

# **Report of Proceedings 2023**

## **General Synod February Group of Sessions**

**Monday 6 February 2023 –  
Thursday 9 February 2023**

**Church House, London**

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## **Full Synod: First Day Monday 6 February 2023**

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 1.43 pm

### **ITEM 1**

#### **STANDING ORDERS UNDER SECTION 1 OF THE GENERAL SYNOD (REMOTE MEETINGS) (TEMPORARY STANDING ORDERS) MEASURE 2020 (GS 2177)**

*The Chair.* Good afternoon. We are at Item 1, remote meetings. Members will need GS 2177. Joyce, you have up to 10 minutes, please.

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* I am moving this first motion on the agenda as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee. That is the body which keeps under review the framework which enables us to work together effectively as Synod and you will be hearing from me again on Thursday when we debate amendments to the Standing Orders. You may be wondering why we have this motion right at the beginning of today's session even before Worship, and of course the answer is that if we do not pass it, those members waiting to join us remotely will not be able to do so and this will become an in-person only Synod, so it is important you pass it.

Just to remind people why we are doing this, in 2020 the Synod met in February and questions were being asked about guidance for administering Communion but no-one realised what the impact of the Covid pandemic would be. When lockdown began, it soon became apparent it would not be possible to meet in person for the July Synod and the Standing Orders did not allow for a way of transacting business other than in person, which meant the budget and all the other things could not be passed. The only way of fixing this turned out to be to have a socially distanced Synod in September 2020, with only sufficient members attending to reach a quorum, to pass a Measure allowing the Officers of Synod to make temporary Standing Orders to allow remote meetings. This went through all its stages. The staff did a tremendous amount of work to make Zoom work so we were able to have our first remote meeting in November. It was November 2021, at the beginning of this quinquennium, before we could have our first in-person group of sessions.

I think everyone agreed that although on-line Synod worked as an emergency Measure, Synod needs to meet in person to enable the development of relationships, discussions outside the chamber and all those things. We did realise that having a hybrid Synod meant that members who could not come to a session because of reasons such as illness, vulnerability or caring responsibilities were able to participate, and also that many committees could work effectively for much of the time on-line, saving time and expense and being better for the environment.

The Miscellaneous Provisions Measure, which reaches its Revision Stage at this group of sessions, provides for these temporary Standing Orders to continue indefinitely and removes the provision that Article 7 and Article 8 business, which deals with changes in doctrine, could not be dealt with remotely. There will be a chance to debate that later in this Synod. When that is passed, the Standing Orders Committee will look at incorporating these temporary Standing Orders as permanent and adjusting the wording to make sure that it is as inclusive as possible.

However, the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure will not have completed its stages for some time yet and these temporary Standing Orders lapsed last August so, as provided for by the Measure, I am asking Synod to renew them until February 2026, which leaves plenty of time for the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure to come into force.

I hope that you will vote in favour of this motion, which will have immediate effect, to allow our colleagues waiting on-line to join us. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* This item is now open for debate. I see no-one standing; therefore, I put the motion to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. That item is closed and we move on to worship. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* took the Chair at 1.51 pm

## **WORSHIP**

*The Chair:* I invite the Chaplain to the Synod to lead worship.

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

## **ITEM 2 INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOMES**

*The Chair:* Good afternoon. I hope you all had reasonable journeys to get here. I would like to invite the Synod to greet new members of Synod elected since the last group of sessions and to welcome at the end of the introductions all those who have been introduced. Please would they stand as I call out their names.

The new members are the Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath, the Bishop of Liverpool, replacing the Rt Revd Paul Bayes; the Rt Revd Helen-Ann Hartley, the Bishop of Newcastle (could you do that at the end or we will be here all day; you are very popular and I entirely agree with the sentiment) who replaces the Rt Revd Christine Hardman; the Revd Alice Kemp, Diocese of Bristol, replacing the Revd Canon Martin Gainsborough; Revd Philip Calvert, Diocese of Birmingham, replacing the Revd

Canon Priscilla White; the Revd Canon Jane Richards, Diocese Chelmsford, replacing the Revd Sam Maginnis; the Revd Brenda Wallace, Diocese of Chelmsford, replacing the Ven. Elizabeth Snowden; the Revd Steve Burston, Diocese of Chichester, replacing the Revd Canon Archie Coates; Mr Ian Boothroyd, Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham, replacing Ms Kathryn Hubbard; Mr Andrew Charles, Diocese of Lichfield, replacing Mr Martin Shakespeare; Miss Mary Bucknall, Deaf Anglicans Together, replacing the Revd Neil Robinson. May we welcome them all, please.

Under a little-known part of the Ecclesiastical Licences Act 1543, anticipating the creation of the General Synod, Bishops who miss their first welcome lose their post. Is that not right?

*Legal Adviser.* If you say so, Archbishop.

*The Chair.* I wish that were true. I am now going to read out the names of the bishops who are attending this group of sessions under Standing Order conveniently numbered 123, which even I can read. The Bishops attending this group of sessions in place of the diocesan bishops are: the Bishop of Aston, the Rt Revd Anne Hollinghurst, for the Diocese of Birmingham; the Bishop of Burnley, the Rt Revd Philip North, for the Diocese of Blackburn pending the arrival of the Rt Revd Philip North as Bishop of Blackburn; the Bishop of Brixworth, the Rt Revd John Holbrook, for the Diocese of Peterborough; the Bishop of Southampton, the Rt Revd Debbie Sellin, for the Diocese of Winchester.

And then I would like to welcome our guests, from the Anglican Communion: the Most Revd Marinez Rosa Dos Santos Bassotto, Primate of Brazil and Bishop of the Amazon, who is not here at the moment; the Most Revd Dr Samy Fawzy Shehata, Archbishop of the Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria, and for people's information, that Province goes from the Horn of Africa to Mauritania, so it is kind of big; the Most Revd Julio Murray, Archbishop of Central America; the Rt Revd Anthony Poggio, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, who will be with us tomorrow. He is flying back from South Sudan today. No, he is not. Gosh, that was quick. And the Revd Canon C K Robertson (Chuck), Canon to the Presiding Bishop for Ministry beyond the Episcopal Church. There has got to be a comma in there somewhere.

This concludes our introductions and welcomes. Accordingly, I hand over to the Chair of our next item of business, which will be the Presidential Address.

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 1.46 pm

### **ITEM 3**

### **THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

*The Chair.* Good afternoon, Synod. We come to Item 3 on the agenda, the Presidential Address, and I invite the Archbishop of Canterbury to speak.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you, Synod.

I am very grateful to be with you today. These past few weeks have been challenging, to say the least, for many here and many more across the Church and outside the Church.

And I know that you will have all thought and prayed very hard about the conversations that we will have over these coming days.

So I am grateful that we have this chance to meet as children of God face to face, and to place our hopes, fears and deep disagreements at the foot of the cross and the empty tomb that unites us.

Because I am convinced that we are united in our desire for a church that in nature, truth and holiness, testifies to the love that God has for us in Jesus Christ.

And yet, and yet. The fears that attack many of us in Synod are genuine fears. In almost all cases, they are both personal, borne out of deeply felt lived experience, and doctrinal.

Some fear that what we may or may not decide will be wrong and sinful. Or that it might discredit the Church. Some fear that it will reject who you are, as God made you or us, thereby diminishing us all. Some fear that it will cause deep divisions here and abroad. And that is only a small part of the baggage that we bring with us today. Inevitably, as human beings, we all carry baggage. It is in recognising that we have baggage with us that we carry, that we are able to deal with its weight, recognise its importance, and most importantly listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying, and listen to one another. That brings me to a passage I am going to read from the Book of Genesis.

Genesis 11.1–9: “Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly’. And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.’ The LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the LORD said, ‘Look, they are one people, they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech’. So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore it was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth”.

This story, as you know, comes at the end of the cycle of the creation and fall narratives. The creation God made good had fallen, due to human choice. The flood has been a second start.

Babel is the moment that apparently sets out the reason for there being so many ethnic groups scattered across the world with so many languages.

But it goes far deeper than that, of course, as does all of Scripture, for it speaks to the divine dialectic of scattering and gathering.

The pattern of scattering and gathering is deeply part of the story of the Bible and the history of salvation. They happen so many times. We could trace examples for hours.

Some of the most significant in the Old Testament may be seen in going down to Egypt and returning, in going into Exile and returning. In each case Israel is a people, of one language, in covenant with God.

At Babel we see an attempt by humans to stand by themselves without God and without His ways. Humans gather and attempt to make a future for themselves literally built on what they can construct themselves.

The use of language at Babel represented power and control, the imposition of one's will, the means to bring coercion and dominance. We are told God comes down and confuses their language. Well, it could be that verse 7 is that "so they will not understand", but the Hebrew can also mean "so that they do not listen to one another..." They want to make a name for themselves, and so choose to attempt self-created unity. They do it not with mutual love, but by coercion.

We constantly face this temptation to make something of ourselves, or to seek to impose our own unity through rules, hierarchies and structures which become a way of controlling others.

The Church throughout history and in our day has so often given in to this temptation to become turned in on itself, narcissistic, imposing unity through force, and losing sight of its divinely ordained call to bring every person to a saving knowledge of the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Unity that we ourselves conjure up has, as its first casualties, those who are different. Look at the Church's history of antisemitism, racism, slavery and collusion with evil structures of power. Look at how we have, and do, treat those of different sexualities. But to be such people – directed by fear of the outsider, those who are different – is to be those who simply live to establish our purposes and not God's. We become the very image of the world around us, not the icon of God.

Then at Pentecost, rightly linked to Babel, God the Holy Spirit does something spectacular, something that creates possibilities beyond human imagination or ambition.

Pentecost is not a gift of translation, but the creation of a new people grafted into the old. This is a gathering, not a scattering, but on an entirely new basis of gathering. Those gathered are gathered by love for Christ and by being saved.

The day after Pentecost must have been very difficult. People from all over the Roman world, all new Christians and no common language, except the language of loving, of being found in Christ. And that defined their identity.

In my scandalous youth, or rather Caroline's and my scandalous youth, as some may know, Caroline and I smuggled Bibles behind the Iron Curtain. There will be some here who do not remember the Iron Curtain. There will be some here who remember St Petersburg before that. At one place we went to in Romania, we had about 200 or more Bibles to unload. I was doing that at night in a back garden and Caroline was left with the elderly lady whose house it was. They had no common language – except Christian. They both spoke that. And thus, they sat together, with the occasional alleluia and waving their Bibles at each other. It worked.

That was a physical gathering. The Lambeth Conference last summer was another. The pilgrimage to South Sudan this weekend with the Pope and the Moderator was a third. All different, but the physical gathering was built on a gathered reality in the Spirit, not our own construction. A gathered reality of divine and global creation, not human and locally limited.

We have a common language, but it is not a human language. In the Acts the Christians are physically scattered, by persecution. By the move of the Spirit, they remain gathered spiritually to anoint those who will lead evangelism, and they gather new Christians as they scatter the Gospel.

There is a dialectic of gathering and scattering. Even in the times when the Church has sinfully and cruelly divided, wreaking havoc on one another in war and hatred, somehow God has prevailed, because he is so much greater than us, and the Gospel has gone yet further.

A crucial difference between Babel and Pentecost is that the scattering is not a result of different languages but of Spirit-led human action established out of the Pentecostal and catholic gathering.

The dialectic of scattering and gathering has produced a divine synthesis of a spiritual gathering amongst physical scatterings. The reality is we are scattered to gather those outside the life of the Church.

For that to work, we must all speak Christian, because that is our true language, a language of signs and wonders, of words spoken, of symbols, of actions and self-sacrifice.

At Pentecost the Gospel is proclaimed, but it is by God's grace in a way that the truth of Jesus is heard in each person's language, and therefore their culture.

It is an incarnated Gospel, real to each person not by their linguistic talent but by the action of the Spirit who comes to them.

For that to be true the people who are needed are those who are not trying to make something of themselves but are seeking to – in all things – live in the light of God. We have deep and passionately held differences. But let us not fall into caricaturing those among us who do not agree with us as being those who are trying to construct their lives away from God. The evidence is far from that.

And this, of course, is why it is so difficult.

The unity we desire is not one based around agreeing in everything. It can never be of our making or imposing. It can never be by forcing, it is always a gift of God's redemption.

The difference from Babel is the Church is scattered but one, so long as we seek the glory of God and to obey the commandment to make disciples.

But God is calling us to do more than listen and speak and act.

He is calling us to more than simply choosing not to build our own edifices that are a memorial to ourselves. He is calling us to be sent to those outside the life of the Church.

They are genuinely the scattered, in every way except one, but that is decisive: God in Christ so loves them that he died for them, and our being sent is to live that love in word and deed and gather them.

That was the purpose of the Pilgrimage of Peace from which I returned early this morning. A Pope, an Archbishop and a Moderator – it sounds like the beginning of a bad joke – representing streams of Christian thinking that were scattered for half a millennium. Three people sent in the love of Christ to challenge a darkness in South Sudan that has, in the last nine years, cost half a million lives.

Sixty years ago, perhaps 30, there would have been demonstrations against such a trip. But God's love has changed us in our attitudes between Presbyterian, Anglican and what, in a rotten and hard past, we called Papist. The symbol of unity in Christ means that the Holy Spirit is released in blessing.

That is what unity does. Division quenches the Spirit. We see and hear that in Romans 14, in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, and in the farewell discourses of John's Gospel. Unity comes first not from doctrinal unanimity but by mutual love released by the Holy Spirit.

In simple terms, we are all equally loved, all equally to face God in judgment, all equally the object of God's overwhelming love. Whoever we are. Whatever our character. Whatever background, our class or ethnicity. Whatever we think, however bad we are. Whatever our sexuality. Equally loved. And how can that be lived in action as well as word?

How can that be lived so that there is a true gathering, not compartmentalised Christianity, but a people gathered, different in so many ways, but gathered in a community of love? Because anything less is not Pentecost. Anything less is not speaking Christian.

Speaking Christian in word and deed rejects constructing ourselves, building our own narratives about our greatness and others' lack, making our own Church: it welcomes being constructed by Christ.



Where people find it difficult to believe what Christians say about God's great love for them because they have been excluded, or made to conceal their identity, or made to feel in some way less – they have not been spoken to in Christian. Along the way, too many people, especially around sexuality, have heard the words of rejection that human tongues create.

And this good news that we have – that God has not left us to construct a life for ourselves – that God has come to us in his only Son Jesus Christ, to save us and call us, to redeem us and summon us and construct us as a people of love, a holy temple – this news is so powerfully deeply profoundly needed in our world today.

For we live in a time of danger and crisis, the greatest since the terrors of the Second World War, terrors worse now because of advanced technology.

We are in a recession, for many a long economic depression that multiplies food banks not dignity.

We see an NHS in crisis, education that misses out on aspiration for the poorest, and care systems and housing that do not reach those most desperately in need.

We see an absence of strong family life that increases mental ill-health in children and emotional trauma in adults. Next month the Families and Households Commission will publish its report, setting this out in detail.

The list is longer than that. The list is incredibly long, and our call is clear.

We are called as Christians to be gathered in the Spirit and to show in the life of the Church of England a passionate love for every person, a profound commitment to the proclamation of Christ, a powerful symbol that culture war and crisis is not the way the world must go: God shows a better, a saving way.

Just as God has spoken in His word, God speaks to us today, in a language that our hurting hearts understand. It is a language that gives us a new identity, made in the image of God. God gathers out of a physically and ideologically scattered people a church which acts in unity for those who are different, and does it with unquestioning love.

A common identity, those who are saved, a common tongue, speaking Christian, together offer a common community. To those driven into doubt, or disbelief by the raucous hammering at each other in all our churches around the world – not just Anglican, and I know what it feels like to have some raucous hammering – which seems to reject people because of their sexual identity or their ethnicity, or their gender, or their youth, or their age or their character or their past or their potential future – we must say, "God himself has come for you. God himself cannot bear to be apart from you, He binds himself to you. He invites you to participate in his divine life and He sets you in His Church where all, all have a cherished and essential place".

That is the good news we carry. Whoever we meet, they are loved by God freely and completely. We may say it, we must live it and how we do that is one of the great tests of these times of societal, national and international division. For we live today in a

time of war physical, and war cultural. We too easily import culture wars and lapse into their language. It is the sea we swim in. We do not need to drink it.

The Church is not called to avoid or to endorse wokery, but to be awake to the Holy Spirit, to show that no division is greater than the unity of our identity in Christ. That is God's accomplished work and our spiritual reality. We saw it and knew it in front of hundreds of thousands in South Sudan these last three days, from all the churches of that conflict-ridden country.

In our discussions in this Synod let us remember and speak out that our brother is never our enemy, that those who listen, may well, outside this hall, may well be listening, for the call of hope, the call of Christ and in every speech we are the mouthpiece, we can scatter or gather them. Our language makes the difference.

Even if we get it wrong, we still need not fear. Look at Church history. For God is faithful even when we fail. We come with fears and baggage; so let us lay our burdens on Christ and let God gather God's Church.

