA) which now represents 1,300 clergy from across the Church of England at all levels within the organisation. Through our helpline we have been in receipt, like the Sheldon Hub, of many tragic stories of people who have been engaged in CDMs over the lifetime of the present Measure.

In bringing this following motion, central to the Lambeth Group’s proposals is the distinction between complaints and allegations of misconduct, with complaints being resolved locally through an informal process while misconduct cases would be investigated by a national agency and subject to formal legal proceedings, similar to the current tribunal process.

However, a significant number of Synod members who have worked with or have been caught up in the CDM process are concerned that this approach fails to address (and indeed will perpetuate) the central flaw of the current system: that clergy, if accused of relevant minor behaviour and other infractions, have to endure the scrutiny and stress of a formal process designed for criminal behaviour and other serious misconduct. Such a process is appropriate for behaviour that merits prohibition from ministry, or removal from

office, but we have heard increasingly of the damage caused to the health and ministry of clergy who have been unfairly treated and threatened with the loss of home and livelihood, and the dangers of malicious complainants who make baseless or exaggerated claims to bully or drive clergy from parishes.

The better approach is to make a further distinction between misconduct generally and serious misconduct, which alone should attract penalties of prohibition and removal from office, and be subject to a formal legal process. An early assessment on the seriousness and allocation of the appropriate track would then enable relatively minor or routine misconduct to be addressed swiftly, with a pastoral focus, and protect clergy from an all-in misconduct process being weaponised against them. Such was the conclusion of the independent CDM Working Party set up by the Ecclesiastical Law Society, which proposed an initial investigation and assessment that distinguishes between, one, complaints not involving misconduct, and, two, misconduct that is less than serious, and, three, serious misconduct.

The ELS Final Report and its proposals have been endorsed by Sheldon and by CECA, both of which work for clergy who have been caught up in the CDM process.

I have tabled a following motion to the take note debate - and I welcome the fact we have taken note of GS 2219 - expressing concerns with the overly simplistic distinction between complaints and misconduct and calling on the new Implementation Group to follow the ELS proposals and further distinguish between misconduct generally and serious misconduct at the initial assessment stage.

The motion also questions the need to delay the proposals for legislation until 2022, when the Implementation Group can draw on the detailed proposals of the ELS Report, and encourages the Business Committee to give time over for the Group to report at the November 2021 group of sessions.

I hope you will agree that these changes are needed to finally and decisively address the hurt and damage caused by the CDM and would ask you to support the following motion that stands in my name. Thank you.

*The Chair:* This motion is now open for debate. I call Jamie Harrison followed by Joyce Hill. You both have up to five minutes, but if you do not need it, please do not use it.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* I am an appointed member of the Clergy Discipline Commission. First, just to say a grateful thanks to Simon Talbott not just for this but other work he is doing, and particularly his work in advocacy. We owe a great debt to him and those with whom he works, and it is good that he has brought this to us.

I have journeyed with this since 1996 and *Under Authority* has already been mentioned, and I am sorry if I was among those who failed to pick up the issues around complaints

as opposed to matters of serious misconduct. Very often I have tried to comment into the debates over those 25 years from my medical work as someone who has worked closely with the General Medical Council, particularly supporting doctors who have either been in difficulty or have needed some form of retraining.

I think it is fair to note, and it is helpful that Mark Emerton mentioned this, that the GMC deals with a wide range of cases, which include of course misconduct but also things like poor clinical performance, where there has been a criminal conviction, where there is physical and mental ill-health affecting performance, and so on. I think we have always noted over the years the three categories we have had to deal with. One is, if you like, the lack of orthodoxy/credal issues which are, fortunately very, very rare, almost unheard of, but, secondly, capability where we have looked at competency and factors that influence competency like ill-health which mean the performance is poor, and, separately from those issues, that of conduct. It is in this area of conduct that Simon is helpfully asking us to think hard and long about categorisation.

Certainly from the medical perspective, we have good experience of this, but, as I say, it is broad brush. I think around 80% of complaints brought to the GMC are dismissed at a very early stage. That highlights the issue of how you actually do that sifting, that level of what they call a screening process, and, of course, a big organisation like the GMC, with so many thousands of members, has a quite a big team of very experienced investigators at an early point who do the sifting, the screening and the triaging.

I am delighted to say that Edward, our new wonderful officer, is doing a great job on improving that whole process, but it is one where we have to think about capacity and capability if we are going to do that properly. To Peter Collier, in his thinking around what a complaint was and was not, if we ended up with misconduct as the criterion and that being either serious or serious, then perhaps not very serious looks a bit like a complaint, so we go round in circles, and I think that is where Bishop Tim's comments around language and classification, particularly in the context of defining those in practical scenarios, is really helpful.

I want to come particularly to meet two of the speakers who have influenced me this afternoon. The first was Gavin Kirk who made the point that as an archdeacon very often cases come in which seem not very serious but could become serious later, and vice versa. Certainly from my experience in the medical world in the areas of misconduct, which are often to do with doctors and their patients where the patient feels they have been seriously abused or misused or inappropriately handled by the doctor, not in performance terms but in personal terms, what can seem to be extraordinarily important can become quite less so, and the opposite where something which seems relatively simple and uncomplicated, the more you go into it, the deeper the problem is or the more people who are actually involved. There is a whole issue around complexity and how you make a good diagnostic screening system that is, effectively, good early enough. That

makes me question for Simon the issue around whether you can really make the distinction early enough, and what would it look like to do that.

The other is Simon Butler's comment about those who make and bring complaints. The complainant hearing that their complaint is less than serious will feel almost pushed away. Again, I think that comes back to perception and misunderstanding. I completely understand why we need to do this and I am very supportive of it, and I think the Commission is very supportive of it and wants to push it on. I do not want to, in a sense, avoid the serious nature of this and the need to grapple with how we manage complainants, but I think again it is where we come with language and understanding.

Simon, I am grateful for this. I think there is more work to be done. I think your timescale for November is hopeful. The November synod is actually very short, perhaps a day/day and a half's business and very new members, and I think this is the sort of level of detail that the Group needs to work on, but also to realise that we need a lot of explanation and understanding particularly for the new members. Up to 40% of the House of Laity and House of Clergy can change from one quinquennium (or the equivalent) to the next. I hope we make it a really helpful way of understanding this whole process with guidance and we do not end up where we ended after 1996 and 2003 with a Measure that we now know is not as good as it should have been.

*Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds):* I am very pleased to be able to speak about this as a member of the House of Laity because, obviously, it is of very, very direct concern to the clergy, but it is also a whole Church issue, and I think we should indeed be supporting our clergy with a CDM (or whatever we end up calling it) which is fit for purpose. That requires, as I think has been clear as we have gone along this afternoon, a very careful use of language - and I noticed somebody on Zoom catching my eye when that comment was made earlier, and I think we shared a smile - careful definitions and distinctions, difficult though they are, and a very carefully thought out way of proceeding which inspires confidence through being rigorous, impartial and appropriately professional.

As it stands, I think GS 2219 is not quite bold enough in rising to meet these standards and expectations. However, I accept that, having received the Report, the Implementation Group's hands would not be tied in following through. Nonetheless, I still think that leaves us with welcoming Simon's motion because it provides a little bit of extra concrete clarity and a push in the kind of direction that I think the Implementation Group will need to move, even though I accept, given the Report and everything that Bishop Tim has said about its implementation and carrying forward, the Implementation Group would be free to move as it developed its frame of reference. I welcome the motion as a point of clarity.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Bishop to the Armed Forces (Rt Revd Tim Thornton):* I am really grateful to Simon for the motion, very grateful to Jamie Harrison for what he has said, and also to Joyce for what she has just been saying. I would not be distraught if this motion is passed, of course I would not, it is helpful in some ways.

I think I would simply want to underline again what I was trying to say earlier. For me, I am not at all interested in a binary debate. It is not the Lambeth Working Group's proposals versus, for example, the ELS Working Party's proposals. I think we really need now to work together to understand what is the right way forward. We have given an overall shape and some principles in what we have put forward today. I completely accept, as I think I have tried to say several times, there is much more work to be done.

For me, the helpful thing about this debate this afternoon clarifies yet further there is a lot more work to be done about, as Joyce was just saying, language, definitions and how it is used. I do not think it is a simple matter for me to say either we go with these proposals or those proposals. I think the Implementation Group will be very well helped if it looked at some case studies and put those through the sieve and the lens of some of these suggestions just to see what would and would not happen in reality under the various processes. As I said earlier, I think there are some strong conversations to be had about what are verbs and what are nouns.

Part of our thinking is precisely what we take away. As I said earlier, 45% of CDMs are dismissed. That cannot be right. That leaves far too many people feeling very aggrieved. Equally, at the moment far too many people are very much concerned because they think they are going to lose everything. That is equally wrong and harmful. I completely accept both those things.

I think there is a lot of work to be done. I think there is tremendous goodwill on all sides. I hear it today from people who are willing to work with us, and that is great. The only thing I would say is that we clearly cannot tie the hands of the Business Committee. As Jamie said, and it is my understanding, it will be a very short session in November. I think we absolutely need to get this as right as we can. If it takes a bit longer and it has to be in February, so be it. I understand what Simon is saying. I would simply say to members of Synod there is much more work still to be done. It is not simple or straightforward. Thank you for your goodwill. I am not convinced we will be able to do everything in order for it to be brought back in November, but if we can, marvellous.

*The Chair:* The next three questioners.

*The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Rachel Treweek):* I should say I very recently became a member of the Clergy Discipline Commission. In many ways, I simply want to echo what Bishop Tim has just said. I completely agree with the direction of travel Simon is taking us in, and, having listened to this debate, I think again we are just talking about

language. I do not want to tie us down this afternoon to particular definitions. I think we need to trust that the Implementation Group will take this away.

I also want to add that it is not simply about the way we talk about complaints and misconduct. I have felt for a long time that one of the problems is we do not ascertain clearly enough at the beginning what it is that the complainant is hoping for as an outcome. There is too much room for assumption and if we spent time on understanding the complainant's hoped-for outcome and managing expectations at the start, I think we would get a lot more right. One size does not fit all, and I think we have heard that clearly.

I also want to say as an add-on to what Mark Emerton said earlier, this system is not always fair for bishops either at the moment. People are caused immense stress and frustration and upset, as we have heard, and it is often bishops who are left impotent with time delays, not being able to act, not always being able to say anything, so I am sure that we would really appreciate this level of clarity.

Finally, I want to affirm what Tim has said and remind us that putting all our eggs in one litigious basket will not get us to where we want to get to. We must not perpetuate a culture in which people shy away from relational conversation and listening. We must not immediately push people into a complaints process. We have to live this well as the body of Christ. But let us trust the Implementation Group to take these ideas away and to go on working with them and let us not tie hands at this stage.

*Revd James Pitkin (Winchester):* I am eager that what comes next does not perpetuate the awfulness of what has gone before. It does seem odd that the carefully prepared proposals of the Ecclesiastical Law Society and Sheldon do not seem to have been adopted and developed, and it is them who say that they have not. Sarah Horsman is particularly vocal about her perceived betrayal.

I could talk about the awfulness of the current system and the devastating effect on clergy and complainants of the current process. I could talk about the shortcomings of the proposals, but I do not have time and now is probably, or definitely, not the right time. I could talk about the lack of adequate support for those in the process - complainants, respondents - but I do not have time and, again, now is not the right time.

Sheldon's Report "I was handed over to the dogs" and the ELS's report have not been properly listened to. The Implementation Group should include the right people: ELS, Sheldon, CECA. The thing for all of us to remember is that we need a fair, just and timely system, and it needs to be seen so to be. What comes next must be the right people in the right group working to the right timetable and asking and answering the right questions, using, as Bishop Tim refers to it, the right language. Whatever happens, we need to get this right. If we are to have a fair, just and timely system to deal with complaints and allegations, we need to support this motion, and, indeed, to get on with the work.

*The Chair:* After Gary Waddington I would be interested in a motion for closure of this debate, if anybody is interested.

*Revd Gary Waddington (Leeds):* Although it sounds a cliché, I had not intended to speak in this debate, but I do want to speak in favour of both parts of the amendment as it has been presented to me. I am a member of the Ecclesiastical Law Society but I am not a lawyer. I may be about to be accused of being a terrible linguistic pedant, but it is difficult to understand how a triage process deals with a binary track. Surely having more than two options has to be a good thing in being able to sift out the initial stages of these complaints.

I hear clearly some of the things that have been said by many people in this debate about how in their own professional lives and in their own professional disciplinary processes there is a highly specialised and professional sense in which that sifting occurs, with specialist independent people who are looking at it. I note the Bishop of Bristol particularly saying this can be a very difficult moment in understanding how best to sort these things out. I get the ecclesiology of how ordinary jurisdiction is to be employed by bishops in a complex environment where modern justice might not sit with the exercise of a Middle Ages power. As Bishop Rachel has said, that is why very often bishops get a good kicking whenever we talk about the CDM, and as the Archdeacon, my friend, has said, too often this has all become painfully slow.

I have witnessed and had to manage a parish whilst a CDM complaint was taking place. It is not just respondent and complainant who are often hurt and traumatised by the process. It can be parish, congregation, fellow clergy, friends, grandchildren. It ripples out in an effect, and therefore we need to take action with replacing the dreadful CDM, but, please, my plea is let us not take forever to do it. The lawyers who attend the church I work in remind me time and again that the great principle of justice and mercy is not a pendulum. If you get it right, it works for complainants and for those who are respondents. Good justice has to be seen to be done and we need to be bolder, I think, in doing it.

*The Chair:* Point of order, Priscilla White.

*Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham):* You asked for a motion of closure and I am very happy to offer you one.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Priscilla. Sorry to see you looking like that, but thank you very much.

*Revd Canon Priscilla White (Birmingham):* I am absolutely fine. I am with my daughter who is poorly in hospital.



*The Chair.* That has my support, but we need to see whether it has the support of Synod. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on a motion for closure of this particular debate.

*The motion was put and carried, 262 voting in favour, 16 against, with one recorded abstention.*

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

*Revd Simon Talbott (Ely):* Thank you to colleagues who contributed to the debate. I would pick up on a few of the things that were said. Jamie, thank you very much indeed for your comments and support. I value very much the experience you have had from the GMC and I think that will be something that will be well fed into the Implementation Group. You note the questions about language and classification. They are quite key, as I have tried to highlight in the following motion, and the danger of the complexity. I take to heart your timetable remarks as well. I am encouraging the Business Committee to see if something can be done before November - I am hoping that might be the case - but we must get on with it, I think.

Thank you to Joyce Hill. I welcome the contribution of the lay voice into this. It is not just a clergy problem; it is a matter for the whole Church. Again, Joyce was highlighting the careful use of language. I agree with her that a full push is needed now to see this process forward.

Thank you very much, Bishop Tim, for your generous support. I welcome it. Among the things I picked up, you talked about the need to be working together and the fact there is much more work to be done. I think the case studies being participated in by the Implementation Group is quite a good idea so that there is a real chance of making this a much better Measure, fit for purpose. I take your comments about timing. I realise that time is short, but hopefully we can use some of the November group of sessions to progress things.

Thanks too for the Bishop of Gloucester's contribution, again hitting on some of the things that have already been said. It was interesting to have comments about what it is like for a bishop in these very difficult engagements. It is not only clergy that have the difficulty of handling this. I realise it is very difficult for bishops as well.

James Pitkin, thank you very much for your support. You have quite rightly highlighted the work that Sheldon has done and that moving report "I was handed to the dogs". I would agree with you that the Implementation Group needs to have a voice that comes from somebody that has had the experience of working either as a supporter for colleagues who have gone through CDM, or, indeed, has had the experience of working on one of our helplines. I think it would be quite important to have that voice in the Implementation Group.

Lastly to Gary, thank you very much indeed for deciding to speak, Gary. I am really pleased that you did. I welcome your emphasis on triaging and getting that right. It is also good to get that experience of what effect a CDM has on the wider parish. I think that is something many of us have observed. I certainly have observed that with a colleague in my own deanery as a rural dean trying to support him and his congregation through very difficult times.

Lastly, to end on what you said about getting on with it, we need to get on with the process and I hope that the Business Committee will heed the second part of my following motion.

I would like to then finally ask that Synod vote in favour of the motion that stands in my name at 99 on the Order Paper. Thank you.

*The Chair.* Point of order, Simon Butler.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* As indicated earlier, I wonder if I can prevail upon you to consider dividing the motion between point (a) and (b) so that Synod can vote on each item separately. We have heard assurances about getting on with this, but also realism about the timescale, and I wonder whether Synod might appreciate the opportunity to consider the two items that Simon raises separately.

*The Chair.* You very kindly flagged this up so I have been able to take some advice. I would like to hear from Simon Talbott what he feels about splitting those two parts of the motion.

*Revd Simon Talbott (Ely):* I hear that from the Prolocutor, but I think I would want to maintain the integrity of the follow-on motion and to keep them together as (a) and (b).

*The Chair.* Thank you, Simon. I am just taking some advice. Had you said everything you wanted to say? It sounded like you had come to a full stop. I can see you nodding. I am inclined to keep this as one motion, so I therefore put Item 99 to the vote as set out on Order Paper IV. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 99.

*The motion was put and carried, 238 voting in favour, 32 against, with 20 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* Thank you very much Synod. That brings these two items to a close. We now move on to next item, Item 25.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 6.27 pm.

## **ITEM 25**

## **APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF THE ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL (GS 2220)**

*The Chair:* We come now to Item 25, Appointment of a Member of the Archbishops' Council. Members are being invited to approve the appointment of John Spence as a member of the Archbishops' Council for a further two years. Members will need GS 2220. The Archbishop of York will speak to and move Item 25, and he may speak for up to ten minutes. After the Archbishop has spoken and moved Item 25, I am open for contributions from members. From the outset there will be a three minute speech limit. I now call on the Archbishop of York to speak to and move Item 25.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Chair, thank you very much indeed. It gives me real pleasure to move this motion to extend the appointment of John Spence to the full ten years permitted under the National Institutions Measure. As GS 2220 outlines, back in 2018 Synod approved the appointment for John to serve for a second term for three of the maximum five years. However, with the many challenges we are facing as a result of the current pandemic and the critical work which is being undertaken by the Emerging Church Steering Group, we are invited today to extend the term to provide the maximum stability.

The paper outlines further details about the appointment alongside the many positions John has held in the past and those where he continues to bring his expertise. I will not repeat them here. Needless to say, John has enormous experience and insights across many of our bodies and committees, and is well placed to continue to serve us and our dioceses and parishes with the gifts with which he has been blessed for the furthering of God's Kingdom.

I would also like, if you will allow me, as well as thanking John for all he does for the Church both nationally and in the Diocese of Chelmsford, where he lives, to thank his wife Yvonne for her incredibly steadfast support for all the things she does for the Church, but I am particularly thinking of the things she does to enable John to participate in all the Zoom conferences that we are all enduring at the moment.

Like many of you, I am simply in awe of John's amazing abilities, not just to remember and digest so much information, but to present it so clearly. As you can imagine, being Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee brings with it great responsibility to make difficult decisions and recommendations on how and where monies should be spent, ensuring we are being responsible for that which has been sacrificially and faithfully given to us.

John does this with such care, such vision and such insight. John, as we know, is a pioneer, always open to new opportunities and possibilities for the good news of Jesus Christ, expanding our vision and our horizons, daring us to do better and to do more as

we discern the vision and strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s and begin to emerge from this pandemic.

Most of all, apart from John's incredible credentials for doing this job, John models what it is to be a disciple of Christ, who offers their gifts and their time in the service of the Gospel. I suspect I am not alone in wanting to get another couple of years of service out of him, but that is a decision for Synod, and I therefore beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Archbishop. I am now going to call on Jane Ozanne followed by Jonathan Alderton-Ford. You both have three minutes.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* I would like to say first up that my comments right now are nothing to do with Canon Spence himself. I think he serves the Church in the most extraordinary way, and I do understand the desire to extend during this difficult time his tenure but, as I mentioned when we last reappointed another member of the Archbishops' Council, I said that there was concern - and I speak as a former appointed member - about the fact that the whole point of appointed members is to bring fresh insight.

I wonder if when we get our papers we could see in the round the terms of all six members so we can understand, if you like, the staggering of continuing members, what their terms are and how this plays in that really important group of six, because otherwise we are going to constantly be told that we need to reappoint someone and they are doing a fantastic job, which John is, and we all feel we have to say yes. We need to look at the bigger picture and understand the full terms, so we ensure that we get that turnover, that freshness, which was the core of the debate we had yesterday with the Church Commissioners.

*Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I am rising to wholeheartedly endorse this continuance. I want to pay a huge tribute to Mr Spence for all the hard work he has done and his brilliance in handling our finances. I also want to pay tribute to the fact of how courteous and kind he is, both in private conversations and public debate, how he always keeps his promises. He has been very helpful to me in battles over the Pensions Board. He really is a model of how to live the Gospel in all his great responsibilities.

I am sure the Archbishop will agree with me that he is the best thing to come out of Chelmsford Diocese for many years and a huge blessing to the Church of England. I therefore endorse his continuance. I also want to say, in light of the previous speaker, that sometimes change for change's sake does not help us at all. While I take the point about freshness, it is obvious he is still fresh and enthusiastic, and therefore it is a great blessing to us for him to continue, and I hope the Synod will wholeheartedly and enthusiastically endorse his reappointment.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* John Spence has undoubtedly contributed a vast amount of his skill to the Church of England both in Essex and nationally. When we look at his national work, he served on the Church Commissioners from 2005 to 2013 and, if we approve his extension of term, on the Archbishops' Council from 2013 to 2023. That means he will have been at the centre of Church governance for 18 years. We have heard a lot about time limits and so on.

If we look for an Archbishop who served longer than 18 years we have to go right back to Randall Davidson, who served from 1903 to 1928. I therefore have considerable reservations about extending a term for someone who has been so intimately involved with the centre of the Church of England for so long. It seems to contradict what we decided yesterday. I shall either abstain or vote against this reappointment.

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* I have to say I thoroughly disagree with the last speaker, Paul Benfield, and I very much endorse what Jonathan Alderton-Ford has said. I have known John over all these 18 years and I have to say the value he brings to the Church is outstanding. As Jonathan says, yes, he is very, very courteous and very helpful and very diligent in actually pushing forward the work.

I think most all you have to think about the huge loss that would occur if you vote against this and if you push this process for term limits so hard that it means that you lose genuine expertise from the Church. I was very sad about the decision last night on the Church Commissioners because I think it illustrates the problem that we have in this area. But do not make the mistake with John. We urgently need the next two years from him. Hopefully, he will carry on in a role in which he can continue to give us huge benefit beyond that, but thank you, John, for everything you do, and please vote for this motion tonight.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I just want to say that Canon Spence and I have had our differences on the floor of Synod, but we never have differences outside. He is a wonderful leader and a real inspiration, particularly as a fellow disabled person, and somebody who sets the bar incredibly high.

I want to thank him for the time he gives to the Church, including visiting dioceses to speak to us. He will continue to be in my prayers and I would ask Synod to support this. I respect Fr Benfield's point, and he is correct, but Canon Spence is very much needed at a very challenging and critical time in the Church's history, and I look forward to his understanding of finances aiding us in getting our books in order.

*The Chair:* I see we have someone else indicating they wish to speak. John Wilson, you have one minute.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* I just want to say that I thoroughly endorse the reappointment of John Spence. He has been absolutely brilliant. I would like to flag up what Paul Benfield said. It throws up some further discussion about this time limits business. We had one yesterday to do with Church Commissioners and we had one today to do with deanery lay members where it was voted that we would go away from time limits. Time limits mean that we lose experience, expertise and, particularly in John Spence's case, commitment. I thoroughly endorse it, but we need to keep in mind we need to do something about term limits.

*The Chair:* I now call on the Archbishop of York to respond to the debate. You have up to three minutes.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you very much and thank you to everyone who contributed. Jayne, I think we have heard clearly what you have said about needing more information about terms of office. I am sure that has been noted.

Jonathan Alderton-Ford mentioned that John Spence was the best thing to come out of Chelmsford Diocese in many years. I am not sure I can entirely agree with him because there is the Dean of the Arches, Morag Ellis, and John Ball, the CEO of the Pensions Board, who are up there with John.

Basically, I want to concur with what people have said. Sam Margrave I thought put it brilliantly well: John is needed at a critical time for our Church. Therefore, I hope you will support this. Terms of office has been a bit of a theme through this Synod in many ways. I think we all understand the reason Paul Benfield is making the point he has been making. However, I thought Randall Davidson did quite a good job and I think John Spence can serve us well for another couple of years.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Archbishop. I now put Item 25 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried, 200 voting in favour, seven against, with 23 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* That concludes this item of business.

## **ITEM 26**

### **APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS (GS 2221)**

*The Chair:* We will now move to the next item of business which is Item 26, the Appointment of External Auditors. This is a formal item as the external auditors need to be approved by General Synod under the National Institutions Measure. Members will need GS 2221.

I will be calling on Maureen Cole to speak to and move Item 26. She will have up to ten minutes. Speeches will be welcomed afterwards, but I can tell you from the outset that that will be limited to three minutes to begin with. I now call Maureen Cole to speak to and move Item 26.

*Ms Maureen Cole (ex officio):* I beg to move “That the appointment of Crowe UK LLP as the external auditors for the Archbishops’ Council for a five year period commencing with the year ending 31 December 2021 be approved”.

Members of Synod, it was a pleasure to address you after the presentation yesterday, but this is the first time since you agreed my appointment to the Archbishops’ Council in the Central Hall at York University in 2019. I welcomed the opportunity to meet some of you then and I regret that I have been unable to meet any of you at an in-person Synod since. Nevertheless, I am glad to be able to speak to you via Zoom.

The Archbishops’ Council had been well served by BDO as its external auditors since 2008. This appointment was reviewed regularly, including a re-tender in 2013 and a formal review by the Audit Committee in 2018. Last autumn the Audit Committee, which I have chaired since the start of 2020, recommended that the time had come to re-tender the appointment once again. The Council accepted that recommendation.

The procurement process is outlined in GS 2221. I can assure Synod that it was a thorough process and I would like to thank all those involved in it for their engagement: my fellow Committee members, the audit firms and the staff.

All Audit Committee members participated in the discussions with the three firms shortlisted for the appointment. We were in the happy position that all three firms were appointable, which was testament to their commitment and their professionalism, but the Committee were unanimous in reaching the conclusion that Crowe offered the best value for the Council.

As noted in the paper, this appointment would provide a unique opportunity to bring greater efficiency and synergy to the audit process across the NCIs, as Crowe also audit the Pensions Board and the National Society. The last two years’ audits for both those organisations were completely conducted remotely and this included a remote onboarding for the National Society. Trustees, committee members and staff have been impressed by their work.

The Council agreed with its Audit Committee’s recommendation and I invite Synod to do the same. I move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* This item is now open for debate. I see two people, or more than two. I am going to call Carl Hughes, and you have an initial three minute speech limit, followed by Debbie Buggs, and we will be reducing to two minutes at that point.

*Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark):* I have some interests to declare. I am the Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee. I am a former external audit partner of the Archbishops' Council and I am a board member of the UK Audit Committee Chairs' Independent Forum.

I am sure that the Chair of the Audit Committee will agree that recommending the appointment of the external auditor is one of the most important responsibilities of the Audit Committee. Robust and diligent external review and challenge of our financial reporting and associated controls is fundamental to good governance and stewardship.

I note that we are considering the appointment of a relatively small firm in succession to BDO and before them my former firm Deloitte as our auditors, the auditors of a relatively large charity which has many stakeholders both within the Church and more widely.

I would be grateful if the Chair of the Audit Committee would confirm that in recommending the appointment of Crowe the Committee has specifically taken account of the following three matters. First, that the firm, and particularly the audit partner, has a breadth and depth of expertise in auditing large charities and structured workings and associated audit risks relating to the Church of England and the Council. Secondly, that the Audit Committee has specifically satisfied itself that Crowe's record of audit quality is adequate given that the firm is not subject to regular audit quality review by the Financial Reporting Council and some of its previous reviews have been relatively poor. Thirdly, that the primary reasons for recommending the appointment of Crowe relate to quality, objectivity and challenge rather than cost.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* I am a member of the Archbishops' Council's Audit Committee, so was involved in the selection of Crowe, and I want to heartily endorse the motion that Maureen has put before us. Crowe were the best people for the job. I would also like to express my thanks to the staff at Church House and the Finance Team for the work they have put into running the selection procedure. Doing that over Zoom was not easy, but they did it very well, so thank you to them too.

*Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds):* I just have a simpleton's query here because I am not on the inside loop of the audit procedure. The motion that we have before us uses the phrase "for a five year period commencing with the year ending 31 December 2021", and we are already in July, which is month seven of the year ending 31 December 2021. Could you please clarify the actual start and end date of the appointment that we are approving here?

*Mr Jon Walker (Leicester):* I have a very simple question. I note that the firm has been appointed to all the other NIBs, or are in the process of that. I can understand the



efficiency and how easy that is to work with, but sometimes having more than one firm involved gives an additional sense of independence and check, so I would like to just ask if there is actually a slightly increased risk by having the same auditor across all the NIBs.

*The Chair.* Thank you very much. I now invite Maureen Cole to respond to the debate.

*Ms Maureen Cole (ex officio):* Thank you all for those comments. Carl, yes, they are not the biggest company but they are very much a leader in the charity sector. That was a significant part of our decision making, that they could benchmark us against other organisations, so, yes, we did put those three criteria that you stated in our considerations, and it was fairly carefully considered.

To Joyce's query, it is for the year end and the subsequent four years, so they will be doing this year end and then a further four years because it will be the year end that they are working to. Debbie highlighted some of the things that we went through. They were not the cheapest. We did not choose them because they were the cheapest. We chose them because we believe that they will be able to give us some insights and some understanding that we will be able to use. There is a wide experience in that group of the auditors that we have in Crowe that we believe will give us a breadth of experience, and that is why we recommend this company to you.

*The Chair.* I now put Item 26 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried, 184 voting in favour, five against, with eight recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* This means Item 26 is carried. That draws to a close this item of business.

We now move swiftly on to our closing worship which will be led by Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann. I hand over to you now, Canon Rachel. Following this the Archbishop of York will dismiss the Synod with a blessing.

*Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

## **Full Synod: Fourth Day Monday 12 July 2021**

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 9.00 am.

*The Chair.* Good morning, Synod. It is very good to be with you again for the final day of this group of sessions. Our worship this morning will be led by the Community of St Anselm who are at Lambeth Palace.

## **WORSHIP**

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

*The Chair.* We are grateful to the Community of St Anselm for leading us in worship as we begin today.

Before we move on to the first item of business, I am going to invite Robert Hammond, the Chair of the Business Committee, to speak to a variation.

## **VARIATION IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* A couple of quick points first. May I ask members just to check again, please, this morning that you have named yourselves correctly - that is Synod number, House and then your name. We have a lot of complex business to get through today, and, as ever, may I ask members to be as succinct as you can in your contributions so that we can move through the business and get all the business done while hearing from as many people as we possibly can.

Chair, I would like to propose a slight variation in the order of business that we end the morning session 15 minutes early at 12.25 and we resume at 1.30. That will give us just a little bit more flexibility for this afternoon's session.

*The Chair.* That has my consent but I need to check Synod's mind. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on that particular motion.

*The motion was put and carried, 214 voting in favour, seven against, with two recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* That is carried so the new timing will come into effect.

## **ITEM 27**

### **MISSION IN REVISION: A REVIEW OF THE MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011 (GS 2222)**

*The Chair.* Without further ado, we move on to Item 27 which is Mission in Revision: A Review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011. For this item, members of Synod, you will need GS 2222 and the Financial Memo on Notice Paper V. I call the Third Church Estates Commissioner Dr Eve Poole to speak to and to move this motion. Eve, you have up to ten minutes, but I know you do not intend to use all that.

*Dr Eve Poole (ex officio):* I would like to start by thanking the Business Committee for scheduling this debate on the Review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure. As we are

all aware, there were many pressures on this Agenda, but I was extremely keen to take soundings from this Synod before it prorogues, and this timing will also allow us to press on over the summer.