*The Chair:* That concludes this item of business and we move directly on to Item 4 on the agenda, the Business Committee Report.

THE CHAIR *The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 2.31 pm

## **ITEM 4**

### **REPORT BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (GS 2284)**

*The Chair:* Before starting our next item, I call on Archbishop Justin Welby.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* I do apologise most profoundly to Synod, I did forget a welcome and it is very rude of me to have done that and I am very sorry. I would like to welcome the Revd Sarah Siddique Gill, co-opted to the Lower House of the Convocation of York. I do not know if she is there. Sarah, I apologise most profoundly.

*The Chair:* We now move to Item 4, the Business Committee Report, and so can I invite Canon Robert Hammond to come and speak to the Report. You have up to ten minutes.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Members of Synod, the Business Committee strives hard to settle the agenda for each group of sessions and endeavours to include items from all the areas applicable to this Synod. As such, this week we have a debate on the cost of living crisis, which many members called for in July, but perhaps the situation is a little bit clearer now. We are considering resourcing ministerial formation, the governance review, safeguarding, and the Diocesan Synod Motion that was not taken in July from Lincoln Diocese, on the insurance premium tax.

We have also reached that point in our synodical process where there is a lot of business requiring legislation we need to attend to, so a significant amount of time is

being given to that, which is after all our primary role, and one that Parliament has delegated to us. And we are also, of course, considering the results of the House of Bishops' deliberations following the *Living in Love and Faith* process. The Covid pandemic unfortunately extended the time required for all the *LLF* work – discussions, courses, feedback and so on – to happen, to be brought together and, as we know, the bishops have worked to bring the response to the process, document GS 2289, to this Synod.

But I want, firstly, to say this is not a one-issue Synod. Those of us in the House of Laity and the Convocations were elected to consider all the business of Synod and so I hope that we will be here in the chamber or on Zoom during all the debates over the next few days. I would also want to encourage you to attend and engage with the group work sessions tomorrow afternoon. They are an opportunity for us all to feed back to the House of Bishops – there will be a bishop in each of the groups – our thoughts, and we hope that that will allow everyone to have an opportunity for their voice to be heard, even if not everyone can be called to speak in the debate.

Group work will take place here in Church House or in buildings very close by and full details are in Notice Paper 10.

I should also point out the very practical point that the Business Committee has decided that for Item 11 on Wednesday afternoon, that is the *Living in Love and Faith* item, amendments need to be in by tomorrow morning at 9 am. We have brought the deadline forward for that debate so the Synod and Legal Office can marshal the amendments and ensure that everything is in order.

The Business Committee is aware that during the group of this sessions, some of you may be feeling anxious or concerned and would value speaking with a chaplain, who can perhaps identify especially with your particular concerns. With the help of some Synod groups and the acting Chaplain, Michael Gisbourne, who has kindly agreed to act as our chaplain this week while the process to appoint a new chaplain continues, we have arranged for a group of additional chaplains to be available to you.

Notice Paper 9 sets out who they are and where they come from, together with details of how to contact them should you want to. They can also be identified by their teal coloured – that is light bluey turquoise, think HMRC blue – lanyards. Some of them are sitting in the public gallery, perhaps they could give us a wave. We thank you very much for giving up your time to be with us.

The Business Committee knows that there are differing, honest and firmly held views on some of the issues we will be discussing and debating this week. It will therefore be vital that we show respect and Christian love to everybody, regardless of whether they agree with you or not. I was struck by how many of you commented on how good the group of sessions held in York last July was, some of you saying it was the best Synod for over ten years. That was partly due, you said, to the agenda the Business Committee had settled on, and we thank you for your kind comments. But it was also due to the way we all conducted ourselves. So, again, can I urge you to be respectful, kind and Christian in all you say on the floor of the chamber, on Zoom, in the tea room, in fringe meetings and on social media.

On the subject of social media, the Business Committee would like to encourage Synod members to be fully part of the debates here in the chamber and listen to what is being said. It might well be that members think it a good idea to limit their use of social media and messaging services during some debates, so that they can really engage with what is happening in the chamber and on Zoom. And should you use social media, as I have said before, please remember not to say anything you would not say to a member in person, and to be mindful that often the way something is said, in a tweet, for example, carries just as much impact as what is said. It is not appropriate to be offensive on social media and we expect members to adhere to the Church of England's social media guidelines as well as our own code of conduct.

Some of our business will be of great interest to our friends in the press gallery. As usual our debates will be live-streamed and recorded, but I gather that some may also be broadcast, either live or later, on the BBC Parliamentary Channel and will in all probability be featured in news broadcasts. So again, we will be on full public view, and all we say in debate will be open for all to see. I am sure we will conduct ourselves with the highest degree of decorum. I should also point out that the plenary session tomorrow afternoon following the group work is not a formal part of Synod, and so the press gallery will not be open then.

I am really grateful to members of Synod for the feedback you provide after groups of sessions, and I have already referred to some of that. We do look at all the feedback and I read every email I receive and there were a lot following July. We make changes in the light of that feedback, for example the second Question Time is in the morning of this group of sessions, and we arranged for written answers to questions in November.

We have also met with the Panel of Chairs and invited them to reflect on the feedback you have provided about chairing. I should say the Chairs are not accountable to the Business Committee, and rightly so. It is important that the Chairs act independently and do so within the Standing Orders. Many other tweaks and changes happen as a result of the feedback that you provide, so please continue to give us that.

The Business Committee trailed having two sessions of Question Time in July, which was well received, so we are repeating that again. Because of the large number of questions received this time, and the large number on *LLF*, we will be taking those relating to *LLF* on Tuesday morning and the others this evening. As I said in York, we do not know how many questions there will be when we set the agenda, and although we have allowed more time than in the past, pressure of business will mean we probably will not get through all the questions. However, if the preceding items take less time than we expect, there will, of course, be more time for questions.

To a large extent, Synod is in its own hands. We have limited time available to us and the Business Committee tries to allocate sufficient time to each item of business. If they take longer and other business is squeezed, then time must be found elsewhere by either reducing time allocated for another debate or by deferring items to a future Synod. The Business Committee will, of course, respond by me popping up and proposing a change in the order of business, but, as I have said, we are largely in your hands.

We have arranged for worship each morning and evening, and a Eucharist tomorrow morning. We know many members will have other meetings tonight, and so that we can worship together, the Business Committee has decided that evening worship will be at 6.45. We hope that you will all stay for that.

I am sorry we have been unable to arrange an induction session for new members this time, we will try and do that in July, but in the meantime if you are new and have any questions, please ask a member of staff at the information desk or another Synod member. Oh, and if you did not pick up your voting card please do so, but remember to return it on Thursday, before you leave.

Looking forward to future Synods, there is a lot of legislation going through the process at the moment which will need to be brought to Synod at some point. Because of that, I cannot say today whether we will need a November group of sessions this year or next year, I am afraid, but I can say there are no plans at the moment for a November 2023 group of sessions.

And finally, I would like to thank the members of the Business Committee for their work, Jenny Jacobs, Simon Gallagher, and all the staff for the hard work that they put in to enable this Synod to meet and to do our business. Madam Chair, I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Item 4 is now open for debate. There is a maiden speech, which will be given five minutes, and because there is so much interest and many requests to speak I will be reducing speech limits after Diana Tremayne for her maiden speech to two minutes for everybody. It is worth mentioning that as we are fully hybrid we will have to take a few moments between speakers to keep an eye out for those wishing to speak and indicating so via Zoom. So, after Diana Tremayne, I call Stephen Hofmeyr.

*Dr Diana Tremayne (Leeds):* I will not be five minutes. I welcome the discussion about the consideration of the code of conduct in the Business Committee Report, following feedback from the last group of sessions. I am aware that although this is highly unlikely to become mandatory, I hope that we can continue to work, as a Synod, on how we engage with the code. As a local councillor I sign up to a code of conduct which is mandatory, and I do that willingly because it is about much more than individual behaviour, but also about wider perceptions of local government. The same applies here, clearly, we have already heard that. I really hope people can see how important this is in terms of how the Church is perceived by those within it and those beyond it.

I engage with social media a lot, as an individual, as a local politician and also through my work as a researcher, and I could happily talk for a long time about the positives of places such as Twitter. I will not do it now, but I am always happy to talk about it. There can be a lot of positives and I hope we that can see some of those this week. But I wanted just to highlight that as someone who is new to Synod, relatively, and as an LGBT+ member, I do have to say, unfortunately perhaps, that this is probably the space, the chamber, the social media space where I feel least comfortable and most vulnerable.

I absolutely appreciate that there are deeply held beliefs, views and feelings which are going to be discussed and raised this week, but I just wanted to note that perhaps everyone could remember that for some of us this is about more than our feelings, our beliefs, it is about who we are, and I really hope that over the course of the week, this can be respected by everybody.

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

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* The writer Douglas Adams once said “If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, we at least have to consider the possibility that we have a small aquatic bird of the family Anatidae on our hands”. Michael Caine reminded us to be like a duck, calm on the surface but always paddling like Dickens underneath. It was the US academic Ellen Swallow Richards who said “If you keep your feathers well oiled, the water of criticism will run off from a duck’s back”; and it was the French novelist Jules Renard who enchantingly said “The person who waits for roast duck to fly into their mouth must wait a very, very long time”.

At some time in our lives, I suspect we have all been guilty of ducking the issue, have we not? Well, the presentation at Item 5, the motion at Item 11 and the group sessions on Tuesday afternoon are in substance, if not in form, liturgical business within the meaning of Standing Order 78. In substance they look like liturgical business, they float like liturgical business, they quack like liturgical business, that we have at least to consider the possibility that we have before us a proposed public service of the family ‘Liturgiaie’.

They concern forms of service and prayer which have a public function. In stating that the commended prayers are not indicative of any departure from doctrine, both the note from the Legal Office and the bishops’ proposal failed to consider the public perception of the commended prayers. The use of Canon B 5 rather than Canon B 2 and then the added failure to apply Canon B 3 correctly means that the legal officers’ conclusion on the commended prayers is, I suggest, flawed. Even if it was possible to accept the prayers do not actually contradict Church doctrine, it is still necessary to consider how they will affect the public perception of that doctrine.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* Last July we were invited to pass a motion by Bishop Jonathan that Synod requires regular updates on the strengthening of independent accountability and the oversight of the Church’s safeguarding work at all levels. Now, we come to this session and we find that the ISB have been deliberately excluded, and I can tell you they are not best pleased and they are very concerned about it.

Last Friday they put a blog out which highlighted what I frankly believe to be a crisis in our safeguarding oversight – and these are not my words. The Church of England has co-created a delivery vehicle that frustrates the ISB’s ability to assure a critical safeguarding service. The current position of the ISB in the Church’s infrastructure is unsustainable. Even worse, the ISB does not consider that it is sufficiently independent from those it is responsible for scrutinising. This is a safeguarding crisis.

We changed our agenda to discuss Brexit – not Synod business; we changed our agenda to discuss the last general election – not Synod business. But everybody

necessary to reform our safeguarding is here right now in this room and I urge the Presidents to use their powers under Standing Order 4(3), to shave off a little time from that very weak debate we have got noting workstreams, and to actually put our minds to how we got in this mess and holding to account those who constructed an ISB that is non-functional. This is very serious and leaving it until July to then call it back in February, to then bring some proposals for the next July is just wrong.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* I was interested to read the legal note sent round by Mr Hofmeyr on Sunday, and am feeling rather confused about what the legal situation is with regards to marriage conducted by a vicar as opposed to civil partnerships. I am sure I am not alone. I appreciate the legal note GS Misc 1339 was produced in a short space of time and am grateful for it. I would ask that the Business Committee asks the legal team here at Church House to respond to the note of Mr Hofmeyr and his friends in any further work that they do. May I also ask that the Business Committee considers having on the July agenda a presentation about this, perhaps with some diagrams to help those of us who are not lawyers or bishops to better understand this matter.

*The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester):* In July 2021, in a following motion from the proposals for legislation to replace the Clergy Disciplinary Measure, we voted overwhelmingly to encourage the Business Committee to enable the Implementation Group to present initial proposals on a proposed approach to Synod in November 2021, so that there could be progress with serious intent through Synod sessions in 2022. We are now in 2023, the particular Measure that is being worked over has been demonstrated to be defective, faulty and plainly dangerous in some circumstances to clergy and other people in the process. Why are we taking so long and why do we not listen to what General Synod votes for when it votes for things like this?

*The Chair:* After our next but one speech, I am going to be testing the mind of Synod for closure.

*The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford):* Tomorrow and Thursday we will give consideration to the prayers in *Love and Faith*. Clearly, the prayers have been drawn up in the light of legal advice from the Legal Office, set out in GS Misc 1339. However, to many, that legal advice appears to contain controversial and questionable claims and surprising omissions. Let me give you just one example.

The legal note advances one view among a number of competing views about how to characterise the relationship in law between Holy Matrimony and civil marriage. The legal note sees them not merely as distinct institutions but as ones with “mutually exclusive” definitions. However, language used in the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, Supreme Court and government guidance about “extending” marriage to same sex couples might rather lend support to the view that civil marriage and Holy Matrimony are respectively wider and narrower conceptions of the same legal institution. No wonder the legal advice is able to say only “there is a good case”. My lawyer friends tell me that is a code for uncertainty.

Given this uncertainty, could I ask the Bishop of London please to consider withdrawing paragraph (e) of Item 11, and ensure that the debate can take place on a more adequate basis in July.

*Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester):* I want to encourage the Business Committee to reconsider the balance of topics discussed at General Synod. We are a gathering of Christians, that is one of the tremendous things about Synod, so it is surprising to say it, but why do we not talk more about the promotion of Christianity? For starters, glaring in our face, we should be addressing the problem of our declining congregations and the age skew so often seen in churches. I am just a very ordinary lay member of Synod, but can I suggest I would like to set up a working party to appraise the results of Stephen Hance's excellent research entitled *Seeing Ourselves as Others See Us*. I invite anybody interested to tell me, and I invite the Chair of the Business Committee to set up a slot in July's Synod to discuss the results.

In the Census, the percentage of those saying they have no religion in England and Wales has gone up from 15% in 2001 to 37% in 2021. Clearly, we have not engaged with these people and that is a terrible void. We need to make people sit up, not furrow their brow with problems. We must stop being internally obsessed and instead set the tone externally for the country. Can we radically reassess the balance of our agenda next time, please.

*The Chair:* I am just going to invite colleagues on Zoom to see if they have indicated that they wish to speak before I test the mind of Synod for closure. As there is no-one requesting to speak on Zoom, I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 4 has been sufficiently debated.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* I now invite the Chair of the Business Committee to come and respond to the debate.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Thank you for those comments in the debate, I will quickly run through them. Diana Tremayne, thank you, I too hope that we will all respect each other and I am sure that we will. I am not going to try and outdo Stephen Hofmeyr on ducks but what I will say is that when setting the agenda we did not know the motion that was being brought by the House of Bishops and we received no legal advice to change the agenda.

Martin Sewell, the Presidents will have heard exactly what you said there. To Debbie Buggs, I do not think legal notes are for the Business Committee. Legislation and bishops are indeed very complex and thank you for your proposals about trying to make that simpler. I understand the complexities. To Lisa Battye and the Clergy Conduct Measure, I am expecting First Consideration on that to be brought to the July Synod. Consultation, unfortunately, does take time.

John Dunnett, I think your point was directed to the Bishop of London rather than to the Business Committee, who will have heard you. To Andrew Orange, we are primarily a legislative body, which is why we have a lot of legislation to deal with. There are other means, Private Members' Motions, for example, of bringing other things for



debate at Synod. I will be more than happy to help you and work with you to set up a fringe meeting at Synod on the subjects that you spoke about.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 4 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* Before moving on to the next item, I would like to invite Luke Appleton to speak to his petition. You have no more than two minutes to do so.

## **PRESENTATION OF PETITION**

*Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter):* My petition is a call for us as a Church to be people who say what we mean and mean what we say. It calls for a return to God's standards. It does not have the same scale of signatories as Humanist UK's Patron Sandy Toksvig's petition has attacking our hardworking bishops, but it is signed by a variety of Christians from different traditions, Evangelical and Catholic, Anglican and Ecumenical. Canon A 5 of the Church of England says that, "The doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures and is of such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as agreeable to the said Scriptures".

Atheist TV presenter and, in matters of morning television, all-round legend, Richard Madeley, said, "Christians should hold the whole of the Bible instead of picking and choosing the parts they like. This is the standard that the world holds us to". Even the Holy Bible itself calls us on a number of occasions to reject hypocrisy, to put it away from us, to be free from guile and for our eye to be single. How can it be right to say to the world that our doctrine is a marriage between one man and one woman for life in accordance with Canon A 5 and Matthew 19, and in the next breath be issuing prayers and liturgies inconsistent with that position? That is hypocrisy. That is below the standard that God calls us to. If you want doctrinal change, pursue doctrinal change with integrity. If you reject the authority of the Bible, then do that and be clear about it with integrity. Let us be people of integrity. But it is not just prayers of love and faith that fall short of this standard.

The Church has been drifting for years. We say one thing and we practise another. It is not good enough. Our word is our bond. If we make a covenant, we honour it. If we proclaim a doctrine, we live it out. My petition may be meek and nimble, but I would rather be a David of integrity and truth than a Goliath of compromise and fudge any day of the week. I commend it to Synod.

*The Chair:* In accordance with Standing Order 43(4), the petition will be available for inspection by members at the information desk. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Very Revd Andrew Nunn (The Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 1.04 pm

## **ITEM 500 SPECIAL AGENDA I LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

## **AMENDING CANON NO. 42 (GS 2269A)**

### **Draft Amending Canon for Revision**

*The Chair.* Good afternoon, Synod. We come to Item 500, the Report by the Revision Committee on draft Amending Canon No. 42 which relates to safeguarding. Members will need copies of the Report of the Revision Committee, which is GS 2269Y; Amending Canon No. 42, GS 2269A; and the Explanatory Note, GS 2269X2. I have the pleasure to call on the Chair of the Revision Committee, the Ven. Nikki Groarke, to move the motion, "That the Synod do take note of this Report". Nikki, you have up to ten minutes to speak.

*The Ven. Nicola Groarke (Worcester):* Members of Synod, Amending Canon No. 42 is a crucial part of the Church's practical response to the IICSA recommendations. Before getting into the detail, I would like to thank the Steering Committee, the other members of the Revision Committee and the legal team for their work on this legislation and also the members of Synod who made submissions. Their largely technical submissions, which are discussed in our Report, were very helpful to the Revision Committee in its task of testing the legislation.

The Revision Committee on this Amending Canon also considered the latest Miscellaneous Provisions Measure and Amending Canon No. 43, which you will be hearing more from me about over the next couple of days. I imagine the papers for these debates were probably not the first ones most members turned to a couple of weeks ago, but they are a key part of why we are here as a legislative body and are important for us as a Church. Amending Canon No. 42 is being taken separately today and is due to proceed to its final stages later on at this group of sessions and can, therefore, come into force as soon as is possible afterwards. That gives a strong signal of the Church's determination to implement the IICSA recommendations without delay. Just to remind members, this Amending Canon implements IICSA's first recommendation, the full text of which members will find on the first page of the Explanatory Notes to this Amending Canon, GS 2269X2. Legislation – in this instance, an Amending Canon to amend Canon C 30 – is the only way we can give effect to that recommendation.

Paragraph 2 of the Amending Canon imposes on each diocesan bishop a requirement to appoint a diocesan safeguarding officer instead of the current requirement to appoint a diocesan safeguarding adviser. This is a very significant change. The current advisory role will be replaced with a new responsibility across the diocese but independent of the diocesan bishop to provide professional leadership and management on safeguarding matters. Paragraph 2 of the Amending Canon goes on to require the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Regulations to provide for the professional supervision of these new diocesan safeguarding officers and for the quality assurance of their work.

Under paragraph 4, the changes I have just mentioned will come into force on a diocese by diocese basis rather than in every diocese on the same day. That will enable the National Safeguarding Team to phase in the new processes. On this point, the Revision Committee was prompted by one member's submission to make it explicit

that the power to amend the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Regulations will come into force as soon as the Amending Canon has been executed and promulgated. That is because the provisions to be included in the Regulations on professional supervision and quality assurance will need to be in place by the time the requirement to appoint diocesan safeguarding officers begins to take effect.

I should just add that paragraph 3 of this Amending Canon makes one other change to Canon C 30, a change that is not concerned with IICSA's recommendations but with a matter of general practical convenience. Its effect is that the list of those who are entitled to carry out a risk assessment can include bodies as well as individuals.

Finally, I stress to Synod that this legislation is vital because it is the means by which the Church can implement IICSA's first recommendation. With that in mind, I beg to move that Synod do take note of this Report.

*The Chair.* The motion to take note of the Report of the Revision Committee is now open for debate. Those wishing to speak should stand or indicate. I see no-one standing, therefore there is nothing to respond to, Nikki, and so I put Item 500 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 513**

*The Chair.* We now come to the Revision Stage. No notice has been given of any amendments and no member has indicated an intention to speak against the motion at Item 513, "That paragraphs 1 to 4 stand part of the Canon". Item 513 is, therefore, deemed to be carried and that completes the Revision Stage. This is a kind of new procedure in all of this, if you think that it sounds new.

The Draft Amending Canon now stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting. The remaining stages for the Draft Amending Canon will be taken on Thursday morning. This concludes this item of business, Synod.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 3.14 pm

## **ITEM 504**

### **DRAFT DIOCESAN STIPENDS FUND (AMENDMENT) MEASURE (GS 2255A)**

#### **Draft Measure for Revision**

*The Chair.* We come to Item 504, the Report of the Revision Committee on the Draft Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure. As well as the Order Paper, members will need the Report from the Revision Committee, GS 2255Y; the Draft Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure, GS 2255A; and the updated Explanatory Notes, GS 2255X2. I call on the Chair of the Revision Committee, Mr Tattersall, to move the motion, "That the Synod do take note of this Report". He may speak for not more than ten minutes.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* This draft Measure received its First Consideration in the July group of sessions and the Explanatory Note to this draft Measure reminds the Synod that this very succinct Measure had its genesis in the Synod's consideration in November 2021 of the paper, Generosity and Diocesan Finances (GS 2234), and the Synod's approval of a motion requiring the Archbishops' Council to develop legislative proposals to give dioceses more freedom to be generous with their historic wealth to other dioceses.

The draft Measure seeks to achieve this by inserting a new clause 5B into the Diocesan Stipends Funds Measure 1953 by removing the geographical restrictions on the application of monies standing to the credit of the income account of the diocesan stipend funds so that a diocese, should it choose to do so, can give generously to another diocese to pay clergy stipends.

You will see from the Report of the Revision Committee that the Committee met once on 15 November 2022 when all members were present and it considered submissions made by members of Synod. The Revision Committee received these submissions, for which we were very grateful, but before considering each clause of the Measure it is probably desirable to take into account the Committee's general approach.

In keeping with the motion passed by the Synod in November 2021 to "give dioceses more freedom to be generous", the Committee favoured a permissive approach rather than one which was over-prescriptive as to how and when a DBF might transfer monies from their DBF to another.

The Revision Committee is satisfied that the wording of the Measure will enable dioceses, where they can, to be generous, whilst providing the necessary checks and balances needed for financial scrutiny. The Committee understands that should, in due course, this Synod give Final Approval to the Measure, some detailed guidance will be issued as to help dioceses in their decision-making.

I turn to the two clauses. As I have said already, clause 1 allows the transfer of monies from one DBF to another. A submission suggested that the word "need" should be replaced by the words "extent agreed". This was resisted by the Steering Committee and rejected by the Revision Committee because it was thought this might cause confusion and argument. But it triggered a very helpful discussion as to whether there were other words to be used rather than "need" which met the policy objective behind clause 1. However, on reflection it was concluded that there were no other words which might be better than the word "need".

A further submission suggested that glebe income should be excluded from the draft Measure as this was obviously somewhat debatable, but this was rejected on the basis that it would be difficult to implement and there would be a variability of accountancy processes.

Finally, there was a suggestion that there should be a provision made that DBFs should use capital funds in the form of a loan to another DBF. Whilst this was welcomed by the Committee, this was rejected because, firstly, the use of capital had not formed part of the previous debate before Synod and, therefore, was not explicitly

approved by the Synod; secondly, because the recipient dioceses could only use the investment received on capital loans so there would be little practical advantage to be gained by any such amendment; and, thirdly, because many DBFs would be reluctant to take the risk of a loan, particularly if they were struggling financially.

A further submission recorded that the DBF transferring funds should get the approval of a diocesan synod but that was rejected, as you will see, for the reasons set out in the Report. Mr Scowen suggested that there should be an express reference to the Archbishops' Council. Although the draft Measure had excluded a reference to the Archbishops' Council because the impending Governance Review might have resulted in structural changes to the National Church Institutions, the Revision Committee decided that it was a helpful point of clarity and decided to make an express reference to the Archbishops' Council or another charity – you will see that on the draft Measure as amended.

As to clause 2, Mr Scowen queried why the Measure did not apply to the Diocese of Sodor & Man or the Deaneries of Jersey and Guernsey. However, it was pointed out very helpfully by the Legal Office that the Diocesan Stipends Funds Measure 1953 did not apply to such islands which had different arrangements for the payment of stipends, hence this amendment was rejected.

I want to thank the members of the Revision Committee for all their work and to thank Church House staff and the Legal Office for all their work on this legislation and I ask the Synod to take note of this Report.

*The Chair.* The motion is now open for debate. I remind members that, under Standing Order 57(6), it is not in order to debate a matter which is the subject of an amendment on the Order Paper.

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

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* I will not take five minutes of Synod's time, I assure you. If I can refer members, please, to paragraphs 19 and following, there is a discussion in there about the lack of standardised accounting practices across dioceses. This point has come up many times before.

Being an auditor, I can find the cloud behind every silver lining and I would like to encourage the Committee in drafting this to consider whether or not it would be appropriate to create some standard accounting practices for when this money is transferred. When money is transferred between organisations, nearly every field of business and charity, there are nearly always accounting rules applied with it and I would ask them to consider this, please.

*The Bishop of Burnley (The Rt Revd Philip North):* I do not have many rich friends, unfortunately. One thing that concerns me about where this Measure stands is that DBFs generous enough to make a donation can make that donation either directly to another DBF or to Archbishops' Council. I think that is probably right. I do not want to amend it, but I would urge people to make the donation to Archbishops' Council, otherwise I can see poorer dioceses having to sort of fawn in an unseemly way around better endowed bishops. I can see myself having to take the Bishop of Oxford out for

dinner or get in with the Bishop of Lincoln. I just hope that that mechanism used is of using the Archbishops' Council, or whatever follows it, as the honest broker.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* Synod will remember that last time in York I made my maiden speech on this proposal and no doubt you will remember the points I made. I am going to repeat one or two of them again just in case you did not.

This proposal I am speaking against is avoidance activity. It is doing something that can be done but avoiding the difficult things I would suggest that need to be done and, in particular, reconstructing the financial basis of our dioceses. This is a sticking plaster – not my phrase, others have used it – that salves our consciences, but I would ask you to take these points into account.

First of all, it confuses the support for the low income dioceses. This support is very generous and very welcomed. If we have individual arrangements being made outside LInC, then that is going to confuse it. It goes against Charity Commission guidance of supporting questionably financially secure organisations. It breaks the ringfence established when the money was appropriated from the parishes in the first place, and it removes any incentive to correct weaknesses that the parishes might have.

Could then the parishes use the money themselves? It is, after all, their money. Would they even be asked? The answer we have heard to that I think is a categoric no. Why do we have weak parishes? Whatever the reasons, there is no doubt that a parish priest is a *sine qua non* for improvement and this is very well-known. Their lack is not necessary; it is our choice and it is a very poor one. Our problem is the imbalance of resources in our dioceses. We need to reconsider the decentralisation, delegation and subsidiarity. These are fairly fundamental points but they do go to the crux of it.

In parallel, the Governance and MPM Reviews – and I am on the reference groups of both of those – need to be far more holistic in the wellbeing of the parish at their heart. We must look beyond our comfort zones and beyond our terms of references to find out what will make these proposals work. If we did this, then our dioceses would be strengthened, they would not need bailing out and proposals like GS 2255A would not be necessary. This, Synod, is being bolder. That is a solution to our weaker dioceses and not, I suggest, this very well-intentioned but misguided proposal. It is a very easy, short-term option and it misses the point. I urge you to vote against.

*Canon Karen Czapiewski (Gloucester):* Members will have heard from Mr Tattersall my suggestion that the Measure has a difficulty in that it limits lending from those dioceses who have no need of their stipend funds. My understanding is that all dioceses rely on giving by their congregations to be able to pay their clergy. While that remains the case, and in anticipation of the Church of England being around for rather longer than what is considered long-term by most organisations, I would suggest that something reflecting an intentionality to support other dioceses, that recognises the sacrificial nature of this giving, is more appropriate than the fallacy that the giving diocese does not need the funds.

*The Chair:* I see no-one else standing and so I will call on Mr Tattersall to respond to the debate, please. He has up to five minutes.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* First of all, I am very grateful for those who spoke in answer to this debate. To Clive Billenness, what he is suggesting is outside the scope of this particular Measure. It is a very limited Measure. You will notice that all it does is it allows something to happen. It does not compel anybody to do anything. For that reason, we are advised that it is outside the scope of the Measure and, therefore, what he proposed is not possible.

To the second speaker, we note what you say about that, about your urging things to happen. To Mr Johnston, again I make the point that we are suggesting that things are allowed to happen and nobody is compelled to do anything about it. In terms of the reference to the Charity Commission, the Charity Commission have been consulted twice about this for their views and have said that they are content with what is proposed and, therefore, we do not see that that is a great problem.

As for wishing for things to be different, being bolder and there should not be parishes which have few people going to them and all that sort of stuff, we note that but what we are doing is we are allowing something to happen here that if a DBF in its infinite wisdom decides that it can give money to another body, another DBF or the Archbishops' Council, that it can be allowed to do that.

We are grateful to Mrs Czapiewski for her suggestions, which she did make to the Revision Committee and which were considered. We are grateful to her for those but we rejected them for the reasons which are set out in the Report. Of course, here it is only when the diocesan board of finance believes that there is no need for monies which are held by their DBF to be applied for the purpose of the stipends that they can transfer it to other bodies – hopefully the Archbishops' Council, as was said already I think by Philip North. I am grateful for the contributions to the debate. Thank you very much.

*The Chair:* I now put the motion at Item 504 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* We come now to the Revision Stage for the draft Measure. We have received notice of one amendment which appears on the Order Paper. At the Revision Stage the 25-member procedure under Standing Order 59 applies. Where an amendment is moved by someone other than a member of the Steering Committee, the mover has not more than five minutes to speak to it. I will then call a member of the Steering Committee to speak for not more than five minutes in reply. If the Steering Committee supports the amendment or indicates that although it does not support the amendment it nevertheless wishes the debate to continue, the debate on the amendment continues. Otherwise the amendment will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or, if unable to do so, indicate by some other means that they wish the debate to continue or a vote to be taken.

## **ITEM 514**

*The Chair:* We begin with clause 1 of the draft Measure. I invite Mr Andrew Orange to move his amendment to that clause as Item 514. He may speak for no more than five minutes.

*Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester):* We are all agreed this is a limited Measure, but I do think we should all support its intent and vote it through. But first of all, by this amendment, I want to make it fireproof: fireproof against outside criticism. I think it is a little vulnerable as it stands. I speak as a member of the Revision Committee, so I make the amendment advisedly knowing the discussions we had.

Generally speaking, it is a sad thing to say but there is already far too much distrust between parishioners and dioceses, particularly in the area of money. Therefore, I do think passionately it is important that we are transparent in everything we do. And nowhere is it more important to be transparent than in the contemplated giving from one diocese to another. We simply cannot afford the risk that someone in the donor diocese could say, "Oh the insiders in the DBF took our money and then decided to give it away". It would be an unjustified criticism, I am sure, but this amendment will ensure that it will not be insiders; it will be a majority of the diocesan synod that approved it, for all this amendment is trying to do is to request and require a majority of the diocesan synod for its approval.

The counterargument – and I think this is the counterargument – is that the amendment is in some way unnecessary because already the donor DBF has to approve. I say actually that is not sufficient and I give you two reasons. First, the Measure is unspecific as to whether it is the members of the DBF who will approve or some smaller group. Second, I have learned different dioceses run their DBFs in different ways. We are, after all, the Church of England and you would not expect them to be the same. For example, in my own Diocese of Winchester the members of the DBF are only the small number of people in the Bishop's Council. I asked about other dioceses and the answer is that just under a third are non-standard, just like Winchester. So let us wrap it up nice and clearly by inserting this amendment. By requiring the whole of the diocesan synod to approve, it is then the same for every diocese, which is how it should be.

This amendment has no agenda really, save to recognise the need to be transparent. But being transparent is not an optional extra. It is, I suggest, vitally important. So, if this amendment seems a bit belt and braces, I make no apology for that. I see this amendment as one that adds democracy and clarity. I beg to move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair:* I call on the Chair of the Steering Committee, the Bishop of Sheffield, to reply. He has up to five minutes.

*The Bishop of Sheffield (The Rt Revd Pete Wilcox):* May I thank Andrew for his proposed amendment. As a member of the Revision Committee, Andrew was kind enough to raise this during the Committee's meeting and we had a useful discussion then. While we have some sympathy for its aim, the Steering Committee does however resist this amendment. As I said to Synod back in July when we met in York, the simple purpose of this Measure is to enable greater inter-diocesan generosity. This will demand not only greater mutuality but also greater transparency and, to that extent, I do understand why Andrew has suggested that the exercise of this power by a DBF be subject to approval by its diocesan synod.