I will not speak for long because I want to leave as much time as possible for debate. That means I may not be able to reply to all of those who speak individually, but, rest assured, we are all taking detailed notes. In this debate there is no such thing as an unwelcome speech. We really want to hear anything and everything that you have to say on this topic.

As you know, the Mission and Pastoral Measure is an administrative piece of legislation which enables bishops and their diocesan teams, with the support of the Church Commissioners, to organise certain aspects of mission and ministry in their dioceses, and to settle the future of churches which are no longer needed for regular public worship. Dioceses identified this Measure as an early priority for reform and the Legislative Reform Committee of the Archbishops' Council asked the Commissioners to lead a short in-house review of it. We took our task of Simplification at face value and our main aim has been to listen to the diocesan experience of working with the Measure and to draw on the experience of the Pastoral and Closed Churches Team, also the NCI Teams and members of the wider Church, to consider all the ways in which improvement could be made. I pay tribute to Wendy Matthews and the Pastoral and Closed Churches Teams who have generated the detailed proposals which are set out in our consultation paper. The Green Paper is deliberately capacious because we are aware that many of you are experts in this area. We wanted to give you the master's dissertation and not the Wikipedia entry because we wanted to honour your deep knowledge of how this really works on the ground.

The purpose of the Measure is to make better provision for the cure of souls and to further the broader mission of the Church. Getting the right structures in place for mission and ministry is critical and plays into the heart of our debate about what it really means to be a Christian presence in every place in a post-Covid context.

The paper contains a long list of challenges and questions to consider. I hope as we debate this motion you will feel free to tell us exactly what you really think. We have brought this to you because we have not formed any fixed views yet, so there really is all to play for.

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

*The Chair.* Thank you, Eve. This motion is therefore now open for debate.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

*Revd Julian Hollywell (Derby):* There has been much talk in social media that any of the changes represented here must be resisted at all costs. A parish is not static, and, as a parish priest, may I suggest that the largely 19th century shibboleth of parish identity looms heavily over us.

This Report recognises that this work is not static and we are presented with an environment of considerable change. The commitment to training indicated at paragraph 25 is really welcome. I know there is a desire rather wider than archdeacons to be included in that, DMPC secretaries, for instance. In my own diocese the bishop's council is coterminous with the DMPC, and it would be of enormous benefit if any training that is provided can be made as accessible as possible.

I am not sure that paragraph 50 describes accurately enough the level of imminent church building closure we are now facing. I myself during Covid have become a vicar of three extra parishes, and the viability of two of those church buildings in those parishes has to be called into question. Not to do so places a burden on me and those like me which is simply unacceptable. In a rural context, church buildings can hold a memory in the poetry and the lives of the communities in which they stand. That is often not the case in our cities where vast Victorian temples may now lie like beached whales in a post-industrial landscape, the communities they served long since destroyed. Indeed, they can be devoid of any housing at all. I am simply not convinced that in such an urban setting the diocesan trust is the only viable answer, and I would ask for considerably more work to be done there. It seems to be an insoluble problem at present, but it is one in which God is to be found.

I intentionally stray into current controversy here, for within one of my parishes there is a new missional community, the Journey Community, and if we were able to lose the church building, which is in an appalling state of repair, their vibrancy and presence would not be diminished; indeed resources would be released for enhanced mission. We have a church plant back into the church building in one of my other parishes, and in no shape or form is it replicating what once was there. We have a food bank and a community hub operating from the nave of another of my churches where the established congregation literally has not survived the pandemic. We also have a thriving inherited worshipping community in my fourth parish church. It is not either/or, Synod, it is both/and, and anything that makes the Pastoral Measure simpler and more flexible for mission has to be the way forward.

*Revd Canon Simon Fisher (Liverpool):* Thank, you Eve, for the paper. As we start this process may I make two suggestions? The first is about communication. As archdeacon and former diocesan planning officer, I am very excited about this, and I will be paying a lot of attention to it. Most people will not. Pastoral reorganisation raises all sorts of anxieties in an anxious church. I have spent long hours explaining to people what the effect of various proposals of reorganisation would be. The most common thing people ask me is, "Where can I find this written down for myself?" They need the Wikipedia entry.

Could I make a plea perhaps in the next code of practice for some plain language description of the effect of pastoral realisation of various kinds because people really do not know that making them a united benefice does not necessarily mean their church will close, or turning you from a priest in charge to a team vicar does not affect your stipend, or whatever it is? We need some plain language description drawn not only from the Measure itself but also from other bits of ecclesiastical law that it affects.

The second suggestion I would make comes from my experience in Wigan. Synod will have seen the Wigan reorganisations described in the paper. I was the one who drafted those and steered them through from the diocesan side, including what I think was the first joint council in the Church of England. The experience of Wigan was that the people of Wigan spent two years trialling those new arrangements - clergy and lay officers taking on new responsibilities, and the new governance bodies meeting together in order to build relationships. They needed to do to that, but, of course, at the same time they were having to run the pre-existing structures. Now we have completed that reorganisation, which was comprehensive, creative and involved a huge number of people, we are learning there are some things we did not get right and which, ideally, we would go back and amend. Of course, sometimes that requires unpicking the whole thing again.

I was interested to see what are described as interim proposals for closing churches which are really an example for allowing some of the arrangements for closed churches to begin before the closure process has concluded to see if they throw up different proposals or amendments, or what you describe as a virtuous circle. I wonder whether we could consider,, with pastoral reorganisation more generally an opportunity to enter a trial period where things can be easily amended and trialled before being definitively decided. I think that would increase simplicity, it would recognise humility and it would enable us to make bolder proposals. A trial period for pastoral reorganisation more generally, if it could be worked out, would be a really helpful thing.

Thirdly, could I finally plead that in any new Mission and Pastoral Measure that we keep the preamble that every person or body must have due regard to the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England. It is one of the most challenging and wonderful sentences in any piece of ecclesiastical law. I quote it everywhere, and, indeed, I think it should stand at the head of every Measure.

*Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* I would like to thank all the staff involved for all the hard work that has gone into this review. I speak particularly as a parish priest involved in several parishes and several pastoral reorganisations in semi-rural communities.

The Report mentions the binary closed or open churches position at the moment, suggesting that there should be a position in between, but I wonder whether another situation has been considered, and whether there should be perhaps some more expedited procedure in a case where there is a church building which has had to be

closed because it cannot safely be used any more, and, effectively, it is closed before the proceedings have begun because it cannot safely be used for public worship.

I had this experience of a church petitioning for closure in a previous parish. There had been questions about the viability of the church and an audit had been completed showing little community support, sadly, but a crisis point was reached when a roof became unsafe due to water penetration and the PCC did not have the resources to make the necessary repairs. The building could not be used. The PCC, sadly, made the decision to petition to closure and the procedure was started. A public meeting was arranged. The CBC surveyor was booked to attend and it was rather unfortunate because the pandemic struck and nothing further could be done for many months. Everything got held up and the PCC was left responsible for a building in a poor state of repair which was deteriorating. As you can imagine, this did not help their morale at all.

Obviously, this was worsened by the pandemic, but, in any case, I feel that the current situation does not really take into account those situations when a more speedy procedure is needed which will enable the mission of the Church to be carried out without being held up by unnecessary burdens.

A further scheme was also arranged at the same time to unite this church with others in the benefice as a joint parish. That happened and, although most of the PCC resigned, the situation was taken over by the joint parish, and it is moving forward. The good news is that one of the other churches in the parish has been very well supported by the community, grant funding has been obtained and it is now being used extensively as a community building.

The point I wish to make is there needs to be perhaps more flexibility for more expedited procedures in particular cases. Certainly, if the CBC survey could have been dispensed with in this matter that could have been dealt with much more swiftly, and it did not really add a lot to the considerations, although it was a very good survey. I think the suggestion that the Church Commissioners have the power to correct mistakes is a very helpful one, as the worry about getting something wrong feels quite paralysing at times, and everyone feels they have to keep to the letter of the correct procedure. Also, the proposals to streamline the consultation procedures would be very helpful, as nearly always, when you get to this point, many informal consultations have already taken place.

I would ask for the support of the mission of the Church, as has been said, that consideration could be given to a more speedy procedure in these sorts of cases.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent):* When we first started Simplification we knew that this particular area was one we needed to address. We have chipped away at various aspects of the Mission and Pastoral Measure, but I am really grateful that, at

last, we are seizing the opportunity to revise the whole Measure. I want to pay tribute to Eve Poole who has been around in the Church central organs almost as long as I have, and has been a real friend to us in terms of making this happen, and also to Wendy Matthews who has come in with fresh eyes and with colleagues has drafted this very helpful Green Paper.

I want to say two or three things about it. First of all, just to say that in relation to some of the questions there in terms of doing our homework, yes to primary and secondary legislation: that is the way we will structure that more simply. Yes to some flexibility in the appellate function. I do not think we should have one form of it. I think there needs to be an appellate function which works well in different contexts and different dioceses and is seen to be independent. That means it does not necessarily have to be national. Yes, we must get rid of the number of different sorts of reorganisation. Having seven different ways of doing pastoral reorganisation is clearly stupid, so question 10 is really important to be addressed. Yes to cross-boundary working because one of the new ways of facilitating a mixed ecology church is to have some churches which operate across diocesan boundaries. I want you to pay attention to what is happening, for instance, in the parish of Hackney, which now has four different churches, some in Chelmsford and some in London. All these things will facilitate a much better way of doing things.

What I do think is a slight worry is this does not necessarily join up with mixed ecology. It is structural in some ways. Part of the problem is that BMOs and things have been developed separately. We need to join those two back together in terms of how we operate.

Thank you for this. Thank you for being able see this opportunity to make a big difference. Please take it forward. Please make sure it is done well and do not, for heaven's sake, leave us with an even more complicated code of practice at the end of it because that could be the death of it.

*Mrs Emily Bagg (Portsmouth):* I want to speak as someone who has recently been affected by a pastoral reorganisation which resulted in my husband being dispossessed of his office. I recognise in this document the questions around dispossession of office and the conflation of the personal and the pastoral.

In our case, pastoral reorganisation was absolutely the right thing for the parish, but I cannot tell you the deep harm and damage that being dispossessed of his office has done to my husband, who has and continues to question deeply his calling. It has put a strain on our marriage and on our family as we learn that pastoral reorganisation under the Mission and Pastoral Measure is a juggernaut that cannot be stopped, even by a pandemic. Explaining all of this to a five-year-old was not an experience I would recommend, nor would I wish it upon anyone else. Work needs to be done to protect and support clergy and their families who find themselves facing dispossession.

I also note that this document makes no reference to the fact that there are massive tax implications associated with the compensation arrangements for clergy who are dispossessed. Unlike a secular redundancy package, HMRC may (or may not) see this as taxable pay. Our experience was that clergy facing dispossession therefore have a choice: you pay tax on the compensation at source and thus lose to HMRC a huge amount of the money you may need to live off, or you sign a settlement agreement and are paid the compensation tax free but sign to say there might one day be tax implications and you therefore are willing to indemnify the diocese and the Commissioners against any further tax implications including penalties, interest and fines. Rock/hard place.

It was a gamble we were not prepared to take and so we paid nearly £20,000 in tax at source. Had my husband been made redundant from a secular job, it would have been mostly tax free. There must be a better way to do this, and to support clergy and clergy families through these complexities.

*Revd Canon Kathryn Fitzsimons (Leeds):* Thank you to those who have prepared this Report. I am going to tell you a little bit about Gipton which is a garden city estate built in the 1930s. The church was consecrated in 1938. In the 1980s, the estate became very difficult and challenging. In the 1990s, the building was given Grade I listed status. The parish had a ranking of 314 in Church Urban Fund IMD stats. It is beautiful and we are fond of it and we have all worked hard to get grants, for which I am very grateful, in order to maintain it. Our latest grant was from the Covid Heritage at Risk appeal and we got 25 grand towards a £60,000 ceiling repair. Indeed, it definitely has a wow factor when you come in. Local kids are absolutely amazed by it, as are the adults.

However, there is no real local ownership of the building. The changing demography means that 20th century Christian architecture does not really contribute to community cohesion. It is irrelevant. Gipton is not high on the Leeds tourist trail either. There is regular worship here and it is an important place for funerals on the estate, but we at Gipton do not have the capacity to look after the building and do effective mission. However, closing the church really would be a nuclear option. I am really pleased to see in section 4 the potential for other options that arise from this Report. If we are to remain responsible for some of the nation's treasures, the burden of responsibility for looking after them needs to be shared wider than the parish. I really want to support this motion for taking forward different ways of looking after both our buildings and our mission in the future.

*Revd David Brooke (Durham):* Thank you to the team for this timely and comprehensive Green Paper and review. In my view, it is also extremely urgent, especially as we absorb the impact of the pandemic. I want to reassure Dr Poole that it is not premature to bring it to this season's Synod.

Before I start though, I need to clear up something that might confuse and tell you why this feels so important to me. I announced myself as a Durham clergy member of the



Synod, but I actually now serve in the Wigan team described in the case study at paragraph 39 and referred to by Simon Fisher. I moved diocese more than halfway through the quinquennium so the rules permit me to continue to represent Durham for the balance of the quinquennium.

As a member of the Wigan team I have a special interest, but also a long history of working at reforming structures in my time at Durham, too, including supporting deanery planning across the diocese. Now that I am in Liverpool I have an additional role as a member of the BDO team which supports the pastoral officer and archdeacons with processes.

In my RTS I indicated that I would like to reflect on three things very quickly: early learning from the Wigan scheme, to which Simon has alluded, the value of teams and joint councils, and the immediate benefits for the Wigan team during the pandemic.

First, the Wigan scheme. Thanks to all who supported these changes. It was a massive change to undertake in one go and I think it stretched our processes to the absolute limit. I can tell you we came up against or are coming up against now pretty much every issue identified in this Green Paper. The hearing that concluded the process was conducted before the Commissioners approved the scheme. That is an experience none of us would want to repeat - ever. I arrived 16 months before that and, as Simon said, regular informal consultations and test driving have been going on for a long time. The changes had been talked about in general terms for years, but it still was not enough to avoid a slew of representations. It was a very rough ride. We need to learn from that. Was it worth it? Yes. Will it work out? We will see. Its coming into force at the beginning of 2020 was both the best and worst timing.

Did we get the scheme right? I would say although the changes were huge, we possibly did not go far enough in one step. We went for what was sellable, but we might have hobbled it, and it is hard now to change things. The internal structures we retained. Seven large parishes and a benefice are now an obstacle to adaptability, and it is hard to see how to move past that. The joint council has ended up perhaps with insufficient power to fulfil its responsibilities, and that too is hard to fine-tune because of the processes to change the delegation. If only we had made it simpler, bolder and humbler. Changes to our legislative frameworks and processes need to make it much smoother to bring something like Church Wigan into being, but not necessarily lower the threshold, and to be able to adapt to the learnings after the fact.

Teams and team councils. I just want to say we have accepted the rhetoric for years. We need to find a way of discovering what makes good teams work. I am sorry I have overrun my time.

*The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Rachel Tweweek):* Before I make my comments, I want to acknowledge Emily's pain, and thank you, Emily, for your vulnerability.

I too want to say that I welcome this and I want to say thank you to Eve, who has been an enormous gift to us. I welcome this now as a Bishop and someone who served for ten years as an archdeacon and also served for several years on the Church Commissioners' Pastoral Committee. Perhaps for the last time in this Synod, I want to say, "I agree with Pete." We will not be able to say that going forward. I do and I want to echo everything Pete has said.

If we are to live with imagination, if we are to be mission shaped, if we are to live a church landscape of varied configuration, mixed ecology, with healthy and wonderful parish churches alongside different ways of doing chaplaincy, and different ways of being and doing church, then our legislation must be in step. At the moment that is not the case.

I think there are really good questions being asked around decision-making and the function of that. I want to say in that discussion I would make a plea that if dioceses have looked at things and been imaginative and made decisions using the right sort of structures, then it is ludicrous when that gets stopped by one or two people who perhaps are not seeing the mission shaped or the imagination. But I do agree there should be a way for people to be able to raise issues. I too want to plea for trust - once again we are talking about trust if all of this - and I want to make a plea, as Pete said, for join-up. I note that we are committing this for discussion and I hope we will have the courage to do so. This is really important if we are to live the coming season well.

*Mr Martin Kingston (Gloucester):* Following your Bishop is always slightly tricky, is it not, but thank you, Bishop Rachel, I agree with everything you have said. Thank you, Eve and Wendy, for a typically thoughtful paper. We desperately need this review. This is not the time to respond in detail to the consultation, but may I say that I think need for flexibility here is absolutely paramount. We need geographical flexibility, missional flexibility and personal flexibility, and we need lay and clergy involvement.

Like the Bishop, I want to acknowledge Emily Bagg's pain. That was clearly something which is highlighting for us the human face of this process and the importance of getting it right. May I say just a word about the process? The process needs to have a local focus. It needs to feel like something which is being driven by local priorities, not something which is being imposed from on high. The appeals process really needs to go centrally only when there is some point of principle or point of law involved. I agree in that respect with Bishop Pete that it needs to avoid a national feel. The right of representation being limited to those who are most concerned seems obvious.

How do we reflect our vision in this? Simpler - if it takes 1,000 pages of guidance, there is something wrong. It has to be simpler. It has to be more accessible. Bolder - we need to rethink mission and we need to re-think missional units and be bold as we do so. Humbler - it needs to be a process which recognises that we are there to serve the communities that we are a part of, not to be some sort of Church club with its own separate membership from the communities that we serve.

*Mrs Wendy Coombey (Hereford):* This review has been much needed. I am a member of the Church Buildings Council, so I declare an interest. We have obviously thought about this a lot. There are a couple of things that I think it gives us the opportunity to do. In the proposal about the binary element between open and closed, there is a huge opportunity here to really engage local communities, not just the Church community. We have been calling for that as the Church Buildings Council for a long time. There is an opportunity to explore the Festival Churches model and how we use that as a way of supporting some of those more vulnerable parishes.

We need to ensure that we get the consultation right for this. We need to talk to government and to our partners so that we are not seen to be making decisions and perhaps jeopardising the role of the Church which has really emerged, particularly the mission role, during the pandemic and has had a real opportunity.

In the opportunity for consultation about church closures, it is about ensuring that we engage everybody in that, and looking at new models. I genuinely think that if we get this right and we make it fleet of foot but clear, this gives us the opportunity to really focus on that mixed ecology. Particularly in the rural areas where I work, church buildings and the way we are church (and it is not just about the buildings) is at the heart of everything we do there.

Finally, you may think I would say this as a member of the Church Buildings Council, but we need to keep hold of the exemption. We need to ensure that we can weave in that mixture of liturgy, of understanding the use of the buildings, their role as holy spaces, but freeing them up to really be used by our communities.

I really, really welcome this. I am looking forward hopefully to working very closely with the whole review.

*The Bishop of Bristol (Rt Revd Vivienne Faull):* I am speaking as the newly announced Bishop for Buildings, not of buildings, working very closely with Andrew Rumsey, Bishop of Ramsbury (Rumsey of Ramsbury) and you may know of his vlogs “Going to Ground”, which I commend, and his book entitled “Parish”. He and I will be working closely together: Andrew to inspire us all, and I think my job is more jobbing. I am a Church Commissioner. I have been part of the work on the Cathedrals Measure and I have seen Eve transforming the way we work, the culture in which we work, and certainly we need that as we go forward on this much more complex task. Eve has already modelled the need for expertise, the need for profound listening, the need for detailed work and a proposal for subsidiarity and flexibility.

I will be working very hard on that. To pick up on what Wendy Coombey has just commented on, we do want to keep the Ecclesiastical Exemption. That is going to need detailed and long-term conversations with Members in both Houses of Parliament. Those

have already begun, as have conversations with the Treasury on how we can work more closely to get appropriate levels of financial support.

Like Bishop Pete, I too look forward to building up trust, continuing to work across our boundaries so that we can support those in local communities who give so much of their time and energy to the mission of the Church in each locality.

*Canon Phillip Blinkhorn (Manchester):* I welcome the general tenor of the Report, but I have a few concerns really surrounding two major issues. One is urgency and the other is resource. It seems to me that the procedure continues to look at a world where we are looking at occasional instances of closures. What I believe we are facing in Manchester is multiple closures over the next ten year period. I really do not think that this document addresses the urgency of closures in so many cases. It was true before the pandemic hit us that we, in particular, had a large number of buildings that were failing. They were failing in terms of the numbers in their congregations, the financial resources and the state of the buildings. In the most egregious case, the PCC actually decided to close and handed the keys back to the diocese. I see some real urgency over this as, with ageing congregations, we face similar situations across our dioceses.

This leads on to the issue of resource, resource both at a diocesan level and at a national level in the ability to deal with these matters. Again, all our processes are built around occasional cases, not dealing with any substantial numbers that are coming forward for consideration. I think this needs to be baked into our system somehow. I recognise the difficulties in dealing with multiple cases, but I think it is imperative that we have some kind of process that can acknowledge that when we come forward perhaps with one closure there may be others coming very closely behind. Whilst they are individual cases, they need to be seen in the light of a diocese's particular need.

*Revd Simon Talbott (Ely):* I would declare that I was until fairly recently a member of the Mission and Pastoral Committee over a number of years, and also my CECA background. Thank you, Eve, for this splendid Report. It is a really welcome rethink of the Measure, and very timely as well. I endorse much of what has been said by previous speakers.

There are two particular areas I would like to highlight and that is around dispossession and around funding support from central Government. I was pleased to hear from the Bishop of Bristol on that one. I feel for Emily Bagg and thank her for her contribution today. That was so timely and really heart-rending, and I hope that she and the family are getting the support they richly deserve in these very difficult times. CECA's helpline has been receiving a number of calls in recent times over the issue of dispossession, with clergy and clergy families in really difficult places. That is why it was good to hear from Emily earlier in this debate.

My plea to the Committee would be to really help us to have a robust set of codes of practice around dispossession and also some good HR support and pastoral support for

clergy that are in these situations. We must not forget, friends, that this involves not only the clergy person, but the entire family. That is why it is really powerful to hear from Emily. That is my first area.

The second one involves government funding. We are blessed by having a considerably large percentage of the nation's historic assets as our places of worship and mission, and having continual help from Government, and, I hope, increased help financially, even in difficult times will be absolutely necessary. I would encourage the Bishop of Bristol and others to lobby for that support. It is particularly helpful to hear from Government of their appreciation of the way our churches have been used as places of pastoral outreach and mission in this pandemic era. Going forward, the Government need to put their money where their appreciation is, and I look forward to seeing better funding in the coming years. Thank you, Eve, for what you have done, and God speed with this Measure.

*Ven. Luke Miller (London):* The Bishop of Gloucester very rightly says that we need to make sure that all this is based on firm foundations of trust. One of my phrases, though, is that good fences make for good relationships, and good fences also build trust. In the midst of the annoyances and frustrations of the Measure which we live with, and which I certainly agree needs a great deal of work and revision, and I welcome this process, lie the checks and balances that enable us to work together on the basis of trust founded on good legal fences and boundaries. We therefore need to make sure that in approaching all of this we do not lose sight of the fact that those provide security for many people, in many ways, to be able to continue sometimes to act in ways that are contrary to the main thrust of where the Church is going, something which of course leads to our diversity. That is not to be enabling hindrances to mission and to necessary moving forward.

As an archdeacon, I spend a lot of time working on pastoral reorganisation and Pastoral Measures and I am well aware of the need for us to try to act in ways that enable us to progress. Therefore, I think there is a real challenge to us to enable that there should be enough checks and balances but without putting in place blockages which are entirely insuperable. I think a lot of work needs to go into ensuring that that balance is maintained in any new Measure that comes forward. Supporting the general thrust of this, I hope that we can work in that way and not simply put in place something that would in fact ultimately undermine trust and disable our ability to work together well for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Revd Michael Read (Manchester):* The first thing I would like to say is I was involved in closing a church over four years ago now, and I would recognise this Report and how important it is in how we move forward. It talks a lot about what the PCCs have in mind about how hard and difficult it is for them to make decisions, how they have to work through all of that with the congregation, and when that starts to happen congregations do leave and move on. It is hard to keep the PCC involved, because many of them decide they do not want anything to do with this, so they go and walk away. I am really happy

about questions 14 and 107 where it talks about having this report before announcements.

When we went through the process of having an announcement, we then had wait for this Report when everyone really knew what was going on in advance. The problem with that was the PCC had to deal with these people and people in the community having a go about what was going on, accusing them of things in Morrison's or Asda, and things like that, and people dropping off. The whole process of being able to have reports before any announcements are made, or anything else like that, is really important before it gets to the community itself. When things have been decided, then the community can be involved, so you have worked well with the diocese before you have moved on to having announcements.

I really welcome the Report, and thank you, Chair, for letting me speak.

*Ms Jay Greene (Winchester):* I am one of your elected Church Commissioners and as part of that I serve on the Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee. I want to endorse the work Eve, Wendy Matthews and the whole Pastoral and Closed Churches Team have done in preparing the paper. Thank you today to everyone who has contributed, especially Emily and your very sobering story.

I want to talk to consultation. Here at Synod we have all seen consultations which are, I would not say not rigged but certainly shaped to produce particular outcomes. I saw it when I worked at the county council and I have even seen it in Church contexts. As Bishop Viv said, Eve Poole has produced a different culture within the Church Commissioners, and so that is not the case here. The whole way in which this paper is written invites you - and that is everybody listening online as well as people here in our Zoom chamber - to come to your own conclusions. Please share them with us.

There are 31 different questions on a whole range of issues to get you started. The consultation period starts tomorrow and lasts eight weeks. Please take part. This work will be so much better if it is a co-production. As Eve said at the beginning, there is so much wisdom and experience here amongst us, in parishes, in deaneries, in our partner organisations, so please take that time to write in and give us your challenges, your thoughts and your ideas.

*Revd Mark Lucas (Peterborough):* One of the great values of the Church of England for me is its diversity of ecclesiological expression, which does not always seem to be valued by bishops when they are thinking about reorganisation, as it can seem more a hindrance than a help. However, it is maintained,, in part, by the patronage system taking away the absolute power of a possibly unsympathetic bishop. I am concerned that this Report could be read to see patronage as a hindrance and seek to abolish it. There may be other ways to maintain parish distinctiveness, but patronage certainly works, so if it works there is no need to mess with it, surely. The last thing I want to see is a Church where

every parish expresses the same grey lowest common denominator ecclesiology with no distinctiveness. We need to maintain distinctive ecclesiologies, to learn from each other and grow together. Patronage supports and helps to do this. I would urge us not to lose it.

*The Chair:* I would like now to test your mind, Synod, as to the closure of this particular debate. This will be a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 241 voting in favour, 19 against, with five recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* Before I move back to Dr Poole, I am sure she would welcome any other comments or questions you might have had and we have not had an opportunity to hear. Eve, you now have the right to reply and you have up to five minutes to do so.

*Dr Eve Poole (ex officio):* Thank you for such a stimulating debate. You have given us lots to think about. I have notes all over my table here.

First, Emily, thank you. I am really sorry, and we will immediately look into the tax matter you raise as well.

As I said at the beginning, I do not have time to reply to you all individually but I thought I might reflect back some of the themes I am hearing, beautifully summarised by Wendy saying we must be “fleet of foot but clear” and Luke Miller saying checks and balances but not blockages. I particularly heard that we need to address the urgency and scalability of the processes that we have. We need to support them by much clearer plain language descriptions which are somewhat shorter in any code of practice that emerges, and support that through training. I very much heard the need to balance subsidiarity and flexibility, shortened procedures, pilots, looking again at that binary open and closed distinction, and looking at what else we can do around multiple uses, communities uses, Festival Churches - and very much in the spirit of simpler, humbler and bolder.

I have also very much taken the point that we need to join up all of this with mixed ecology, with BMOs, and we really need to keep looking at how we can ease the burden of buildings. I have seen a particularly beautiful picture of that building in Leeds which I can see is an absolute monster, and you are an absolute star for keeping that going. We are looking very much at how we can help all parishes take better and easier care of their buildings. Because the Measure is part of our arrangements with the State under the Ecclesiastical Exemption, as has been mentioned, I have also sent members of the Ecclesiastical Committee a copy of this Green Paper and will also be consulting with our statutory partners as well as with our colleagues within the Church of England. As Jay said, please keep comments coming. As the Chairman said, anything that has been left unsaid in the debate today, please do send that to us.

In closing, may I say please do encourage everyone you know to take the opportunity of the formal consultation which runs from tomorrow until 15 September. Respondents can either complete an online questionnaire or provide a written submission. Please badger your colleagues in the dioceses to make time to take part. As I learned from my work on the Cathedrals Measure, this Measure will only be as good as all the input you give us on it, so please keep that coming. We want to get this as right as we possibly can.

A particular thanks to those of you for whom this will be your last Synod. Please continue to help us with it from the sidelines so we do not lose your hard-won expertise. We will report back to you on the outcomes of the consultation and seek your approval to bring fresh legislation to you in 2022.

*The Chair:* I agree that the Church of the Epiphany, Gipton is a spectacular church in Leeds.

Synod, I need to put Item 27 as set out on Order Paper V to the vote. This will be through the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried, 278 voting in favour, two against, with seven recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* This motion was carried. Thank you, members of Synod, for that. We have managed to claw back a little bit of time so there is now going to be a screen break. We will resume this sitting at 10.30. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham)* took the Chair at 10.30 am.

*The Chair:* Welcome back, everyone, after the scheduled break. I hope you are feeling refreshed and ready for the next part of our morning together. We come to Items 28 and 29 on the Agenda. Both these items come under the topic of Vision and Strategy. First of all, we will focus on Item 28, which will be a presentation by Archbishop Stephen. After that, we will turn our attention to Item 29 which will be a take note debate.

## **ITEM 28 VISION AND STRATEGY (GS 2223)**

*The Chair:* On Item 28, I invite the Archbishop of York to speak to us.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Discerning a vision and strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s began with a simple question: what kind of Church is God calling us to become?

After 18 months of a wide-ranging series of conversations involving many Synod members, representatives of just about every constituency that makes up the complex



and varied ecology of the Church of England, and many voices that do not always find themselves invited to the decision-making table, and many, many local clergy, we were led to a simple answer: to become a more Christ-centred Church.

I do not think we would have arrived at such a simple statement were it not for the experience of Covid. The restrictions and isolations we have lived with have been so hard. Our world is suffering. Stripped of the familiar comforts of worship and common life we have, however, discovered a new and clear vision of Christ, the one who stands at the centre of our faith, the one in whom we have access to God. This is all so obvious. It is hardly a surprise that our life is centred in Christ, but it is also unceasingly profound. The new life we have in Christ is received in one “gigantic gulp of grace”, to quote St Cyprian. It is also a never-ending story. St John’s Gospel ends with the declaration that if everything about Jesus was written down then “the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21. 25).

St John also tells us that we are called to beloved discipleship, “dwelling close to the Father’s heart”; and courageous discipleship: “As the Father sent me, so now I send you”. As we recover and emerge from Covid, we believe that God is asking us to become a church of missionary disciples; a younger and more diverse church that looks like the communities it serves; a safe church and a church that is a place of welcome for everyone; a mixed ecology church where we reach and serve our nation in many different ways.

At the centre of this, and as the means whereby we will serve and reach our nation, is a parish system revitalised for mission. I am dismayed that anyone would think this work - work, by the way, that is still a work in progress - is aiming at anything else.

Of course, we want to cherish and develop our ministry in chaplaincies, Church schools, Fresh Expressions, church plants, and it is a long time since the Church of England was so positive about the importance of chaplaincy. And, yes, we are setting ambitious targets about how we will reach and serve children and young people and develop new Christian communities. But we also know that these things, as the paper makes clear, will flow from parish churches serving local communities, forming communities of faith and enabling every member of the Church of England to discover their part in God’s mission.

Even where some services or mission initiatives are lay led they remain under the oversight of the incumbent whose cure of souls is shared by the bishops and governed by Canon Law. None of this changes.