But the Steering Committee resists this amendment for three reasons. First, the Measure already has safeguards built into it. In particular, before any transfer of monies can take place, the DBF must be satisfied that the money does not need to be applied for a purpose specified in section 5 (1) of the Measure, that is to say the payment of stipends and related costs, the expenses incurred in repairing and maintaining parsonage houses and defraying the expenses of the sequestrators during any vacancies. That will in all cases require a detailed level of scrutiny before any transfer is contemplated.

Secondly, the decisions made by members of the board of finance in any diocese are already subject to the governance scrutiny and interrogation of its diocesan synod. Accountability already exists therefore and we do not believe this Measure necessitates additional safeguards. Thirdly, as every PCC treasurer knows, in any attempt to excite generosity, it is as important to take as much friction out of the process as possible. Giving is greatest when it is easy to give.

Since this Measure is purely permissive and is designed to enable with ease those dioceses that can afford it to live out the Christian vocation to be generous, it needs to be simple. We fear that Andrew's proposed amendment will introduce into the process an unhelpful complicating step, so while we are grateful to Andrew for his suggestion, for these reasons we resist the amendment.

*The Chair:* As the Steering Committee resists the amendment, the amendment will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or, if are unable do so or are on Zoom, indicate otherwise that they wish the debate on the amendment to continue. Do I see 25 people standing? Yes, I do. This item is now open for debate.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* I just want to say at the outset how much I value my colleague Andrew from Winchester and the considerable financial experience and wisdom he brings to us. However, on this occasion I am not sure I agree with him, so I am speaking against the amendment. I am concerned that this amendment will make it harder for us as a diocese to do the very thing that this Measure is hoping to enable – to allow us to be generous – by building in what I consider to be unnecessary process. I am speaking out of my own experience of being both a lay chair for diocesan synod and also a member for ten years of the Winchester DBF that Andrew spoke about.

This amendment would not be necessary if there were a good, open and trusting relationship between Synod and the DBF. The diocesan synod cannot be involved in every financial decision made by the diocese, and they specifically elect members of the DBF to do this detailed scrutiny and strategy work for them. I would be very happy to nominate you, Andrew, if you would like to stand for that. This amendment will slow down decision-making, I believe. Synod meets two or three times a year and the DBF at least six. Andrew spoke about mistrust and so I would prefer that we would tackle this directly rather than build in this extra step. I hope that we can work together to build stronger trust in our own dioceses.

Synod, I would prefer that we did not accept this amendment, although I accept the spirit in which it is made. I think it confuses the roles of diocesan synod and the DBF and will not help or support the main purpose of the Measure.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* I will not speak for anywhere near five minutes, and I am not even going to mention safeguarding, which I normally do when I am at these podiums.

I wish to resist the amendment, too, on the basis that diocesan synods approve the budgets of diocesan boards of finance. It is unlikely that any significant sums of money would be able to be expended unless it was already in the budget, so the safeguard is already there, in any event.

We have a mixed economy, as has been said, between the dioceses over the DBF, and in many cases the DBF and the synod are one and the same. In other dioceses, what would be the Bishop's Council is the same as the DBF executive. We will create a bit of mess if the people responsible for decision-making on finance, who are the trustees, have to wait months before a diocesan synod meeting comes up to approve something that is already in the budget probably anyway. I would resist the motion. We need to have a system in the Church which is not always slow and dragging on. We need to be able to get on with things. The systems and safeguards are already in place through existing formula. I would ask you to resist the amendment, please.

*The Chair:* The speech limit is three minutes and then I may test the mind of Synod on a motion for closure.

*The Revd Marcus Walker (London):* God loves a cheerful giver and I want our dioceses to be cheerful givers. I love this Measure. I love the idea of the Bishop of Sheffield and I love the fruits that this might bring, but the danger of it is that dioceses will resent what is happening. The danger of it is that there will be added friction between the diocesan boards of finance and the diocesan synods. The fruits that could come from this Measure and from this amendment are that dioceses could really get behind the decisions that are being taken, could see the fruits of their generosity growing in other dioceses, could hear how their generosity has led to churches being saved in dioceses which they may have never visited and which they then might go and visit, and might build up greater knowledge, greater friendship, greater love and greater Christian amity between these dioceses.

The more that we do things in the open, the more that we do things with joy and excitement, the more fruit will be grown and harvested. So, I say let us not worry about the friction that might be caused by being open. Worry about the friction that might be caused by being closed and rejoice in the possibility of the joy that might happen from cheerful giving.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* Chair, I am a member of the Steering Committee for this Measure. Our dioceses are big charities. They are not Oxfam or Save the Children but they are all multi-million pound organisations. No charities of that size could continue to operate without very robust financial systems, including rigorous planning, budgeting and scrutiny of those plans and budgets. In Oxford the diocesan synod sees the annual budget three times before it is finalised. For all dioceses, in addition to the regulatory, accounting and reporting frameworks they need to work within, they need also always to be conscious that their funding is for all of us mainly coming through Parish Share or common fund donations from their parishes.

I have worked in various areas of Church finance now for over 20 years, it is incredible really, and in that time there have been periods when I have lived, breathed and dreamed Parish Share allocation methodologies. It is sad, I know, but believe me, it all has to be open to scrutiny, explainable and justifiable. This amendment is simply unnecessary. Our dioceses are well able to order their own affairs and do not need to be dictated to by Measure about who they need to consult regarding one line of expenditure. Please join me in voting again this amendment, leave this Measure unamended so our dioceses may with their own procedures choose to be generous to others.

*The Chair:* I will now test the mind of Synod on whether this item has been sufficiently debated.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* We move back to hear from Mr Orange, please. He has up to three minutes.

*Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester):* Synod you can call me a naïve man, but I really did not expect to hear the amount of opposition as we have heard, and I am, frankly, slightly puzzled by it. The first thing I want to say to Alison and Gavin is paying some money from one diocese to another – and we do not know what sum we are talking about, but it could be a considerable sum – is surely not the same as paying the electricity bill, so no matter what processes there may be, and I am sure there are good processes, it is exceptional, and exceptional things surely deserve to receive the exceptional approval of a diocesan synod.

That takes me to the other point about the diocesan synod. It is not as if it is a meeting of a Convocation that occurs once every ten years or something. Diocesan synods meet perfectly regularly and I do not really see what the problem is with putting this on the agenda of the diocesan synod. Mine meets three times a year, I do not know how often yours meet, but that is fairly frequent, and the giving to other dioceses I do not suppose is going to be happening on a weekly basis but more, I would imagine, on an annual basis in reflection of the overall financial position. I do not see why anybody would find the passing of the motion at diocesan synod such a difficult thing.

Marcus, you referred to the possibility of setting up a tension here. Surely we have had this time and again: we must not set up situations where things can be said not to have been done in the open. That is always toxic.

To Julie's point, yes, we are a multi-million pound organisation. We are big charities. To me that does not reduce the need for this to go through diocesan synod but, to my little mind, it rather goes in the other direction, that potentially the donations could be quite large, and, therefore, we should treat them seriously and give them the approval they deserve.

I do not really apologise that this amendment might, as I said in my opening speech, be a bit belt and braces because this is a matter over which we should be very careful.

Synod please, why be careless? Please I urge you to support this amendment and to be careful.

*The Chair:* I now put the amendment at Item 514 to the vote. That is quite close so I am going to call for a counted vote, please.

*The motion was put and carried, 128 voting in favour, 158 against, with nine recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* That means the item was not carried.

## **ITEM 515**

*The Chair:* We now come to Item 515, the motion, "That clause 1 stand part of the Measure". This item is now open for debate. I see no-one standing so we move to put Item 515 to the vote. No, we do not. I am corrected. As no member has indicated an intention to speak against the motion, Item 515 is deemed carried.

## **ITEM 516**

*The Chair:* We now move on to Item 516, the motion, "That clause 2 stand part of the Measure". This item is now open for debate. I see no-one standing. As no member has indicated an intention to speak against the motion, Item 516 is deemed carried.

## **ITEM 517**

*The Chair:* Finally, we come to Item 517, the motion, "That the Long Title stand part of the Measure". This item is now open for debate. As no member has indicated an intention to speak against the motion, Item 517 is deemed carried.

That completes the Revision Stage for the draft Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment Measure) which now stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting. The remaining stages for the Measure are due to be taken on Thursday morning. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 4.00 pm.

## **ITEM 518**

### **DRAFT CHURCH OF ENGLAND PENSIONS (APPLICATION OF CAPITAL FUNDS) MEASURE (GS 2264)**

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, everyone. On our agenda we come now to the legislative business, Draft Church of England Pensions (Application of Capital Funds) Measure. Members will need the Draft Measure itself, GS 2264, and the Explanatory Notes, GS 2264X2. As stated in the agenda, the Revision Committee, pursuant to Standing Order 57.7, has authorized the clerk to inform the Synod that no proposals for

amendment were received by the Committee and that there are no other matters for it to report. As a result, we proceed immediately to consideration of the clauses. As no notice of amendment to either clause has been received, I give permission for clauses 1 and 2 to be taken en bloc. As no member has indicated an intention to speak against the motion, Item 518, “That clauses 1 to 2 stand part of the Measure”, is deemed carried.

## **ITEM 519**

We now come to Item 519, “That the Long Title stand part of the Measure”. As no member has indicated an intention to speak against the motion, Item 519 is deemed carried. The Revision Stage for the Measure has been completed and it now stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting. The remaining stages are due to take place at Thursday morning’s sitting.

That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 4.04 pm

## **LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH GROUP WORK (GS MISC 1329)**

*The Chair:* This is a presentation by the Rt Revd Sarah Mullally, the Bishop of London, to give an overview of the Living in Love and Faith group work and debates during the Synod. She will introduce the presentation and it will conclude without any opportunity for questions. Bishop Sarah.

*(Prayer)*

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* On 16 February six years ago, the Archbishops wrote: “How we deal with real and profound disagreement is the challenge we face as people who all belong to Christ. To deal with disagreement is to find ways forward; we need a radical new Christian inclusion in the Church. This must be found 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”.

Some of you will remember that letter, and the moment at the February General Synod in 2017 that prompted it. Some of you will remember, and may even have participated in, the Shared Conversation that preceded it. Others of you may belong to the ‘LLF generation’, only having entered these debates more recently, perhaps participating in *Living in Love and Faith* in some way.

Real and profound disagreement continues to characterise the Church of England. Disagreement about sexuality persists within our church communities, between our churches, among clergy and lay leaders, as well as among us Bishops, and now here,

among members of Synod. It is not, of course, the only reality about our Church. But these particular disagreements mar our life together, tarnish our reputation in the world that we are called to serve, and distract from God's mission. They are a source of discouragement, of doubt for us as the Church, dragging us away from the love and joy and celebration of our common humanity, the common humanity that the Gospel calls us to. They cast a shadow over our witness to Christ, the good news of salvation and redemption that we long to embody and declare.

As Bishops, we have received countless passionate and forcefully articulated letters and emails expressing seemingly opposing views in the name of Christ. Many blogs and even books have been written since 2017, persuasively setting out arguments that lead to different conclusions. On Wednesday, we will witness passionate debate and clearly articulated arguments again, as those of us who were here six years ago did. In response to the proposals set out in the Archbishops' letter of February 2017, a whole suite of *Living in Love and Faith* resources were produced, including a large book, 16 podcasts and a video course.

An on-line library has been stocked with different perspectives on questions of human identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, including the deep study of Scripture and theological reflections. Individuals have shared their stories of struggle and redemption, stories of God's powerful presence in seemingly contradictory paths of discipleship. Our call is and always will be to seek the face of Christ – yes, in each other, but above all in searching the Scriptures, examining the Church's tradition, and exercising our reason as we strive to make sense of how truth is lived out with grace in our 21st century context.

The reality is that we have done all these things. Even among ourselves as Bishops, our conclusions about the clear teaching of Scripture and the trajectory of the Church's tradition, diverge. We see God at work in each other's ministries and are forced to acknowledge that somehow, mysteriously, the people of God who seek God's face and who want to see the Church flourish, disagree. For some unfathomable reason, God, it seems, has allowed us to continue to disagree, disappointingly refusing to engineer a Damascus Road experience for one side or the other, either in the Church of England or across the Anglican Communion.

How can this be? Perhaps we are all prone to forget that all of us, without exception, "see in a mirror dimly... know only in part". As confident as we might be that we have heard God's 'answer', perhaps God is calling us to be humbler; humbler towards one another but, above all, humbler in our humanity towards the God who is above and beyond our understanding and whose love is deeper, higher and wider than we can ever imagine.

Perhaps we need to be reminded not just of the nearness of God, but of God's wholly 'otherness'. So if, as it seems, God is calling us to live with our disagreements, how can we do so without causing each other so much pain and bringing the Church into humiliating disrepute? How can we cease to stand in judgment over one another? But, most importantly of all, how can we stop adding to the suffering of Christ, the one who, 'opening his arms wide on the cross', holds us together in his costly embrace?

In their letter in 2017 the Archbishops wrote that “We need to work together – not just the Bishops but the whole Church, not excluding anyone – to move forward with confidence”. Over the last few years, we have tried to do just that, urging church communities across our dioceses to engage with the *LLF* resources together. In gathering the reflections and experiences of thousands who accepted this invitation to learn together, to listen to one another and to God, we hear the strident confident voices about a divergent way forward: stand fast against prevailing culture, stay true to the clear teaching of Scripture, on the one hand, and, on the other, we see another understanding of Scripture: the Church of England needs to catch up and allow equal marriage.

But underneath these more strident voices, we have been able to pick out a different tune. Relationships strengthened as silence was broken; growing empathy and respect as different perspectives were shared and better understood; not allowing the discomfort of our differences to distance ourselves from each other; and, importantly, allowing our hearts and minds to be open to the pain that we have inflicted on each other; owning up to the sin of homophobia, transphobia and biphobia, as well as to our intolerance of perspectives different from our own.

We have seen groups being helped to create spaces that are both safer and braver than they have been before. We have seen a growing awareness of the significance of the process, and not just the outcome. The Church has begun to change. It has begun to change the way it does things. I believe that we are now more aware of the need to include as many voices as possible in our deliberations, to listen to the Spirit speaking through the whole Church, in all its diversity. And, as we have done so, we have realised how rich and transformative such conversations can be.

But we have also realised just how badly we have treated LGBTI+ people, just how inhumanely we have excluded and rejected people who are not like us. Our eyes have been opened to the harm that we have done, especially to LGBTI+ people. That is a reality that must continue to change.

Finding ways to walk together with our diversity and differences is not comfortable. The Archbishops warned about this in their preface to the *LLF* book. This book will be deeply uncomfortable in different places for everyone who reads it sincerely and honestly. It will bring you face to face with Christians who have been hurt or harmed by the words and actions of the Church. It will confront each of us with the realities of the depth and breadth of disagreement. It will remind us of the depth of commitment to holiness that the Gospel and the Cross call us to, and how short all of us fall from it.

We must not pretend otherwise. Only in looking honestly at the fact that we have sisters and brothers in Christ who have vehemently opposing views to ours can we come in humility before God and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As Bishops we have been seeking the mind of Christ in the uncomfortably sharp disagreements that we have about same-sex relationships. In our deliberations we have come to realise that each of us brings something to the table that enlarges our understanding of God and of the holiness to which we are called. To separate, to walk apart, would impoverish the Church of England. The costlier and the more narrow

way is to walk together, to bear one another, to suffer the discomfort of our diversity and difference within the body of Christ, to suffer being misunderstood and perhaps even reviled for refusing to say to a fellow follower of Christ “I don’t need you”.

Alongside our engagement with *LLF* as Bishops, and our discernment about walking together, we have to come to understand more clearly the situation we find ourselves in with regard to marriage in the Church of England. The Equal Marriage Act introduced – for the first time – marriage as an option for same-sex couples. Since 2014, same-sex couples have been able to contract a civil marriage, recognised by law. But the legislation permitting this also explicitly excludes the possibility of a same-sex marriage being conducted according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England.

This situation is seen as patently unjust for many. For others, it – and the Church of England’s exemption under the Act – is a necessary consequence of the Church’s unchanging understanding of Holy Matrimony. This disagreement aside, it also raises the question about the distinction between civil marriage and Holy Matrimony, regardless of the genders of the couple concerned. Opposite sex couples who have been civilly married are understood as being married in the sight of God and of the Church, there is no question of reneging on the validity of that understanding.

But how does this apply now, when same-sex couples in a civil marriage are not considered to have entered the state of Holy Matrimony? Furthermore, civil marriage ceremonies encompass many options, some of which accord with marriage as the Church understands it, with vows of fidelity and permanence, and others do not include such promises.

This, alongside the changed meaning of civil marriage as a result of the Equal Marriage Act, raises complex questions which, it could be argued, the Church of England should have asked back in 2013, but which we are perhaps better placed to ask now with the benefit of the *Living in Love and Faith* process. As Bishops we are not offering a definitive answer to these questions, but we are aware that they have been raised and some fresh thinking may be needed.

In proposing our way forward as Bishops, what we have done is to chart a path that navigates the realities of the disagreements among us in a way that enables us to walk together, acknowledging its discomfort and ensuring that individual conscience is protected. One way of describing this way forward is to see ourselves standing in different places and finding a point that each of us, by stretching out our arms, can touch and reach the fingertips of the other. It will be uncomfortable for everyone, but it is about creating a space for the Holy Spirit to move among us and to continue to guide us and shape us into the likeness of Christ.

How have we, the College of Bishops, tried to do this? First, we have acknowledged that we do not agree about the nature of Holy Matrimony. We do not agree whether the biblical and theological understanding of marriage can be extended to same-sex couples. That is why we have not forced such a change on the Church of England.

Second, we recognise and we have acknowledged the urgent necessity for pastoral change in welcoming and celebrating the Christian virtues of faithfulness, mutual love



and lifelong commitment of so many same-sex couples in our churches and in wider society. That is what the prayers of *Love and Faith* aim to enable. They do so without changing the Church's doctrine on Holy Matrimony. That is because they do not set the couple's relationship in the context of the biblical and theological understanding of marriage and they do not use any liturgical material of the Church of England's authorized service of marriage.

Third, we have come to a deeper understanding of blessing in our liturgical practice and prayers. We recognise that it is God's blessing that we are asking for in our praying. And God's blessing is an expression of God's desire to see people flourish. It is not a statement of approval, but of God's lavish love which we are commanded to channel equally lavishly.

Fourth, we recognise that there is a spectrum of convictions among us as Bishops and across the Church. That is why the prayers of *Love and Faith* are commended – they are not imposed on anyone. They simply form part of the variations that are permitted for use in either a Service of the Word or of Holy Communion. Furthermore, the range of prayers offered reflects the range of convictions among us, so that clergy may use the prayers to create a service that they are glad to perform in line with their conscience and the wishes of the two people concerned.

Fifth, we realise that the voluntary nature of using these prayers, while allowing clergy to make decisions and order the life of their congregations in accordance with their conscience, also brings with it the fear of what repercussions there might be for those making such decisions. We know that clear reassurances will need to be provided for those who choose to use the prayers and for those who choose not to use them. This is about how we relate well to one another across our church communities, this is also why we need to continue to engage with the *Pastoral Principles* as we witness to Christ in a polarised and fractured world.

Sixth, we know that our proposals have not made explicit statements about sexual intimacy in relation to the prayers of *Love and Faith*, or to civil marriages, civil partnerships or covenanted friendships that couples have entered into. We know that there is disagreement on these matters. This work will need to be done as part of producing the *Pastoral Guidance*.

And finally, we are also aware that we have not spelled out the implications of this way forward regarding the distinction that currently exists for clergy and lay leaders in same-sex civil marriages or civil partnerships. This work, too, will need to be done in relation to producing the *Pastoral Guidance*. The *Living in Love and Faith* resources are about much more than same-sex relationships. They are about our Christian understanding of what it means to be human in the light of social, scientific, cultural and political change.

There are some questions which are being hotly and acrimoniously debated in society today. These are questions surrounding our embodied existence, with respect to gender identity, for example, or, in a different area, our interaction with virtual reality and the advances in Artificial Intelligence. There are other questions which may not figure in the headlines but to which we believe we should be more alert in the light of our identity in Christ – as individuals and as a Church.

In an increasingly permissive society, the Church needs to uphold and celebrate the Christian vision and inherent goodness of faithful and permanent relationships in both marriage and other committed relationships between two people. We need to become better at offering pastoral support for families and households that reflects the unconditional love of God, and that is for the good of the people involved and good for our society.

Valuing singleness, friendship, and commitment to community are areas that many have raised, and that the Church needs to pay attention to. The Church's commitment to *Valuing All God's Children* in schools needs to be updated, and we need to be clear about how the Church stands against all forms of coercion, whether in relation to so-called 'conversion therapies' or other forms of abuse, and this needs to be worked out in practice.

These are areas to which we believe the Church needs to attend. While we have not created a road map for each of these, we are hopeful that what we have discovered through *Living in Love and Faith* about how we learn together, to listen to each other and to God, will characterise these vital areas of work too. *Living in Love and Faith* has been about inclusion. The invitation to engage with the resources, with each other and with God has gone far and wide. I am encouraged that so many took part and that so many shared their reflections and convictions.

These responses, set out in the *Listening with Love and Faith* Report, have been an important part of our discernment of what we believe God is saying to the Church. As you know, Synod members, we have engaged with *Living in Love and Faith* at almost every session since 2017. Your engagement has been instrumental in shaping the work. Your participation in these sessions of Synod is no different. As Bishops, we are eager to listen to you as together we shape the way forward over the coming months.

Tomorrow, you will have an opportunity to do this in group work. And, as you know, on Wednesday, there will be ample opportunity to debate the motion that we have put before you. My hope is that at this Synod you will embrace your role as leaders in the Church of England. I hope that we will not look to our own interests, but to the interests of others. I hope that we will embrace the narrow way of walking together, rather than the wide way of retreating into the comfort of our silos. I hope that our passion to avoid some sins will not blind us to the sins of strife, quarrels, dissensions and factions that St Paul warns us against.

I hope that we will carry and own the reality of our disagreements in our hearts alongside Jesus's prayer that we may be one in his love and care. I hope that we will commit to living well as a Church, loving and valuing and cherishing every person. May God hold us in the redeeming love of Christ and bless us with the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*The Chair.* Point of order.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Chair, in view of the richness of that address, I wonder if you could arrange with the Clerk of the Synod for it to be emailed to all members, both who are here and who are elsewhere?

*The Chair:* I am not sure, Canon Butler, that it is a point of order but those who have heard it I am sure will try and action it because I am sure it is worth a point. I am told that there is now a video which will be provided for us.

*(Video played)*

*The Chair:* That concludes this item of business and we will move on to Questions in a short time, I am sure.

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy MacDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 4.40 pm

*The Chair:* Synod members, I have a couple of notices to give before we move to Item 6. Staff at the information desk have asked me to apologise for issues with Synod wi-fi. We understand that some of you are struggling to connect to devices. Staff are hoping to fix the issue overnight. There is, however, another wi-fi that has been created called “Synod\_Backup” with a password of “Synod” – with a capital S – “2023”. If you would like help with this, please speak to someone at the information desk and thank you for your patience.

The second notice is that I have been asked by the Chair of the House of Laity to tell you that there will be a meeting of the House of Laity at 8.00 am on Wednesday in the chamber. Further documents will follow by email.

## **ITEM 6 QUESTIONS**

The Chair: We move to Item 6, Questions. You will need the first Questions Notice Paper for this item. I would like to remind Synod that Standing Orders 112 to 117 relate to questions and I am just going to read out some of that. Any member can ask one supplementary question in respect of each original question but no more than two supplementaries can be asked in respect of one original question. In calling members to ask supplementaries, I will give priority to the member who asked the original question. A supplementary question must be a question. A supplementary question must be strictly relevant to the original question or to the answer given. The same rules apply to supplementaries as apply to written questions. It must not contain argument or imputation. In other words, a question must not be used as a debating point and it must not accuse a person of wrongdoing or reprehensible behaviour. It must not ask for an expression of opinion, including on a question of law, or for the solution of a hypothetical problem.

In summary, your question needs to be able to be answered with facts. As laid out in the first Questions Notice Paper, there are notes for members on supplementary questions for you to read through. This is an item of timed business and worship is scheduled for 6.45 pm.

Finally, I would like to ask those wishing to ask supplementary questions to approach the podium so as to be ready when they are called and I would like you to give your name, Synod number and diocese before asking your question, thank you.

We move to Questions 1 to 5 to the Secretary General.

## SECRETARY GENERAL

1. *The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS)* asked the Secretary General: Thank you for your answer to my Q167 at the July 2022 Synod concerning the current ratio of women to men in senior roles in the NCIs, following a round of redundancies: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/QUESTIONS%20Notice%20Paper%20July%202022.pdf>

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

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General:* Of the 14 senior leaders who attend the Archbishops' Council Senior Management Group (SMG), three (21.4%) are female. Seven (50%) are ordained, all of whom are male.

2. *Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)* asked the Secretary General: How many NDAs, compromise agreements including non-derogatory clauses, or similar contractual agreements that prevent people disclosing potential staff/management issues have been signed by people leaving the NCIs within the last 12 months?

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

*Miss Prudence Dailey.* Could the Secretary General please clarify whether any of those 13 mutually agreed settlement agreements contained any clause which would constrain the ability of former employees to speak critically about the employer, the former employer, or the circumstances of the employment, in the public domain?

*Mr William Nye:* I am sorry to say I am not sure I can give a definitive answer to that question. What I can say is that the approach to these agreements that the National Church Institutions follow is absolutely in line with the best practice guidance laid down by ACAS and certainly does not prevent employees or ex-employees from having recourse to whistleblowing arrangements if they need to disclose information. I do not have enough knowledge of the details of the clauses to be able to say whether criticism is permitted but I would be very surprised if all criticism was prohibited, this being the Church of England.

3. *The Ven. Fiona Gibson (Hereford)* asked the Secretary General: The introduction of the Pathways system offers much to recruiters and applicants to posts, but it is

inflexible and extremely difficult to navigate for all users. Now that it is well-established, could feedback be sought from a range of users, and the system reviewed and adapted in the light of that feedback, in order to make for an even more useful and supportive resource for the church?

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

*The Ven. Fiona Gibson:* I thank the Secretary General for his reply. Can he inform Synod of the nature of the developments he mentions in his answer and the timescale for their full roll-out?

*Mr William Nye:* Not, I am afraid, in more detail than I lay out in my answer, but I am sure that Fraser McNish, who I have mentioned in my answer, would be really very happy to talk to you about how we are seeking to improve Pathways, because we are very keen that it should provide the best possible service to dioceses and other people who want to use it. So do please be in touch with Fraser or I can put him in touch with you.

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

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

### **Worshipping Community age distribution, diocese by diocese**

**Note:** This data was not published due to data quality issues and further checking and analysis work required. The data should be read carefully considering this and the statements below.

This table should be used in conjunction with the full Report and in particular with consideration of the methodology and explanatory notes.

### Comparing 2019 and 2021

Based on the subset of records where the same church (or set of churches) submitted data in 2019 and 2021, in which there was a non-zero worshipping community total and in which the total matched the age breakdown.

This means that the comparison between the 2019 and 2021 age distributions is, as far as possible, like-with-like.

However, it means that the 2019 figures are based on a different set of churches from those used for the equivalent numbers in Statistics for Mission 1029.

In general this makes little difference.

The obvious exception is Carlisle, where the 2019 figures include the worshipping community of Network Youth Church, from which no data were received in 2021.

Other large, or apparently large, differences in other dioceses between the 2019 figures as previously published and those calculated here are also likely to be the result of one or two large churches that submitted figures in 2019 but not in 2021.

In general, the proportion of the worshipping community that is people aged under 18 has fallen. Part of this fall may be because some churches that used to work closely with their schools, so included large numbers of school pupils in their worshipping community, have been unable to do so during the pandemic.

Dr Ken Eames

Church of England Data and Analysis Team 18 November 2022.

### Diocesan Worshipping Community: Breakdown by Broad Age Band 2019 and 2021

**Based on the subset of records where the same church (or set of churches) submitted data in 2019 and 2021, in which there was a non-zero Worshipping Community total and in which the total matched the age breakdown**

**See Table 2, Statistics for Mission 2021, p.6 and note 5 and \*Table 4, Statistics for Mission 2019, p.24**

Ref no.	Diocese	Worshipping Community		distribution 2019 as published*			Age distribution 2019 revised for comparison with 2021			Age distribution 2021		
		2019	2021	Ages 0-17	Ages 18-69	Ages 70 & over	Ages 0-17	Ages 18-69	Ages 70 & over	Ages 0-17	Ages 18-69	Ages 70 & over
National	Church of England	1,112,900	966,300	20%	47%	33%	19%	47%	34%	17%	47%	36%
1	Bath & Wells	23,500	20,500	11%	41%	48%	11%	42%	47%	10%	40%	51%

2	Birmingham	19,900	17,100	20%	52%	28%	20%	51%	29%	17%	51%	32%
3	Blackburn	25,800	22,200	23%	43%	34%	22%	43%	35%	19%	42%	39%
5	Bristol	18,400	16,700	23%	49%	28%	22%	50%	27%	22%	49%	29%
6	Canterbury	20,200	17,100	18%	42%	40%	18%	42%	40%	16%	41%	43%
7	Carlisle	15,000	13,100	21%	34%	45%	14%	38%	48%	10%	38%	52%
8	Chelmsford	41,400	35,500	19%	50%	32%	19%	50%	32%	17%	47%	35%
9	Chester	33,900	30,100	19%	43%	38%	19%	43%	38%	17%	42%	40%
10	Chichester	46,000	40,700	18%	47%	35%	17%	48%	35%	16%	47%	37%
11	Coventry	16,900	15,300	19%	46%	35%	19%	47%	35%	17%	46%	37%
12	Derby	17,400	14,300	16%	44%	40%	16%	44%	40%	14%	42%	44%
13	Durham	18,300	16,600	18%	42%	40%	18%	42%	40%	17%	40%	43%
14	Ely	22,900	18,900	23%	48%	29%	21%	49%	30%	20%	49%	31%
15	Exeter	24,200	20,300	11%	41%	49%	11%	40%	49%	10%	39%	52%
16	Gloucester	21,700	17,500	19%	45%	36%	19%	45%	35%	16%	44%	40%
17	Guildford	30,700	27,100	22%	50%	28%	22%	51%	27%	23%	48%	29%
18	Hereford	13,400	11,400	17%	39%	44%	17%	39%	44%	13%	38%	49%
19	Leicester	17,100	14,200	18%	44%	38%	18%	45%	37%	16%	44%	40%
20	Lichfield	41,300	35,100	19%	45%	36%	19%	45%	35%	17%	44%	39%
21	Lincoln	20,600	19,100	19%	38%	44%	16%	40%	45%	14%	45%	41%
22	Liverpool	24,700	21,400	25%	44%	32%	24%	45%	31%	23%	45%	33%
23	London	86,700	77,000	24%	61%	15%	24%	60%	15%	21%	61%	17%
24	Manchester	27,800	22,900	25%	46%	29%	25%	45%	30%	24%	44%	32%
25	Newcastle	13,800	11,900	15%	45%	40%	15%	44%	42%	12%	42%	46%
26	Norwich	21,200	19,800	12%	41%	47%	13%	41%	46%	10%	41%	49%
27	Oxford	64,500	55,300	21%	49%	29%	22%	50%	28%	17%	52%	31%
28	Peterborough	20,300	17,600	19%	44%	36%	19%	44%	36%	17%	44%	40%
29	Portsmouth	14,400	13,000	15%	46%	40%	15%	45%	40%	15%	43%	42%
31	Rochester	30,200	26,200	23%	50%	27%	23%	51%	26%	22%	50%	29%
32	St Albans	34,800	30,200	21%	48%	31%	20%	48%	32%	17%	48%	35%
33	St Eds & Ips	20,500	15,200	22%	38%	40%	21%	38%	41%	12%	38%	50%
34	Salisbury	33,900	30,100	16%	42%	42%	16%	44%	40%	12%	40%	48%
35	Sheffield	19,600	16,400	25%	45%	30%	22%	47%	31%	20%	48%	32%
36	Sodor & Man	1,700	1,500	13%	38%	49%	12%	40%	48%	8%	36%	56%
37	Southwark	55,800	50,200	26%	54%	19%	27%	54%	20%	24%	54%	22%
38	S'well & Notts	18,700	16,100	19%	47%	34%	19%	48%	33%	16%	49%	35%
39	Truro	11,500	10,900	12%	38%	51%	12%	36%	52%	10%	35%	55%

41	Winchester	26,700	23,400	16%	47%	36%	17%	46%	36%	15%	44%	41%
42	Worcester	12,900	11,600	12%	39%	49%	12%	39%	48%	10%	40%	50%
43	York	28,300	24,500	15%	43%	43%	14%	43%	43%	11%	42%	47%
44	Europe	15,500	13,800	18%	55%	27%	20%	56%	24%	17%	59%	24%
46	Leeds	40,300	34,400	20%	43%	37%	20%	43%	37%	18%	43%	40%

*The Revd Charlie Skrine:* Thank you for the answer and for the detailed tables under actually a different question number later on in the Annex and thank you to your team. Noting that I think it is now 23 dioceses with more than 40% of churchgoers over the age of 70 and that in 2012 it was one, is your team doing any modelling on the effect of what seems to be a linear progression, and is your team doing any work on how they will support dioceses through transitions?

*Mr William Nye:* Thank you for your question and thank you for your continuing interest in this very serious topic. I would not say we are doing modelling in the sort of pure arithmetic or statistical sense. What we are doing is seeking to support dioceses and networks in a number of ways through the Diocesan Investment Programme and otherwise to help them devise plans which will help them implement the bold objective of the Vision and Strategy to double the number of children and young people in our churches. We look forward to supporting as many or, indeed, all dioceses, if possible, in that over the remainder of this decade.