Therefore, in the paper before you, particularly in Part 3, you see not only the three strategic priorities for the 2020s, but also the six bold outcomes (three of which are directly to do with the place of parish and local church) which begin to describe what the Church of England might look like in 2030 if our endeavours bear fruit. Moreover, we have also begun to focus on some key actions which will get us to where we believe God is calling.

One of these is a relatively easy win: to align the financial resource we offer from the centre with these priorities. But, beyond this, what we are discussing today are not initiatives emerging from head office but an invitation to the whole Church in all its breadth and diversity and in all our parishes and dioceses to begin to see how its existing priorities and strategies might be shaped, changed and informed by these things. These are decisions that will be made locally over which PCCs and diocesan synods have control. In the film we are about to see, you will hear some clergy talking about how this is already impacting their own local strategies.

Just look at what we have achieved in the past year with so many services happening online and new communities being born.

Part 2 of the paper includes bringing simplicity and coherence to our governance structures and every aspect of our life together.

The Transforming Effectiveness agenda, which we are discussing later, aims to ensure that all our resources of people, structures and historic wealth serve the mission of God more efficiently. This will cover every part of our national Church, from buildings and faculties to how many bishops and dioceses we have. We need to assure those who give faithfully and sacrificially for the ministry of the Church that their money is being used for a single purpose, which is to make Christ known and to build God's Kingdom in the world.

What we are doing will enable more money and more resource to go to frontline ministry in our parishes and other varied expressions of mission and Christian community that will emerge from our parishes, and this will include the services we need to ensure that frontline ministry and our ministers, ordained and lay, are properly trained, equipped, valued and supported.

Finally, I would like to say that I am enormously excited that, I think for the first time, the Church of England is putting children, young people, schools, families and households at the very heart of its strategy. We are asking that our Church becomes more diverse.

As you know, three words run through all this work and describe the virtues that God has laid on our hearts. It is to be a simpler, humbler, bolder church. These words have landed well. You know that when you hear them repeated back to you and when people make jokes about them. But simpler does not mean easier. And humbler does not mean tidier. And bolder certainly does not mean being predictable or overbearing. On the contrary, it means a renewal of our life in Christ, returning to those deep, replenishing wellsprings of faith that we find around the Lord's table when we receive Communion and when we open the Scriptures together. It will mean a meekness and obedience to God's agenda and penitent hearts, humbly recognising where we have got things wrong.

And, yes, it will mean courageous and daring discipleship and witness. But this will flow from hearts and lives changed and charged by God's goodness and God's mercy.

Doing this will sometimes hurt. It will mean change. But it is not top-down. And neither is it bottom-up. It is the outworking of our discipleship. It comes from the centre. But the centre is not Lambeth Palace; nor Bishopthorpe; nor Church House Westminster; nor the General Synod of the Church of England.

It is Christ.

The invitation of this work that we discuss today with, I am sure, its many flaws and shortcomings (that is why we are having some discussion about it) is nothing less than an invitation for the spiritual and theological renewal of the Church of England as the company of believers formed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, working together in all our diversity, for the transformation of the world. It begins here in our own hearts as we commit ourselves afresh to the service of the Gospel.

I want us to be a Christ-centred and a Jesus Christ shaped Church by the Five Marks of Mission, making a difference in our world and affecting every community we serve.

I now share with you a film by people who have already been impacted by this work and are sharing with it as they share their reflections.

(Video Shown)

*The Chair.* Thank you, Archbishop Stephen, and also for us to be able to see and hear from other voices in that presentation as well.

## **ITEM 29**

*The Chair:* We come now then to Item 29 which is a take note debate on the Vision and Strategy Report. I am going to give everyone the heads-up at this point. As we have a large number of members who are hoping to speak in this debate and we must stick to the schedule, as has already been mentioned and therefore you are aware, there will be a three minute speech limit from the start.

Point of order from Sam Margrave.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I am moving that this item be adjourned and resumed in February 2022.

*The Chair:* Sam, I am going to have to interrupt you there because, in actual fact, we have not moved the motion yet, so we need to hear from Archbishop Stephen. Then if

you wish to move a motion for adjournment, there will be a point at that stage, so please bear with us.

As I was about to say, I invite Archbishop Stephen, the Archbishop of York, to speak to us. You have up to ten minutes.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* In formally proposing the motion that we take note of the report GS 2223, I refer, of course, to the presentation we have just heard, but particularly direct us to Part 3 of the paper on page 9 and the strategic priorities, bold outcomes and key actions that mark where we have got to in the development of this work. Sadly, there is not time at this virtual Synod for the small group work and extended discussion which I had so hoped would take place and hope will still take place in the future.

I intend to make this a short speech, so that there can be maximum time for debate and input from Synod members. But if you are not called to speak, please write to me with your thoughts and responses, particularly to the questions at paragraph 31 on page 10. I am grateful to those who have already opened up the discussion.

I look forward to all the contributions. I would particularly love to hear how parishes and dioceses and other expressions of church life are already responding to the vision, as we heard in the film, and beginning to work out what this means.

I would love to hear what we have missed and where further development is needed. I would like to remind you it is a take note debate. We are taking note, we are discussing, we are shaping things. That is what we are doing in this debate.

I would love to know what you are praying for. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have written to me to tell me that they are praying for this. There are candles burning in the Holy House at Walsingham for this work on vision and strategy. I have been written to by the Society of St Francis and other religious communities, and members of the New Wine network. There is a great wave of prayer happening around this.

I would love to hear what more we could do to ensure that we do this together, which is why I hope we get some group work at a Synod later on, a much better way to discuss these things.

This is an important debate. It is our opportunity - though not the last one - to shape the strategic actions that will help make this vision a reality.

Can I just emphasise a few things? This vision and strategy came from the body of the Church. It puts Christ and the Five Marks of Mission at the centre. Any initiatives that

flow from it will be discussed by the national Church when that is appropriate, but most of it is going to happen in the parishes and dioceses.

Mindful of the shocking, shocking racism that we experienced last night following England's defeat in the football, I want to emphasise that saying we want to be a younger and diverse Church, wrestling with the issues of racism in our Church and in our wider society, this is a prophetic call upon us. We know we have more work to do, but let us not lose sight of the big things we are saying here about being a Church of mission and disciples, a Christ-centred Church, the Five Marks of Mission and all that they mean for our environment, and to be younger and more diverse.

I move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper "That the Synod take note of this Report".

*The Chair:* Thank you, Archbishop Stephen. Item 29 is now open for debate. The speech limit is three minutes. A point order from Sam Margrave.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Chair, I move a point of order that the debate be adjourned and resumed in February 2022. Shall I outline my reasons now or will you come back to me?

*The Chair:* The correct procedure is that you wait for me to say some things so we all know where we stand, so if you can hang on, that would be great. Sam Margrave, as you have just heard, has moved the motion that the debate before us, Item 29, be now adjourned and resumed in February 2022. If the motion for the adjournment debate is carried, the debate will be adjourned and resumed in accordance with the motion. If the motion is lost, the motion for the adjournment of the debate may not be moved again except with my permission as the Chair.

I call Sam Margrave as the mover of the motion for the adjournment of debate to speak to it, followed by the mover of the main motion, Archbishop Stephen. Having heard that, I will then consider whether to allow any further debate. The speech limit is two minutes. Hopefully we all know where we stand. Sam, back to you.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Synod, I am asking you to defer this item for the new Synod to meet, to have breakout groups or workshops to develop this strategy. His Grace is well aware of my concerns and I will not repeat these, but I am particularly concerned at the bulldozer being parked outside many of our parishes waiting to tear them down physically or spiritually.

If we pass this Report, even in a take note, we are handing a gun to the dioceses to kill off the Church as we know it. I do not want to vote down the many good things in this Report, but Synod, as our national body, has been side-lined. If we want to have new voices on Synod or new voices making decisions, elect new people. Do not just usurp

this body. We need to have those promised breakout groups that have not taken place and we need to co-create this document and co-create our strategy and vision. We should not be passed a document that is for the Church. It should be by and with the Church of England - and it is this body that represents every parish in the country. So let us defer this item, not throw out the good with the bad, and ask the Business Committee to bring this back, but first have breakout groups or worship as we are promised.

Please vote for my motion, because otherwise we will endorse this document and there are great flaws in it. Alternatively, we will throw out the good with the bad. Thank you, Synod.

*The Chair:* Archbishop Stephen, you also have up to two minutes to respond to what you have just heard from Sam about a possible adjournment of this debate.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you, Chair. Needless to say, I really do not agree that this is in any way an attack on anything which is precious to us in our Church, but it is a vision for the revitalisation of our parish system and a revitalisation of the Church as we know it. That is obviously something Sam and I will need to talk to each other about.

The main reason I oppose this is that by taking note of this Report we enter into discussion about it by doing that. This in no way prevents us from having breakout groups as well at the next February Synod continuing to shape this, which, as I tried to emphasise in my speech, is primarily about things that will or will not happen in parishes and dioceses. We need to do this work together. The take note debate is part of that process. I hope it will lead to breakout groups at a Synod when we will all be together.

In a way, and I have to say this, I am slightly distressed that in what is already too short a debate we are wasting time discussing this adjournment when we could be listening to each other to shape this together, which is the object of this debate and I hope the groups that will follow when we do meet together in person next year.

*The Chair:* Anthony Archer, you have a point of order.

*Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans):* A motion for closure on this special procedural motion.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Anthony, that is most helpful, because, having heard the two speakers, I do not consider that the motion for the adjournment of the debate needs to be debated further. Therefore, I put the motion to Synod for the adjournment motion to be decided.

*The motion was put and lost, 24 voting in favour, 268 against, with 12 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* Now we continue with debating Item 29 as a take note debate. I call Barry Hill followed by Anderson Jeremiah. Please remember, everyone, the speech limit is three minutes.

*Revd Barry Hill (Leicester):* There is so much that excites me in this vision but top of the pile is its invitation to renew what it means for us to be for the parish. For decades, congregationalism has been a pervasive institutional sin; a sin from which many others around power and control and defensiveness flow. Thankfully, huge progress has been made in recent years. Christians have risen to serve our communities in myriad beautiful ways over these last 18 months and yet more work remains to be done. Our theology says we exist to serve all in our parishes, to have a preference for those who are not yet part of any Christian worshipping community and yet our collective habits are so often moulded around congregationalism.

I love being a parish priest and yet from our laws to our expectations, to our identity, to our needs, the pressure at every level of Church life to prioritise those already a part can be intense. When time is stretched, it is often the new things God is blessing which are easiest to go. Being congregationally focused is almost never our aim. The wonderful people of God, lay and ordained, across our Church have a far bigger vision than that, but occasionally things in the culture that we have collectively created can mean it ends up being so.

In the Eucharist we are reminded bread cannot be multiplied and shared unless broken. This vision gives us an opportunity to be broken just enough to be shared more. That is hard and painful in our exhaustion, defensiveness and how it is that scarcity can be contagious and yet we do not need to lift our eyes very high to see that God is already doing these wonderful things through the breadth of the Church. For one who has led by Fresh Expressions of Church and Resourcing Churches for Dioceses, I see every day the beautiful sacrifices existing communities are taking to form additional new community to add to the diversity so that we might serve all.

In Leicester, we have helped one another see afresh that unless the Church is both eucharistic and thoroughly baptismal, it is not yet church. We feel blessed that so many who have started leading new communities have responded to a call to ordination. To do this, we need to cheer on the very best in each other, different from how we do it. Many of us are tired and exhausted, and occasionally, a bit narky. We can go down as a Church in a quasi-orgasmic criticism festival in other that makes us feel better for a few minutes but burns the very thing that we need - grace. In this wonderful vision we have opportunity to reflect the abundant beautiful grace of God. If we can rise to this moment in all our brokenness, and in all our fallenness, to rediscover the wonderful call to be a mixed diverse ecology of missional disciples for all the parish, we can be confident that God is not done with his church just yet. I support the motion.

*Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS):* What is a mixed ecology church? A definition proved elusive. Mixed ecology transitioned from mixed economy. Contrary to popular perceptions, they mean two different things. Mixed economy is a type of capitalist economic model with a few bits of socialism thrown in. It is predominantly about utility maximisation; growth and success oriented. Mixed economy generally protects private property over the common good. By allowing competition it facilitates innovation and efficiency. The most efficient succeeds; the most vulnerable is kicked out.

Mixed ecology, on the other hand, as a branch of biology, deals with the relationship of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings. Biodiversity is the infrastructure that supports life. Interestingly, preservation of existing biodiversity is at the heart of mixed ecology. Conservation alongside innovation, but not at the expense of endangered species.

This brings me to this exciting debate around mixed ecology church being the norm. What we are seeing is an economic model being presented as an ecological model. Limiting factors as impediments to the success of the Church is diametrically opposed to the ecological model of preserving the most vulnerable organism for a healthy ecosystem. Biodiversity is not a limiting factor, rather the necessity.

As a church, I am excited we need to reimagine afresh what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. If our ecclesiological imagination is dominated by anxiety and scarcity we end up driving a utilitarian model of a success-oriented form of capitalist church. Then we are not being faithful to the Gospel that calls us to be mindful of the most vulnerable, especially after what we have witnessed last night: the online racist abuse of three black footballers.

Before we enforce a normative ecclesiology of mixed ecology church, we need to ask some fundamental questions. What definition of mixed ecology are we using? What are the values and motivating factors of mixed ecology church? And what safeguarding measures are we implementing? If we do not ask those questions, we might unhelpfully slip into a tyranny of mixed ecology church.

*Revd Jackie Doyle-Brett (York):* In 2020, for Pentecost, our Archbishops were joined by Pope Francis, who said, "After this pandemic, we cannot start again by going back." These words are so true, but I ask you, why would we want to do that anyway: go back to a church in many places in decline, and considered by people of all ages as irrelevant?

In York this document had been used to reimagine our diocesan vision which is called *Living Christ's Story*. This vision document helps to re-evaluate and review how we do things. One recent example of using the strategy to reorganise in my own benefice is that the combined annual PCC/APCM meetings have now been reduced from 32 to ten. This is not so someone in diocesan office can reduce my hours or stipend. It is to give me more time to fulfil my priestly calling. And yes, that does include new worshipping



communities and evangelism. But it also means giving me time to be with my parishioners, to simply be there as the traditional priest I am.

In 2013 the Pope said that to evangelize is “to give witness with joy and simplicity to what we are and what we believe in”. How do we make the belief of God’s unconditional love visible to all? We do it by being humbler, by accepting we need to change. Being bolder by having the courage to be a radically inclusive church, and with and through simplicity. I do not experience any of this as undermining my priesthood or the revitalisation of our parishes but as a challenge to do new things and to grow new ministries by focusing upon mission and becoming missionary disciples.

And yet I feel some negativity about the Strategy and Vision document. I hear the, “Not another initiative”, or the damaging statement, “We’ve done it all before, we’ve done it again, and it didn’t work then or now”. These documents past and present are great strategies, but if they are read, dismissed and filed, then that is what they will only ever be: filed documents, and not the transforming tools of renewal and growth that they are meant to be.

As a former teacher we had strategic plans. They often worked because everyone played their part in making them a success. Do we do that? Do we look at this document and think, “How can I engage with this? What part can I play?” I would say we do not. Strategies do not work if they are filed either in a cabinet or a bin.

The Archbishop of York says that these are not new ideas and it is not a new vision, but maybe this time it will be different because this time we are running out of time. We need to resist taking the choice of bin or cabinet. We need to accept the time for change is now. In 2015, Pope Francis said, “We are not living an era of change but a change of era”. As we emerge from the pandemic, this is our lived reality: a changed era. We have been given the tools to grow the Church. We simply need to pick them up and use them and rebuild God’s house and remember the call of our Archbishop to be a radically inclusive church: let’s build God’s house.

*Mrs Heather Black (York):* I have the privilege of leading the Mustard Seed programme which we have developed through a careful process of listening to the voices of people within our poorest parishes. There are two key things that we heard from both clergy and laity. The first was a call to invest in lay people, and we have responded with a year-long programme called Stepping Up - local learning communities where lay people grow together in discipleship and mission in their local community. People who often feel pretty small like the mustard seed. People who are full potential but who have not always had the framework we would all hope for that enables them to flourish. Despite the difficulties of the past year, we have 30 people stepping up, and it is a joy to see their vision and courage as they explore how God wants to use their unique gifts and talents to share the good news of the Gospel in their local communities.

The second thing we heard was a vision for each church to be like the nests in the mustard seed parable: places of welcome; places to belong, to receive support with the challenges that are ever present in places where life is tough; and places where prayer is offered, people receive the love of God and encounter Jesus. These nests are often within the church building, but sometimes it is more appropriate for them to happen elsewhere.

We are seeing a wonderful mixed ecology of lay people who, with growing courage, are working alongside clergy with a vision to develop mission and worshipping communities in church buildings, care homes, schools and community halls.

I confess that I am not someone motivated by targets and large numbers. After all, who can guarantee that we can ever achieve such targets, because it is God alone who gives the growth? However, trusting in the divine agency of growth, it does seem perfectly reasonable for us to believe that many of our parishes will develop some form of new mission within the next ten years. The parishes where I work are predominantly small with many challenges and yet the potential I see for growing gives me courage to believe that we can contribute our small part to this vision.

I hope and pray, Synod, that we will all commit ourselves to a mixed ecology where lay people and clergy work tougher as partners in the Gospel, sharing the good news of Jesus in many and varied ways.

*Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter):* I just wanted to say how much I have appreciated the Vision and Strategy webinars, with their practical examples and ideas, so thank you to everyone involved.

I want to make two points. First, one of the important things I took from the webinars is that the examples given were from places where the vision has been adapted rather than adopted, thus illustrating the flexibility necessary for the local context to respond.

I was heartened by Archbishop Stephen asking if there was anything that was missed, so here goes. Most of the examples in the webinars had a distinctly urban flavour. A wonderfully inspirational priest - you saw her on the clip - spoke of initiatives being taken in the two churches under her care. In our diocese, with a large number of rural parishes and deaneries, we too have wonderful inspirational priests and they have four, six, eight, ten, 12 and even more churches under their care. More recognition of the rural context would be welcome.

Exeter is a proactive diocese. We have a Growing the Rural Church project. We have benefited from Strategic Development funding and we going ahead, importantly, with forming joint councils. But please, recognise and remember the rural.

Secondly, I refer to paragraph 18 of GS 2223, bringing simplicity and coherence to governance structures. I did ask a question about this, it was question 68, in relation to

General Synod. I got a short sort of encouraging reply from the Bishop of Leeds - thank you, Bishop Nick - and that reply said that it is expected that the Governance Review Group will include a recommendation that further work will be done to review this "in the near future". Well, in the Church of England, as we know, the near future can be a very long time ahead indeed.

Members of Synod, a simpler, humbler, bolder Church needs a simpler, humbler, bolder Synod, so please make speed to attend to this possibility.

*Revd Andrew Lightbown (Oxford):* On Friday afternoon, I opened my spam box to find an email from the Archbishop of York. Please, Synod, do not read too much into this. I would like to start this very short speech by thanking Archbishop Stephen and indeed my own diocesan Bishop Steven Croft for the way they have engaged with me addressing my concerns over the last few days. Our exchanges have been candid, forthright and, yes, uncomfortable at times. Perhaps that is what happens when an east Londoner, a Yorkshireman and a Lancastrian engage with each other in the ether, or perhaps it is the natural consequence of three people who care deeply and passionately about the Church of England and her mission.

Archbishop Stephen and Bishop Steven have both sought to address my concerns which are the concerns of a parish priest whose every instinct is to argue for the parish first. I believe in the parish and I believe in parish priests. I can honestly say that over the course of a diverse working life, parish priests rank as some of the most remarkable selfless people I know, people who consistently transcend limits. Many parish priests would not in fact recognise a limit if it was staring them in the face.

I am however angry - incredibly angry - with the language and rhetoric coming out of the multiplyX conference as reported. I am angry because it undermines the parish and parish priests. Myriad, though related to the Church of England, is not the Church of England. Archbishop Stephen has gone to huge lengths to reassure me that the Church of England has not and will not simply adopt the strategy of a Parachurch organisation as its own and that the parish and parish priests remain central to the Church of England.

Both Stephen and Steven have also assured me that vision and strategy will not be developed in a vacuum separate from ecclesiology doctrine and formation. This week I have pushed hard, possibly exasperating both the Archbishop and my diocesan (I can be a dog with a bone) to gain an assurance that the mixed ecology will not circumvent basic Church of England polity. I have asked that the parish system is not only respected but enhanced, and I believe I have received their assurances.

To be sure, I am still a nervous passenger, but I am going to listen to the rest of the debate, and I am going to try to do so having put my sense of anger to one side. In listening to this debate, what I am hoping to hear is yet further affirmation that parishes and their priests are valued as treasures the Church even as we explore what it means

to be mixed ecology. These are the ongoing reassurances that I am looking for so I can become a slightly less nervous passenger.

*The Bishop of Burnley (Rt Revd Philip North):* Burnley is Lancashire's Premier League town to which you are all warmly invited. Five years ago, Bishop Julian challenged the Diocese of Blackburn to start planting new congregations. The very next day one of our most traditional, rather crusty old-fashioned Anglo-Catholic priests rang up and said, "We'll do one". The congregation, which started to meet soon afterwards in a school hall - all age and eucharistic - swiftly became the largest congregation in that benefice and one of the largest in that urban deanery.

There is research that indicates that over 25% of people coming to faith are doing so through new congregations. I want to try to offer some reassurance to those who see this planting movement as theologically tribal or a threat, or an evangelical takeover. It need only be so if we allow it.

There is a huge history of Catholic planting. It was for the most part Catholics who planted into the fast-growing inner city areas in the 19th century and the new estates after the war. There is a new need for Catholic planting right now. As we know, any serious and sustained movement of renewal across this nation will only be effective if it is located, above all, amongst the poor. That is why the Synod voted to have a congregation on every significant social housing estate in the country. Those estates and deprived communities are where a disproportionate number of Catholic parishes are ministering.

There are some national developments that will help. It would help if the Strategic Investment Board sought actively to back some Catholic planting projects, something largely missing from the current portfolio. It would help if our training institutions could do more to equip Catholic ordinands for mission. It would help if the Catholic voice were given greater strength in the work around vision and strategy and in those bodies who are promoting planting. We also need Catholics to grab hold of these opportunities by the scruff of the neck. The one-size-fits-all parish mass or bust approach no longer works in every context. Churches that begin new eucharistic congregations at other times, and in other places, will usually grow. Parish priests, who long to see new people come to faith, are the key enabling factor in that. This initiative need not be a threat to anyone. In fact, it could be a golden opportunity to bring many new people to Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

*The Chair:* After Mary Bucknall, I am going to reduce the speech limit to two minutes, because, sadly, time is pressing.

*Miss Mary Bucknall (Deaf Anglicans Together):* Chair, I welcome this Report. I wish to refer you to paragraph 17, third bullet point, last sentence. The theme is diversity and disability.

I wish to speak up for profoundly deaf people who use British Sign Language and/or lip reading, like myself. They need to be included in the bigger picture because church services are impossible to follow without communication support from interpreters and notetakers. In the past and in an ideal situation there would be deaf chaplains and deaf licensed lay ministers leading services in British Sign Language, but I am sad to say that dioceses are cutting back on specialist ministers and ignoring the requests of deaf worshipping communities.

However, I wish to say that there have been excellent moves towards improving access online to worship materials. For example, the weekly service from the Church of England is now subtitled with interpretation and the *Thy Kingdom Come* materials are interpreted as well. However, I have a point out that the video just shown was not subtitled.

Access is not the same as inclusion. Deaf people are not just observers. Theological training in British Sign Language for deaf people is needed in every diocese. Zoom British Sign Language interpreters is a very good way to meet to worship and can even have an international flavour because everyone from all over the country can meet on Zoom. It is wonderful. This is a great worldwide mission opportunity here, but people are needed to drive this forward in dioceses to save young deaf people from ignorance, loneliness and fear. Deaf people are the last to hear the Gospel message because they cannot hear, but they need materials and resources to be made accessible to them.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*The Bishop of Peterborough (Rt Revd Donald Allister)*: I am very grateful to Archbishop Stephen and his team for bringing this to us. I am looking forward to the further discussions in February as well. There is much here that is tremendous. A Christ-centred church - yes, yes, yes.

I want to focus briefly on children and youth. I am so glad that has been brought in as part of where we are going and what we want to be doing. It is critical. In our diocese we are running a project partly funded by the SDF training youth workers as apprenticeships and to degree level. This is really key. We are learning from it, and I hope this sort of thing can be done more widely, because the Church of England centrally has not yet cottoned on to the importance of youth workers and to training them to a good standard.

We have a brilliant director of children and youth in our diocese, who has worked as a secular and church youth worker over decades. I have spoken to him about the proposals and there are a couple of things he has given me that I think need to be shared. The idea of youth hubs of 25 is a bit arbitrary, maybe even a bit bizarre. Small can be beautiful too. Rural matters. What really matters for youth work and children's work is relationships and being intergenerational, not lumping all the young people together in one place, but letting a small number of young people in a village relate to children and to older - intergenerational relationships in youth work.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* We are being encouraged to be visionary, so I would ask if we were going to start the Church of England from scratch and think really big, what might we want it to be like? Let us dare to dream for a moment. Would it not be great if we could reach people where they are by having our very own building in the heart of every community as a centre for people to gather and worship and which might also sometimes be used for community events: the presence of God incarnate in brick and stone. Each one of these centres might have its own clergy, especially selected and trained, who could minister and reach out to all the people in their own contexts, and these clergy would live right in the heart of their community and be part of it. And how about if we could release these clergy to carry out their ministry full time by giving them some kind of stipend? Of course, we do not have to dream because we already have all this.

I absolutely believe that there is no desire to side-line parishes. The danger is the more we channel our energies into ambitious new initiatives, the less time, money and energy there is for the daily round of traditional parish ministry. We all know that many parishes are now really struggling, squeezed between declining congregations and increased parish share demands, and from whence cometh their help? There is Strategic Development funding and Fresh Expressions funding, but where is the getting on with the parish ministry on the ground funding? It is so much harder to build a thing up than to allow it to fall into decline. Until I see real evidence that we are willing to treasure what we already have, I am afraid I will struggle to take note of this Report.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* On Thursday, it is the feast of St Swithin, patron saint of Winchester Cathedral, and of our mission partners at Stavanger Cathedral, in Norway, and thanks to the wonders of technology at our service yesterday we were able to hear from the Dean Stefan Emmerhof with a St Swithin's Day message. He talked just like Jackie Doyle-Brett has said, about going back after Covid and the fact that we cannot go back after Covid. He suggested that we do need to go back to basics, which he described as going back to the simple and most important things. I found his message prophetic, not just for us in Winchester but for us all at this time. I think it resonates strongly with this Vision and Strategy paper.

I want to talk a bit about being a church of missionary disciples, which I think is one of the simple but most important things, because it turns out it is not actually that simple to do in practice. There is still some way to go, I would suggest, in helping all of us to understand we are the Church Monday to Saturday, not just on Sunday, and that how we live out our faith every day in all the things that we do really matters.

We have heard some very inspiring stories of faith in action, Synod. John Spence's impressive CV we looked at yesterday, presumably started at some point with him deciding to become a banker. We also heard about Maria Millis, a servant in the household of the Earl of Shaftesbury, sharing her faith and hope with an unhappy boy.

We are all called to be missionary disciples, every day, in all the places and with all the people, wherever God has placed us.

I want to strongly support the Vision and Strategy paper, but please could I respectfully ask for consideration to given to reword this section so it does not highlight any specific area? I am the first to acknowledge that the environmental crisis is urgent and demands our attention, but I feel that here it muddies the water because we need the message to be simple and about the most important thing, which is that we are all called to live out our faith.

Archbishop, you ask what I pray for and that is what I pray for. I pray that each person would know that they are called by God to live out their faith wherever and whatever they are doing.

*The Chair.* Thank you, Alison. Christian, please.

*Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam (York):* I declare an interest as a member of the Shaping Group for this Report.

Chair, I welcome this Report as a much needed and timely breath of fresh air for the Church of England. We are living in times of great change, with many present challenges. Decades of history of numerical decline and uncertain further challenges for church as we unlock and return to a new normal. Anyone who has read the 2019 Statistics for Mission or any of the other data will not know that this discussion is urgent, important and critical to the future of the Church of England.

I am delighted that although some are critical, it has also been very well received. The Christian organisation Youthscape has said that the goals about children and youth are “bold and brilliant”, and should be shared by every denomination and church.

I was recently at a meeting with 20 young Anglicans all under the age the 22, and out of interest I asked for a show of hands of who thought that in the next few years they would be involved in planting a church. All 20 raised their hands.

For another example, a friend Wale, a 24-year-old British Nigerian who felt called to plant a church when he was at university in Leicester. Three years later he was planting his second Anglican church, this time in London. This month he was ordained as a deacon in the Church of England. There are many people like Wale and the young adults I have mentioned, and they offer us great hope for the future, and perhaps an example of a more fluid and flexible approach to deployment and training of both lay and ordained people.

Chair, I welcome this Report wholeheartedly. I note that it may perhaps contain the greatest aspirations for mission in England since Augustine of Canterbury. I plan to spend my next decade of ministry focusing and investing in these priorities.

*The Chair.* Sadly, we are pressed for time this morning, so I am going to test the mind of Synod for a motion of closure; therefore, I put the motion for closure on Item 29.

*The motion was put and carried, 220 voting in favour, 63 against, with eight recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* The motion is carried. I invite Archbishop Stephen to respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you to everyone who spoke. I am very sorry to those who did not have time to speak. I obviously cannot mention all the things we heard.

I want to start with Prudence Dailey with whom I find myself in almost complete agreement, as I often do. I want to pick out one phrase from her speech “release the clergy”. I want to say that this is precisely what this is about, alongside Transforming Effectiveness and a governance review, to see all of this about releasing the clergy so that we can revitalise our parishes, and to use the fascinating the language that Anderson Jeremiah shared with us of “conservation alongside innovation” in a mixed ecology”, as Anne Foreman said working this out on the ground in parishes and dioceses, adaption, not adoption.

Thank you, Andrew Lightbown, for your graciousness. I hope your nerves have been settled a bit through this debate, as we have heard a lot from parish clergy telling us that, as far as they are concerned, this is about them being released to do the job they have been called to do. That crosses all traditions, as Philip North in his usual provocative and winsome way reminded us. I speak as a fairly unreconstructed Anglo-Catholic who when I became a parish priest, one of the first things I did was to introduce Benediction on a Sunday evening against the wishes of the Bishop. It grew because people liked something different, something contemplative. There are many, many different ways of being the mixed ecology church through our parishes and through building a broader church, with clergy and lay people working together.

Heather Black told us about the wonderful work of the Mustard Seed project, planting churches in some of the poorest communities of the north of England. Jackie Doyle-Brett spoke very powerfully about how the vision was working out in her parish. So did Barry Hill in his beautiful opening speech. We heard much more besides that was positive and encouraging.

Synod, I do not quite know where some of these things come from that say that somehow there is an agenda to undermine the work of parishes and the work of clergy. I can simply tell you from the bottom of my heart that if I thought, even for a moment, that is what any of this was about, then I would be voting against this motion to take note. But this is an



invitation for us to be a younger, more diverse church, to be a mixed ecology church, and to be a Christ-centred church.

There is one thing particular thing I need to note. Mary Bucknall, thank you very much for reminding us that diversity must include disability. I recognise we have more work to do on that and, Sam, we want you to help us with that work. May I say the video actually did have subtitles, but I am very sorry for some reason when it was shown the subtitles were not switched on. I do apologise for that.

A few last things. I am excited by this vision because it is a vision that will enable more people to become disciples of Jesus Christ. I am excited about this vision because it is focused on Christ and it is focused on discipleship. Alison, I agree with you on the day-to-day living out of our faith, that is my prayer as well. I am excited for this vision because by putting the Five Marks of Mission at the centre, it brings justice and environmental justice into the heart of our agenda. Therefore, I hope that you will take note of this Report, recognising that by so doing we keep the conversation going, which we will come back to in our Synod, and which I encourage to take place in all our parishes and in all our dioceses. May God bless us as we try to work together on this, as I think we have so encouragingly demonstrated in this debate, which felt like the Church of England at its very best, working together for the cause of the Gospel.