5. *Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford)* asked the Secretary General: If he will estimate the actual savings made in each year since the start of COVID-19 for General Synod meeting in person and by hybrid and for all its Boards and Committees which now tend to meet alternately in person and on-line, as concerns

- 1) The now normal non-printing of Board and Committee Papers;
- 2) The reduced staff time in the preparation dispatch of all papers, unless opting in for them;
- 3) The annual savings in postage costs to Synod – for Board and Committee papers;
- 4) The reduced ‘notional’ hire costs and use of Board and Committee Meeting rooms at Church House; and
- 5) The reduced provision of lunch and other refreshments during each meeting.

And whether or not the savings have resulted in the reduction of staff being employed at Church House and the freeing of more office space for external letting, and if he is satisfied with the current arrangements from an accounting perspective.

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

In 2018 and 2019 prior to the pandemic the total costs of the General Synod borne by the NCIs were around £460,000 a year. This represented the cost of a Group of



Sessions in London and the residential Group of Sessions in York and excludes costs funded by dioceses.

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

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

*Canon Peter Bruinvels:* In thanking the Secretary General for his answer insofar as it goes, does he not accept the £2 million annual savings, whilst quite remarkable, have resulted in the reduction in the number of in-person meetings through Covid and with more of his staff working from home there is an element of social interaction possibly being lost? In making such savings, is he satisfied that the balance is right with so many staff and Synod members now operating hybrid?

*Mr William Nye:* Yes, I think I am satisfied that the balance is right. I and the other chief officers of the NCIs have done a lot of work consulting staff and consulting the staff side of the Joint Staff Council on the arrangements that we have for hybrid working, not just for Synod and its committees and boards, but also for the work of the staff generally. As a result, we have been able to release a significant amount of space here in Church House, some of which is currently being refurbished for others to occupy, and that has led to a significant saving for the Church as a whole by enabling the Corporation to let it to other people.

At the same time, I think teams are able to come to and fro and gather when they need to, but also to cope not just with the rail strikes and other problems that previously would have incapacitated us but to employ people more across the country and to be much more flexible. We do need to go on monitoring it but, yes, I do think we have the balance right.

## **CLERK TO THE SYNOD**

6. *The Revd Mark Miller (Durham)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Why are papers and timetables not uploaded to the synod app at the same time as they are added to the Church of England website (or within hours) so as to enable efficient reading and notating of Synod papers?

*Ms Jenny Jacobs replied as Acting Clerk to the Synod:* We are very sorry that it took a week to have the papers available on the Synod App. This was due to a lack of resources and staff turnover.

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

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

*The Revd Mark Miller:* Thank you, Acting Clerk, for your answer. I appreciate the current situation with low staff levels and recent recruitment. Your answer seems to refer to this current group of sessions but, since I joined at the beginning of this quinquennium, the app is often behind the email and website. Assuming it is a resource allocation question, what is required or who needs to make a decision so that the app is given at least the same priority if not greater than email and website?

*Ms Jenny Jacobs:* I would like to reassure you that the staffing has now stabilised. We have had training take place and we hope that in future the app will be updated at the same time as the website and the email.

## NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL

7. *Dr Paul Buckingham (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: From the three options available under the 2021 DBE Measure,

- a company limited by guarantee or a charitable incorporated organisation
- an unincorporated body
- a committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance?

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

*The Bishop of Durham replied as Chair of the National Society Council:* Following the revision of the DBE Measure, all 40 DBEs have certified Schemes as at the end of December 2022.

- 16 dioceses are incorporated under the 2021 Measure (previously 14 under the 1991 Measure)
- 23 dioceses are statutory committees of the DBF under the 2021 Measure
- One DBE remained unincorporated, and this DBE is compliant as it is registered at the Charity Commission.

A list of which DBE has taken which form is available on the Synod notice board. How Diocesan Boards of Education have been established under the DBE New Measure (2021):

Diocese	Previous Constitution 1991	Constitution 2021
Bath and Wells	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Birmingham	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Blackburn	Incorporated	Incorporated
Bristol	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Canterbury	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Carlisle	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Chelmsford	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Chester	Incorporated	Incorporated
Chichester	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Coventry	Incorporated	incorporated
Derby	Incorporated	incorporated
Durham	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee

Ely	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Exeter	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Gloucester	Unincorporated	Incorporated
Guildford	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Hereford	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Leeds	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Leicester	Incorporated	Incorporated
Lichfield	Incorporated	Statutory Committee
Lincoln	Incorporated	Incorporated
Liverpool	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
London	Incorporated	Incorporated
Manchester	Incorporated	Incorporated
Newcastle	Incorporated	Incorporated
Norwich	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Oxford	Incorporated	Incorporated
Peterborough	Unincorporated	Unincorporated
Portsmouth [joint with Winchester]	Joint unincorporated	Joint Incorporated
Rochester	Incorporated	Incorporated
Salisbury	Incorporated	Incorporated
Sheffield	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Southwark	Incorporated	incorporated
Southwell & Nottingham	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
St Albans	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Truro	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
Winchester [joint with Portsmouth]	Joint unincorporated	Joint Incorporated
Worcester	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee
York	Unincorporated	Statutory Committee

8. *Ms Venessa Pedro Pinto (Leicester)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: What national resources does the Church of England offer to nurture the faith development of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society Council: Some national resources were produced through the *Faith at Home* series to enable schools, churches and households to explore faith together but we generally do not produce national resources to nurture faith development of children and young people as that responsibility sits at parish and diocesan level.

*Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester)*: Could the Bishop clarify if the responsibility to nurture the faith development of adults sits at the national level?

*The Bishop of Durham*: That is not a supplementary I was expecting to this question about SEND primarily. It does not sit nationally though it fits within the national framework of what we are about. Every diocese and every parish should be focusing on nurturing adults. My own suggestion is that every parish priest should be prioritising discipleship in their ministry.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* I am asking this question on behalf of the original questioner. These resources that have been talked about are of immense potential value, so may we ask if the Church will consider creating a portal where dioceses can advertise these resources that they have created with such care?

*The Bishop of Durham:* Thank you for that suggestion. I am sure we can explore that and, actually, I would want to add that in replying we thought we answered purely about written resources. There is actually already a growing network development, particularly through *Growing Faith*, of those who are involved in SEND which we intend to expand, but we will take your suggestion and explore.

9. *The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: GS 2223 set out a vision for a Church of England that is younger and more diverse. The strategy suggests “a bolder commitment to Christian education and ministry with children, young people and students” (p.6). In 2022, 38% of English 18-year-olds were in higher education, part of a total of 1.3million full-time UK undergraduates. University chaplaincies are the front line of the expression of Christ’s love to this student population. In what ways has specific work been undertaken or is planned to articulate how chaplaincies can be supported as a key part of this bolder commitment to ministry with students?

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

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

*The Dr Revd Sara Batts-Neale:* Thank you for your answer, which lists a number of activities which I believe predate the adoption of the Vision and Strategy document. Has there been any additional work to identify the needs of higher education chaplains, particularly in those universities which do not have a religious foundation in order to support their frontline work?

*The Bishop of Durham:* In line with the vision for both higher education and further education, the role and place of chaplaincy is kept under constant surveillance. It is also up to the dioceses to explore with some of those institutions whether or not they

should do so. It is not a decision that can be taken nationally, in fact. But if you want a strengthening we must – must – put much more into further education chaplaincy as well as higher education.

10. *The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: Analysis of Church of England schools in the Diocese of Chelmsford shows that every school is facing a substantive deficit budget. Our Interim Diocesan Director of Education recently reported to our Diocesan Board of Education that Chelmsford is not alone, as this situation is repeated across the Church of England's Diocesan Boards of Education. Given our schools are a vital missional provision to our communities in growing faith, what action is being taken to bring the significant budget pressures our schools are facing to the urgent attention of the Department of Education and relevant Ministers of State?

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

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

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society Council: Chapter 4 of *Valuing All God's Children* sets out the legal framework with reference to equality law and other legislation which sets the context for schools. It was written and updated with advice from the Legal Office. The Government will publish updated guidance on the subject soon, and *Valuing All God's Children* will be updated as appropriate in the light of that guidance and in conjunction with advice from our own Legal Office.

12. *Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: Bearing in mind the increasing body of evidence that gender distress may be a response to a range of developmental, social and psychological factors, and of the risks associated with early social transition of children, will the new *Valuing All God's Children* guidance exclude reference to the concept of a "trans child"?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society Council: *Valuing All God's Children* does not use the term 'trans child'. It

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

*Mrs Rebecca Hunt:* My question is how has the decision been made to use the ideological language of sex assigned at birth in this answer when the facts are that sex is determined at conception and observed at birth?

*The Bishop of Durham:* I do not know the answer to why we chose that. That is the honest answer, I do not know why we did it that way round.

*Mrs Rebecca Hunt:* Please could you write to me to confirm the answer.

*The Bishop of Durham:* I will do something in writing, certainly.

*Mr Benjamin John (St Albans):* What role, if any, was given to the fact that the Equality Act does not permit gender reassignment in law below the age of 18, when affirming trans pupils in *Valuing All God's Children*?

*The Bishop of Durham:* We constantly look at these things and that is why we are going to revise it in the light of what comes forward from the *Living in Love and Faith* stuff.

## **CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL**

13. *The Revd Roger Driver (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the Church Buildings Council: It was reported back in October 2019 that the Church of England had entered into a 'Memorandum of Understanding' with a company called Cornerstone to assist churches hosting a cell mast within their buildings. Following parliamentary approval of the new Electronic Communications Code, what support and assistance is available to parishes wishing to pursue this opportunity and how can it be accessed?

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

*The Revd Roger Driver:* What legal faculty or other advice will be given and available for DHCs and PCCs in respect of the Electronic Communications Code which is enshrined in law, in particular with regard to mobile phone companies, their right of access to the church building, modification of equipment, sharing of equipment, impact on insurance for the church and the restriction and/or inability for the PCC to seek removal of that equipment?

*The Ven. Robert Cooper:* There is in the Memorandum of Understanding the working out of how faculty applications are both made by the companies and also how they should be delivered. I think that the CBC would want to issue advice on how that is actually worked out in practice and I know that members of staff at the Church Buildings Council will be happy to work with you on that.

14. *The Revd Roger Driver (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the Church Buildings Council: How many churches across the Church of England currently host a telecommunications cell mast in their building, and could the information be presented in a table giving numbers per diocese?

*The Ven. Robert Cooper replied on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:* The information requested is not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost. We estimate that around 300 churches have telecommunications infrastructure in their towers, including a small number with a more compact technology suitable for deployment in rural not-spots.

## **MINISTRY COUNCIL**

15. *Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: The aggregate number of Stipendiary Clergy reported by dioceses has declined from 7,235 in 2019 to 7,063 in 2021. What steps are in place to reverse this long-term trend of decline, and actually increase the number, as is so badly needed?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* answered as Chair of the Ministry Council: Data compiled by the NCI's shows that in 2019 there was a total of 7,700 stipendiary clergy in the Church of England where in 2021 there were 7,570. 2021 saw the highest number of ordinations to stipendiary ministry for a generation (390) thanks to the hard work of local clergy and diocesan vocations teams in supporting people to consider their ministerial vocation and through the application of funds from the Church Commissioners to the Strategic Ministry Fund to support dioceses with the cost of increased numbers of curates. In recent years this number of ordinations would have been sufficient to see growth in the overall cohort. In the unique circumstances of 2021, more ministers than usual left ministry for a range of reasons. Looking to the future, significantly increased national funding will be distributed through the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Fund to dioceses in order to help the Church meet the outcomes of its Vision and Strategy for the 2020s. This includes provision to support an increased number of stipendiary clergy posts.

*The Revd Jo Winn-Smith (Guildford):* Could you just clarify with the figures whether this is full-time equivalent or whether this number of posts is a reduction not just in individuals but potentially could be with regards to hours actually worked because people are part-time?

*The Bishop of Chester:* That is an extremely good question. I have lots of information in front of me, but I am not one hundred per cent confident that any of it actually answers that question and so I will write to you. Or, actually, what I will do is I will stick it on a blog so that you can view them. If it does not come through to you, let me know.

16. *The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: In the light of the fact that Canon C 4.3 is currently being cited in at least one Diocese to block access to ordination training for some disabled, potential candidates, can the process for amending this Canon proceed as a matter of urgency?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: We are committed to enabling those with disabilities to access the discernment process and training for ordained ministry. The National Diverse Vocations Officer is undertaking research in this area.

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

17. *Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: To what extent have the Ministry Council explored centralised training provision, perhaps an IME 'zero', for those 'further back' in the discernment process that might cohere with the training undertaken at a TEI for IME 1 later?

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

18. *The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What plans are in place to develop a common syllabus/national framework for ordination training with clearly defined common outcomes at the point of ordination?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The Formation Framework sets out common expectations for training and the requirements to be met at the point of diaconal ordination (for candidates to be priests, distinctive deacons and, specifically, pioneering priests). The Ministry Council and its Quality and Formation Panel oversee validation and quality assurance work. This ensures that pathways offered by TEIs are shaped to enable candidates to develop appropriately in accordance with those expectations.



The Council will be reviewing whether (and, if so, what kind of) greater commonality between pathways would be beneficial and possible given the diversity of prior experience, church tradition, and culture amongst candidates and in the church.

*The Revd Dr Tom Woolford:* Thank you, Bishop Mark, for your answer and your work on this. The formation criteria specified that, at the end of IME Phase 1 ordinands should understand Christian beliefs, so does the Ministry Council plan to consider whether there are certain core doctrines of the faith as the Church of England has received them that every ordinand in every TEI ought both to understand and personally believe in, and what is the timescale for the review on whether this and any other kind of commonality between pathways would be beneficial to be concluded?

*The Bishop of Chester:* I would encourage you to consider what is already in place. So, under a process delightfully known as the T11 process, we have to approve every pathway to make sure that it fits as appropriate ordination training for everyone. Systematic theology, the study of doctrine would be part of that. However, it is actually quite technically difficult to have a common syllabus, which is why we have this understanding of common outcomes. We recently had a meeting of the Archbishops' Council and the Ministry Council and we have agreed that we will seek to take that work forward to see whether we can do better with it, but it is something that we are currently considering.

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

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* Each diocese is responsible for ensuring that it appropriately trains and assesses its curates within the national framework. Each year dioceses are asked to complete an Annual Self Evaluation of their IME2, and the Quality and Formation Panel receives a summary of key points these raise.

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

*The Revd Jeremy Moodey:* I thank the Bishop of Chester for his assurance that IME2 training is being monitored by the centre, but does the Bishop agree that if such reliance is being placed on diocesan self-evaluations then, of course, this may not

actually reflect the experience of curates themselves? Indeed, dioceses will be incentivised to give a more positive spin on their IME2 training programmes?

*The Chair* That is an opinion.

*The Revd Jeremy Moodey*: Sorry?

*The Chair*: You are asking for an opinion. Would you like to reframe your question?

*The Revd Jeremy Moodey*: Surely curates should be asked for their own opinions, especially if further diocesan funding for curacies is dependent on these diocesan self-evaluations?

*The Chair*: That is also a question of opinion, which is out of order. Sorry.

20. *Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What guidance is provided to diocesan authorities (that could be published more widely) to equip them in authorising external training providers?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as *Chair of the Ministry Council*: We do not believe that there is any formal guidance provided, at least within areas overseen by the Ministry Council. Dioceses may discuss particular proposals for training with staff from appropriate teams within the NCLs leading to ad hoc guidance being provided.

21. *The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Overseas Permission to Officiate (OPTO) covers liturgical ministry in the Church of England by bishops and clergy visiting from other Anglican Communion provinces. But are overseas Anglican bishops and clergy required to seek permission from the Church of England before ministering in an ecumenical context in England, outside the Church of England?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as *Chair of the Ministry Council*: We have consulted the Legal Office who have advised that OPTO is not required for overseas clergy to participate in non-liturgical contexts (such as speaking at a conference) or to officiate in a Church other than the Church of England.

Section 4 of the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988 envisages that Churches that are in communion with the Church of England (i.e. overseas Churches in the Anglican Communion) might also have their own separate ecumenical arrangements with Churches in England other than the Church of England, and that their clergy might exercise ministry in those other Churches. Aside from the legal position, however, a bishop of another Church in the Anglican Communion should, as a matter of courtesy, be in touch with the relevant Archbishop even if the activity he or she is proposing to undertake is not subject to the requirement for OPTO.

## **REMUNERATION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE**

22. *Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: Thanking the Bishop of Hereford for his answer to written

question 11 in November, please could the Remunerations Committee provide similar estimates of median stipend and mean stipend received by female clergy, compared to the median stipend and mean stipend received by male clergy for the years, 2007, 2012, and 2017?

*The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson) replied as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:* The information requested is not easily available and I am afraid cannot be obtained within the time available to answer this question.

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

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

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

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

*The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson) replied as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:* Although recent increases in stipend recommendations have not been in line with inflation, it remains the aspiration of the Archbishops' Council as the Central Stipends Authority (CSA) that the NMS should increase in line with inflation as measured by CPIH over the medium term. We remain concerned about the impact of high inflation on clergy wellbeing and hope that increases below inflation will be compensated for by increases above inflation in later years. However this depends on a range of economic, financial and other factors, especially giving levels. In view of this, I am not able to provide a precise answer as to how long the 'medium term' will be. The three-yearly reviews will ensure not only that progress is monitored and assessed but also whether the aspiration remains affordable.