Synod, bless you. I hope you will vote for this motion which will just keep this work going. Amen.

*The Chair.* Thank you, Archbishop Stephen. I am now going to put Item 29 to the vote “That the Synod do take note of this Report”.

*The motion was put and carried, 285 voting in favour, eight against, with 17 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* Item 29 is carried. Thank you everyone for all your contributions to that debate. That concludes this item of business. We will move to the next item on the Agenda, Transforming Effectiveness, in a moment.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 11.45 am.

## **ITEM 30**

### **TRANSFORMING EFFECTIVENESS (GS 2224)**

*The Chair.* This is a presentation followed by questions. Members will need GS 2224. Bishop Martin and Adrian Harris will present for around 15 minutes. Then we will have an opportunity for questions, which will take us up to our lunch break at 12.25. Over to you, please, Bishop Martin and Adrian.

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley):* First, we are grateful to the Business Committee for allocating some time to present this area of work, and for keeping us on the Agenda when we moved from a physical meeting to a Zoom meeting.

As we describe in GS 2224, the Transforming Effectiveness area is the third stream of work begun about a year ago flowing from and working alongside the Vision and Strategy work, about which we have just been engaged, and the Governance Review Group. The Transforming Effectiveness work was set up initially to look at how to enhance the effective working of the National Church Institutions, by looking at different ways of working that would benefit the whole Church and at the same time would reduce the costs of the NCI operations without adding burdens to the dioceses.

We started out asking what can simply be stopped, what should be done in a national office because it can only be done or best be done that way and what could or should be done differently; where is effort being duplicated, or not being joined up in ways that would render it more helpful, and, indeed, effective.

We have been guided, indeed I would say compelled, by two questions when looking at the National Church Institutions. How does this support enable the flourishing of the local church of our worshipping communities? That has really been our main guide for most of the work. The second question for a smaller area of work in scope was how does this serve the Church of England in her national and international engagement?

Throughout this work one of the key values that has become very strongly affirmed is that of service. The NCIs exist to serve the mission and ministry of the wider Church, in whatever form that takes, in a similar servant way to that of the diocesan office in relation to the wider diocese. The high-level proposals for realigning the church-facing and nation-facing operations of the National Church Institutions, and referred to in GS 2224, have now been supported by the various governing bodies of the NCIs that are directly affected, including the Church Commissioners and the Archbishops' Council. The process of consulting with staff is about to begin, so you will understand that I am not able to share any more about this area than we have written about in the paper at this stage.

However, what became evident very early on in this process, particularly through a wide-ranging scoping exercise we undertook in the autumn and described in GS 2224 was that engaging with one part of the life of the Church leads you to engage with other parts. In fact, this has been an exercise in applied ecclesiology or practical theology. What is the operational shape and dynamic of the Church that the Spirit is leading us towards? Every part is a part of the body of Christ, and it is vital that we see each part as such. The NCIs are as much a part of the body as the local congregation, and each part has its part to play. Paul's image of the body in I Corinthians emerged as the defining image for us. What flows from that is that every part is a source of wisdom and expertise for the benefit of the whole in our vocation together as the body serving the people of our nation.

One of the clear messages from the autumn consultation was to recognise and value the expertise and wisdom across the Church. Let us find ways to be better joined up, to learn from and support one another across and between congregations, dioceses, chaplaincies, mission agencies, TEIs, and so on, because we are all part of the same body, called to work together, animated by the Spirit, to be the body of Christ in the world.

There has been a profound sense through this process that this is about release, about setting free, to use and share the gifts each part of the body has received for the sake of the whole, for the sake of participating in God's mission. And then we found ourselves asking the questions that led to the work that we are focusing on this morning and that Adrian Harris has kindly taken on, having moved from being the Church's Head of Digital in order to do this. I want to thank the extraordinary dedication and skill of a number of the NCI staff who have worked incredibly hard on this project and the host people who have worked alongside. This has for me been a humbling experience.

So to Adrian's work. This is the question: what areas of work are dioceses engaged in that are being replicated over and over again that could more effectively be done once or a small number of times rather than, say, 42 times? Where are the gaps and the opportunities to significantly reduce the administrative burden of worshipping communities, freeing time for ministry and mission? This is the work on which we want to consult with you. I will now hand over to Adrian to explain the research that he has led over the last two months with hundreds of people across the Church.

*Mr Adrian Harris:* Good morning, Synod. As Bishop Martin mentioned, I moved in February 2021 from four and a half years setting up and leading the Church's Digital Team to take on this new area of Transforming Effectiveness, and in recent months I have been focused on building and testing initial ideas from the scoping work that took place in 2020 through a comprehensive research programme.

In the presentation today I am going to explore: an overview of simpler support for dioceses and worshipping communities, and how it seeks to serve those different groups; the research programme and the results from it; how the work will be progressed in the months ahead; and a discussion with Synod members around a few things you can see on the screen there, as well as taking any wider questions.

The simpler support for dioceses and worshipping communities stream of TE is focused on freeing up our churches, cathedrals and dioceses for mission by relieving the administrative burden, working more effectively together, and enhancing existing diocesan functions and activities where possible, better supporting worshipping communities with services the research has identified as helping, and helping to develop a more collaborative culture across the Church.

It goes without saying that this has been a very challenging time and worshipping communities have innovated the most extraordinary ways of living out God's love, from

pastoral care, to social action, to online worship and now mixed mode church to meet the needs of congregations and those exploring faith.

Any changes proposed from this Transforming Effectiveness work need to make a notable and noticeable positive difference for churches and dioceses that decide to use the various services. Good examples of where we have seen significant opportunities to free up churches and dioceses from the research programme include technology, online solutions and other church support services. I will explain a little more about those in a moment.

There are six principles that sit at the heart of this work that I have been undertaking. This is a voluntary offering for dioceses, cathedrals and churches to opt into as they wish. The products, activities and services obviously need to meet the needs identified from the research programme and learning from other organisations that we have spoken to. What we are proposing is that there will be a simple virtual shelf of products, activities and services available with clarity with about what is free and what needs paying for. Centralisation is neither the objective nor the answer with this work. The work seeks to look at how we might be able to add existing capability and build up, where necessary, in locations outside London. There will need to be contracts, service level agreements and quality assurance in place to ensure that everything is formalised. This is as you would expect when using secular services. The services proposed are provided based on being scalable, cost-effective and affordable for those who wish to opt in and use them.

This slide provides a summary of the research that took place and that builds on the scoping exercise led by Bishop Martin in the autumn of 2020 from which the overall Transforming Effectiveness programme was developed. This suggested where the key areas might be to reduce duplication between dioceses and to reduce the administrative burden for local worshipping communities, freeing up our churches for mission. The research process I led took place with nearly 400 people across the Church, including DBF chairs, diocesan secretaries, General Synod members, bishops' leadership teams, clergy and lay leaders across a number of dioceses, as well as cathedral administrators and NCI staff.

There were 15 workshops in total. Following each of the workshops, a survey was sent to ask people to rank the services they would consider using and what churches would be willing to pay for. In the workshops, we spent time discussing a range of possible services that could be provided to worshipping communities and dioceses. Again, I want to emphasise that most of these will be provided by working with dioceses already doing this, and possibly charities and other organisations that know the Church of England well. Proper tendering will be put in place. As part of the initial research we also captured other possible services that churches would welcome support with.

The key areas that we focused on - and you can see these on the screen - included HR, personnel and payroll services, technology provision, finance, policies, training and

advice knowledge hub, property and buildings, project management support, and digital solutions to improve church administration and life events.

Using the 15 workshops and survey results we reviewed all the feedback and put it into three major themes that emerged: work that we can start on now, a range of services for worshipping communities, and a number of opportunities. A good example of the proposed approach is the brilliant work that has been done in the Diocese of Birmingham with the various services they offer to churches in their diocese. This includes HR, finance, payroll and building support. We have learnt much from this as part of the research stage, and there is potential to work with Birmingham and other dioceses to make their existing services available to other Church of England churches across the country.

First, in terms of work we can start on now, we propose developing a knowledge hub. This will hold key policies and guidance on areas such as GDPR and data, the environment, legal, buildings and HR, all of which were identified as priorities in the research.

Secondly, technology provision for dioceses and cathedrals with a pilot underway in the Diocese of Bristol and early interest from others. This has the potential to deliver significant cost savings for dioceses and cathedrals. Other areas we looked at include free C of E clergy and church email accounts and online support networks to help groups to communicate more effectively with each other.

Secondly, there are several services for worshipping communities that clergy, church wardens, treasurers and PCC members suggested could really provide value. These ideas need more development and testing of concepts in the months ahead and include HR advice for church staff only, payroll service provision, again for staff that the church or diocese or cathedral may employ, bookkeeping services for monthly and year end accounts, and, finally, church administration software featuring a standardised approach to finance, managing electoral rolls, rotas, online payments, donations and closed links with [achurchnearyou.com](http://achurchnearyou.com). This is an area where there is very strong support for a standardised software package while also recognising that churches are free to use tools they have already purchased.

Finally, there are several opportunities for exploring the ways in which we can share services across dioceses and for working closely with the church-building teams to support the work they already have under way.

How will these new activities help churches? We heard multiple stories of volunteer treasurers right across the country struggling to balance running payroll alongside other responsibilities. A payroll service would free churches up in this area, and the idea was well received. Similarly, a bookkeeping service would also help for those PCCs that choose to opt in. For lay leaders, the new software building on the existing Life Events

Diary will make it easier to administer the life of the Church. Any Church of England church in the country will be able to access the tool to administer weddings, christenings and funerals, process online donations, gifting and Gift Aid, help to organise rotas across the life of the church, and receive online room and hall hire church bookings and payments through [achurchnearyou.com](http://achurchnearyou.com). Churches will be able to approve or decline bookings.

The new online knowledge hub will enable church and lay leaders to go to one place to access a range of training policies and templates provided by the national Church, focusing on several key areas to start with, to watch simple training videos and join regular webinars to hear advice from both national colleagues and how other churches across the county have implemented the changes on the ground. And, finally, to download and where appropriate customise the policies.

Finally, technology support for dioceses is another area that received widespread support. Over the last two months myself and colleagues within the TE Team have worked closely within the NCIs to support the Diocese of Bristol by providing a long-term cost-effective proposal to update its ageing IT infrastructure, including critical services like email. Overall, we expect this to save the diocese a significant amount in the three years ahead. It is clearly a repeatable and scalable model for other dioceses and could save considerable amounts of money and encourage stronger collaboration.

In most of the examples above, the national Church would help to procure the services from dioceses, charities or other organisations. From then on, our role would be to provide quality assurance, to ensure churches continue to receive a good service and suppliers remain happy, and delivering it against the agreements that have been put in place. Like any other organisation, we would regularly re-tender to ensure that the most cost-effective solution is provided.

As the chart on the screen shows, the approach to offering services, particularly direct to churches, has three key elements that will enable us to keep improving. Listening to the needs of churches, cathedrals, dioceses. We will encourage regular feedback to help us maintain and improve the services provided by dioceses, charities or other companies. We will work with a range of dioceses and other suppliers to provide the services at sensible prices and high levels of service. And quality assurance. The national Church will ensure the services meet the needs of churches, cathedrals and dioceses.

In terms of where we go from here, the next steps are further research on each of the areas with church leaders to understand exact requirements, starting to tender and select suppliers and dioceses to work with, and implementing in areas of significant demand and running pilots.

Finally, please let me know if you want me to be involved or you would like me to run a workshop in your diocese or area of the church. I am very happy to do that and my email address is on the screen, [adrian.harris@churchofengland.org](mailto:adrian.harris@churchofengland.org).

Finally, at the heart of this work is freeing churches and dioceses up for mission and to continue serving God and their communities.

I will now hand back to Bishop Martin. We would like to hear your views on some of the themes on the screen, but obviously any other questions as well. Thank you for listening.

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley):* I am handing back to our Chair.

*The Chair:* We will take questions in groups of three. Please keep your questions concise so that we can hear as many people as possible in the next 20 minutes. To assist in this, I have asked for the timer to be set for two minutes and there will be an alert when there are 60 seconds left. Please ask questions or contribute to the discussion areas. We will start with Nigel Bacon, Ian Paul and Gavin Oldham.

*Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln):* Thank you for the presentation, particularly what Adrian has just shared with us. I find it very exciting and it certainly will be welcomed in my diocese.

I want to pick up on an aspect of the Report we have in front of us. I am pleased to see from a couple of references within the Report that the Transforming Effectiveness programme will include consideration of where function should be located. My question is how radical and determined are the team working on this prepared to be with regard to where the NCIs are located? Whether it is a matter of shuffling desks around in an office, moving to another more economic building in the same area, or relocating to another part of the country, it is never easy as one has to balance the feelings and sensitivities of staff members with hard economics. There is always a risk that the 1,001 objections that can be raised drown out the economic case, so it demands a high degree of determination and objectivity on the part of whoever is leading the project.

It is not just a case of economics. Moving those parts of the NCIs that do not have to be in Westminster out into the country, if done well, would improve connectivity with dioceses, free staff from the drudgery of lengthy and expensive daily commuting and allow them to enjoy a higher quality of life in beautiful parts of the country where the cost of living is significantly lower, places, may I suggest, such as beautiful Lincolnshire, and indeed my home town of Market Deeping, and for that I declare an interest.

*Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Thank you very much for the presentation. I think it is a really important piece of work. My first and main question is: given the complexity, how do we avoid unintended consequences coming out of the new proposals?

The second part of the question is I was very encouraged to see in the report of the research work in the paper where there were identified the cultural changes needed, the top two were, number one, trust, number two, hierarchy and deference. I think I speak for many people when I say that during the pandemic there were various things which really strained the trust between clergy, laity and bishops, including issues around the administration of the Communion, responses to the pandemic, issues around singing and so on. I think also in the organisation of the Church of England, trust is undermined when different groups go off and do their own thing, and there is a lack of transparency and a lack of accountability and a lack of clarity about why things are being done in the way they are. I guess my question then is what needs to be done to address that?

Lastly, on the question of deference I asked a question, Question 75, and I was told that it was agreed in 1968 that we would stop using deferential titles such as “your Grace”, and yet it has happened today in Synod. I wonder when we are finally going to really believe in eliminating a culture of deference, where people are addressed in different terms, they wear different garb, and they radiate issues around deference. When are we actually going to eliminate that, and make a difference to the culture?

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* While appreciating that centralisation is not the answer for all administrative services, does the group recognise that moving to a single point of accountability, vested in this General Synod, for all administrative costs throughout the Church is the only way for us to build a proper appreciation of the scale of duplication across our organisation and to break free from wasting time and resources on duplication, as recognised in a motion which we passed here in this General Synod in February 2017? While I am delighted to see Adrian now fully involved with this, why has it taken the Archbishops’ Council so long to take action on a motion which we passed four and a half years ago?

*The Chair:* May I hand back over to Martin and Adrian, please?

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley):* Thank you for those questions. First, Nigel, I apologise, I am technically limited and therefore had not got my sound turned on, and I only got the last part of what you said, but you wonderfully spoke about Lincolnshire, which is the diocese in which I was ordained, so I declare an interest, too.

The point I think you were making was about whether we are looking at ways activities can be located in other parts of the country. That is a message that came through very clearly in the consultation we did last autumn, and we are certainly looking at that.

Ian, thank you for your questions. In terms of the unintended consequences, one of the reasons that we are actually taking these processes through a number of discussions with a number of different groups is to try to unearth those. Even in this particular area



that we are talking about this morning, and which Adrian is focusing on, each time we have a conversation about it something new emerges, so we are trying very carefully to avoid unintended consequences. We will never manage it all, but we hope that people will be able to help us anticipate them and to point them out to us. We have already had a number pointed out to us, and that has meant we have been able to change tack.

Let me deal with the question of trust first. It has come up over and over again in all of these conversations and it has come up, I know, in the Governance Group too. Of course, as we know, trust arrives on foot and flees on horseback. What we need to understand, and this is a project that we have just embarked on, is what are the dimensions of trust, what builds and sustains trust, so that we can ensure that that becomes a much more pervasive quality of our life together. That work is underway and we will draw in and invite people to engage with that, and I hope that at some future Synod we can actually engage in that as a subject.

In terms of hierarchy and deference, I think it is about titles but not just about titles. It is about behaviour, demeanour, the idea in your mind as you hold the role you are exercising. I think there is a lot of work to do there, but we need to be addressing this and need to be much more open, and not sitting on those things that might protect us in one way or another, so I am certainly committed to engaging with that.

Gavin, I cannot answer the question about why it has taken so long. On your point about the single point of accountability, as I know you appreciate, one of the things that we are doing here is holding together what might happen in one place, let us say in a national office, and what happens in what are effectively 42 separate charitable organisations in dioceses. Our approach is to see where we can get agreement, consent, some recognition that this will be better if we do it a different way.

*Mrs Michelle Obende (Chelmsford):* I would like to start very quickly by commending the work of the team behind this initiative. Like the previous item, their desire to engage people across the whole Church is very much appreciated.

My question for the group is what did you see from the research as having the biggest impact for worshipping communities? May I be very cheeky and quickly say on record that I was able to attend one of the workshops, which, as a consultant, I can say confidently was very well run, enjoyable and informative, and it was great to see how quickly the team responded on the feedback and created an extra workshop so that working General Synod members might have an opportunity to contribute too. Thank you very much.

*Ms Mary Talbott (Europe):* I am from the 42nd diocese. I very much welcome Adrian Harris' presentation on the things that can be provided centrally and have benefited from some of these, but please can the designers remember Europe when they are setting them up? AChurchNearYou still shows all times in BST without indicating such. Also, we

have been asking for a long time for help with contactless giving. Please put it in at the design stage when it is much easier.

*Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford):* I fully support the objective of reducing duplication of effort, as I am sure we all do, enabling churches and individuals to focus on the priorities of the Gospel. I have a very quick question on this. Is it really effective for us as a Church to reinvent solutions for church admin, payroll, rotas and so on, when such solutions are commercially available in things such as the Sage Church app which have been developed and refined with far greater resources than the Church of England could possibly throw at such development? Not invented here is not a good reason for dismissing such solutions which can right now provide for the needs of churches and dioceses.

*Mr Adrian Harris:* Thank you for those three questions. I will deal with them in order. First, thank you to Michelle and to the many people who joined the workshops that we led, and thank you for your feedback on those. I think the area where we saw time and time again the biggest impact for worshipping communities in particular was in some of the areas around the direct-to-church offering. What really struck me was the range of churches that actually employ (even part time) people and are seeking, whether it is a part-time parish administrator or a part-time children's and youth worker right across from small to large. I think that is an area in which we can very quickly seek to do something. I think there is a lot of clarity that came from the workshops about that and over the summer we are going to seek to refine those areas, in particular, to really understand what would most benefit churches, so that we can start working on it in earnest in the autumn.

In terms of Mary's question about the Diocese in Europe, absolutely not forgotten in this work. A good friend of mine is now the Diocesan Secretary for the Diocese in Europe, Andrew Caspari. I have already had conversations with him, and what I will do, Mary, is I will follow up with Andrew about running a workshop or several workshops with yourself and others in the Diocese in Europe. I have made a note to do that.

Finally, on Andrew's point, I could not agree more with that. We are absolutely not seeking to build custom-made solutions within the NCIs. The principle of almost all of this work is looking at off-the-shelf technology. Just briefly in terms of the church administration software, we are actually talking to one supplier that recently tendered as part of a wider stream of work. The premise of this work is working with established partners that do it well, and looking at what is already available commercially. We are dealing as minimum custom builds of this as possible.

*Mr Philip French (Rochester):* I am delighted to see this work and to see the leading role that Adrian is taking in it. Could I ask for a little more information on investigating alternative models to the burden of being a charity? There are some things we do not just 42 times but 12,500 times, and we are finding it harder and harder to do so as the

burden puts off potential volunteers at local level. Without in any way wishing to undermine the parish system, what might be done to reduce the burden of regulation and compliance at the parish level, particularly for those excepted charities below the £100,000 annual budget threshold?

*Canon Elizabeth Renshaw (Chester):* Synod has recently passed a new DBE Measure which will require many diocesan boards of education to review their procedures and perhaps to implement some expensive software, et cetera. I have question for Adrian. Do the opportunities you offer apply to DBEs in the same way as dioceses generally, and to cathedrals?

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* My question is on resources for treasurers. Having been one for 12 and a half years in a large parish, I appreciate the need for help in claiming Gift Aid. However, I would ask that they use resources also to point people towards the Parish Giving scheme, which not only takes the entire administration of Gift Aid for donations made that way from treasurers but also has the additional option of the inflationary uplift, which really helps. Could I have reassurance that that will be included in this work?

*The Chair:* Bishop Martin and Adrian, back to you, please.

*The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley):* I am going to answer Philip's question and then hand over to Adrian for Betty and Judy's.

Yes, Philip, we are looking at this whole area - and it is a minefield - about the multitude of charities in local parishes. You will appreciate there are many strands to this work. It is a piece of work that we are literally about to start. I have a meeting this week to begin to engage with that, and we will be looking forward to bringing back thoughts and reflections, and certainly, if anybody has any advice or help to help us think through this then I would be very grateful indeed. I am now handing over to Adrian.

*Mr Adrian Harris:* On Betty's point, absolutely, it would encompass DBEs and other parts of the Church. We want to make anything we do as widely available as possible. I have made a note, Betty, to follow up with you in terms of having a conversation about the points you raise in more detail.

To Julie's point about the Parish Giving scheme, absolutely, I am having conversations with NCI colleagues, with the CEO of the Parish Giving scheme, to follow up and look at the opportunities to collaborate and work together.

*The Chair:* We have time for two more short questions.

*Revd Chris Tebbutt (Salisbury):* Thank you, Bishop Martin and Adrian, for your presentation, which I am sure is greatly encouraging to dioceses all across the country.

My question was partly put by Andy earlier about inventing solutions that already exist. In a previous life, just before I left a multinational computer company to train for ministry, I was given a role to carry out some benchmarking work. This involved looking at what we considered best-of-breed organisations who were leaders in their fields, to see what we could learn.

My question is what work have you done by looking at similar organisations which are considered leaders in terms of efficiency and effectiveness in delivering their services and ask how we can learn from them rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, and see where the Spirit is leading us?

*Mr John Freeman (Chester):* I have been a church treasurer now for 30-odd years and during that time I have had my own simple Excel spreadsheet to deal with the accounts. Other people whose accounts I have examined have taken it up and found it quite useful. I ask you to bear that in mind. Also, in another guise, I used to at one time do a weekly payroll for 12 part-time employees in the days when you had to use a tax table and pay them by weekly cheque. I commend the work of this organisation, but please note that these proprietary programs produce an awful lot of paper. My accounts go into one folder. I am examining somebody's now who uses one of these programs who has three books' worth of material, which does not make life easy. Whatever you do, produce something that does not produce mountains of paper in these days when we should be producing less paper.

*The Chair:* Bishop Martin and Adrian, back to you, please.

*Mr Adrian Harris:* To answer Chris, and trying to be as jargon-free as possible, we have been running a study to benchmark the work particularly on direct-to-church services in the four areas I outlined: HR advice, payroll, church administration. We are actually running a study to look at what could be provided by dioceses - I mentioned Birmingham and Sheffield is about to do something quite similar- but also looking at charity partners and commercial partners that know the Church well, so looking to see what is out there and then against half a dozen criteria to benchmark. Given all the experience you have, I would really love to follow up with you, so I have made a note, Chris, and I will be in touch by email and set up a Zoom conversation. If you have time to do that, that would be brilliant.

To John Freeman's point, again I really appreciate the feedback and absolutely we should think about the environment and the amount of paper. I would emphasise again the point again that it is entirely up to a church if it wants to opt in to do this. You have been a treasurer for many years and have the processes you use; if those work well there is no need to use this, it is all completely voluntary. Thank you for your feedback.

*The Chair.* That ends Item 31. Thank you to all who participated. I now close this sitting. Synod resumes at 1.30. That is slightly earlier than you may have seen from the Notice Paper.

THE CHAIR *Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 1.46 pm.

### **ITEM 31**

#### **MOTION FROM THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS ON THE REPORT FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION AND DIALOGUE GROUP (GS 2225)**

*The Chair.* Good afternoon, Synod. Welcome back after lunch. We move to Item 31, the Motion from the House of Bishops on the Report from the Implementation and Dialogue Group. Members will need GS 2225 for this item. I am going to call, first of all, the Bishop of Rochester to speak to Item 31. Bishop, you have up to ten minutes to speak.0202

*The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd James Langstaff):* Members of Synod, I had not expected this contribution to be made in the last few hours of my synodical participation. Indeed, it comes after my farewell to and from the Diocese of Rochester, but the circumstances we have all been living through mean that bringing this item to Synod has been delayed.

Additionally, those of us involved would have preferred some less formal in-person engagement, as we had in fringe meetings at a much earlier stage of this process, to go alongside the debate in Synod, but we are where we are. Some of my earlier substantive contributions at Synod were between 2012 and 2014 when I was privileged to Chair the Group which brought to Synod the Five Guiding Principles, the House of Bishops' Declaration, the Measure and the other elements of what is sometimes called the "2014 Settlement".

As a result of that work and the Synod's decision, all three orders of ministry in the Church of England were then open to women as well as to men, while we also put in place arrangements for those who, by conscience and theological conviction, were not able to accept that development and those arrangements were not time limited. Over the subsequent seven years, therefore, we have been seeking to inhabit the framework put in place at that time, something which a good many had previously thought might not be possible.

A key dimension of that framework has been that it was designed to be less about rigid processes and legal provisions and more about the facilitation of relationship and mutual respect and understanding. As noted in GS 2225, and in the Report attached to it, the House of Bishops set up an Implementation and Dialogue Group in response to a

recommendation from the Independent Reviewer in his Report into circumstances around the nomination to the See of Sheffield.

The group set out to, "Review how the House of Bishops' Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles as part of the Settlement that made possible the admission of women to the episcopate is being understood, implemented and received in the Church". In my view, such a piece of work would anyway have been a good thing to undertake.

My own Synod membership comes full circle as I find myself ending my period of membership by returning to this matter. Given the breadth of perspectives held by members of the Implementation and Dialogue Group, Synod members will probably not be surprised to hear that our discussions were not always easy and, as with the 2012 to 2014 process, I did at times wonder whether we would be able to reach a good outcome.

The fact that we did produce a Report with recommendations which had almost unanimous support is a testament to the attitude and commitment of the members of the Group and I take this opportunity to thank them for all that they have contributed. The IDG's work was largely complete at the end of 2019 and the House of Bishops discussed the draft of the Report in December that year.

Some further work was done following that discussion with the version you now see coming to the House in July 2020. Though the Report was always going to be a Report to the House which commissioned it, it had always been assumed that it would also come to Synod in some form or another, but Covid intervened and it is now a year later and, indeed, we are three and a half years since the IDG began its work.

Covid notwithstanding, life has not stood still and, as indicated in paragraph 8 of GS 2225, new experience has been gained and new or reshaped questions are arising - and some of those may be indicated later on in our debate, I am sure. I suppose that, given these circumstances, the House might have sought to reconvene the Group in order for the work to be updated. However, what was decided was to bring the Report to Synod in its existing form as a platform for a debate in which further experience may be shared, including, I hope, instances of good practice.

In doing that, we recognise that the Report is now somewhat dated, but we also believe that it contains a lot of really useful and important material. With that, as described in paragraph 10 of GS 2225, the House brings an important decision it has made to establish a Standing Commission as a means of continuing to keep these matters under review. The remit of this Commission is different from that of the Independent Reviewer, though it does I think sit in a complementary way alongside the Reviewer.

Thus, for example, the Commission gives us a body which can pick up the recommendations of the Reviewer, especially when those may move beyond the specific local situation and have implications for the whole Church. This Commission also gives

us some means by which the particular recommendations made in the IDG's Report may be taken forward - indeed, that will be its first task. While there was not the unanimous support for every one of those recommendations from within the Group itself, there was very substantial support for almost all of them.

While the House itself has in formal terms neither accepted nor rejected the recommendations, and nor is Synod being asked to do so, those recommendations remain very much on the table. It will be for the Commission to address them, working with the House of Bishops and a wide range of individuals and other bodies concerned to assess how they may best be taken forward. Some will be relatively uncontroversial and easy to implement. Others may need further consideration in terms of both practicality and the effects of their implementation.

The terms of reference then give a framework for the Commission's continuing remit beyond that initial task. I do actually think that the establishing of this Commission puts in place something which, with the benefit of hindsight, we probably should have put in place back in 2014. Here is a body which can be solely focused on fostering those arrangements that were put in place for the flourishing of the whole Church.

It can address issues and questions which have arisen and others which doubtless will arise. Importantly, it can collect and disseminate learning and good practice and, unlike the IDG itself, it is there to do that on a continuing basis. With the Standing Commission now being established to take forward the work of the IDG on that continuing basis, I want to take this opportunity to underline what I have written in paragraphs 11 and 12 of GS 2225.

The recommendations of the IDG cover a wide range of matters but absolutely central is the continuing dissemination of both the detail and the spirit of what was put in place in 2014 by the House of Bishops and the General Synod. With the passing of the years, we have ordained and lay people coming into leadership into our Church, both locally and nationally, who were not involved in the detailed and nuanced discussions which took place then.

With a new Synod soon to be elected, there will be fewer members with memories going back to those debates. Each year, praise God, we have new people being ordained and others being licensed as new lay ministers for whom 2014 will seem increasingly far in the past. If that were to put in place at that time as to continue to shape our common life, then we need to communicate both the spirit and form of the Measure and the declaration including the Guiding Principles.

I do believe that, in putting these things in place, we were responding to the guidance of God and that this Synod in 2014 acted with God-given wisdom both in making the substantive decision concerning the ordination of women to the episcopate and in putting

in place the various arrangements around that. I do, indeed, see this as an act of witness in a world which still finds it so hard to hold differences in good ways.

I see the IDG's Report, together with the establishing of the Standing Commission, as giving us a firm basis on which to continue this into the future. I hope, therefore, that Synod will vote to take note of GS 2225, thereby affirming the IDG's recommendations for further work and affirming the forming of the Standing Commission as a means by which this and more may happen.

*The Chair:* This item is now open to debate. I just need to say that there is a lot of interest being shown and so we have got a lot of requests to speak. I am planning to invite a couple of people who are making a maiden speech to do so initially and then I will be reducing the speech limit so we can hear as many views as possible.

*Revd Esther Prior (Guildford):* Thank you, Chair, for calling me for my maiden speech, smack on the last day of this quinquennium. I am a vicar in a church society sole patronage church - let the listener understand. As an evangelical woman, I am intimately acquainted with the pain that the outworking of mutual flourishing can cause; however, I remain absolutely committed to it.

David Banting, a leading complementarian evangelical and an esteemed member of this body, is one of my greatest Gospel partners. He knows that I profoundly disagree with him on women's leadership in the Church. I do not know if he knows this but the word "headship" causes my blood pressure to spike. What I do know is that he knows that I respect and accept that he reads 2 Timothy, for example, and concludes that though we love one another he cannot, in good conscience, agree with me on the question of female oversight.

That conclusion did not stop him from coming to support me at my licensing service into a church society living. Our differences on this have not hindered our Gospel partnership as we have worked together in various ways. There have been times in complementarian circles when David has jumped to my defence and protected me and there have been times in my own egalitarian circles when I have done the same for him.

I offer David and myself as a picture of mutual flourishing, a life-giving and beautiful picture I hope you will agree. All this is to say I want to serve in a Church in which David and other complementarian evangelicals can flourish, even as I follow the call of Christ on my life as faithfully as I know how. By the way, I would be honoured to serve under Bishop Philip North as together we proclaim the good news to the poor, binding up the broken-hearted and proclaiming freedom to the captives as Jesus declared in Luke 4 that he had come to do. I would like to ask you, Synod, to please take note of this Report from the IDG Group and I am really thankful for their work.