*Mr Ian Boothroyd:* My supplementary is broadly as I indicated yesterday. Thank you for the written reply. With reference to maintaining the relationship between the level of the National Minimum Stipend and inflation, is the medium term aspiration now part of the formal policy of the Archbishops' Council as the Central Stipends Authority, and

when will the next three-yearly review referred to in the policy take place? Might it be three years from the beginning of the period of higher inflation in 2021?

*The Bishop of Hereford:* I refer you to the answer about the aspiration of the Archbishops' Council as the Central Stipends Authority: it clearly does remain the aspiration. In terms of the specifics of the review process, we started the three-year cycle in 2021 and it will be reviewed in 2024 with a view to reviewing where we are relative to CPIH.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* What would be the cost to the national Church of immediately restoring the stipend to its higher level in relation to median pay?

*The Bishop of Hereford:* Ian, I am not in a position to answer that without the data, but I will respond to that question in writing.

24. *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: What is the maximum and the median pension currently paid to priests, archdeacons, and bishops respectively on retirement, and what are the respective requirements in terms of years of service in each order or ministry/role in order to qualify for the maximum pension?

*The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson)* replied as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: The details of maximum pension and accrual rates are published on the Church of England Website (pages 10-11 of the CEFPS member's guide). This information is also available on the Notice Board. Clergy pensions are calculated with reference to the National Minimum Stipend, with a multiplier for senior clergy posts (again, available on page 10 of the CEFPS member's guide).

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

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

	<b>Maximum Pension for Members who Completed Maximum Pensionable Service Before 1 January 2010</b>	<b>Maximum Pension for Members Joining From 1 January 2011</b>	<b>Multiplier of NMS used to calculate pension</b>
All clergy, licensed lay workers, other than those mentioned below	£16,843	£12,632	1

Archbishops	£33,686	£25,265	2
Bishop of London	£30,317	£22,737	1.8
Other diocesan bishops	£25,264	£18,948	1.5
Suffragan bishops, deans and archdeacons	£21,054	15,632	1.25
Lump sum at retirement—all scheme members	£50,529	£37,896	
Maximum qualifying period	37 years	41 and a half years	

*Miss Debbie Buggs:* Does the 1.5 multiplier for bishops' pensions only apply to their years spent as a bishop or does it apply to all of their ordained years, please?

*The Bishop of Hereford:* Again I am afraid I will have to get back to you on that in terms of detail if I may.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Is there any reason given why in 2011 it appears that the pension for clergy was unilaterally reduced by one-third?

*The Bishop of Hereford:* Again, I think it would be helpful to give you an extended answer to that question but, essentially, it was around the removal of the second pension and at the same time there was an increase in the basic pension, so on the surface it looks like quite drastic but in practice it was not as bad as some had thought it might be.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* But it became worse when that was removed in 2015?

*The Bishop of Hereford:* Well, it was reduced from two-thirds to a half.

*The Chair:* You have had your question. Sorry.

## MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

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

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:* The Bishops in the House of Lords, supported by Parliamentary Unit and the Public Policy Team of Faith and Public Life, have regularly engaged HM Government on issues with the social security system, particularly for the most vulnerable at this time.

The Bishop of Durham has been leading this, asking HM Government directly what assessment they have made of the adequacy of the current levels of benefits given the increased cost of living. HM Government replied that it has provided decisive action through the Energy Price Guarantee for all households providing £26bn in cost-of-living support for 2023/24 inclusive of Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable, such as those on means-tested benefits, pensioners and those on disability benefits. However, it has not committed to assessing if these one-off provisions are adequate given the ongoing cost of living crisis.

*Mrs Michaela Suckling:* Thank you for your answer and for the work you have already done in this area. I would like to ask what further plans are in place to strongly encourage His Majesty's Government to assess if their one-off provisions and current welfare system are adequately meeting the needs of our most vulnerable, not only during the cost of living crisis but beyond, and how can Synod members help in this encouragement?

*Mr Mark Sheard:* Thank you, Michaela, for your question, and I apologise I cannot be with you in person this afternoon to answer it. As many of you will know, there has been a fairly catastrophic earthquake in Turkey and Syria which has been preoccupying my time as a member of the Board of the Disasters Emergency Committee today. Nonetheless, turning to matters closer at home, Michaela, you rightly raise the question of the need for continuing action. Obviously, at this stage no guarantee has been received from the Government that they are going to monitor the adequacy of the social security system beyond the one-off payments that were referred to.

Most of the work is done by the Lords Spiritual in the House of Lords, and Bishop Paul Butler of Durham has been leading a lot of activity there, but also our Parliamentary Unit continues to exercise as much influence and seek as much access as they can to Government Ministers and civil servants on that.

As I am sure you will appreciate, it is a tough task. You ask what Synod members can do. I would encourage Synod Members to write to their MPs and express their opinions clearly and also to get on their knees and pray for a softening of heart.

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

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

*Mr Adrian Greenwood:* Thank you, Mark, for the answer and thank you for agreeing to look at the CIVITAS Report and its recommendations for halting the decline of marriage in our country. I must say I was surprised that you did not know about the Report but I would ask three points. When did Mission and Public Affairs last do some research on the benefits of marriage to society, and particularly the raising of children? Will it now make this a high priority for consideration? And has the MPAC contributed to the Archbishops' Commission on Families and Communities?

*Mr Mark Sheard:* To answer those questions in reverse, yes, the MPAC has been involved in the Archbishops' Commission and also supported it through Faith in Public Life which, as I am sure you are aware, is the new structure in which it operates.

The first part of your question I cannot answer off top of my head and I have completely forgotten the middle part. I know there were three elements to it. I will be at Synod tomorrow and perhaps you and I can catch up offline and I can give you a little more detail on some of this.

## **BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

27. *The Revd Martin Thorpe (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: Please could the Business Committee consider holding a group of sessions of General Synod in the November 2023 window, either virtually or in person, to deal with the backlog of business, not least the raft of Diocesan motions which are mostly perpetually carried over?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford) replied as Chair of the Business Committee:* The Business Committee monitors the amount of business in the forward look, including legislation, finance, Private Members' and Diocesan Synod Motions and strives to settle a balanced agenda. In July 2022, the Business Committee reintroduced some evening sessions to enable some DSMs and PMMs be debated. and may consider this again in July this year.

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

28. *Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: There is an ongoing level of concern about which members are called (or not called) to speak in Synod debates. A former member of the panel of chairs has publicly published the following, with regard to members of General Synod with whom they disagree: 'When

I was a Synod Chair I tried only to call them to speak at the end of a debate with a two-minute speech limit!'. What measures are there in place to monitor the conduct of chairs of debates with regard to the balance of who they call to speak, and when, and how would chairs be called to account for biased chairing of this nature, which could bring the office into disrepute?

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

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

29. The *Revd Jo Winn-Smith (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: Following the success of the *Pastoral Principles*, how does the Committee plan to address good conduct in General Synod and public life by members of General Synod, for example, activity on social media like Twitter, particularly for lay members for whom there is no equivalent of either the CDM or the new complaints procedure?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford) replied as Chair of the Business Committee:* The Business Committee is looking at additional guidance for Synod members on this, and it is hoped that this will be in place by July. We will look at the *Pastoral Principles* and other material to see if there are things that we can bring into the guidance.

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

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

30. *Mrs Gill Frigerio (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: Will the Business Committee undertake to take all necessary steps, including if needed the introduction of legislation, to ensure that any member of Synod engaging in hate speech on social media during or between sessions can be removed from the Synod, or subject to a vote of no confidence by their electorate?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford) replied as Chair of the Business Committee:* The Business Committee condemns any use of hate speech on Social Media and continues asked Synod members to be mindful of how their words will be interpreted both within and outside the Church. There is currently a Code of Conduct for Synod members and I would like to draw Synod's attention to this as well as Notice Paper 7: Order and Decorum.



The Business Committee has discussed the issues raised in the question and has decided not to pursue a mandatory code of conduct. The committee is advised that a mandatory code would not only need Primary Legislation via a Measure and an Amending Canon, but would also require significant resource to implement and monitor. However, the Committee is looking at additional guidance and hopes to have this in place by July.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* Parliament has a Committee on Standards, local authorities have standards committees subject to the oversight of the Ombudsman, clergy are subject to the Clergy Discipline Measure. Can I ask the Business Committee to look again at this to ensure that lay members of Synod are subject to a mandatory code of practice with powers given to a body to enforce and, where appropriate, sanction members for breaches so that laity on this Synod are not in a different position from clergy?

*Canon Robert Hammond:* The Business Committee has set up a small working group to look at what we can do without an enforceable legal code of conduct. We are constantly considering that and we will keep that decision under review.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* In that group, may I ask the Chair of the Business Committee if he would also be in conversation with the Corporation of Church House and with the authorities at York University about their expectations around hate speech and the use of it on the premises that they are responsible for?

*Canon Robert Hammond:* To be clear, the group is a subgroup of the Business Committee, but we would certainly be happy to talk to groups where we hold Synod sessions, yes.

31. *Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: General Synod Committees are now holding many of their meetings during the year on-line rather than in person. Has the Business Committee conducted any research into the impact of this and whether, as a result of meetings being held on-line, members are still fully involved in the substance of the meetings and that the relevant Officers are still being properly held to account?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford) replied as Chair of the Business Committee:* The Business Committee has not conducted any research on this.

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

*Canon Peter Bruinvels:* In thanking him for his answer and noting how the Business Committee and himself remain agile, and no doubt nimble of foot, will he note there remains some concern over accountability and interaction when so many important meetings more often take place on-line, with no opportunity to challenge, support or even see each other, and what are the views of the other Chairs?

*Canon Robert Hammond:* I am not sure it is for the Business Committee to speak for the other Chairs about how that decision goes, Mr Bruinvels, so I cannot comment on what the views of the other Chairs are.

Thank you for thinking I am agile and fleet of foot but I continue to think that the way – certainly for the Business Committee, and others if used well – hybrid meetings can have significant benefits, particularly on short-term meetings where you need to address one particular thing.

## **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

32. *Ms Fiona MacMillan (London)* asked the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee: GS 2177 Standing Order made under section 1 of the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure 2020 states that:

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

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

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

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

## **CLERGY DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE**

33. *Mr Charles Houston (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: Please can you provide the figures for formal cases of discipline involving allegations of safeguarding or related issues brought under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 relating to all clergy and those brought against laity for the past five years?

*The Bishop of Liverpool (The Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: The Clergy Discipline Commission is a statutory body constituted under section 3 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. Accordingly, it has no role in relation to the discipline of the laity and does not have access to any data in that regard.

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

misconduct towards a vulnerable adult was 24 and the total number involving misconduct of sexual nature towards a child was 26.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* Has the Clergy Discipline Commission carried out research to show how many of those 50 cases were forwarded to the designated officer within the 28 days specified in section 12 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 and what the average time was to make such referrals?

*The Bishop of Liverpool:* I am happy to go back and ask the Clergy Discipline Commission to look at that.

34. *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* asked the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: How many allegations under the Clergy Discipline Measure have been brought against clergy, archdeacons, and bishops over the last five years, and how many in each category have been dismissed and how many upheld?

*The Bishop of Liverpool (The Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: The Clergy Discipline Commission collects data each year on the number of allegations of misconduct brought against clergy and the manner of the disposal. This is published via its annual Report to General Synod. The Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 distinguishes between allegations brought against deacons or priests and bishops or archbishops. The Commission does not separately collect the number of allegations brought against archdeacons. The figures for the period 2017 – 2021 are posted on the notice board.

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Deacons or Priests</b>					
Number of allegations of misconduct	101	90	217	92	94
Dismissed or no further action taken	44	47	81	37	46
Finding of misconduct (penalty by consent or after a tribunal)	25	22	17	26	23
<b>Bishops or Archbishops</b>					
Number of allegations of misconduct	7	24	13	32	22
Dismissed or no further action taken	4	17	7	24	14
Finding of misconduct (penalty by consent or after a tribunal)	0	0	0	1	2

**Notes:**

1. The figures are for allegations of misconduct brought or disposals made in that calendar year.

2. A decision on the disposal of an allegation of misconduct may cross over into next year, particularly where the allegation is made late in the calendar year.
3. In answer to the specific question, the figures include cases which were dismissed under section 11 CDM 2003 or where no further action was taken under section 12 CDM 2003. Figures for number of cases that were withdrawn, resolved by conciliation, or disposed by conditional deferment are not included.
4. The figures for findings of misconduct include where a penalty by consent has been agreed following an admission or a finding has been made by a tribunal.

*Miss Debbie Buggs:* Has the Commission considered segregating out the numbers for archdeacons please in the future?

*The Bishop of Liverpool:* At the moment we cannot do that because they are classified as clergy, but we are happy to look at that.

35. *Miss Rosemary Wilson (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: Please can you set out the Church of England disciplinary structures that exist for bringing formal complaints against bishops that involve matters of doctrine, ritual or ceremony and also formal complaints that do not involve those three areas.

*The Bishop of Liverpool (The Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath)* answered on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: Formal complaints alleging the commission of an offence against the laws ecclesiastical involving matters of doctrine, ritual or ceremonial fall under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963.

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

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

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Would I be right in assuming this path of discipline would apply in any case where a bishop commended prayers or liturgy which was indicating a variance from the doctrine of the Church of England in any important matter?

*The Chair:* That question is out of order I am afraid. You are asking for an opinion.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* I was asking for a clarification of fact.

*The Bishop of Liverpool:* It is not a clarification of fact. It is an opinion.

36. *Mr Timothy Hamilton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: Given both research and anecdotal evidence of the way in which some clergy are treated in relation to handling CDMs and 'out of process' complaints within dioceses, could the Church of England provide better HR training for Archdeacons and other senior clergy – and clearer information both about rights and processes for clergy in their care?

*The Bishop of Liverpool (The Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: The Clergy Discipline Commission commends paragraph 7 of the Code of Practice issued under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 which states that:*

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

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

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

## **DIOCESES COMMISSION**

37. *Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds) asked the Chair of the Dioceses Commission: If they would update the Synod of the progress of phase 2 of the bishops and their ministry consultation relating to the management and operation of diocesan structures and bishops' offices which was mentioned in the 2022 Annual Report.*

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

## **FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION**

38. *The Revd Lindsay Llewellyn-MacDuff (Rochester) asked the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: Could the Faith and Order Commission confirm that the Church of England still teaches that the sacramental authority of a priest flows from their Diocesan or other ordinary?*

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: The Church of England does not use the phrase 'sacramental authority', but distinguishes between sacramental validity, which flows from the validity of ordination by a bishop, and the authority to minister, granted by the diocesan bishop or ordinary.*

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

*The Revd Lindsay Llewellyn-MacDuff:* I thank the Bishop of Lichfield for their answer, but I fear they have made a distinction without a difference. Since a priest's authority to minister that is given by the diocesan or the ordinary is the authority to administer the sacraments, can the Bishop tell me how it does not significantly undermine that authority if a priest's diocesan will not receive those sacraments from his or her hands?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* Thank you for question and the supplementary. The *Five Guiding Principles* make clear that those who occupy offices are to be regarded as the true and lawful holders of that office and that expectation would apply to diocesan bishops or ordinaries as well, so they would be recognising the legal standing of priests in that situation.

## **LEGAL ADVISORY COMMISSION**

39. The *Ven. Fiona Gibson (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the Legal Advisory Committee: In respect of open churchyard maintenance, 32 PCCs in the Diocese of Hereford lost in total some £14,800 in a year from parish council grants due to advice from the National Association of Local Councils that such grants contravene s.8(1)(i) of the Local Government Act 1894 ('Additional Powers of Parish Councils'). Can the Commission please add to their helpful on-line opinion about the provisions of s.214(6) of the Local Government Act 1972 an opinion about the operation of section 8(1)(i) of 1894 Act?

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (ex officio)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals (December 2017) recommended:

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

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

*The Ven. Fiona Gibson (Hereford):* Thank you ---

*The Chair:* Could you just pause for a moment?

*The Ven. Fiona Gibson:* I could and I shall.

*The Chair:* Is Morag Ellis in the House? We will come back to this question.

## **LITURGICAL COMMISSION**

40. *The Revd Joanna Stobart (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Please could the Liturgical Commission provide an update on the steps

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

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:* We have been exploring the use of gendered language in relation to God for several years, in collaboration with the Faith and Order Commission. After some dialogue between the two Commissions in this area, a new joint project on gendered language will begin this spring.

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

*The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham):* Hypothetically speaking, can I just clarify my understanding, and you will see why. You will get it. It is fine. I think it is okay. Is it correct that, as it currently stands, if one decides to use gender neutral terms for God in our liturgy you are in breach of authorized liturgy? Bearing in mind my understanding of linguistics, and I am not good at language, not all languages ---

*The Chair:* You are asking for an opinion.