*Revd Christopher Trundle (London):* I am very grateful for this Report and for all who have contributed to it. I am also extremely grateful to Esther for what she has just said. As the Report acknowledges, there is clearly work to be done around awareness of the Five Guiding Principles in many places.

But one really helpful thing from the Report struck me in particular from among the reflections on questions raised by the Theological Colloquium, namely the reminder that the Five Guiding Principles provide a framework to build upon: “It is the building of relationship, trust and goodwill upon that framework which is now the task”. What Esther has just presented us with is just one gracious and encouraging example of exactly this.

I serve in a diocese with a larger proportion of traditional Catholic or conservative evangelical parishes and Church plants and, while, in my experience at least, the Five Guiding Principles have been lived out with great grace, it is when people of differing traditions and outlooks make the effort to form those strong, honest and supportive relationships that flourishing really happens, not just relatively peaceful co-existence but real joy in each other’s presence within the same Church. This takes courage, openness and humility, of course.

I think this Report is timely and makes really positive recommendations for the life of our Church, but the Report reminds us of the further work needed. The task is not only to do with awareness of the Five Guiding Principles but also to do with our will to establish and to work on those relationships of trust and goodwill.

*Revd Alicia Dring (Derby):* I cannot take note of this Report. Having previously served as dean of women, I am fully aware that the Five Guiding Principles were a necessity at the time and this Report highlights some, but by no means all, of the impact of the principles in the intervening years. The trouble lies in the key phrase “mutual flourishing” which has turned out for some of us to be not very mutual.

The Principles are a friend only to those who object to ordained women serving in our Church. For women, they are formalised in institutional discrimination and in my experience can be used to bully, belittle and dismiss us in our ministry. I am currently attempting to mutually flourish alongside CE colleagues who wish to plant into one of my parishes, something that we welcome as the mission field is big enough to share.

However, it feels that the Five Guiding Principles are being weaponised to drive through the needs of the BMO over the wishes of the parish. This is not mutual. It does not promote unity and no one is flourishing. There is a challenge to us in how grace and mutuality can work both ways beyond merely tolerating one another. This is why the review of the Principles must encompass the needs of the whole people of God, not merely the needs of the minority so that, together, the Gospel, the people and the Kingdom may flourish. I cannot support this Report in its current form.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Bishop of Sheffield (Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox)*: Two weeks ago, five services of ordination were held at Sheffield Cathedral for nine new deacons and eight new priests. Ten of the ordinands were women and seven were men. I ordained the deacons, one of whom was an Oak Hill ordinand destined for a curacy in a parish under extended episcopal oversight but who chose to be ordained with his cohort.

My colleague, Sophie, the Bishop of Doncaster, ordained seven of the priests, four of whom were men, while the eighth, also a man, was ordained by the Bishop of Maidstone but with Bishop Sophie and I in attendance. The acting dean, a traditionalist Catholic, was also present at all five ordinations, as were the two clergy who curated the retreat, which had taken place at Cliff College in the previous days, one of whom is a woman and the other of whom is another traditionalist Catholic man. The retreat leader, an excellent preacher, at four of the five ordinations, was also a woman.

Taken as a whole, that weekend was one more positive step for us on the road to mutual flourishing, but the road to mutual flourishing remains an especially tricky one in the Diocese of Sheffield. As the Report states on page 25, we have in our diocese, at around 16%, a higher proportion of parishes which have petitioned for extended episcopal oversight than any diocese outside London.

The Five Guiding Principles really matter here and we ask every lay and ordained person to refresh their familiarity with them whenever they take up a new, licensed or authorized ministry in this diocese. My colleague Sophie and I are fully convinced that this diversity can be the strength and glory of our diocese and not its weakness or shame because it provides us with a very specific opportunity to live out the mandate of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to honour those who differ from ourselves in theological conscience on this matter.

There is a danger that a minority group feeling threatened appeals to mutual flourishing only in the way that a footballer appeals to the referee for a foul. It can be a cry for protection for the defence of one's own rights. But this is not the call of the Gospel. The Gospel calls us actively to adopt the mind of Christ Jesus and to promote the interests of others ahead of our own and, in humility, to regard others as better than ourselves.

I want to draw the attention of the Synod to the fifth of the Five Guiding Principles and to the phrase, "The highest possible degree of Communion". It is my observation that the highest possible degree of Communion is easily lost and, in our diocese, Bishop Sophie and I are constantly challenging ourselves, our clergy and lay leaders and our parishes to ask what more can we do in pursuit of that highest possible degree of Communion and how might we make it visible by the way we relate to those who differ from us in conscience? How might we make these differences become an opportunity for the grace of Jesus Christ to be manifest? I thank the IDG for its research and Report and I support its recommendations.

*Revd Anne Stevens (London):* I would like to say a few more words about the Report itself. I want to begin by saying that those who cannot accept the ministry of ordained women at any level do have an honoured place in the Church. I want to say it is really important for Synod to understand what they think about the arrangements that are in place and I am grateful for all the hard work that went into this Report to let us hear that.

The difficulty is that this Report does not reflect the wider picture of the Church because there are heaps of other people who are affected by the outworkings of the Bishops' Declaration. This Report does not really give us the voice of women clergy and their experiences on the ground. It does not really give us the voice of bishops pro and anti and the way they are dealing with it. It does not really give us the voice of Archbishops or offer us any clues as to why some very odd things are happening at consecrations at the moment.

Most of all it does not give us the voice of lay people. Something seems to have gone wrong with the process. I do not know whether it was the make-up of the Group itself or whether it was the surveys that went out to the dioceses. We are not really hearing the voice of lay people either who cannot accept women's ministry or those who can and those who want to be assured that the sacraments they are enjoying every week are actually valid.

I do not think I can vote to take note of all of this. It is a flawed Report that seems to be based on a flawed process and I do not want future Synods to think that this Synod accepted all its recommendations and many of us disagree with some of the points that are there. I do support the idea of the Standing Commission, but I would say to the bishops when you set that up please, please, please think very carefully about who is on it and define the purposes and the processes very, very clearly.

*Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield):* I wish to speak in support of this Report, not only as a member of the Group but also in thankfulness that, way back in 2014, the work of drafting the Bishops' Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles was undertaken and endorsed. It has enabled me and thousands of others to remain in our beloved Church of England as Anglo-Catholic and evangelical lay disciples and to flourish.

You may wonder where the word "flourishing" comes from. Well, it was from Lambeth Palace Blue Drawing Room, a meeting convened by a small group of women representing both positions. It was convened by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, and we prayed together and undertook to work together despite our differences - and we must go on doing so.

As a member of the Implementation and Dialogue Group, life was not always comfortable for many of us, as the Bishop has said, but I can assure you that all views on the fundamental issue were represented. But, with God's good grace, we stuck to our task

and I am sure members will agree that the Report before us, in its length along with all the appendices, is evidence of the comprehensive and thorough job we were determined to do.

In the 19 unanimously agreed recommendations, it details there is still much work to do before the full implications of flourishing for all can be achieved, but I am hopeful that these will be taken seriously both at the highest level and through dioceses and parishes. The final recommendation calls on all bishops, clergy and laity in the Church of England to make every effort constantly to pursue unity, to love one another in humility and gentleness and with patience as our Lord instructed us to do.

Please, Synod, vote to take note of this Report and move forward together. My thoughts and prayers will be for the new Commission and the newly elected Synod members who will continue this work.

*Canon Jenny Humphreys (Bath & Wells):* Thank you, Chair, for calling me for my last speech at General Synod as I am not standing for election again. I was not on General Synod for all of the long process of enabling women's ordination, but over 11 years I have participated in the final stage, that of enabling women to be ordained to the episcopate. Yes, there have been highs and lows over the time, lows when it stalled in November 2013 and highs when it was completed and women finally took their place at every level.

Being part of this long process led to my support for WATCH and Inclusive Church and I am now a trustee for both. I have read with interest this long awaited Report and, although there are some things to welcome within it, I am not going to take note of it for the following reasons. First, the lack of awareness of the need for transparency, clear easily accessible website statements which explain the position of resolution parishes and what this means for both women and men who attend those churches.

Secondly, the lack of attention to the experience and voices of lay people, particularly women and young people, and the ongoing lived experiences of ordained women. I cannot support recommendations 19 and 20 that more suffragan sees should accept the appointments of non-ordaining clergy. There is already a higher percentage of non-ordaining bishops than the percentage of parishes requiring such oversight.

I welcome the theological work done on the subject of mutual flourishing but would like this to be developed further and published and for more work to be done on education on the Five Guiding Principles for all, not just those training for formal leadership roles, and I can commend the resources produced by WATCH.

Finally, I am concerned about the membership of the proposed Standing Commission. It may be important that those with differing theological positions are included in this body, but not in disproportionate numbers in relation to the majority view of those within the whole Church and the wider community. Bearing in mind all of my concerns about the

overall direction of this Report, I ask Synod members to seriously consider not taking note of it.

*Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS):* Synod, I am really conflicted as to how to vote on this Report. I am fully committed to the Five Guiding Principles and mutual flourishing - and that is not just talk, I voted for them as many of us did as part of the legislative package - but in the years following 2014 I have become concerned about how they have been worked out in practice, especially in the area of the conduct of consecrations and the theology revealed by that practice, as well as their impact on our relations with other episcopal churches with which we are in full communion.

My comments come from someone who comes from the Catholic wing of the Church of England. First of all, I fail to see how the exclusion of almost every single living, serving, retired male bishop from the ordinations and consecrations of those opposed to the ordination of women is a sign of mutual flourishing and maintains to the highest possible degree of communion.

Secondly, concerns deepened in July 2020 when the Archbishop of Canterbury announced that he was withdrawing from consecrations and limiting the number of bishops to three. There have been no theological papers setting out the reasons for this profound change in practice and custom and the announcement came shortly after a meeting of Synod where it could have been presented and discussed. I tried to ask a question in Synod about this, but was told by the Legal Office that when the Archbishops act in their metropolitan role one is not allowed to ask them a question in Synod. With the Church seeking greater transparency and accountability and wishing to erode the culture of deference, I find that reasoning somewhat alarming.

My question in this Synod to the Chair of the Council for Christian Unity was allowed and it appears no consultation has taken place on the impact on the visible sign of unity given by the wider participation in consecrations of the Communion and our episcopal ecumenical partners. It is this mission creep of the Five Guiding Principles where this lack of consultation and accountability that has caused me concern. These issues are not addressed, as another speaker has pointed out, in the 130 page Report we have before us. I will listen carefully to the debate, but at the moment I feel I cannot vote to take note for the reasons given.

*Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford):* Thank you for calling me for what is my General Synod swansong after 21 years. I am still reeling from Esther prior's expression of friendship and I want to salute her and thank her. I wish to use this swansong to commend the Women Bishop Settlement 2014 and make its provisions work. I want to thank Shayne Ardrone from Leicester for her humility and honesty in acknowledging that it was a lack of awareness of the Five Guiding Principles and their intentions that led to a spot of bother in her diocese recently. Memory loss is an unhappy experience and does cause complications.

I wish to commend best practice and maturity in professional relationships to which this Synod committed itself in the momentous decision of 2014 and its accompanying provisions, expressed by the Five Guiding Principles and the recreation of the See of Maidstone. Which diocese would not want to support and be known for best practice in good relationships? Which diocesan bishop would not want to respect the Women Bishops' Settlement and make it work and win the peace?

I speak to salute the Bishop of Maidstone and all that he has achieved in his 31 dioceses where he has expressed shared oversight over the equivalent, someone said, of a medium size diocese. I salute my own Diocese of Chelmsford which was a seedbed for acknowledging the need for a proper provision for theological minorities and was an early adopter of the Bishop of Maidstone as Assistant Bishop.

It included in its recent Vacancy in See a statement of needs in the diocese: "Our Bishop needs to be fully and warmly committed to both the ministry of women at every level and to the ongoing contribution of the Bishops of Maidstone and Richborough within the diocese as framed by the Five Guiding Principles and our clear commitment to mutual flourishing". The Bishop of Maidstone is another good thing to have come out of Chelmsford Diocese.

I also want to salute the Bishop of London for her "London Plan" which Bishop Sarah shared at her inaugural press conference and commended to every other diocese in the country. I want to salute the Bishop of Penrith. Bishop Emma and I and Liz Goddard, the current Chair of the Junia Network, and here on Synod, have been friends for many years. We disagree but we have agreed in public debate and private conversation not to take chunks out of each other but to stand together and support each other.

I return to Leicester and Chelmsford Dioceses. I want to salute Bishop Guli as she moves right now from Loughborough to Chelmsford. I have already written my letter of welcome to honour her humble and courageous obedience to accept this call to be the Bishop of Chelmsford and inhabit its statement of needs and to offer whatever support I can, working together and helping the Principle of mutual flourishing to work well. I salute all these Bishops for their modelling best practice and pray for them as I ask you to pray for them in their rigours of travel: Sarah in her rigours of trolling on the internet; Emma in a recent unexpected hospitalisation, and Bishop Guli in moving. The IDG Report explains and illustrates how the Five ---

*The Chair.* Thank you David. Sorry, about that.

*Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield):* As a Chair of Synod, I rarely share my views in debates. As a disabled person, I belong to a minority group conservatively estimated at 20% to 30% of the population - in truth, quite a lot more in Church. This Report recommends that we offer 4% of our Church members who cannot accept the ordination of women - and I

am grateful that Jenny Humphreys raised the issue of overrepresentation - yet more resources and preferment, the likes of which those of us from minority groups with genuinely protected characteristics could only dream of.

Covid has held up a mirror to the Church, Synod, and we need to take a good, hard, long look at ourselves on this one and ask what others have asked me many times as a vicar: how can a male priest who believes that women like me and/or those who discerned their calling to priesthood are fundamentally misguided and then be given oversight of those same women either as suffragan or diocesan bishops?

It is very fashionable to say, "We are where we are" as though nothing can change. We are tired, possibly even hungover from last night, so could easily take note of this Report, accepting all its recommendations, including the consecration of yet more bishops from among that minority group, giving them oversight over the vocation of women that they deem to be misguided.

Synod, our Church ordains women full stop. Let us look in the mirror and see what others see: baffling, avoidable, institutional sexism that is unhealthy, unjust and ultimately unworkable. I cannot in good conscience take note of this Report and encourage others not to either. Yes, we are where we are but it is up to us and God where we go from here.

*The Bishop of Newcastle (Rt Revd Christine Hardman):* Like Judith Maltby, I am a huge supporter of the Five Guiding Principles. I was with Bishop James on the group that drafted them and I want now to put on record the debt of gratitude that the Church owes to Bishop James for all his work on this. But, in reflecting on where we are now seven years later, I remain committed to all of the Principles and the Fourth and Fifth Principles which are implicitly the subject of this Report about mutual flourishing. When we drew up the Five Guiding Principles, we knew that holding them in tension would be very difficult and that they do have to be held in tension.

My concern is that in this Report, implicitly, we are only focusing on the difficulties with the Fourth and Fifth Principles and we are assuming that everything is well with the First Principle of the Five Guiding Principles. The First Guiding Principle is rooted in Canon A 4, one of the foundation Canons of the Church of England:

"The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, annexed to the Book of Common Prayer and commonly known as the Ordinal is not repugnant to the Word of God; and those who are so made, ordained or consecrated bishops, priests or deacons, according to the said Ordinal, are lawfully made, ordained, or consecrated, and ought to be accounted, both by themselves and others, to be truly bishops, priests or deacons".

It is in that foundation Canon that the First Principle is based. Now that the legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops, the Church of England is fully

and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all without reference to gender and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy.

In that drafting Group, I argued happily and successfully for the inclusion of “true” as well as “lawful” based on that foundation Canon A 4. It is the First Principle that I think is now in danger of being disregarded and we are seeing what is happening, which is not now to do with just the ordination of women but also those men who are ordained by women bishops.

The experience that some of those men are having is equally painful to the experience that some of the women are having. I do not know how I am going to be able to vote for this Report. I will probably take note but it does not mean agreeing with it. I would urge us to take seriously our identity as a Church of England and that First Guiding Principle which is equally as important as the Fourth and Fifth.

*Dr John Appleby (Newcastle):* There is much good in the review. We have committed to mutual flourishing and we need to make sure that works. I share with Zoe Heming and Emma Percy referred to in the Report a concern that we can have a disproportionate level of action and support nominations unrelated to the actual numbers needing representation.

However, the main purpose I wanted to speak on was to support Jenny Humphreys’ point that, if we are committed to mutual flourishing, none of us are ashamed of our views and we ought to be more willing to make those known. As it is, there are many churches who hold to a conservative or traditional view who do not make that clear. That is a concern for a new worshipper moving into an area, the new worshippers coming through evangelization or, indeed, applicants to vacancies, that they cannot actually tell clearly which churches hold which theological position.

Although the special bishops do sometimes have published lists, those are not comprehensive and they do not include the many parishes who are served by their existing bishops and suffragans and, therefore, there is no advert at all. Some websites hold this information. Many do not. If we are proud of our position and wish to defend it, then we ought to make it public and I think this is a deficiency that should be put right.

*Revd David Fisher (Salisbury):* The Report which I have been able to go through is very comprehensive. In sense, it is trying to square a circle, I suppose. The most important point that I would like to make in this contribution is that the Five Guiding Principles are unheard of in most of our parishes.

Just as a piece of anecdote, a few years ago I asked in my deanery synod for a show of hands. There were 32 or 33 people. “A show of hands, one, have you heard of the Five Guiding Principles?” Only half said yes. “Two, have you read them?” About six. “Three,



have you read the House of Bishops' Declaration?" Two, one of whom was me and the other one was the diocesan communications officer but you would expect us to have read it.

The deficiency that this brings into the life of the Church was illustrated in the recent Vacancy in See work that I had to undertake here in Salisbury Diocese. That Vacancy in See work had one of our colleagues say, "Oh, we must have the Five Guiding Principles for you Catholics". Well, it is not for "we Catholics", it is for the entire Church.

Therefore, I am going to vote to take note of this and I would encourage everybody to take note of this because if the Five Guiding Principles disappear in a very real sense what unity exists within the Church of England will also disappear. I would urge all members to take note of this. It is not the end bit, obviously; there is a lot more to come, and there we are.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* I was a member of the Implementation and Dialogue Working Group. The Working Group contained members with a full range of views on the subject. Over half were women and, of these, five supported women's priestly ministry and, indeed, four were themselves ordained to various offices both as bishops and as clergy.

Because we believe in a God who keeps his word and calls his people to do the same, I am pleased that the Report goes a considerable way to ensuring that the promises made to the minority in 2014 will be remembered and kept. Watch out for inclusion of material on this in the induction pack provided to Synod members in the autumn. That is suggested in recommendation 10. I commend this Report to you.

*Mr Bradley Smith (Chichester):* Chairman, thank you indeed for calling me to speak on an issue which is deeply important to me on a personal level, as indeed it is to the Church from which I come and to the diocese of which I am a part. I want to thank the Implementation and Dialogue Group very much indeed for its considerable work on this Report. It is a Report which I warmly welcome.

Reading GS 2225, I was encouraged to read about the mutual flourishing groups in the Dioceses of Manchester and Sheffield, but I especially want to commend Bishop Rachel Treweek for the gracious and generous way in which she has responded to the request of two Gloucester parishes seeking alternative episcopal oversight. Bishop Rachel's wish to respond in a relational and not merely administrative way and her determination to meet and talk with the PCCs and, then as a result of that, to offer a public act, entrusting pastoral and sacramental provision to the Bishop of Ebbsfleet, represents a model of pastoral practice based on clarity, respect and trust.

I am aware that, in other parts of the country, petitioning parishes have received a far less gracious and generous response from their male diocesans. Clarity, respect and trust

are key to the ongoing cultural change that is occurring in the Diocese of Chichester where we are learning what it means to stand alongside each other in our differences, to allow ourselves to be enriched by the contribution of the other and, most importantly, to embrace each other as fellow partners in the Gospel and not as problems to be solved.

We have some way to go, but I do believe that here in Chichester we have made huge progress in recent years. This is a very different diocese from the one that I joined as a student in 2002 and that is due in large part to the generous leadership of the senior staff of the diocese and of the diocesan Bishop in particular. Here, the Five Guiding Principles underpin all our diocesan structures and inform all our engagement with others. They form a really important part of our selection processes, as I know from my own part in selecting a new incumbent for a group of three churches with radically different theological convictions and they were central to the processes by which we appointed two new suffragan bishops, one female and the other a traditional Catholic.

The Bishop is quite right to say that here we have avoided objectifying the Guiding Principles. We see them modelled and lived out in practice by the senior staff of the diocese and by our bishops, in particular, and that enables the wider diocese to understand what mutual flourishing is all about. It is a commitment that I wish to model in my own life, in parish life and my involvement in the wider diocese, in my professional life, working alongside a female priest on a day-to-day basis, in the Prayer Book Society and in my own personal friendships with many female clergy who greatly enrich my life. I am so delighted to receive ---

*The Chair.* Thank you, Bradley, I am sorry, I have to cut you off there. The Bishop of London, after which I will be testing the mind of Synod for a closure of this debate.

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally):* Although I have some concerns with the content of this paper, like Christine I shall take note because you do not have to agree with everything in the paper. However, the work of the Implementation and Dialogue Group is to be welcomed for their refusal to shy away from some highly sensitive unresolved issues. We have heard some wonderful examples of mutual flourishing in this debate, which has been my experience in London. I am very grateful for the support of the Bishop of Maidstone and, in particular, the Bishop of Fulham since my appointment as the Bishop of London.

We have made good progress in London over the last three years to embody the Five Guiding Principles, but that is not to say that work can stop here and that at times it does not hurt. I am conscious that women in the Diocese of London may say that they have had a harder time since my arrival on the issues of gender. Why? Because, bluntly, my presence means that areas which had been fudged in the past can no longer be fudged.

The further work asked of the Faith and Order Commission on the meaning of mutuality and reciprocity will need to offer a vision of how these concepts can be lived out in

practice, how they can shape our relationships and how they can form our culture. As Bishop Christine reflects, the Five Guiding Principles are primarily about how we behave to one another. The new Standing Committee will need to hold us to account in the imperative to receive one another with warmth, humility and grace in the midst of difference and disagreement.

As is said in the document in the Diocese of Southwark, "Speak well of each other". Someone in the national Church recently noted to me how women priests are more often abused on social media than men and they had seen how I personally experienced such regular abuse. Whilst I am becoming used to that, I am grateful that somebody noticed and agreed that it was unacceptable.

We need to get to a place where the whole Church from Synod to TEIs to local congregations can, without anyone needing to have a fear of vilification or disapproval, be intentionally engaged in the understanding of where we have got to on this issue, why and in encouraging transparency about where we all stand. A culture of transparency and care will also allow us to better understand where we are living with theological difference and where discrimination exists. We have chosen to live with one another in open disagreement and, yet, in love. If we can do that well, it will be a remarkable gift to a world shaped by polarisation, binary thinking and the fear of other.

*The Chair:* I am now going to test your mind, Synod, as to whether we should close this debate. This will be a counted vote of the whole Synod on the closure of this debate.

*The motion was put and carried, 225 voting in favour, 77 against, with six recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* I, therefore, invite the Bishop of Rochester to respond to the debate. Bishop, you have up to five minutes to do so.

*The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd James Langstaff):* Thank you very much indeed to all who have participated in this debate. I will not have time to mention every single person individually, but I am grateful that we have heard a range of contributions and perspectives in this last hour or so.

If I may mention, first, those who made their maiden speeches. I am really grateful to Esther for sharing that personal experience and I guess we affirm the mutual admiration society between Esther and David. Also to Christopher Trundle, his emphasis on relationship, trust and goodwill. Alicia Dring was the first person in her maiden speech to raise some concerns about where we are at and her personal experience of mutual flourishing actually not being either flourishing or mutual.

Clearly, there were a number of people who expressed concerns of one sort or another, Anne Stevens, Jenny Humphreys, Judith Maltby, Zoe Heming, among others. In relation

to those areas of concern, first of all, I want to acknowledge them. They are real. They are arising out of people's experience. Some of these have actually become more marked since the Group did its work, the issue around consecrations which Judith Maltby referred to particularly and the issue that was referred to by the Bishop of Newcastle around men who have been ordained by women bishops. That has become an increasing phenomenon since we had more women bishops who are diocesan bishops and so there are issues which have become sharper since the Group did its work.

That is one of the reasons why I hope that this Standing Commission will be established and will become a really significant body in our common life because it gives us a continuing mechanism and a continuing group which can do precisely those bits of work which are being asked for on some of these issues. Somebody also referred to the theological work and the need for more work to be done from a theological perspective around mutual flourishing. Again, I would encourage that. I would welcome it. It seems to me that we will have a means by which that work can be commissioned through the Standing Commission when it is up and running.

A number of people shared with us their positive experiences, the Bishop of Sheffield, Liz Paver, David Fisher and Bradley Smith among them. David referred to the importance of communicating the Five Guiding Principles. For me that is the key thing out of this work, that if we do not do that then we will not be enabling others who come after us to inherit that which we put in place and to live it in good ways and to work to put right those instances where it is not being lived in good ways. That communication and dissemination is I think absolutely key.

In terms of what we are being asked to do this afternoon, I recognise it is not as clear as it might be and the Order Paper says that we take note of the Report. My thought, I have to be honest, is that we were more taking note of GS 2225 to which the Report is an attachment but, either way, what we are not being asked to do is to agree to every one of the recommendations as a number of people have said. I do not think any of us would necessarily be able to vote for all of those recommendations with wholehearted enthusiasm.

We will all have reservations about one or other to varying degrees. That is why it is going to be remitted to the Standing Commission to pick up those recommendations and do further work around them. Indeed, that Commission, as its life develops, may well bring forward further recommendations.

What the IDG Group did not think it was being set up to do was to revise the whole Settlement from 2014 but, rather, to look at the way in which it was being implemented. If people want to revise the whole Settlement, including the Five Guiding Principles, that is a different matter and the next Synod will be a place to bring that if there is a head of steam to do that. I do not think that is what we were being asked to do in this particular

Group. We were being asked to look at the workings of the Settlement as it existed since 2014.

I hope, members of Synod, that you will take note, acknowledging that that is not, in my view, to affirm every one of the recommendations of the IDG, but it is to enable the work on those recommendations to go forward and other work which has arisen since, other issues which have been highlighted. Therefore, I urge you to take note and I move the motion which stands in the name of the House of Bishops.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Bishop James. Point of order, Jayne Ozanne.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Under Standing Order 33, I believe I am able to ask for a move to next business. Am I able to give my reasons for requesting that now?

*The Chair:* I will ask you to do that after I have made my little speech that I have to make after you have pressed that particular button. Jayne Ozanne has moved the procedural motion that the Synod do pass to the next business. If that motion is carried, Item 31 will lapse and it will not be in order to reconsider that question in the same form or in a form which is substantially similar within the remainder of the lifetime of the Synod, except with the permission of the Business Committee and the general consent of the Synod.

The motion for next business may be debated at the discretion of the Chair. I call Jayne Ozanne as the mover of the motion for next business to speak to it, followed by the mover of the main motion, the Bishop of Rochester, to reply. I will then consider whether to allow any further debate. Jayne, you have got two minutes to make your point, please.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* We have had a good debate but it does strike me we have had two very differing debates and, hearing from even members of the House of Bishops themselves who are not sure which way to vote and who are concerned about this Report, I do feel that moving to next business would stop what could be an acrimonious vote this afternoon.

We are obviously at the end of this quinquennium and so if we move to next business it will not, in a sense, delay the work longer than it has to, but it will give a message of the deep concern that there is amongst many of us about the content of this Report, the way that it impacts so many of us, the concerns from Zoe Heming to Judith Maltby and many other's voices talking about the need for recognition of other minorities. I hope it would be a way of us registering those concerns but without having to vote against the Report, which is the only other nuclear option we would have left to us.

*The Chair:* I ask Bishop James now to respond. You also have two minutes, Bishop.

*The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd James Langstaff):* With all due respect to Jayne, I would resist her proposal. I have already made clear that we are not being asked to, as

it were, affirm a vote for every single amendment by voting for this take note motion. I would hope, though, that Synod would be given an opportunity not least to affirm the setting up of the Standing Commission, which I think is probably almost the most important thing here. I think it would be helpful if Synod had been given the opportunity to do that by voting to take note or, indeed, not to do it by indicating otherwise.

*The Chair.* The advice I have just received is, under Standing Order 31(2), that, being as we had closed the debate, this procedural motion cannot go forward and so we have to move to a vote on the motion. Point of order, Caroline Ralph.

*Revd Caroline Ralph (Bath & Wells):* Can I ask for a counted vote by Houses, please.

*The Chair.* If I see 25 green ticks appear before me, then we can have that count by Houses. Oh, I see a lot more than that. I am now going to put Item 31 to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*The vote on Item 31: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 25, against one, with six recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 93 in favour, 39 against, with 14 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 93 in favour, 40 against, with 20 recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.*

*The Chair.* Thank you, Synod, for your co-operation this afternoon with all of that. Item 32 is not being moved but, following the variation of business, Item 11, Body to Oversee Next Stage of Anglican-Methodist Covenant, will now be taken.

THE CHAIR *Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 3.17 pm.

*The Chair.* Point of order, Simon Butler.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Chair, the Order Paper for this afternoon's session is not on the Synod app. Another document is under Order Paper VI and I wonder if that could be rectified in short order, please.

*The Chair.* Yes, that will be looked at by Synod Support and, I am assured, rectified as soon as possible.

## **ITEM 11**

### **APPOINTMENT OF A BODY TO OVERSEE NEXT STAGE OF THE ANGLICAN-METHODIST COVENANT (GS 2210)**

*The Chair.* Synod, we now come to Item 11. Members will need GS 2210 in front of them for this item. There is an amendment which we will take a little later on once we have

had our debate. First, can I please invite the Bishop of Fulham to speak to and move Item 11. You have up to ten minutes.

*The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker):* Members of Synod, as GS 2210 reminds you, the Covenant between the Church of England and the Methodist Church was signed on All Saints Day 2003. All Saints is a feast day which does just what it says on the tin: it celebrates all those women and men in every age and in every part of the Church who have revealed through the holiness of their own lives something of the holiness of God. The Church's holiness and her unity are indivisible.

All Saints Day was and remains a very good day to have entered into a solemn Ecumenical Covenant, at the heart of which stands that affirmation by both the Methodist Church and the Church of England that both are true Churches belonging to the one holy catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, both truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God.

GS 2210 sets out much of what has unfolded over the past nearly 18 years since 1 November 2003 and I do not propose to repeat all of that in this speech. There is a great deal to celebrate and a great deal to be thankful to God for. There have been difficulties and there remain unresolved challenges - though these two are occasions for thanksgiving as they constitute the grit which requires us to go on wrestling with the difficult theological questions and to go on asking hard questions of ourselves and of one another as we seek to serve Him who is the truth as well as the way and the life.

Ecumenism is a key part of the Church's self-critique. It was the late Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor who remarked that the ecumenical road was a long but fruitful one and, even more memorably, that it is a road with no exit. The proposal before you this afternoon standing in my name invites you, and it invites us as a General Synod, to keep faith with this particularly long road, the road which we pray has no exit which we embarked upon on All Saints Day 2003.

It offers a fresh emphasis which it is hoped will both energise and encourage while honouring the affirmations made in the Covenant itself and further worked on by the JIC and the JCAMG subsequently. That emphasis, which is captured in the name of the new draft body, Life in Covenant, is summarised in paragraph 15 of GS 2210.

There are three points there. The first at paragraph 15(a) embodies the principle of receptive ecumenism; that is to say, the recognition of the distinctive gifts which each partner brings to the relationship and to the life of the whole Church. The second, (b), is about co-operation in witness and mission. We know how effectively Anglicans and Methodists are co-operating at local level to serve those in need and to promote the common good and we rejoice in that and want to see us do even better. The third, (c), is the priority which must be given to the relational, that relationships among Christians of different traditions and denominations are spiritual and personal rather than theoretical,

still less bureaucratic. *Cor ad cor loquitur*, to borrow John Henry Newman's motto: heart speaks unto heart.

In using this language of gift, co-operation and relationship, there is no thought whatsoever of ducking those hard theological and ecclesiological issues to which I referred a moment ago. On the specific and profoundly testing question of the recognition of ministries, more work is needed and more work will be done. Speaking from a Church of England perspective, what is required is a long and deep look at our whole approach to the related questions of the recognition of churches and the recognition of ministries.

These are questions which press on us more widely and not just in respect of the Methodist Church. To some degree, the Church of England's approach differs from that across much of the Anglican Communion where the recognition of an ecclesial body as a Church and the reception of the historic episcopate can lead more naturally to the interchangeability of orders. To repeat, much more work needs to be done.

Members of Synod, we cannot duck the fact that there are now fresh challenges on the road to the full visible unity of our two Churches, though, of course, they are challenges and differences which we should remind ourselves exist within our relationships of greater unity such as the Anglican Communion and those with our partners among the Porvoo Churches.

The recent decision of Conference to permit the celebration of same-sex marriages will have been welcomed by some in this chamber but will have prompted dismay in others. Decisions concerning the extent of what is possible in terms of the online celebration of the sacraments may equally mean that many here would want to distance themselves from what the Methodist Church is exploring, although in this matter too there is clearly a spectrum of views as much within each of our two Churches as between them. Whatever the Methodist Church does or does not decide does not change the doctrine or discipline of the Church of England.

This afternoon, we are invited to affirm that these fresh challenges cannot and must not destroy relationship. What is before you this afternoon is emphatically not a scheme for unity but a means of maintaining, nurturing and deepening relationship, of continuing a conversation. It is a means of keeping a vision alive, of honouring those commitments and affirmations made on All Saints Day 2003 to which I hope all will want to accord a real and lasting value.

Members of Synod, what is before you this afternoon is in one sense a modest proposal, a means of keeping on with the patient, sometimes painful but always necessary work of ecumenical endeavour which is a Gospel imperative. But in another it is much more than that. It is about life, life in Christ which is shared by all the saints, by all those baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ which is one but whose visible unity is occluded from our



sight. I hope that you will support the establishment of the proposed new body to be known as Life in Covenant and I move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair.* As there is considerable interest in speaking on this item, I propose that we have a few speeches and the speech limit will be three minutes from the outset with the exception of the Ecumenical Representative who is joining us today.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Bishop of Liverpool (Rt Revd Paul Bayes):* I am speaking as the Anglican Co-Chair of the Joint Covenant Advocacy And Monitoring Group, whose extended five year mandate has now expired, to commend the motion to encourage Synod to support it most positively. It maps the next step in a decades long conversation which predates the Covenant and of which the Covenant was a key milestone.

I would like to take the opportunity of thanking my colleagues, both Anglican and Methodist, on the Group who have served over the years. In the 1970s, I trained for ministry ecumenically at Queen's College in Birmingham alongside many colleagues from the Methodist Church. I learnt much of what I know from Methodist tutors and university professors. I formed friendships with Methodist students which have been life-long.

At every stage in my pastoral ministry as a parish priest or university chaplain, while I worked for the Archbishops' Council and in my years as a Bishop, I have always initiated or inherited ecumenical partnerships with Methodist colleagues and I have benefited immeasurably from those. For me, personally, as well as for our two Churches, this has been, to quote Eugene Peterson, "A long obedience in the same direction".

Here we have two families of God's people, each part of a worldwide community, each following the call to be faithful to the unchanging God in a changing culture. The paths of our different histories and ecclesiologies and pastoral decisions have not always coincided and, partly for that very reason, they have produced richness to share and richness to receive. The journey together, as with so many of the journeys of the Christian people, demands clarity and forbearance, sometimes proclamation, sometimes repentance and always perseverance.

In the preparatory material for the Lambeth Conference, you will hear Thabo Makgoba quoting his predecessor but one, Desmond Tutu, who, when being asked the purpose of the Anglican Communion, simply replied, "We meet". It is the value of this meeting which is inestimable and I commend to Synod the opportunity to sustain this meeting and to refresh it through Life in Covenant which the Methodist people themselves have approved in their Conference last month and to take this work forward.

*Revd David Penny (Manchester):* There is no question that the partnership with our sisters and brothers in the Methodist Church is of great benefit to us all. I know from my

own experience of training with Methodists at the Northern Ordination Course how the richness of diversity enabled us to get a deeper understanding of theological education. We need more than ever these days to galvanise the momentum of working together and keeping our relationship with one another moving forward.

Whilst I warmly welcome this Report and would commend agreement with setting up a new group called Life in Covenant, I have a couple of questions if I may. How would good practice and lessons learnt from dioceses such as Carlisle feed into the process so that we engage in a more meaningful way with our ecumenical partnership, especially with our Methodist brothers and sisters? It seems to me that places like Carlisle are taking a really good step and there is much to learn in our mission and ministry there.

Also, are the terms of reference of this body wide enough to enable that deeper, Anglican-Methodist engagement in mission and ministry following the example of our ecumenical county?

*Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I have worked in an ecumenical parish for over 30 years. I have many friends who are Methodists and I have worked in joint ministry projects before ordination with Methodists. Having been on Synod since 1999, I have travelled along with this process and I thoroughly endorse it.

However, I rise today to call for caution and actually to delay the process and I do this with a heavy heart. One of the reasons is that, if you look at the document we had, in clause 12 the whole purpose of this organisation is to take down barriers between the two Churches. Recent decisions in the Methodist Church, although they do not directly affect our doctrine and policy, have erected a new barrier - and I am talking to the decision over gay marriage.

The other thing, of course, is that you will see from other clauses we already have interchangeability of ministry which is very important and valuable. But in this decision it means now that Anglicans working in Methodist churches that want to do gay marriage cannot do them and, equally, Methodist ministers wanting to do gay marriage working at Anglican churches cannot do them and this obviously puts a strain on the process.

My real concern, as a convener of LLF, is I am engaged in that process because I want to see evangelicals like myself fully engage with the process so that we can be a truly mutually understandable and accepting Church. This decision has caused many evangelicals to tell me in my face that they will not now engage with the process. I, therefore, ask that we do not go ahead at this particular moment.

I will be voting in favour of the amendments because I think it is important that, at the very highest level, the two Churches should discuss the present decisions and give a public statement so that we can be assured that we can progress with what is very worthy, noble, and, a thing which we have all been working on, a desire to see.

Some of my friends suggested we should move to next business. I think that not only is a nuclear option but it is an unfair option because it does not allow for debate. Therefore, I do ask Synod to carefully think through is it right to go ahead at this stage. I say this with an incredibly heavy heart because I am committed to the ecumenical process, I am committed to LLF, I am committed to reconciliation and mutual flourishing, but I think at this stage we need more information from the Methodist Church about how this is going to work out before we can go ahead at this moment. That is said with respect, not with recrimination.

*The Chair.* After Susan Howdle, I intend to invite Chris Gill to speak to and move the amendment in his name. Susan, you have up to five minutes.

*Mrs Susan Howdle (Ecumenical Representatives):* When I spoke at the Synod two years ago on the Covenant, I assured the Synod that, whatever happened in that debate, as Methodists we remain committed to our worshipping, witnessing and working together. We called it a "Covenant" because we meant it and the Synod committed to further work during the next quinquennium.

On this current proposal, I would say to you and we still mean it. We had a very short but positive debate at our recent Conference - and I would want to thank here the Ven. Moira Astin, the Church of England's Representative at Conference, for her warm words of affirmation. As Bishop Jonathan has reminded us, what has already been achieved by God's grace, the affirmations, commitments, whatever happens in this debate we are called still to live and grow in them and to do so through the good times and the testing times.

There is a Charles Wesley hymn which many Methodists love to sing lustily when permitted, which says, "Even now we think and speak the same, and cordially agree, centred all in Jesu's name, in perfect harmony" - a piece of wishful hymn writing. In each of our two Churches, we continue to learn to live with a difference. Often, as we have said, that is a diversity to be celebrated. At other times, it is something to be wrestled with. If I may say so respectfully, both that celebration and wrestling has underlain so many of the debates of the last few days.

I have learnt so much from listening to the debate we have just heard. It would not be appropriate for me to say anything about that except gently to remind the Synod that, in 2003, in trust we as Methodists agreed to the Covenant unconditionally, although it was very clearly not where we were on ordained women's ministry and leadership. Yes, we in Methodism continue to live with our differences and anything I say now in relation to the marriage question is not intended to pre-empt the very careful LLF process but, briefly, in my own experience we have been thinking, speaking and praying about these things in the Conference for over 30 years.

Two years ago, the Conference adopted a range of resolutions as provisional which meant that 30 district synods were consulted. All but one Synod approved the resolutions. It was my responsibility to present these responses to the Conference for the Conference to decide this year. As has always been my experience in the Conference, the debate this year was gracious and sensitive. Our associate members from other churches commended us for it and, at the end of a long period of conferring together, deeply enfolded in a prayerful space, the Conference did confirm them.

Our resolutions explicitly affirm that within our Church there are two different understandings about who can enter into a marriage and that those holding either of those views have a respected place among us. Our Methodist explicit commitment to live together with contradictory convictions may not be as theologically complex as mutual flourishing, but it is not a grudging putting up with each other but a commitment to being the body of Christ seeking to discern God's will in and for the other and in the Church and to try to do so well.

As others have said, that is to make clear the really countercultural nature of the Gospel in a society and world all too ready to resort to cancelling and adversarial populism. If that is our quest, to live well together in each of our Churches, then surely also it can be in our Covenant journey in the next phase which this motion is designed to assist and which I am sure the sorts of clarifications that Jonathan has just been referring to will be worked upon.

There is still so much more that unites than divides us. As I read the papers for this Synod, our agendas have so much in common, not just in their length, most of all as we both humbly and boldly seek to share in God's mission at this time. I pray that God will grant that we may continue to do so together in trust as we work through the technical questions which have been raised but more as we work together to seek God's will because we still mean this Covenant.

*The Chair:* After Chris Gill has spoken to his amendment, because the Bishop of Fulham does not support this amendment I will be inviting Synod to indicate using a green tick or not whether the item should be debated. There will be a threshold of 25 green ticks for that. Chris, you have up to five minutes to speak to and move your amendment.

*Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield):* Thank you for calling me, Chair, for what is technically I believe my maiden speech. I am grateful for the work that members of the Group have undertaken during the quinquennium just ending, but cannot help thinking that now might be a good time to stop, pray and reflect on the way ahead. My family have been part of a Local Ecumenical Partnership since we moved into the area where we now live in 1988, some 33 years ago. The Partnership had been going since 1973 and so was already well-established.

We have been helped in our Christian lives by the opportunity to worship, pray, study God's work and engage in his work with sisters and brothers from our partner Methodist Church as well as from our own Church. Over that time, I have learnt much about our work with other churches, not least that each LEP is different, largely because they adapt to the local circumstances and needs as they are called by God to witness to their own particular area.

The last time we considered the Anglican-Methodist Covenant, there were some wonderful examples of excellent ecumenical work reaching out to local communities. As most of that work is driven by the local church, I suspect much of it would continue if the work of a replacement group for the JCAMG were put on hold. Whilst I appreciate the work of the Group's members, from reading GS 2210 I have some hesitation as to the value of this, or a similar group, in adding to the excellent work going on at a local level to grow God's Kingdom and think that now might be a good time to stop, pray and reflect on the way ahead.

We are, of course, at the end of our quinquennium and a new Synod may well have a different view on taking forward the work of the JCAMG. We are also at the point where the Bishop of Fulham said the Methodist Conference has recently taken a decision to confirm its provisional resolutions on the understanding of the Methodist Church on cohabitation and same-sex marriages. Whatever you might think of that, this is a major change to the position of the two Churches at the time the Group was instigated and one which goes against the formal position of the Church of England on marriage and sexual relationships.

As a previous speaker has said, with regard to the first commitment to the Covenant set out in paragraph 12 of GS 2210, that appears to me to add another obstacle rather than working to overcome the remaining obstacles to the organic unity of our two Churches. Perhaps now might be a good time to stop, pray and reflect on the way ahead. It would seem that the decision of Conference and the way that the debate was managed has also caused a significant element of division. If a new group is established, who would it be talking to and to what end? Perhaps a time for healing is needed. Perhaps now might be a good time to stop, pray and reflect on the way ahead.

Chair, had we conducted this debate on Friday I would have ended at this point, but a conversation yesterday after worship confirmed that I should indeed raise this issue. In conversation with one of our lay readers, a former diocesan ecumenical adviser as it happens, she reminded me of a comment made by a Stephen Cottrell who apparently had visited our area in the early 1990s. His advice to PCCs, whenever there was anything controversial or contentious arising in a meeting, was to stop the meeting and pray. Perhaps at this stage in the whole process now might be a good time to stop, pray and reflect on the way ahead before we, as a Synod, agree to the establishment of a new group.

*The Chair:* As this amendment is not supported by the Bishop of Fulham, Synod, if you wish to have a debate on this amendment please indicate with a green tick. That threshold has been reached and so we now open the debate on this amendment.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester):* I wish to speak against the proposed amendment as I think what we need is dynamic energy into this rather than stopping and pausing. While fully supportive of the renewal of the Covenant Monitoring Group, I want to raise the question of what we are actually trying to achieve here, which Mr Gill did cover. We have heard much, rightly, about being bold as a Church. Well, we need to be a lot bolder on this matter which has journeyed on for nearly 18 years now without the sight of the end destination that many of us hope for.

I have a question. The Methodist Church broke away in 1739, do we genuinely think that by 2039 we will have achieved the union of our two Churches? Looking at the progress of the last few years, this very unambitious date might be a realistic one. Is it now not time for one of the Archbishops to take ownership of this matter to give it real prominence and put some vibrancy and energy into the whole thing? Do we know what our ultimate aim is? If we stop and pause, that does not help.

We have lost sight of this over the last few years and this seeps through in the Synod document. It talks about needing to explain the value of ecumenical relations. I would challenge this personally, but for those who agree with this sentiment do they think that much of this might have something to do with the endless journey with no end destination in sight? What are we also doing about education? The briefing paper also talks about the Covenant not being assessed in terms of goals achieved. Well, perhaps it should be. Is this not a more appropriate way of making progress than having a combination of prayerful evolution but having something to measure this progress against?

I also think on Friday afternoon the fact that we spent three and a half hours discussing membership of the CNC but finding no time for this matter shows us to be a little insular and not mindful of those who are members and worshippers. This subject matters far more to people than much of our inner governance.

I urge you to support the original motion today and to vote down this amendment, but let us urge everyone at whatever level of our Church to instil dynamism into this process but be clear of the route of the journey, the destination and, please, please, the timeframe. Then, we can all have faith once again in the covenantal process.

*Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester):* I speak in order to support Chris Gill's amendment to this: to stop, to pray and to reflect. Also, to pick up the words of the Bishop of Fulham who talked about Life in Covenant being a very serious matter and, therefore, something about which we should think very seriously at this point.

In 1969, I was one of several children picked up by a bus from a housing estate to go to Eastern Methodist Church. Aged four, my Sunday school teacher, Mrs Hicks, taught me all about Jesus and I fell in love with Him there and then. I cannot remember a moment when I have not loved Him. Aged 14 with my youth leader, Mr Hicks, I remember joining the Methodist Youth Movement in yellow and green colours in Westminster Central Hall and around Westminster and stood up in Westminster Central Hall, moving my childhood faith to adult faith.

Seamlessly, in my early 20s, I discovered the Church of England at St Helen's Bishopsgate, under the great preaching and teaching of Dick Lucas. Two great Churches, faithful movements, loved by God. Life in Covenant is obviously something that we should always work towards. But the first affirmation of the Covenant before us is that we affirm one another's Churches as true Churches belonging to the one holy catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and as truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people to God, that we commit to work to overcome the remaining obstacles to the organic unity of our Churches on the way to the full visible unity of Christ's Church to make possible a united interchangeable ministry.

As we have heard, on 30 June the Methodists at their Central Conference overwhelmingly supported a change in the doctrine of marriage. We heard from the Ecumenical Representative, Susan Howdle, that this had gone well and the two positions on marriage were being held in tension. But not so for the Reverend David Hull who has found himself now without a home, many of those holding to an orthodox position unable to remain within the Methodist Church, losing their homes and losing their ministries.

Even within, therefore, the Methodist Church, we are seeing a breaking of the Covenant. When I think of my childhood, that is a sear to my heart. A church cannot in covenantal relationship, either within itself or with other church movements, affirm two contradictory views at the same time. So what must we do as we end this quinquennium? Well, as Chris has exhorted us, we need to stop, we need to pray and we need to reflect.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I absolutely agree with Chris Gill that we should pray and reflect, but I do not believe this is the time to stop. If we appoint this new body, what we are doing is continuing the conversation and it is a conversation that the Gospel requires of us to seek unity with our sisters and brothers. Yes, that might have got a bit more complicated recently. We see that and we acknowledge that. But I then draw the conclusion it makes it even more important, particularly bearing in mind issues within the Anglican Communion and within the Church of England, that these conversations continue.

I also believe that with people like the Bishop of Fulham involved in this, I have every confidence - and I want to say this directly to Chris - that when this new group forms, what will be the first thing they do? Well, I am absolutely certain that the first thing they will do

is stop and take stock of what is happening and these new developments. I am certain that they will pray and that they will reflect. I urge us to resist this amendment and allow these conversations to continue as we work together towards the unity which is Christ's prayer, recognising we are not there yet but the conversation goes on.

*The Chair:* Synod, I would like to test your mind on a motion for closure on the debate on this amendment. We will do this using the Lumi system in the usual way.

*The motion was put and carried, 232 voting in favour, 60 against, with three recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* The motion to conclude that part of the debate is carried and so we now turn to vote on the amendment proposed by Chris Gill. We will do this as a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and lost, 116 voting in favour, 174 against, with 14 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 11**

*The Chair:* The amendment is lost. We now return to the main debate on Item 11 unamended.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* Members may remember that in York I was deeply disappointed to find members in the gallery and us having a great difficulty in going forward with our plan for unity. I belong to an ecumenical church myself which is united with the URC. We have members in our church from several different denominations and we learn and respect and love one another.

My mother was a Methodist and I have Methodists still in my family. I have been quite heartily warmed to hear of Mrs Williams's experience within the Methodist Church, which is my experience having been in their Sunday schools. I do think we have become very fixated on various issues and, we are not looking at the things we can do well together, we are looking at the things that may differ in our respective denominations. We can learn together. We can train together. We can learn to live with one another. We can respect difference.

In fact, most of what we have been doing today has been about respecting difference. I think from my point of view, and speaking directly out of my own experience, the opportunity to show some unity in ecumenical affairs across the nation at this moment in time is really timely. We have all of us been looking at things online.



I am sure some of you will have looked at different services and probably different denominations and I know that members of the public are looking at different ways of worshipping. We can all learn from each other. We do need to present a united front to our nation and we should be hand in hand with those of us who partner in belief in Jesus Christ.

*Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities):* I want to welcome this proposal and to welcome it warmly. One of the things about a Covenant is that it binds you and it binds you openly for the way ahead. As Bishop Jonathan has remarked, quoting Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, may it bless his memory, it is not a way which has an exit. That is because it is the way to that unity which Christ wills.

I do find the idea that, when something goes wrong, one can jump off it or pause - which is another way of saying the same thing I think. That really is bizarre. It is when things are difficult and when your friend in Christ does something you disapprove of or think is bizarre or wrong that then you should walk more faithfully and more closely together. I think we need to vote for this and to vote confident that the Lord will show us the way.

*Revd Michael Read (Manchester):* I first wanted to declare an interest in that I am a husband of a Methodist minister and so have intimate knowledge of things like the CPD and interest and involvement about that, and also to say that I trained ecumenically for a number of years with people at Cranmer Hall and Wesley Study Centre and so I have a deep understanding of that.

I want to endorse this really for the wholeness and, partly what I was going to say earlier before the Archbishop said it, about being bolder about it. We have got a precedent to move on and do something about this and how we make sure that with our differences how we can have some diversity in all of our understanding of where we want to go with this.

I want to ask a question about have we identified who the new members of the Council are going to be? Are they going to be the same people as before or are we going to select some new people? If we are having new people, then, hopefully, some diversity in who we have on that committee and maybe simply to say to the Bishop of Fulham, well, I have some experience myself and if I can be of any help to you as someone who is married to a Methodist, then, therefore, I am offering my help.

*Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Of many stories today, mine too is one of ecumenical work together. I trained at a seminary with Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. My great sadness at that time was that it seemed to some of my number it was more important to be Anglican than to be Christian. Within the Anglican Communion itself, we have many differences wider than the ones we have with the Methodist Church, yet we remain part of that family. Within the Church of England, we

have many differences that are wider than our differences with the Methodist Church, yet we remain one Church of England. Please, Synod, let us go ahead with the journey.

*The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Julian Henderson):* I want to speak in favour of this motion, as now not amended, because I think it is right that the conversation continues. The fact that there are issues that need to be discussed is another reason for having this new Life in Covenant Group and so I am fully supportive of the full motion as it is there.

Just recently, at a meeting of the Lancashire Churches Together last week, which I currently Chair, at which there were an Orthodox, a Roman Catholic, a Quaker, a Methodist, a Baptist and Anglican Churches represented, the Methodist representative introduced a discussion on the topic that had been discussed at the Methodist Conference. He related some of the joys that there were for some but also the difficulties for others within the Methodist Church and how some feel they have to leave and some circuits have had to close.

I think that is a reason then that we in the Church of England, while we have not yet agreed where we are with LLF, have an opportunity to learn from the Methodist Church and I think that would be an important learning point in this Love in Covenant Group. In that Churches Together Group, the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church made their positions very, very clear and that the decision of the Methodist Conference did not enable or promote better ecumenical relationships. On the focus of this Life In Covenant Group, I want to suggest that there could be a real focus on learning for the Church of England around this particular issue. As the Church of England, we can learn from our friends. For our futures, we face the challenges in front of us.

*The Chair:* Synod, I would like to test your mind now on a motion for closure on this item.

*The motion was put and carried, 268 voting in favour, 25 against, with three recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* I now call upon the Bishop of Fulham to respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

*The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker):* Chair, thank you and thank you to all those who have contributed to what I think was a very good debate. I want to respond briefly to some of the speakers. To the Bishop of Liverpool, thank you very much for reminding us of the long journey predating even the signing of the Covenant in 2003 and for your use of some key words in this whole relationship - perseverance and forbearance - and for reminding us of the value of the meeting.

David Penny, thank you for emphasising the need to emphasise working together, reminding you of paragraph 15(c) in the paper, "The continuing value of harmonious and

cooperative relationships”, and also to note that I think I am right in saying there are two people from Cumbria on MAPUM as presently constituted.

Jonathan Alderton-Ford, thank you. Just to pick up particularly that if you go to the website of the Methodist Church itself, you will find some very helpful and detailed exposition of the way in which they reached the recent decisions and the consequences for their life together. Susan Howdle, thank you very much indeed for your contribution and, of course, for emphasising again, “We called it a Covenant because we meant it”.

Robin Lunn, thank you also for that perspective of history, “1739 to 2039?” You asked about timeframes. That is, of course, in one sense, a very sensible question but I would want to say, I, certainly speaking just for myself, could not possibly give any timeframes for this journey under God into the full visible unity of the whole Church of Jesus Christ. I think we are called to walk the journey without knowing when the destination will be reached.

Andrea Minichiello-Williams, thank you very much for reminding us about the important part that the Methodist Church played in your Christian formation and upbringing and thank you for the care with which you articulated your very serious concerns. What the Methodist Church has decided does not, as I said in my opening remarks, determine or pre-empt or change the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England.

To the Archbishop of York, I am hugely grateful, you said exactly what I wanted to say: prayer, yes, reflection, yes, but we do not stop, we take stock but we do that in the context of the conversation going on. Penny Allen, thank you for that encouragement to look at what we can do together and can do well. Fr Thomas, thank you for your exposition of what it means to be in Covenant with another church and of walking together, particularly when things are difficult, walking more faithfully and closely when things are difficult. That is a contribution that comes from a religious and perhaps carries something of what it means to live in community, so thank you very much.

Michael Read, no, we have not identified the members of the new group yet although I think Ruth Gee is there from the Methodist Church, but thank you for your offer of help and for your plea for diversity which we have heard. Andrew Dotchin, thank you for your encouragement too to go ahead with the journey and to remind Synod of the differences that we live with in much closer relationships even than this relationship of Covenant.

To the Bishop of Blackburn, I am hugely grateful for your encouragement to us to learn from Life in Covenant. As and when it comes into being, I am sure that it will be a forum for honest talking and good listening and learning together. Thank you for encouraging us to continue the conversation. I think that is really where I want to end, that this motion before you is one to continue the conversation.

I am sorry for not acknowledging it earlier, but somebody made the very important point about our speaking together to the world and I think in this season, when there is so much fracture in the world, to send a signal that we cannot talk to one another within the household of God and within the body of Christ, whatever the challenges, would be very regrettable indeed. Thank you again, Synod, and I conclude by urging you to vote as enthusiastically as you can for the motion before you.

*The Chair.* We now put Item 11 to the vote using the Lumi voting system.

*The motion was put and carried, 218 voting in favour, 73 against, with 19 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* We now adjourn, Synod, for a 15 minute screen break.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Fulham (Rt Revd Jonathan Baker)* took the Chair at 4.48 pm.

## **ITEM 77**

### **AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS: ELECTIONS TO CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION 58<sup>th</sup> REPORT OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (GS 2227)**

*The Chair.* Welcome back, members of Synod. We now come to Items 77 to 89, which are the amendments to the Standing Orders which relate to elections to the Crown Nominations Commission. This item is intended to put into effect the decisions made by Synod on Friday afternoon when we were debating Items 5 to 9. Members will need GS 2227, the 58th Standing Order Committee Report, and the Seventh Notice Paper. With your consent, Synod, I am going to use my discretion as Chair under Standing Order 40(2) to take some of these items en bloc.

You will be pleased to know that the purpose of this, other than simply to promote simplicity, is that it should enable us to take eight votes rather than 12 in order to complete this business and I hope very much that you will welcome that. We are going to do this by grouping together and taking together the items which are consequential on previous items having been carried. I am doing this because there has been no notice of amendments to any of these items and because I am hoping that no member will indicate a wish to speak against one of the consequential items, but if they wish to make a point will do so in consideration of the substantive item a little earlier.

All of that means - and I hope this is making sense and that you are able to follow it - that we will take this business in a slightly different order from that on the Notice Paper in that we will work our way through item by item and then we will take Items 78, 80, 81, 87 and 89 together en bloc at the end, those being consequential on previous items having been carried. I hope that has your consent.

I am now going to ask Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move this business. I would like to invite him, if he would like to do so, to speak for up to ten minutes to all the business on the Seventh Notice Paper and, then, at the end of that introductory speech, to move the first item, Item 77. Aiden, you have up to ten minutes.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* I understand from the Vicar of Cannes that those who during this group of sessions have been in this seat can sometimes take on a slightly Napoleonic air because of the background. I have to say, from my perspective, I feel more like that childhood hero, the Blue Peter person, given that I am called "Presenter 1" in this context. So here is something I prepared earlier.

Chair, with the end of this group of sessions in sight, and indeed the end of this exceptional sexennium, members of Synod may, with some justification, feel that they have fought the good fight, have finished the race and have kept the faith. I do not know whether St Paul might have imagined the opportunity to engage in debates on changes to Standing Orders and the Vacancy in See Committee Regulations as a crown of righteousness or whether we must wait a little longer for that reward.

I do understand, however, that members may be disappointed not to see before them the righteous judge and I can only apologise for being a very poor substitute in bringing Standing Orders changes to the Synod for the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, Chancellor Tattersall. Members will realise that I have been asked to move these items of business as they relate solely to the implementation of recommendations contained in GS 2202, Responsible Representation.

Members have received the 58th Report of the Standing Orders Committee, GS 2227, which contains in the Annex the details of the changes as originally proposed. Those changes were set out in the Second Notice Paper. No notice was given of any proposed amendments. I am grateful to the Synod for engaging so constructively with the detail of the five propositions set out in GS 2209 implementing the recommendations of Responsible Representation. In our debates on Friday - yes, it was only 72 hours ago - the Synod gave a considerable amount of time to clarifying the way in which it wishes to move forward.

The business before us now gives effect to the policy decisions made by the Synod on Friday as to the implementation of the recommendations of the Crown Nominations Commission Elections Review Group. You will recall that amendments proposed by Mr Lamming at Item 90, by Mrs Foreman at Item 91 and by Prebendary Cawdell at Item 94 were accepted by the Synod.

In consequence of this, the proposed Standing Order changes have been updated to reflect the decisions made by the Synod. The Standing Orders Committee met on Saturday evening to consider those amendments and is of the view that the amendments

now being put to the Synod achieve the intended effect. The four updated texts of the changes now proposed are contained in the Seventh Notice Paper which was made available to members yesterday.

Chair, I hope members will forgive me - or possibly even be relieved - if I indicate that, in view of the position as I have just set it out, I intend to speak in only the briefest of terms about the detail of each set of amendments contained in the 12 items listed on Order Paper VI.

Turning specifically to Item 77, this amendment together with Items 79 and 83, gives effect to Proposition 3a in GS 2209 and as considered by the Synod on Friday. It will provide for the central members of the Crown Nominations Commission to be elected as six pairs, three pairs from the House of Laity and three pairs from the House of Clergy.

The eagle-eyed amongst you may have spotted that the Explanatory Statement on the Seventh Notice Paper refers to the election of “three pairs from the House of Laity and three pairs from the House of Laity”. I am not in a position to confirm or deny rumours of an attempted coup by Dr Harrison and Canon Paver, but I am able to inform Synod that there is a typographical error in the statement and three pairs and only three pairs would, in fact, be elected from both Houses as clearly set out in the proposed amendment immediately above it.

Members will recall that only one member of each pair would serve on the Commission in relation to its consideration of any given vacancy. Chair, I beg to move the motion at Item 77 standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Item 77 is now open for debate. I see no one indicating that they wish to speak and so we can move directly to a vote on Item 77 using the Lumi platform in the usual way. This will be a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 233 voting in favour, nine against, with ten recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 79**

*The Chair:* Item 77, having been carried, I invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 79.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* As I indicated in relation to Item 77, Item 79 forms part of the provision for the central members of the Crown Nominations Commission to be elected as pairs. The amendments comprising Item 79 specifically set out the basis on which the person to serve on a given Commission would be chosen, namely by agreement between the pair or, failing that, by lot. In the event that neither member of the pair could serve, the Chair of the Commission would, in consultation with the other

two pairs from the same House, nominate a member of one of those pairs. If none of them were available, then the nomination would fall to the Chair of the House concerned. Chair, I beg to move the motion at Item 79.

*The Chair:* Item 79 is open for debate. I see no one wishing to speak and so we move to a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 79.

*The motion was put and carried, 230 voting in favour, 13 against, with eight recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 82**

*The Chair:* I now invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 82.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, the amendment at Item 82 forms part of the package of provisions, including Items 78 and 81, for the co-option of a non-voting member. Together, they give effect to Proposition 4, being GS 2209. These amendments would provide for the possibility of the co-option of one non-voting member by the Commission for its consideration of a particular vacancy. Such a co-option would be made only if the Commission established for that vacancy considered that its membership was not representative of the relevant diocese as a whole.

Specifically, Item 82 requires that the Commission must have taken into account the material provided to it by the diocesan Vacancy in See Committee and by the Prime Minister's and Archbishops' Appointment Secretaries before making any decision on co-option. It also specifies a qualification for co-option so that a person could be co-opted only if he or she would be eligible for election to the General Synod.

In order to expedite our business, Chair, may I just add that Item 78 expands the list of categories of non-voting members of the CNC to include a co-opted member if one is appointed. Item 81 is simply a consequential drafting amendment. Chair, I beg to move the motion at Item 82.

*The Chair:* Item 82 is open for debate.

*Revd Anne Stevens (London):* This may have been covered in the debate, and apologies if I missed it, just to clarify the timing, because to a certain extent this will depend on which of the pairs gets nominated to the Commission. Would someone be able just to clarify that for us?

*The Chair:* I see no one wishing to speak and so if Aiden Hargreaves-Smith would like to reply to the debate he may be able to give you that clarification.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* I think all I can say is that it would be a matter for each Commission to determine. But I think, as I said on Friday, it would be a question of establishing the membership of the particular Commission and, when that is established, of those Commission members, whilst they have the papers before them from the Archbishops' and Prime Minister's Appointment Secretaries and the diocesan Vacancy in See Committee, for any of those members to raise the matter at that point. It would be, as it were, far enough into the process that one has got the material but otherwise at the earliest stage.

*The Chair:* Synod, we now put Item 82 to the vote. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 229 voting in favour, 14 against, with nine recorded abstentions.*

### **ITEM 83**

*The Chair:* Synod, having a few moments ago carried Item 79, I now invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 83.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, as I indicated when speaking on Item 77, Item 83 forms part of the package of amendments which together give effect to the proposal for the election of central members in pairs. Specifically, Item 83 provides a nominations procedure which follows a pattern which will be recognisable to members of Synod from other elections conducted under the Standing Orders. Chair, I beg to move the motion at Item 83.

*The Chair:* Item 83 is open for debate. I see no one indicating that they wish to speak. I, therefore, put Item 83 to a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 248 voting in favour, three against, with seven recorded abstentions.*

### **ITEM 84**

*The Chair:* I invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 84.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, Item 84 would give effect to Propositions 1 and 2 in GS 2209 and, with your permission, as amended by the amendments proposed by Mr Lamming and Mrs Foreman. Specifically, this amendment deals with elections procedure and would provide for there to be a single electorate combining the House of Clergy and the House of Laity. It would also provide for the election to take place at a group of sessions by those present, subject to the special arrangements being made for those unable to be present because of illness or disability to be able to vote.



The precise arrangements would be for the Business Committee to determine. Those members participating remotely at a remote or hybrid group of sessions are deemed to be present for the purposes of the Standing Orders and so would fall within the scope of paragraph 3 of the new Standing Order 137B. This amendment thus also takes account of Mr Lamming's amendment in this respect. Chair, I beg to move the motion at Item 84.

*The Chair.* This item is open for debate with a five minute speech limit in place.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I hope I shall not need five minutes. I simply wanted to comment on the wording of paragraph (4) of this Standing Order. Members may recall that I opposed Mrs Foreman's amendment because it seemed to me to be arbitrary in, for example, providing for somebody who was ill but not for somebody who was caring for somebody who was ill.

At the Standing Orders Committee on Saturday evening, we were advised that this form of words does indeed include the illness or disability of other people and so, in fact, as it is written it would enable someone who was caring for a sick relative, for example, or for a disabled person to vote under this exception, which was not immediately apparent and so I am encouraged by that.

I am also encouraged that this is more workable than I had thought because, as paragraph (7) says, the result has to be declared at that group of sessions. I was wondering how, if we were not using electronic voting - which is a matter for the Business Committee to decide - we would actually do that.

Again, I am advised that the Business Committee could, if it wished, make provision for proxies to vote on behalf of a person who was not there and so, again, that deals with that problem. I am now much more content with this amendment than I was on Friday.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* That could be the last time I say my name and diocese. I just wanted to thank Mr Scowen for his comments there and to thank Aiden and all the others who have made this possible. I hope that we will all support this. In particular, I am so pleased and so happy that we have made provision for disabled people and those with health conditions and their carers. Thanks be to God, it has really made my Synod and it is a wonderful way to be ending this session.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* I simply wanted to refer, as Clive has already done, I suppose, to the last sentence of the Explanatory Statement and to the fact that illness and disability are not limited to the member concerned. We thought, as the Standing Orders Committee, that this reflected the spirit of the amendment proposed and passed by Synod and I hope that Synod will agree.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* I just have a brief question, although it is probably too late to do anything about it if the answer is not satisfactory. But would this provision also cover, for example, somebody who was self-isolating because of track and trace?

*The Chair:* I see no one else indicating they wish to speak and so I invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to reply to the debate. Aiden, you have up to five minutes, should you need them.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* I would like to thank those who have contributed briefly, simply to welcome those comments, to thank the righteous judge for his observations and to say to Miss Dailey that I cannot give a guaranteed legal observation on the interpretation here. If the reason is illness or disability, then it will come within the Standing Order and, if it is not, it will not.

*The Chair:* Synod, I now put Item 84 to a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 249 voting in favour, two against, with three recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 85**

*The Chair:* Synod, Item 79 having been carried, I now ask Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 85.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* The amendment at Item 85 gives effect to Proposition 3b in GS 2209 and, with your permission, as amended by Prebendary Cawdell's amendment. It would provide that, if there were a single vacancy within the pair, the other member would continue to be a central CNC member and could serve on the Commission accordingly. In the event that the continuing member of the pair ceased to be eligible or did not wish to remain on the Commission, an election would be conducted for a new pair. Chair, I beg to move the motion at Item 85.

*The Chair:* I see no one wishing to speak on this item and so we move to a count of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 258 voting in favour, one against, with one recorded abstention.*

## **ITEM 88**

*The Chair:* I now invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 88.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, the amendments at Item 88 give effect to Proposition 5 in GS 2209. It will provide for the Commission to determine the stage of the CNC process from which it should start afresh in the event that the CNC had been unable to agree on a name to submit to the Prime Minister. I beg to move the motion at Item 88.

*The Chair:* Item 88 is open for debate. I see no one indicating that they wish to speak. I, therefore, put Item 88 to a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 249 voting in favour, two against, with three recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEMS 78, 80, 81, 87 & 89**

*The Chair:* Synod, we approach the clean air and broad horizons of the summit and I invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move en bloc, with my permission, Items 78, 80, 81, 87 and 89.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, I am tempted to say this will be ruining both your stats and mine for the number of times I have been called to speak in this debate, but I am happy to move the amendments at Items 78, 80, 81, 87 and 89. They are consequential on other amendments already made by this Synod and I beg to move them.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Aiden. As long as no one indicates a wish to speak against one or more of those motions, we may take them en bloc. I see no one indicating that they wish to speak and so I, therefore, put Items 78, 80, 81, 87 and 89 en bloc to a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motions were put and carried, 251 voting in favour, none against, with two recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* Thank you, Synod, for your attention to this business and that concludes that group of items.

## **SPECIAL AGENDA I LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS ITEM 503**

### **VACANCY IN SEE COMMITTEES (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2021 (GS 2228)**

*The Chair:* Synod, we move straight on to our next business, Item 503. This is the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulations 2021. Members will need GS 2228, the Explanatory Note GS 2228X, and the policy background paper GS 2228P.

In a moment, I shall invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 503A. This is the preliminary motion that the Regulations be considered. This will provide members with an opportunity to make general comments about the Regulation or to raise specific points which do not relate to the amendment on the Order Paper.

If the preliminary motion is carried, we will then move to the amendments and members who wish to comment on an amendment should, of course, not do so, please, in the preliminary motion but reserve their comments for the debate on the relevant amendment. After we have addressed the amendments, we will return to the motion for approval at Item 503B. I now call upon Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 503A "That the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2021 be considered". Aiden, you may speak for up to ten minutes.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* It is possible, of course, to have too much of a good thing and, whilst there are undoubtedly members for whom changes to Standing Orders and Regulations are the highlight of a group of sessions - I can see some of you on the screen right now - I do understand that it may not be everyone's idea of fun. Running the race, we are at least now approaching the final curve and I can assure the Synod we shall soon have gone round the bend.

Members have GS 2228, the draft Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2021; GS 2228X, the helpful accompanying Explanatory Notes produced by the Legal Office; and GS 2228P, which is an additional note produced by the Review Group to provide some additional commentary for members in advance of today's debate and which sets out the rationale for the principal amendments.

The terms of reference for the Crown Nominations Commission Elections Review Group specifically included the election of diocesan representatives to the CNC from the Vacancy in See Committee. Our work led us to make a number of recommendations relating to how the Vacancy in See Committee is formed and conducts its business and how it elects members to the CNC.

The revivification of Vacancy in See Committees is perhaps a particular challenge given the apparently established view of their function and that they therefore spend much of their time dormant. We hope, therefore, that that body might be given a fresh vitality it might not often have had other than following the announcement of a vacancy in the hope of engaging a wider range of people in its work.

A number of our recommendations do not give rise to the need for any formal changes. For example, dioceses giving wider publicity to the qualifications for election to the Vacancy in See Committee will help to overcome common misconceptions about that and thereby has the potential to draw in a broader range of candidates. Nevertheless, some of our recommendations do require changes to the Vacancy in See Committees

Regulation and those are embodied in the (Amendment) Regulation before the Synod today.

I will turn now to some specific amendments. First, members of the House of Laity and the House of Clergy of the diocesan synod would form a single electorate for the election of Vacancy in See Committee members. This approach is consistent with the way in which Vacancy in See Committees elect diocesan representatives to the CNC and, following the Standing Orders changes, it is also consistent with the way in which the General Synod will elect the central members.

Secondly, the (Amendment) Regulation would give effect to our recommendation that the Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee should not be eligible to stand for election to the CNC. The Review Group came to a clear view that the Chair of a Vacancy in See Committee is a key responsibility in its own right and, in the context of a refreshed approach to the Vacancy in See Committee, we recommended that the Chair should be an *ex officio* member of the Bishop's Council.

We felt strongly that a crucial part of the Vacancy in See Committee Chair's role is to ask the difficult questions and to bring a constructive and creative challenge to the Committee. We concluded that this was best done by someone who was not concerned, consciously or otherwise, about their election prospects.

Some representations were made to us that some Vacancy in See Committees had worked in such a way that the Chair was the only person who really had a clear understanding of the full picture of the Committee's work and deliberations. We believe it would be in everyone's interest to avoid such a concentration of knowledge and understanding in just one person and are not persuaded that it provides any justification for adopting a different approach from that set out in our Report. On the contrary, we think it important to enable all those who will represent a diocese on the Commission to make a full and informed contribution to the Commission's work.

Thirdly, provision is also made to build on the existing restriction on the number of senior staff who may serve as an elected diocesan representative by, additionally, bringing staff of the National Church Institutions and the diocesan board of finance and DBE employees within its scope. *Discerning in Obedience* was concerned that voices beyond the central diocesan administration should be heard on the CNC.

The proposed amendment does not remove the possibility of the election of such a person other than in respect of suffragan bishops, but restricts it to one place out of six. It is the Group's view that, if more places were available to such candidates, it would risk reducing a proper expression of the breadth of perspectives and experiences of the laity and clergy across the parishes and communities of the diocese.

Fourthly, the proposed amendments would change the very restricted present provision to allow a replacement diocesan member of the CNC to be appointed in situations where the original elected member is incapable or unwilling to act. This is a practical provision that would provide greater flexibility and help to ensure that the representation of the diocese is not diminished.

Fifthly, paragraph 6 of the (Amendment) Regulation would permit a Vacancy in See Committee to meet virtually by electronic means and would enable a Committee to undertake its business in that way. The Review Group remains of the view that the process of corporate discernment is more likely to be fruitful in a context of prayer and worship with all the parties present together in one place. Nevertheless, the provision of a legal basis for remote meetings is a practical step which would significantly simplify the present requirements in that respect should the need arise.

Sixthly, the proposed amendments will also give Vacancy in See Committees greater flexibility to decide when they wish to conduct the election of diocesan members to the CNC. We have taken this opportunity to bring the main Regulation up-to-date and to make it more consistent with other provisions.

The qualification for election to and *ex officio* membership of the Vacancy in See Committee is brought into line with the Church Representation Rules. This will allow proctors elected from a university or TEI to be included in the *ex officio* membership of the Vacancy in See Committee and members of the Bishop's Mission Initiative to be eligible for election to the Vacancy in See Committee. Gender specific terminology has been changed.

Chair, this (Amendment) Regulation forms part of the package of proposals to implement the recommendations contained in Responsible Representation. On behalf of the Review Group, I commend it to the Synod and beg to move the motion at Item 503A standing in my name, but representing the fruits of the labours of my colleagues and the distillation of the representations made to us, for all of which I record my sincere gratitude.

*The Chair.* Item 503A is open for debate.

*Mrs Angela Scott (Rochester):* A Vacancy in See Committee must elect six people to Crown Nominations Commission and at least three in the House of Laity, is this also a requirement that there should be at least three in the House of Clergy?

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Mr Hargreaves-Smith referred to the proposal of the Review Group that the Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee should be an *ex officio* member of the Bishop's Council. I do not think that is something that can be done by this

Regulation and I do not think it is in this Regulation unless I have missed something. How is it intended that that should be implemented?

My other question, which I was going to mention at a later debate but I can do it now, I think, is, as I recall, previous Vacancy in See Committees have then been formalised as acts of Synod. I do not see any specific proposal here to do that unless, again, I have missed something and I just wonder whether that has been thought about.

*Dr Michael Todd (Truro):* In relation to the Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee being an *ex officio* member of the Bishop's Council, in my own experience the Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee was only elected from the Committee when it became active, not when it was actually originally elected, and it never met until it was needed to when there actually was a vacancy in see. What is actually intended to happen and would the Chair cease to be *ex officio* on the Bishop's Council when the Vacancy in See Committee had completed its work?

*The Chair:* I see no one else indicating that they wish to speak and so I invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to respond to the debate.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Angela Scott, I think if you hold your breath - not literally - for a few moments, you will see at Item 506 an amendment being brought by Canon Linda Ali which will give you the answer that you are looking for. It will be up to the Synod whether it is equal numbers, whether the present provision where it is at least three laity will change. At the moment, the provision is that you could have, for example, four laity and two clergy. It is never more than six members.

To Clive, thank you, as always helpful points of detail. As I understand it, the intention is that the recommendation in relation to the Bishop's Council membership will be brought forward as an amendment to the Church Representation Rules and that would come in due course. As far as the question about the Act of Synod goes, I understand that will be something for a subsequent group of sessions.

Mike Todd, you helpfully make one of our points for us, which is that the Vacancy in See Committee is a Committee which we wish had rather more life because we think if it had rather more life more people would be interested in actually serving on it rather than the present situation where in some places not a great deal seems to happen. We are hoping that there will be proposals that will come forward for how that life might be encouraged in each diocese.

But, to answer your specific question, the membership of the Bishop's Council would not come to an end with the end of the work of a Vacancy in See Committee for a particular vacancy because, of course, the appointment as Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee is of a Standing Committee, i.e. it is for a term, and so the appointment will be for that period.

*The Chair:* I now put to Synod a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 503A, that the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2021 be considered.

*The motion was put and carried, 257 voting in favour, two against, with three recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 505**

*The Chair:* Synod, we now come to the amendments at Items 505, 506 and 507. Here, the 40 member procedure will apply. The mover of each amendment will have not more than five minutes to speak and I will then call on Mr Hargreaves-Smith also to speak for not more than five minutes in reply. If the amendment is not supported by him, it will lapse unless 40 members indicate by means of a green tick that they wish the debate to continue and the amendment to be voted on. I now call the Revd Prebendary Simon Cawdell to move the amendment in his name, Item 505. Simon, you may speak for up to five minutes.

*Revd Preb. Simon Cawdell (Hereford):* The two amendments that I am bringing this afternoon cover items that were not tested in the debate on Friday as that related only to the CNC arrangements rather than the Vacancy in See Rules. Both of my amendments deal with issues where we need to think about the application of subsidiarity.

We are privileged to be members of a national body that is in a position to take an overview and then make rules on behalf of all of us across all dioceses. This does not always mean that we should and there are occasions when the temptation to regulate makes us too big, too bossy, too centralising and too little trusting of the ability of our diocesan colleagues to make good decisions for themselves.

My two amendments are very simple. In my first amendment, my proposal would enable the Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee to stand as one of the diocesan six on CNC. As well as the reasons outlined by Aiden, which I will come to in a moment, I also think that there was an unspoken suggestion that may have come from the fact that in some dioceses the Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee is a suffragan bishop. If that is so, then elsewhere in the new rules suffragan bishops are expressly forbidden from serving on the CNC and so a suffragan bishop as a Vacancy in See Chair could not stand for the Crown Nominations Commission anyway.

Dealing with Aiden's suggestions, I have to say that the suggestion that the task of Chairing a Vacancy in See Committee would be impaired if the Chair was standing for election to the Crown Nominations Commission is really something of a slur to the integrity of those who are serving in that post and also, frankly, to the electors who are perfectly well-equipped to vote as they see right for the best reasons of their own diocese.



Further, it may well partially deprive the process of the service of people who may be singularly well-equipped to serve in both capacities. I myself have come across vacancy processes where the Vacancy in See Committee Chair, perhaps by reason of national level expertise and senior public appointments in another field, has been singularly well-equipped both to lead the diocesan level process and then to represent the statement of needs to the Crown Nominations Commission when it has met.

To have to make an artificial choice as to which role we are asking that person to serve in at the outset of the process would be to diminish both the quality of the process and potentially our representation. It is simply a decision that should be made at local level in local circumstances by local people. Let us not be too big, too bossy and too controlling and respect our colleagues locally. I beg to move my amendment.

*The Chair:* I invite Mr Hargreaves-Smith to respond, to speak for not more than five minutes and to indicate whether or not he wishes to support the amendment.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* The Group considered the role of the Chair to be a significant responsibility and a distinct role. Given the nature of this role, as I have already indicated, we have recommended that the Chair should be a member of the Bishop's Council if they are not already.

As we set out in GS 2228P, and I explained a moment ago, the Review Group considers the Chair to have a particular role to play in the process and our proposal is not to diminish in any way the excellent work undertaken by Chairs of Vacancy in See Committees, but we do believe that there is a significant benefit to everyone in the process if the Chair has the freedom to hold the work and life of the Vacancy in See Committee as objectively as possible by asking the difficult questions and challenging the members of the Vacancy in See Committee without, consciously or sub-consciously, being concerned about the need to gain the support of colleagues in the Vacancy in See Committee in the election of diocesan representatives to the CNC.

Ultimately, we took the view that it is preferable to avoid the potential conflict of interest that could arise for a Chair so that she or he might be free to focus on their present responsibilities as a Chair. If I may just finally add, I am advised that it is very uncommon now for suffragan bishops to be the Chairs of Vacancy in See Committees and so I can assure Prebendary Cawdell that there was no intended, unintended or otherwise point behind that.

*The Chair:* Aiden, can I just absolutely confirm that you are not accepting the amendment.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* I am so sorry, yes, the Group resists the amendment.

*The Chair.* The mover of the main motion has not accepted Prebendary Cawdell's amendment, therefore, in order for debate to continue, 40 members must indicate using the Zoom green tick. There are 40 members indicating, therefore the debate on this amendment can continue.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* I speak as a member of the Review Group to resist this amendment. Synod, you will be aware that one of the main principles of the work that the Group has put forward is that of increasing diversity. Diversity is partly about who is in the room. It is about representation of people of different backgrounds and traditions, ethnicity, all of the things we have talked about when we have reflected on diversity. But diversity is also about - and this is the way committees and organisations work - the concentration of power.

The reality is that the Chair has a very powerful position in the Committee and the essence of a Chair is in order to enable voices to be heard. Therefore, a position of not being part of that election themselves is an integral part of encouraging the kind of diversity of hearing different voices that is at the heart of the work of the Group and at the heart of the proposals that the Group has made. It is for that reason that we have made this recommendation. It is for that reason that I would ask you to resist Simon Cawdell's amendment.

*Mrs Debrah Mclsaac (Salisbury):* I am currently serving on a CNC and, of course, prior to that, was on the Vacancy in See Committee. I see it as absolutely essential that there is an independent Chair who has no other or further involvement in the process. There are many able people on a Vacancy in See Committee in any diocese and it is important that we do not think that wisdom resides in a single individual. This is not an artificial choice, but it is critical that the decisions are preserved from being too local, too insular and too focused on individuals taking a role. I think retaining the proposal as it is essential and I urge Synod to resist this amendment.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Canon Dr John Mason (Chester):* I was Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee of Chester recently and I was also elected to the CNC and so, if this amendment is not passed, I would have been unable to carry out that role. I understand the concern that you are saying that either you might wish to curry favour as a Chair or it might be a concentration of knowledge.

I have to say - and I know I would say this, would I not - I really do not recognise that in my experience whatsoever. They are actually two separate roles. First of all, the Vacancy in See Committee sits and is chaired, but then from then on the CNC is a completely different procedure.

Also, I think in the role as a Chair you can create as many enemies as you can friends. A good Chair will expressly attempt to involve as many people as they possibly can. That is what a good Chair would be doing and so they are not concentrating their knowledge by any means. I doubt that a Chair who did not have that mindset would act any differently just because they did not believe, ultimately, they were going to be eligible to stand on the CNC.

Basically, I do not really see that this concern outweighs the benefit of having someone who is presumably highly motivated and knowledgeable as being eligible for what is, after all, only ever going to be an election to the CNC. If people who are electors perceive that the person has been overstepping the mark, they will not get elected. We have had quite a lot of talk about term limits in different roles during these sessions and I just think it is interesting we now seem to be proposing that we should have got a term limit of zero for this, which I just cannot believe is correct. Please, I would ask you to support this amendment.

*Mrs Michelle Obende (Chelmsford):* As many of you heard on Friday, I was on the last CNC for the See of Chelmsford where we had the Vacancy in See Chair, Robert Hammond, also elected onto the CNC. No surprises, therefore, as to why I support the amendment tabled by Simon Cawdell and would like to share some of my lived experiences in this area.

In order to get everything ready within the short timelines, we created sub-working groups within the Vacancy in See. It was only the Vacancy in See Chair and the Deputy Chair who were a part of both of these groups. Therefore, having Robert on the CNC was really valuable from a knowledge perspective. The central members asked some very valuable questions during the process that only Robert knew the answers to, having been the only CNC member who was actually on both of the smaller working groups as well.

It did not appear like he was canvassing votes or distracted in his role when he was acting as Vacancy in See Chair but was, rather, solely focused on getting the right person for Chelmsford. No surprises again that I am all for diversity and, therefore, I really do not see how not having the Vacancy in See Chair as a CNC member will really hinder that and agree that it should be decided at local level.

*Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I would like to speak in favour of Simon Cawdell's amendment and the principle of subsidiarity. Might I start by reminding Synod members that, of course, it is the function of the Bishop's Council to elect the Chairman of a Vacancy in See Committee, to be elected by the Bishop's Council from among the members of the Committee both *ex officio* and elected and that person shall then hold office for the same term as the elected members. However, referring back to the suggestion that the person elected should then become an *ex officio* member of the

Bishop's Council, it seems to me that that would introduce a novel provision in the Church Representation Rules.

I would like Aiden to comment on this when he replies to the debate, because the rules at present simply provide that there is to be a Bishop's Council and Standing Committee of the Synod which has such membership as the Standing Orders may provide. It would certainly be novel for the Church Representation Rules to prescribe a particular member *ex officio* of the Bishop's Council.

Members of Synod, in terms of the particular amendment, I would invite you to support it. It seems to me that we should trust the members of the Vacancy in See Committee, who will have heard the discussions at that Committee and the way the Chairman of the Committee has conducted its business, to decide who are the appropriate persons to elect to the CNC as the diocesan representatives.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of one minute.

*Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter):* I speak as a member of the Review Group. I have served as a diocesan rep on two different CNCs and I am also the elected Chair of Exeter's Vacancy in See Committee. In Exeter, we have contested elections for this role. I would urge the Synod to listen carefully to what Debbie and Bishop Jonathan have said. Our aim in doing this is to have a completely independent Chair.

I am sure Robert was a brilliant Chair and member for Chelmsford Diocese but, nevertheless, you would not be human if you did not use the opportunity as, unconsciously, you are auditioning a bit for being elected as well. It takes different skills, particularly skills, to chair the Vacancy in See Committee and I think we would widen representation by having an excellent Chair and then six separate elected diocesan representatives. Please, I urge Synod to reject this amendment by Simon Cawdell.

*Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans):* I want to speak in favour of the Cawdell amendment for much the same reasons as John Mason and Michelle Tackie, but I want to also make clear that the priority for a diocese is to have the very best person chairing their Vacancy in See Committee. I think this is a restrictive provision which might run counter to that. It is, of course, always open to the Chair of the Committee when it comes to meet that he or she might announce that they will not be candidates for representation on the CNC, which would be fine. I urge Synod to vote in favour of this amendment.

*The Chair:* I would invite members to consider whether they are making a fresh point and, if so, to make it as crisply as possible.

*Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Correct me if I am wrong but I think there is some confusion about whether the Chair of the local Vacancy in See Committee should be on the national CNC or on the Bishop's Council. In many dioceses whoever

becomes the Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee is already a member of the Bishop's Council. They are often a senior member of the diocese. It is very helpful to the work of the Vacancy in See Committee that you have someone who is at the heart of the diocesan business, has been involved in the Bishop's Council's work and is more able to inform the rest of the Vacancy in See Committee members about the diocesan needs. I would resist the amendment.

*Very Revd Rogers Govender (Dean of Manchester):* In the interest of diversity, as I have said in previous debates on a similar theme, it is very important that the Chair of the CNC is objective. We are aware that, given the ways in which we tend to choose people to head up these very influential roles, especially in the election of a diocesan bishop, we have to have that openness and that objectivity. For all those reasons, I am simply wanting to lend my voice and my name to encourage the Synod to resist this amendment, please. I think we would have greater objectivity and a greater chance of diversity if we resist this amendment.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* We need to recall that the whole direction of travel with Simplification and with the form of the new Church Representation Rules is to leave as much to local discretion as we can and not to impose national restrictive rules. In London, I have served on three Vacancy in See Committees and on each occasion the Dean has been the Chair and there has never been any question of them standing for election.

But that is London and I am very well aware that different dioceses are utterly different, have different cultures and different approaches. I do not think we should impose this one-size-fits-all approach on the diversity of dioceses that we have. My other concern is that, yes, the Chair has an important and an influential role in the Committee but so, for example, do people who serve on the drafting group that produces the diocesan statement of needs. Those people also have a chance to exercise that sort of power and canvass for support.

*The Chair:* Clive, thank you, that is a point we have heard.

*Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells):* I just want in this very last speech of mine in this wonderful General Synod to say that, at last, for once, I agree with David Lamming and Clive Scowen. It is very important that we allow local people to sort out local matters.

*The Chair:* Synod, I am going to test your mind for the closure on Item 505.

*The motion was put and carried, 251 voting in favour, 11 against, with two recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* I, therefore, move to put Item 505 to a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and lost, 123 voting in favour, 133 against, with 16 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 506**

*The Chair.* We now move to Item 506 and I call Mrs Linda Ali to move Item 506. You have up to five minutes.

*Mrs Linda Ali (York):* This amendment would provide that the members of the Vacancy in See Committee who are elected to the Crown Nominations Commission are to be in equal numbers of clergy and laity. The amendment would give effect to a recommendation of the O'Donovan Report which the Election Review Group noted in paragraph 140 of our original Report. I should have said at the beginning I was a member of the Review Group.

An administrative oversight meant it was not listed as a formal recommendation in the Responsible Representation Report and for this we are very sorry. The Group, however, do strongly support this proposal and would be grateful for Synod to support the amendment. The rationale behind the amendment is to bring consistency between the diocesan members of the CNC and the central members which already requires an equal balance of lay and ordained members. Synod, I hope you will also agree to accept this amendment. I move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair.* Mr Hargreaves-Smith to respond and to indicate whether he is willing to accept the amendment.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* This gives me an opportunity to thank Canon Ali, not just for her amendment but for all the thoughtfulness and care she has brought to the proceedings of the Group. We valued it enormously. Chair, we welcome this amendment.

*The Chair.* Item 506 is open for debate.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Mrs Angela Scott (Rochester):* Like Tim Hind, this will be my last contribution to General Synod as I am not looking for re-election. We have just had elections to CNC in Rochester and we have elected four in the House of Laity and only two in the House of Clergy and I feel that this amendment just corrects that because there should be equal numbers.

*Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield):* Can I just ask why it is felt that consistency is needed?

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Dr Nick Land (York):* I find myself in a very unusual position in disagreeing with my colleague, Linda. The CNC consists of the six central and six diocesan members and, of course, the two Archbishops and so, where there are two clergy and four lay people, there are a total of seven ordained and seven lay people on the CNC. If this amendment was to go through, then there would always be a majority of ordained people and a minority of lay people on the CNC. At the moment, dioceses can make the point of sending four and two, or three and three, but I really think putting through this amendment which guarantees that there is always a majority of ordained people on the CNC is probably not a helpful message to give just at the moment.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* I have served on two diocesan Vacancy in See Committees and so I declare an interest. I simply do not follow why there needs to be equal numbers of elected people. There are far more lay people in a diocese than clergy and their voices need to be heard in the numbers selected locally. It is not for us and should not be for us to seek to dictate to the local people who they elect. Nick has made the second point that I was going to make and I will not repeat it. I urge you, please, to vote against the proposed amendment.

*Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury):* I urge you to resist this provision that half the members should be elected by lay members and half elected by the clerks in holy orders and half lay members. In my particular Vacancy in See Committee and the resulting choice of representatives to the CNC, we ended up with four lay people and two clergy. I do not think we are at any risk of being outnumbered when we get to the CNC, as has been pointed out with the Archbishops there.

Surely, if you are going to leave choice to the locals you could leave this choice to the locals. I think it was an essential requirement to provide that there should be a minimum number of lay people otherwise we could very well get swamped by the people appointed to the local Vacancy in See Committee. It seems to me that the current provision is not only adequate but the right protection and balancing of interests.

*The Chair* imposed a speech limit of one minute.

*Mr Keith Cawdron (Liverpool):* I simply want to say that supporting subsidiarity becomes important when we come to specifics. Here, we get the opportunity to take a decision centrally or leave it to the local diocese to take the decision there. I believe we should practise subsidiarity and let the diocese make the choice as it needs to and I think, therefore, we should reject the amendment and give more flexibility.

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* I would just like to make the observation that the Committee is very centrally involved with preparing the diocesan profile and the work which goes into that requires a very deep knowledge of how the laity is across the diocese and the challenge for ministry. I do think that the existing situation is fine. I would like you to resist this amendment, please.

*Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford):* I did not intend to speak, but I could not help noticing that all the speeches had been from lay members of Synod and I just thought I would pipe up as a clergy member who had served on a recent CNC to comment that the Archbishops are in a class of their own, shall we say. In terms of representing the needs of the clergy and particularly in Vacancy in See Committees and CNCs with large numbers of senior diocesan people, the place of the clergy and, indeed, the ordinary parish clergy, which I admit are not, do not necessarily feel well-represented. I am sorry for the voices that seem to imply the clergy are kind of out to squash the laity. Quite a lot of clergy are feeling quite bashed at the moment.

*The Chair:* I see no one wishing to speak. I am, therefore, able to put Item 506 to you, a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and lost, 98 voting in favour, 159 against, with seven recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 507**

*The Chair:* We now to move Item 507 and I invite Prebendary Cawdell to move Item 507. You have up to five minutes. If you can do it in less, we would be very grateful.

*Revd Preb. Simon Cawdell (Hereford):* I promise to do it in less. My second amendment concerns representation on the Crown Nominations Commission by diocesan and NCI employees. As presently drafted, the rules allow for only one member of senior staff - that, in practice, is deans or archdeacons - or a member of staff employed by dioceses or NCIs to serve on the CNC by election from the diocese.

I do agree that it is right that the number of members in these categories are limited so as to ensure a right level of representation at parish level from across the diocese rather than places being taken by central diocesan staff. But the restriction as it is drawn is drawn too tightly and, worse, sets up a serious conflict and power dynamic within the process.

As drawn, the Regulations will almost certainly ensure that the Crown Nominations Commission has one member of senior staff serving on it, as at present, namely a dean or archdeacon. However, it is also likely, as drawn, to exclude other diocesan employees, particularly lay members who may well, in fact, have a better and wider view of the whole diocese - for example, a lay training officer - but who will find it difficult to stand in an election against a senior staff member who might well be their line manager.

The consequence of these Regulations, as presently drawn, will be to advantage senior staff members over lay and clergy diocesan employees who may in practice have a wider view of the diocese on the ground. My amendment creates a separate category which



would enable one member of senior staff to serve and, in addition, an employee of the diocese or NCIs should the electorate wish to vote for them and so a maximum, therefore, of two central employees or senior staff.

Again, it is my view that we should be allowing flexibility for the local diocese within reasonable parameters to elect the people who will best represent them. That should be at their option and, again, I suggest that we need to avoid being too big, too bossy and too controlling and, in this case, also avoid setting up unfortunate power dynamics which will be detrimental not only to this process but probably create toxic issues within the diocese at the same time. I beg to move the amendment in my name.

*The Chair:* I now invite Aiden Hargreaves-Smith to respond to Prebendary Cawdell with reference to Item 507 and to indicate whether he accepts this amendment.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* The Review Group resists this amendment. In making our proposal, the Group was building on the issues identified by Professor O'Donovan and his colleagues in *Discerning in Obedience*, and I quote from that: "A Vacancy in See Committee has a significant block of *ex officio* members who serve in central diocesan functions which is necessary to ensure that the diocesan profile does justice to the state of affairs in the diocese but, since each diocese has its own small scale version of the central local tension, it is important that the central diocesan administration should not be the only voice to be heard on the CNC.

To guard against an over-dominant role for the diocesan centre, the rule is observed that no more than one of the six be a dean, an archdeacon or a suffragan bishop. This restriction, in our view, does not exclude enough. The Vacancy in See Regulation originally prohibited more than one member of 'the bishop's staff' and we favour restoring a broad construction of that phrase, including all who are both appointed directly by the bishop and report directly to the bishop".

Defining concepts such as "senior staff" and "central administration" legally for the purposes of a Regulation such as this is surprisingly difficult. However, the Review Group is clear that there is a strong perception among those who work at the centre or have a particular view of the diocese that that perception may not always be accurate and needs challenging. But there is a question of proportionality and balance.

Two places would constitute a third of the diocesan representation and the Group is not persuaded that that is proportionate. If Prebendary Cawdell's amendment passes, a third of the diocesan six could be people whose role places them in the so-called centre of the diocese. Our concern, reflected in our recommendation, is about ensuring that there is space for the breadth of representation across the diocese, giving space for parish clergy and lay people in the diocese to be elected to the CNC.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Aiden. I am hearing you as resisting the amendment.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* That is correct.

*The Chair:* I, therefore, invite, if there are 40 members, please, to indicate with your green tick that you wish the debate to continue. There are not 40 members indicating, therefore the amendment lapses.

## **ITEM 503B**

*The Chair:* Now that we have considered all the amendments, I call on Mr Hargreaves-Smith to move Item 503B, that the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2021 be approved. Aiden, you have up to ten minutes.

*Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London):* Chair, the end is nigh, but if our end is our beginning I hope members will forgive me for returning just for a moment to the origins of the work committed to the Review Group. A fundamental question we grappled with was considering what a broader theologically informed view of representation in the Church might look like in the hope that our findings might inform electoral processes for other bodies in the Church.

Our conclusion, put simply, is that it is only when each of us is so committed to the vitality of the whole body of Christ across its full breadth and legitimate diversity that we shall be able to respond as we should and, in this context, as responsible representatives. If I may say, Chair, there have been many references during this Synod to the need for a change of culture and for a more genuine acknowledgment of our interdependence.

There is much in our Report about that. I want to acknowledge what a privilege it has been to work with such a wonderful group of people as have been on the Review Group and supporting us in our work. The Group has lived out that mutual care and it has been a wonderful experience.

Synod, as we come to elections, will we be seeking to encourage to nominate people who reflect our own views and our own wishes? Will we be seeking a Synod in our own image? Or will we be seeking to express that commitment, that care and that love for our sisters and brothers in Christ to which we are called by seeking to ensure that the Synod, all our boards, and committees and councils reflect the full and wonderful diversity of the body of Christ?

This coming Saturday, I and many others will be marking a year's mind of a faithful priest and a very dear friend, Fr Bill Scott. He was a former Sub-Dean of the Chapels Royal. He had a coat of arms. It had a motto of one word, just three letters, "Amo", I love. Sometimes, it really is that simple. Chair, I beg to move Item 503B.

*The Chair.* Item 503B is open for debate. I see no one indicating that they wish to speak and so we will be able to move straight to a vote on this item. Before calling the vote, I would just like to thank Mr Hargreaves-Smith and every member of the Review Group that has brought the business to this point for their hard work and attention to detail and to all members of Synod for their participation in this series of debates. I, therefore, put Item 503B to a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and carried, 263 voting in favour, nine against, with three recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* The Regulation has been made and will be published as a Regulation of the General Synod. Synod, that concludes this item.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 5.40 pm.

## **ITEM 33 FAREWELLS**

*The Chair.* We come now to Item 33, Farewells. This is a formal item to farewell the First Church Estates, Loretta Minghella, the Bishop of Beverley, the Rt Revd Glyn Webster, the Bishop of Rochester, the Rt Revd James Langstaff, The Bishop of Willesden, the Rt Revd Pete Broadbent and the Bishop at Lambeth, the Rt Revd Tim Thornton. There will also be an opportunity to farewell those not standing for the next quinquennium, including Liz Paver, Vice-Chair of the House of Laity, and the Revd Michael Gisbourne, who is stepping down as Synod Chaplain. I would encourage you not to applaud, however you do it on the present system that we are working with, but wait until everyone has been farewelled and then to raise your hand or thumb or clap, or whatever you choose to do.

I now invite the Bishop of Manchester to deliver the farewell for Loretta Minghella.

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker):* Members of Synod, I wish to put on record our thanks to Loretta Minghella, the First Church Estates Commissioner. "First" is a very apt title. She is the first woman to hold that role in more than 170 years of its history. The office she has use of in Church House, as well as having pictures on its walls of many of the eminent men who served in that capacity in former times, has them being stared down at from the adjoining wall by a life-sized portrait of the woman who is our effective founder, Queen Anne. So perhaps Her late Majesty's pictorial presence reminds us that without the vision and pastoral concern of women - or at least one woman - from the very beginning, there would have been no bounty for Loretta and colleagues to distribute.

Staff reliably inform me that Loretta is the first Commissioner that they are aware of to actually enjoy General Synod. She is certainly the first Commissioner to greet visitors to her Church House office with a big hug (at least pre-Covid), and she is probably the first to fill the corridors with her tuneful singing, which sometimes gives us a few moments to prepare for her arrival in the office.

Loretta began her career as an articled clerk and then a solicitor, but by 1990 she was head of enforcement law and policies at the Securities Investment Board. She went on through a series of ever-more senior posts until she became the chief executive for the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. She took a rather interesting career move in 2010 when she left the world of finance to be the chief exec of Christian Aid. She was there until 2017 when, with a little bit of arm twisting on our behalf, Her Majesty kindly appointed her as the First Church Estates Commissioner. (It was Loretta's arm we twisted; you do not twist the Queen's arm!)

Loretta's first work experience of course came much earlier - as soon as she was tall enough to clear the tables of the family ice-cream parlour on the Isle of Wight. That is where no doubt she first developed her extraordinary capacity not only for hard work but also for personal connection and engagement. These are professional gifts that she would continue to develop and deploy to great effect in the years ahead, but they are at the core of the person, too.

Many will have known first-hand how much information that Minghella mind can store, and how quickly it is processed, and how beautifully formed it is on release, not least here in Synod. That would explain the great praise she received when she practised as a criminal defence barrister. But she has spoken publicly and movingly about her inability to see reduced sentences as victories in an arena where there is so much suffering. That is because that big brain of hers co-inhabits with an enormous heart. We should all be very glad that Loretta did not (or could not) compartmentalise these, and following the tragedy of her brother Anthony's untimely death, she chose to pursue a career where the heart got its say. And there, at the helm of Christian Aid, she stood alongside the world's most vulnerable people. Moreover, Loretta's rediscovery of her Christian faith and that powerful sense of homecoming which she speaks so movingly about, including in the past to us in Synod, has helped inspire her career choices. Her deep faith shines through in all the work she does and, importantly, in the way that she goes about it.

For all that warmth and pastoral care, Loretta has been, when needed to be, a tough and trailblazing figure, embarrassingly so for those who told her as a youngster she need not aim too high because she was either too female, or possibly too Italian - and that is a tricky thing to be in England this afternoon! But she has achieved a great many things despite those early criticisms.

As chief exec of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme during the 2008 financial crisis she was the person who oversaw the payment of over £21 billion to victims of bank failures, and that is where she received the OBE for her outstanding contribution.

As well as achieving in her own right, Loretta has paved the way for others: getting the best out of colleagues - encouraging, challenging, supporting, championing - and the way that she has driven increased diversity wherever she has worked. She blends her professional acumen with outstanding personal skills.

As we heard in that joint report with the Pensions Board earlier in this Synod, she steered the Commissioners through extremely volatile economic conditions, earning excellent investment returns despite Covid and other challenges. She has overseen the strengthening of the staff team and the introduction of important new strategies and methodologists. She has led the further strengthening of the award-winning responsible investment arm of the Commissioners and helped the National Investing Bodies become a seriously influential voice in the transition to a lower-carbon economy. Make no mistake, Synod, this is a genuinely world-changing influence on corporate behaviour and Loretta, more than anyone, has embodied the fact that ethical investment is not finance with an overlay; it is integral to it and inseparable from the Church's mission.

Loretta has never forgotten that investment returns mean nothing except the capacity to distribute funds in support of the Church's mission. During her tenure, this has covered immediate things like Covid and long-term things like clergy pensions, support for bishops and cathedrals, ministries, parish initiatives and, of course, the magnificent and internationally significant Lambeth Palace Library.

She has brought her vision and flair, not to mention extraordinary diplomacy, to discussions on future strategy, good governance, practice and improved efficiency. And who will ever forget her immortalisation of the lemon, and the apple and the tape measure? I hope that when her picture joins those of her predecessors on those hallowed walls of Church House, she will be shown holding these three talismanic objects firmly in her grasp. They are, of course, an example of her ability to describe complex things simply.

We at the Commissioners all feel the better for having known her, but all too soon she will no longer be a Commissioner, Archbishops' Council member or - unless she should stand again - even a General Synod member. We hope that she will still be able to sing in the choir, to enjoy Salisbury Cathedral, where she is a proud canon, and continue to be a wonderful advocate for the Church and a great exemplar of the Christian life lived out.

On her appointment as the next Master of Clare College, Cambridge (again, the first woman ever) she is going back to the place where, as an undergraduate, she was shaped as the high-achieving tough, but incurably warm person we know and love. That job is perfect for her. We regret it because that is where she is going. Clare College is fortunate

to be welcoming Loretta at a key point in its own journey, as it prepares to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the admission of women and in 2026 its 700th anniversary. Scarily, I was at the college next door when it celebrated its 650th.

We wish Clare College well and we send all our love to Loretta and Christopher, and their grown-up children Olivia and Toby, for this exciting new chapter in their lives.

Synod, we express our deepest thanks to Loretta.

*The Chair.* Thank you, Bishop. I now call on the Archbishop of York to deliver the farewells for the Bishop of Beverley, the Bishop of Rochester, the Bishop of Willesden, the Bishop at Lambeth, and the other farewells for those who are not standing for the next quinquennium.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you, Chair. Just before the farewells, Synod, could I draw attention to the Tenth Notice Paper which has gone out from myself and the other officers of General Synod applauding the achievements of the England football team in reaching the final last night, noting the multicultural composition of the team and the way this modelled something for our country, but also publicly expressing our deep disappointment and concern that their achievement has been marred by such disgraceful racial abuse on social media. That Notice Paper has gone to all members and obviously gone out to the press as well.

Also, if I could draw attention to a statement that I have issued today alongside David Walker and John Spence, noting that we really have heard some of the disappointment, frustration, and indeed anger, about the current inability to meet the recommendation about a racial justice officer for every one of our dioceses.

I will not read the whole statement out, but please read it. It says that we are committed to carry on working with dioceses, the Racial Justice Commission and others to find an effective solution and a way forward on this to deliver the aspirations behind this recommendations. Please, please read the statement, and please be aware that this is something that is still being explored and looked at.

Having drawn your attention to those, let me now come to the farewells and first of all to Glyn Webster, the Bishop of Beverley. I start, therefore, close to home because Glyn is someone who served his entire ministry in one diocese, the great Diocese of York. This is perhaps especially remarkable since Glyn is a Lancastrian!

Ordained in 1977, he has served as curate, vicar, rural dean, residentiary canon, acting dean and suffragan bishop all in York.

Glyn's background as a nurse and his 18 years in hospital chaplaincy formed a significant basis for this pastoral ministry which he has demonstrated so admirably throughout his

ordained life. As we have been reminded, during the current pandemic, our NHS workers and hospital chaplaincies see all too often the realities of suffering and grief and yet offer faith, hope and love.

It was my predecessor, but two, Archbishop Habgood, who spotted Glyn's qualities and he became an honorary canon of York Minster and Rural Dean of York. Glyn is no stranger to synodical proceedings having served as a member of clergy for the York Diocese while a hospital chaplain.

As the years went on, Glyn became canon of York Minster, twice serving as Acting Dean, ensuring worship, good governance and pastoral care continued. For most of this time, he was also Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of York and a member of the Archbishops' Council. Glyn's insightful contributions to our ecclesial committees have been of huge benefit to the Church.

He is also an extrovert, which means he gets his energy from people. This prepared him well for his ministry as a bishop. Glyn became Bishop of Beverley in 2013 and he has served with wholehearted commitment, huge care and pastoral wisdom the 100 or so parishes that look to him for sacramental and pastoral care across the Province of York.

Many of these parishes are in some of the most deprived areas of the Church of England. Glyn's ability to maintain good relationships with the bishops and senior staff of nine different dioceses multiplies the complexity of the task but also witnesses to the mutual flourishing that we all long for and that we spoke about earlier today. He has done it with joy and faithfulness. It has not always been easy and there have been many challenges along the way but Glyn has navigated his way through these with great dignity.

But, throughout all this, Glyn has also not lost his sense of humour. The twinkle in his eye and a pomposity-busting aside has lightened many an awkward or potentially stuffy occasion.

Glyn has never forgotten that the bishop is first and foremost a pastor: to his people and to his clergy. And this, his primary vocation, has been nurtured by the daily disciplines of prayer and the renewal of his life and ministry around the altar. This spiritual rootedness in Christ is evident to all who know him. He is a leader who knows how to be led. He is one who knows and is known and loved by priests and people. Glyn, we will miss you hugely, but I look forward to our partnership in the Gospel continuing.

We thank you and may God bless you in all that lies ahead.

We turn to say farewell to James Langstaff, the Bishop of Rochester. Sadly, we do not have any photos (well at least one) for you to see as when we were talking about this with James's office, his office said, intriguingly, "What happens in Bishopscourt stays in Bishopscourt!" Well, as you can see, we found some!

James has served in a number of dioceses during his ministry. He became Bishop of Lynn in 2004 and then Rochester in 2010.

He has served the wider Church in a variety of ways and we owe him huge thanks for the way in which he led the process for the ordination of women to the episcopate in this Synod. But of course he has done much more than this.

He was, until very recently, the Bishop to the Prisons and spoke powerfully in the Lords on various matters about prison reform and restorative justice. He also visited prisons and worked closely with the Chaplain General.

He has been a long-time member of the Development and Appointments Group, ensuring the work of senior leadership development has itself been developed and grown significantly. He has scrutinised the appointments work. He was chair of the Turning up the Volume group which has done such important work in diversity and in working alongside UKME clergy to assist them in their development.

We are turning from all the stuff he has done for the Church to some of his other stuff. He is, so I gather, a keen skier, though his skiing trips, I am told, have often had interesting outcomes. Once he skied off a cliff (no permanent damage) and he busted his shoulder (now replaced). But when I think of James and all he has done in the dioceses he has served and his tireless work in the national Church, James, I think you are one of those people who may fall down from time to time, but you always get up. And it is the manner and the faithfulness of your rising up which is so humble and impressive.

Recently, as many of you will know, James was diagnosed with cancer. Thankfully, he is now in the clear, but it has meant a difficult few years. But James carried on and he carries on.

It is good to hear that some traditions are upheld in the offices of bishops. I understand that around 6.30 pm (about half an hour to go) there is the sound of ice knocking on the side of a glass and overtime to staff is paid in gin and tonic.

James, the Diocese of Rochester will miss you and we in the national Church will miss you. You have been a very faithful servant in your ministry and you have often taken on some of the tougher and much less glamorous assignments. In all of this you have led with quiet grace, determination and a huge care for all concerned.

Your contributions within the House of Bishops have always been thoughtful and wise and we will miss your voice.

It has not been an uneventful time and you have had several moments when I know your prayers were being said with great intensity and focus. Thank you, James, and also thank



you, Bridget for all that you have done and all that you have been for our Church and for the Gospel. This Synod really owes you a debt of gratitude as does the whole Church. We wish you well as you move back north to Birmingham (well, I am not sure Birmingham is the north!) And pray that you will not have too many scares on future skiing trips. Most of all, keep on rising up to all the fresh adventures that God puts in front of you.

James and Bridget, we thank you.

We now turn to the farewell to the Bishop of Willesden, Pete Broadbent. I hope you will agree with me that saying farewell to Pete is a less than agreeable business. Many of us, it often gets mentioned, will remember the debate in York when one by one all the speakers declared, "I agree with Pete". It became an almost liturgical response or perhaps, we might say, for Pete, a football chant. But whatever it was, Pete had once again suggested a way forward on what seemed like an intractable situation.

I think we can agree that Pete is something of a phenomenon. He is that rare thing: a person of big vision and yet at the same time with a brilliant grasp of small detail and a pragmatist to boot. He was made for Synod. So as we say farewell to Pete and to Sarah, we say goodbye to someone who has given an enormous amount of time, energy and creativity to the life in and around General Synod. Pete is a member of the Business Committee and a member of the House of Bishops Standing Committee and other things besides. He has played a major role in many of the matters that have been debated in Synod over the last - well how many years - when wasn't Pete a feature in the life of General Synod? He has served on and off since 1985. He was a founder member of the Archbishops' Council.

Pete, for someone who loves to tell it as it is and to be unrestricted in his views, you are also an extraordinarily loyal committee person, and you like to ensure that things get done and you do not mind getting your hands dirty in the engine if bits of the mechanics have gone wrong.

This propensity for saying it as it is has sometimes got Pete into hot water with a few juicy headlines. But Pete himself has not boiled over. Because I think it has never been about him; it is always about the Gospel, the Gospel he serves and how he sees it.

Pete has been in the London Diocese since 1980 when he moved down from a curacy in Durham. He became Archdeacon of Northolt in 1995 and then, of course, Bishop of Willesden.

He has seen others come and go, and, as a result, built up an impressive list of credits. Not quite the Globe or the West End, but at one time or another Acting Bishop of London, Acting Bishop of Edmonton and no less than twice Acting Bishop of Stepney.

He has also been one of the main drivers behind Spring Harvest which has done so much to bring evangelical Christians and others together across the denominations and breathed hope and life into the Church.

In recent years, Pete has led the Simplification process with his usual forensic eye for detail and concern to shred red tape, all in order to enable the local church to be set free, to proclaim the Gospel and get on with the work of the Kingdom.

You may not know this, I thought perhaps it was time for a revelation, but outside of church, Pete enjoys football! Here, he demonstrates his customary wisdom, good taste and appreciation for life's finer things. For you may not know it but Pete is a lifelong supporter of the very fabulous Tottenham Hotspur, and I think I can say confidently without any fear of contradiction that this is another area of life where the whole world would be better place if we all just agreed with Pete. I certainly do.

However, such a vocation, like that to ministry itself, is not without suffering. For most of us Spurs fans, the text that comes to mind is: "He was man of grief and acquainted with death".

Pete, you may not have been a conventional bishop, whatever that is. Your mode of transport and choice of clerical robes (or not!) will sometimes have raised an eyebrow or two. But you are clear in your passion for the Gospel and the ministry of the local church and the wellbeing of the Church of England.

We will miss you and it is hard to imagine General Synod without you. But we wish you and Sarah well as you move on. Whatever God has in store for you next, we know that you will seize it with wit, determination, fortitude, courage, a big vision and an eye for detail.

Thank you, Pete, and Sarah, may God bless you, and our good wishes and our prayers go with you.

Now we come to the farewell to Tim Thornton, Bishop at Lambeth, or, as we know him in this body, Bishop to the Armed Forces.

Even though you might not be quite sure what a Bishop at Lambeth does, I can confirm that if we were to list all the stuff that comes across Tim's desk each day, much of it very sensitive and painful, we would still be here tomorrow.

Tim is, of course, a Yorkshireman. His parents (or at least one of them - I have not checked my details) were Church Army evangelists. I think that Church Army combination of sharing faith in deed and word and with a down-to-earth good humour is deep inside Tim. He trained for the priesthood at that great school of holiness in Oxford which if I might say has turned out so many fine clergy, St Stephen's House. He began

his ministry as a curate in the then Diocese of Wakefield, before seeing what life was like in the Church in Wales. Thankfully for us, a few years later he was back in Wakefield as Bishop's Chaplain and Director of Ordinands before moving to the Southern Province where he has ministered ever since, doing an amazing job in theological education in Essex and east London, and then becoming Area Bishop of Sherborne in 2001. Tim moved west following his appointment as Bishop of Truro in 2008. Later he entered the House of Lords and as a Lords Spiritual was an advocate for raising concerns around children and young people, mental health, and was co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary inquiry into hunger and food poverty. Tim is a passionate supporter of the Children's Society, having chaired its trustees board for a number of years.

Tim is quite simply a wonderfully servant-hearted person. He loves the Church. Therefore, I am sure as much out of obedience as anything else, he agreed in 2017 to become Bishop at Lambeth, following Nigel Stock's retirement. This certainly was not a role Tim had been expecting as part of his ministry, but he has carried it out faithfully, humbly and often at great cost. He has, in my experience, always put the needs of others first. He is astonishingly hard working. He gets detail and process. He wants the Church of England to be the Church for England, with a greater mutual responsibility for all we do and a greater love for each other. This was evident in his final contribution to our life yesterday afternoon in the important and moving things he brought before us.

Tim has a huge pastoral heart. A reservoir of patience. Endless good humour. A slightly shocking taste in risqué sermon illustrations. He is, as one member of staff put it, completely genuine.

Tim, I want to say how much I have hugely valued your wisdom and advice in my first year in office. And I know that pretty much every bishop in the Church of England in the last four years has benefited from your wisdom and thoughtfulness, alongside your gentle, but persistent nudging when we need to be challenged. And that is often! And I have no doubt that if Archbishop Justin were here he would add a great litany of thanks for the personal support and encouragement you have given him.

Tim has been chair of DAG (Development and Appointments Group) and has been instrumental in exploring how training for senior leaders within the Church is developed and delivered.

And if this was not enough, Tim is also Bishop to the Falklands or, as you are affectionately known over there, "Bishop Splash" because apparently of your delight in and propensity for asperging everyone in sight and drenching them.

Closer to home, I am told the kettle is constantly on at Lambeth Palace as you consume gallons of tea each day, often accompanied by a Lion bar and a pack of Maynards Bassetts wine gums. Colleagues across Lambeth, Bishophorpe and the NCIs speak of how much you are loved and I suspect you are invited to far more meetings than you

need to be, simply because of the warmth, good humour and sense of direction you bring. Tim, you can see the wood for the trees without ever losing sight of the trees themselves. You are never too far away.

Your handwriting will not be missed. Colleagues at Lambeth describe it as the “worst ever”. Heartfelt messages are often written in cards, and, as grateful as the recipient is, they are unable to read them.

But, Tim, it really is the thought that counts. And your care for the Church of England, your faithfulness and dedication, your love of the Gospel and the enormous service you have given to the Church are plain to see. Words, however legible, cannot express how much you have given over the past 40 years. Even now you are continuing to support the work for the Lambeth Conference next year which you have been instrumental in shaping.

As you begin this new chapter, I hope that you will have time for other things: perhaps watching cricket or running. Or spending a bit more time with Sian to whom we also extend great thanks for all that she has given.

So Tim, thank you. Thank you for your service to the Church and your service to the Gospel. You go and move on with our immense love and prayer.

Synod, I think at this point I should assure you we are approaching the end of this item. However, there are still a few more farewells to offer. In my Presidential Address I tried to pay tribute to Synod members who will not, for whatever reason, be returning in November.

May I draw your attention to Notice Paper IX which lists those members who have already decided not to stand for election again? I am not going to read the names out, but perhaps you might get hold of that Notice Paper and spend a moment praying in thanksgiving for the service they have given, and for others who for other reasons may not return. I want to place on record my thanks to all the members of the Synod, especially those departing, for all that you have done in the last six years.

There are three people that we do think deserve a specific mention. The first is Liz Paver, the Vice-Chair of the House of Laity.

Liz, I think you were first elected to the General Synod back in 1991 and therefore it is over the last 30 years that you have witnessed, participated and shaped the life of our Church through your much valued contributions. Over the last year since I have been a member of the Archbishops’ Council, I have personally benefited from Liz’s wisdom and tenacity and good grace. I first got to know Liz and work closely with her through my membership of the Anglican Consultative Council where Liz has been the Vice-Chair. I have to tell you, Synod, that if you think Liz is held in high regard and high esteem at the

Church of England, which she most certainly is, wow, you ought to see the esteem with which she is held across the Anglican Communion and the remarkable contribution she has made to the life of our Communion.

Liz, you have always been such an astonishingly graceful and committed servant of the Gospel and also a trailblazer for the laity, so it is no surprise that you ended up as Vice-Chair. Thank you so much for all that you have contributed during your time on Synod and all the other meetings, sub-groups and steering committees that you have been part of. I suspect you might be someone who will still keep an eye on Synod proceedings with a keen interest. But I know, most of all, you will continue to be actively and prayerfully involved in your local church in the Diocese of Sheffield. Liz, we thank you so much for all that you have done for this Synod, for the Church of England and for the Anglican Communion.

Now we come to say goodbye to Michael Gisbourne, our Synod Chaplain.

Surely, the most important thing we do as a Synod is we come together to pray and to ground our debates and deliberations in prayer. Being the broad church that we are allows for a variety of worship, but, as a consequence, the person responsible for delivering that does not have an easy task.

Michael, our Synod Chaplain, has been a master at balancing all of this and I want to pay tribute to his servant heartedness and commitment to this role which he has carried out with great patience and humility. Michael, you have ensured that, despite our often heavy debates and sometimes heated moments, at the end of each day, when many words have passed our lips, our worship is a chance to recognise that we are sisters and brothers together on a journey and united can join our voices together in the words of Scripture and in the words of praise and worship, called to love one another and serve this world with the good news of Jesus Christ. It is our worship that has bound us together, and, Michael, you have been central at enabling this to happen and creating the spaces where we can offer our thanks and prayers. Our very best wishes and our thanks go with you as you continue your work and ministry in the fabulous Ripon Cathedral.

And finally, Synod, we say goodbye to Jonathan Neil-Smith, such a significant staff member at the NCIs.

Forty years ago, a fresh-faced young employee began his career within the National Church Institutions and today is the day we say goodbye to Jonathan. Jonathan has served with distinction across various roles, first working for the Church Commissioners before moving to the Archbishops' Council as secretary to the House of Bishops before segueing to look after the work of the Dioceses Commission, which included being instrumental in working through the complexities and delights of creating the now very well established Diocese of Leeds.

Jonathan has been secretary to the House of Clergy and in recent years, secretary to the Church of England Appointments Committee. Another responsibility Jonathan has absorbed is supporting the work of the independent reviewer.

Jonathan has been a long-time worshipper at Guildford Cathedral where he is also a lay canon. He is keeping the ecclesial family connection following in the steps of his father who was a well-known clergyman and an uncle who was a previous Bishop of Carlisle. Jonathan enjoyed many a holiday as a child at Rose Castle.

When not immersed in the minutiae of the national Church offices, for light relief Jonathan enjoys choral music, which has clearly rubbed off on his daughter who is training as a singer. And I am told that Jonathan also has an encyclopaedic knowledge of all things cricket!

Jonathan, I know that there are many colleagues within the NCIs who, because of the current pandemic, have not been able to say goodbye to you in person, and I guess that goes for all the people we have said farewell to today. But we want you to know how extremely grateful we are for all that you have given over the last 40 years, but also the way you have given it. Your gentleness, your wisdom, your grace have helped us be a better Church in so many ways.

May God's richest blessings be on you and Susan as you enter into a new chapter of your lives.

For Jonathan, for Liz, for Michael and for those departing Bishops, Synod, we cannot rise and clap as we would like to but to all of them we send great love and thanks. We are the body of Christ and in one spirit we have all been baptized into one body and what a joy it is to express our life together in the body and our thanks to those who have served us so well. Please wave or show a tick or a hand or something to these faithful servants of the Gospel who have been such a blessing to our Church.

*The Chair.* Thank you, Archbishop. That concludes this item of business.

## **ITEM 34 ANNOUNCEMENT OF DISSOLUTION**

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* took the Chair the 6.22 pm.

*The Chair.* I have to inform the Synod that Her Majesty's Writs commanding the Archbishops to dissolve their respective Convocations have been received. The Joint Provincial Registrar of Canterbury and York will now read Her Majesty's Writs.

*The Registrar:* “ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith:

“To the most Reverend, Our right trusty and well-beloved councillor Justin Portal, by the same grace, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England and Metropolitan, greeting.

“Whereas the present Convocation of your Province of Canterbury was by Our Writ called together on the twenty-fourth day of November 2015 and is still continued, and whereas we have this day ordered by and with the advice of our Privy Council that the said Convocation be dissolved on the twelfth day of July 2021; therefore, we command you to dissolve the said Convocation on the said day and to signify such dissolution to all bishops, deans, archdeacons and other clergy whom it does concern.

Witnessed Ourselves at Westminster, this twenty-third day of June in the seventieth year of our reign.”

“ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith:

“To the most Reverend, Our right trusty and well-beloved councillor Stephen Geoffrey, by the same grace, Archbishop of York, Primate of England and Metropolitan, greeting.

“Whereas the present Convocation of your Province of York was by Our Writ called together on the twenty-fourth day of November 2015, and is still continued, and whereas we have this day ordered by and with the advice of our Privy Council that the said Convocation be dissolved on the twelfth day of July 2021; therefore, we command you to dissolve the said Convocation on the said day and to signify such dissolution to all bishops, deans, archdeacons and other clergy whom it does concern.

Witness Ourselves at Westminster, the twenty-third day of June, in the seventieth year of our reign

*The Chair:* In the absence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, as Dean of the Province, will now read and sign the Schedule dissolving the Convocation of Canterbury. I will then read and sign the Schedule dissolving the Convocation of York.

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally):* “We SARAH ELISABETH by Divine Permission BISHOP OF LONDON Dean of the Province and Acting as Chair of the Convocation of Canterbury, in obedience to a Writ of Her Majesty bearing date the twenty-third day of June 2021 made by and with the advice of Her Majesty’s Privy Council, HEREBY DISSOLVE the Convocation of Canterbury, which was called together on the

twenty-fourth day of November 2015, immediately upon the prorogation of this group of sessions of the General Synod.

Dated this twelfth day of July 2021”

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* “We STEPHEN GEOFFREY by Divine Providence ARCHBISHOP OF YORK Primate of England and Metropolitan President of the Convocation of York, in obedience to a Writ of Her Majesty bearing date the twenty-third day of June 2021 made by and with the advice of Her Majesty’s Privy Council, HEREBY DISSOLVE the Convocation of York, which was called together on the twenty-fourth day of November 2015, immediately upon the prorogation of this group of sessions of the General Synod.

Dated this twelfth day of July 2021”

*The Chair:* In consequence of the dissolution of the Convocations, the General Synod will be dissolved immediately upon the prorogation of this group of sessions. This will take place immediately before the Dismissal at the end of the Service of the Word.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* led the Synod in an act of Worship.

## **ITEM 35 PROROGATION AND DISSOLUTION**

*The Archbishop of York prorogued the Synod.*



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