*The Revd Chantal Noppen:* Is it?

*The Chair:* You are asking for an opinion on a question of law.

*The Revd Chantal Noppen:* I will ask my Bishop then – hypothetically obviously.

41. *The Revd Carol Bates (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Has the Commission considered providing resources for a New Year's Eve Watch Night service, noting the scarce resources currently available for this, and the importance and popularity of these amongst many in the Afro-Caribbean community?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:* Thank you for this helpful suggestion. As part of our ongoing partnership with the Racial Justice Commission we are exploring ways in which the worship of the Church of England can draw inspiration from a wide variety of cultural influences.

42. *The Revd Stuart Craddock (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Has the Liturgical Commission produced, or does it plan to produce guidelines for parishes using *Common Worship* that reflect the new understandings of the importance of local adaptation and how to make our worship accessible for all?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission:* The Commission has produced or sponsored a number of publications which encourage ministers to plan worship that reflects local contexts and the need for accessibility to all. Among them are the well-known practical guides entitled *Using Common Worship*, which include imaginative suggestions for a variety

of local situations, as well as our recent edited volume *God in Fragments: worshipping with those living with dementia* (CHP, 2020), and the resource volume *Patterns for Baptism* (CHP, 2022). Bearing in mind the motion passed by the Synod last July affirming disabled people in the life of the Church, the Commission also stands ready to listen to and to work with others who are interested in this area.

43. *The Revd Dr Michael Brydon (Sodor & Man)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: In 1953 the Church of England prepared for the Coronation by offering teaching and instruction on the Rite, as well as liturgical resources to ensure it was surrounded by prayer. What plan is there to release appropriate teaching and liturgical resources in 2023?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission: We look forward to releasing in due course a variety of resources for worship and prayer which will be aimed at parishes, cathedrals, schools, and individuals to help prepare them for the Coronation.

*Mr Bradley Smith (Chichester)*: Will the liturgical resources include prayers and traditional language including those taken from the *Book of Common Prayer*, with which some congregations, clergy and schools may not be familiar?

*The Bishop of Lichfield*: Thank you very much. I am sure they will. We are looking at a range of liturgical resources both for individual use and also in the week leading up to the Coronation and around the Coronation weekend, and I am sure that a range of linguistic registers will be used for those.

44. *The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: What resources are being prepared to explain to congregations, schools and the wider community the Christian meaning and significance of the various parts of the Coronation service on 6 May, especially the symbolism of regalia, anointing, and the presentation of a bible?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied as Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission: We can look forward to many people in England and around the world exploring for the first time the rich symbolism of the rite of coronation, and participating in the worship of God which is the setting for the coronation of the King. There are wonderful opportunities for churches to become involved in the coronation weekend. The Liturgical Commission has played its own part in providing resources for reflection on the Christian elements of the rite of coronation which will be released in due course.

## **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL**

45. *Mr John Brydon (Norwich)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: For the most recent financial period available, please can you provide the proportion of costs for the newly-established Office of the Archbishops' paid by Lambeth Palace, Bishopthorpe and any other NCI, and the basis on which those splits were determined?



*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as President of the Archbishops' Council:* The Office of the Archbishops is funded by the Church Commissioners as part of their support for the mission and ministry of the archbishops and bishops.

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

46. *Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Archbishop of York's reply to Q32 in November 2022 confirms that General Synod has neither approved nor agreed to Vision and Strategy. Will the Archbishops' Council kindly request the Business Committee to furnish General Synod with the opportunity to debate, and vote explicitly on, Vision and Strategy?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as joint President of the Archbishops' Council:* My reply to Q31, also in November 2022, confirms that General Synod has been closely involved throughout the process of the Vision and Strategy. There have been various discussions in Synod meetings to inform this work as well as voting at the last Synod to align resources to the Vision and Strategy. Most importantly the whole Vision and Strategy builds on numerous Synod resolutions, which were listed in the Annex of the Questions Notice Paper from November 2022 suggesting a direction of travel for the Church of England in its dioceses and parishes.

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

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

*The Revd Marcus Walker (London):* In your answer to this question you made reference to Question 31 in the November questions in which you said that this Synod had in fact voted on the Vision and Strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s in July 2020 during the debate on the budget. When I asked you in July at the Synod whether we would be able to have a debate on this, you told me, "I can't tell you that but Synod is constantly being consulted on this". As you told me that you could not tell me whether we would be able to have a debate, only five hours after we are now

told we did have that debate. Would it perhaps be fair to say we did not have that debate in the July Synod?

*The Archbishop of York:* I am a bit confused, and this is probably something to take into the tea room because it is a serious issue. Yes, we have had debates and we have had votes. We have had different types of votes. We have had Take Note votes and in November last year we had a vote on the expenditure.

With the Chair's permission, because we have got plenty of time, when the Vision and Strategy came to the Synod, it was during Covid, and it was not possible to do the things that certainly I wanted to do and I think Synod wanted to do in terms of group work and discussions. None of that happened, which is regrettable, and over the past couple of years in many ways we have been playing catch-up.

I think what I would want to make clear to Synod, and I apologise if I have not made it clear before, I do not think it is the job of this Synod to discern the vision for God's Church. I do not think it would be seemly for us to take a vote on whether we follow Jesus Christ or not. The vision is simply what the Church has always received, which in each generation we find different ways of expressing. What is absolutely the Synod's business is the priorities, expenditure and legislation which flow from that vision which the Bishops arrived at with a large consultative process which included many members of Synod and which is ongoing. As I have been at pains to point out, the main component parts of the strategy that follows from the vision were things that came from the General Synod, such as the ongoing over many, many years desire for this Synod to put children, families, young people and schools at the centre. That bit of the strategy built on decisions this Synod made. Likewise our desire to build new worshipping communities. So when there are priorities to be discussed, we discuss them, we vote on them. When there is money to be spent, we discuss it and we vote on it. Where legislation is necessary, the same happens.

So yes, I do regret that the process that I had hoped we would have two years ago, which was not allowed by Covid, did not happen, but now this Vision and Strategy is shaping the Church of England in all our dioceses. It is extremely well received. It is the priorities that this Synod consistently voted on for ten or 15 years and at last it is at the centre of our life together. I would say this to you: if this question keeps coming back you will keep getting the same answer. We cannot go back two years and do it differently.

I do need to say this thing, which is the one thing that we have not yet voted on is about our aim for the revitalisation of parishes. I look forward to that debate and I look forward to Synod voting on it.

47. *The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What is the policy/practice of the National Church Institutions with regard to 'Maxwellisation'?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The National Church Institutions consider in the case of any appropriate report which may be published whether the duty to undertake a representations process – often known as "Maxwellisation" – applies as a matter of

either law or good practice and, if they consider that it does, they undertake the process in the most appropriate way in the circumstances of the case.

*The Revd Canon Lisa Battye:* Thank you for engaging with me on this subject. Given the distress that can be caused to people when there is no representation process, will you be you able to publish guidelines for the consideration process? I do realise things are different in each case but I am thinking of the individuals.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* Thank you, Lisa. The issue here is really where someone is criticised in an official report and they need to be able to respond before the event in a way that is helpful for them and for others. I think you are making a helpful point. I think it has been heard. You are asking for guidelines. I cannot agree or not agree, but I think that is a very helpful suggestion.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* What remedies does the Church provide where Maxwellisation is not accepted and remarks as you have described are made without having an opportunity to see or respond to them? I am happy accept a written answer to that question.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* I do not really know the answer to that. I think it is a general question which Lisa raised around policy and practice. It is a case-by-case issue, and if you have particular examples perhaps you can bring them to me.

48. *The Revd Robert Thompson (London)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What is (i) the cost to date, and (ii) the estimated final cost of, respectively, the Makin review into John Smyth and the Humphrey Review into Trevor Devamanikkam?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* There is always a financial cost associated with any Independent Review, however this must be balanced with establishing the truth and listening to the voices of victims and survivors, and learning from and improving safeguarding provisions as a result of recommendations. These two reviews have cost approximately £354,000 to date.

*The Revd Robert Thompson:* Many will be really suspicious about these figures given the length of time that these reviews have taken, including a number of survivors who have contacted me personally in relation to your response here. Will these figures be scrutinised by the Audit Committee and what is the process for doing that?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* Thank you, Robert. Yes, I have been aware of the concerns raised by some survivors and we have had another look at the figures. I think the difficulty is that one particular review is very heavily financially used in this number. It may be helpful perhaps to try to give you the specific figures a bit more clearly. Also, the role of the Audit Committee of course within Archbishops' Council is to audit matters. I am sure the Chair of the Audit Committee has heard that question.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* I apologise I am speaking twice, Chair, but I did not choose the order of the questions. To help with this, would the Archbishops' Council undertake to provide updates at each Synod of the costs incurred to date on these

inquiries, recognising that the costs do inevitably come in very large blocks at long periods of time?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* I cannot promise that but I think again that has been heard.

49. *Miss Debbie Woods (Chester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In December 2020, the Archbishops' Council agreed to set up an independent safeguarding board as a distinct legal entity. Has that happened, and if not, why not, and what plans are in place to overcome any obstacles to its swift implementation?

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

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Given the decision of the Archbishops' Council, at which I was present, in December 2020 made a definitive resolution to set up a legally independent entity, is there a particular reason why you use of the language likelihood rather than definitive and when you mention the expected timetable, what is that now?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* The problem, as you know, Ian, is this is an independent board and there is always the problem if the Archbishops' Council starts to set out rules and regulations in relation to the independent board, the independent board can rightly say, "That is our business."

If I could refer you to a recent release by the ISB on 2 February, a very helpful release of information, one of the key issues there is that they do make proposals. Towards the end it is stating the proposal had been made to create a separate legal entry which will deliver the ISB's functions for the interim period while the longer-term path is still being developed. My sense is that the independent board is in close contact with the Archbishops' Council and the NST in trying to come up with a clear timetable but, as the answer to the question states, this board has only been running for a full year with a full complement, and therefore the functions around what was an interim board would inevitably take time to come up with what can become a completely independent board with independent funding. I think there is an issue here about how much we can tell or inform or direct an independent board what it should do. I do believe that we are

moving forward and I think if you look up the note from the ISB from February this year, that is a helpful move forward.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* So the final board will be legally independent, not 'likely to be'?

*The Chair:* You have asked your question, sorry.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* In the considerations as to the structure of the independent board, has the Archbishops' Council considered a draft Measure to provide the statutory basis for the board, giving it powers to intervene in cases where good process is not being followed, providing powers to receive and handle data appropriately, lawfully, and to guarantee its independence?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* Again, Gavin, I think we are second-guessing what an ISB wants to do. That may well be on the table that the ISB wants to bring to the Council and to the Synod but, as I think I have said, we do not want to second-guess. The Archbishop of Canterbury in particular has been very clear that this board has to be fully independent. Therefore, the more we try to start to say to the board what they should do, the more we are controlling them in a way that seems unhelpful. I think that is a perfectly justifiable offer and I am sure the board will hear it.

50. *The Revd Vincent Whitworth (Manchester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Church of England fee for a crematorium-only funeral has increased by £21 in 2023. How are increases in church fees decided and calculated each year and is any consideration given to the impact such fee increases have on our missional role through the occasional offices?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The framework for parochial fees in 2020-24 was agreed by the General Synod in 2019. This required parochial fees to be increased from 1 January every year in line with the annual increase in the CPI inflation index for the 12 months to the previous August, rounded up to the nearest pound.

Key reasons for the Council recommending a revision to this practice which the Synod will consider on Wednesday (see GS 2288 and GS 2288X) were the potential missional impact and the cost of living crisis.

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

*The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* Yes.

The framework for parochial fees in 2020-24 was agreed by the General Synod in 2019. This required parochial fees to be increased from 1 January every year in line

with the annual increase in the CPI inflation index for the 12 months to the previous August, rounded up to the nearest pound.

With CPI for the 12 months to August 2022 being 9.9%, the Council considered the resulting increase in 2023 to be too high. So it has proposed a Parochial Fees (Amendment) Order (see GS 2288) which will cap increases for the remainder of 2023 and 2024 at 5% above the previous year's level, rounded up to the nearest pound. As set out in GS 2288X, if the Synod approves the draft Amendment Order, lower fees will come into effect once the Amendment Order has been laid before Parliament.

*Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield):* Could you please explain the rationale for choosing 5% as opposed to, say, 2% or 8%? Could you outline why it has been decided to cap at this point and not previously?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook:* Thank you so much for your question. I do not have the detail here but we will make sure we get an answer to you in writing.

*The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark):* Given the well-known fact that clergy hate hassle and like to be able to explain things easily to people coming forward for occasional offices, would the Archbishops' Council consider setting fees to be set for five years at an affordable rate for parishioners when they come forward for these services?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook:* Thank you very much for your supplementary. I shall take that comment to the Archbishops' Council.

52. *Mr Tony Allwood (St Edmundsbury Ipswich)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In view of the increasing difficulties and charges being made by banks, what actions has the National Church taken to assist parishes with their banking?

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

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

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

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

*Mr Tony Allwood:* Thank you for your very helpful answer. Please could the document referred to in the second paragraph be expanded to include a definition of the constitution of the Church of England, which many banks actually ask for, and could the existence of the document itself be given wider publicity?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook:* Thank you, Tony, for your supplementary. I shall pass on your comments and we will make sure we get back to you.

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

*The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Parishes in Parish Buying's energy basket do not qualify for the Government's Energy Relief Scheme for non-domestic customers as the price of electricity and gas in the basket is below the minimum threshold at which Government support is offered. Parish Buying buys the energy for the energy basket in advance, so was able to offer a lower unit price to its thousands of members than the Government guaranteed level.

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

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

*Dr Ian Johnston:* Just to make the point that my diocese I think acted brilliantly in distributing its funds, so congratulations there. Can you please publish the data on the pricing of the parish costs and also the general public ones to just point out that we have got a such good deal on Parish Buying? I was absolutely surprised by that.

*The Revd Charlotte Cook:* Thank you very much for your supplementary. I am delighted that your diocese has done so well and it is always wonderful to hear good news stories. I shall pass on your comment and make sure that we respond on whether we are able to do that or not.

*Dr Ian Johnston:* We need the numerical data. Thank you.

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

*Mrs Maureen Cole (ex officio)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: I think that the specific comment referred to in the question was made during the First Consideration debate on the draft Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure when the Save the Parish estimate that diocesan glebe was worth £9 billion was mentioned. This was an overestimate. According to diocesan annual reports, at the end of 2020 dioceses' investment property (most but not all will be glebe) was valued at £663 million. In addition dioceses held other investments valued at £1,142 million, the majority of which is held in the Diocesan Stipends Fund capital account. All these assets are revalued regularly in accordance with the relevant accounting standards.

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

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler*: The difference between a claim of £9 billion and a figure of £663 million is quite significant. Could I ask you, Maureen, whether that is basically because the accounting models being used by Save the Parish and the Archbishops' Council are different, and whether going forward there might be an ongoing dialogue with Save the Parish so that inflated figures or inaccurate figures are met with a clear and accurate response?

*Mrs Maureen Cole*: I am not sure what the two different accounting policies are for both. I suspect they are different. I am aware that John Spence and the Deputy Chair of the Board of Finance met with Save the Parish to have that dialogue, and I presume there is no reason not to have that continued dialogue. I will check whether that was answered at that meeting.

*Mr Robert Zampetti (London)*: Maureen, thank you. As someone who attended what I agree was a very constructive meeting, in which we actually did leave agreeing that we would remain connected because we think that would be of great benefit, I just wanted to ask a question observing the fact that in that conversation we agreed that the actual value of glebe is poorly understood. In fact we were mixing some numbers here because that number that we had was glebe and endowments, but I will not go into that. It is poorly understood. So the question is: can the Archbishops' Council consider undertaking the gathering of a definitive list of glebe assets by diocese for publication so that we have something to actually review and audit?

*Mrs Maureen Cole*: I can take that back and we can investigate it. I suspect the



situation is that dioceses will account for that differently and it will depend on their auditing processes, so that will be another complexity.

55. *Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: A total of only seven dioceses currently use Total Return Accounting. What advice or guidance has the Archbishops' Council issued in relation to the account practices of dioceses?

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

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

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

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* In Oxford Diocese we adopted Total Return at the beginning of 2018 and we have had a very positive journey with it since. Has consideration been given to linking enquiring dioceses regarding Total Return to experienced dioceses regarding Total Return? I will talk about it at length to anyone.

*Mrs Maureen Cole:* I am aware that that has happened and that dioceses have been linked. I was working in a diocese where we were linked and we did have a conversation with Oxford actually, but you also have to take it that 13 dioceses are doing it. For other dioceses' boards of finance it may not be the right answer. It may appear so for everybody else but it is not always the right answer for every diocese.

56. *Professor Helen King (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Has the Independent Safeguarding Board been subject to scrutiny by the Audit Committee of the Archbishops' Council in relation to its formation and operation and, if so, with what outcome?

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

*Professor Helen King:* As the answer to question 49 clarified, the Archbishops' Council created and paid for the ISB and so, as the Audit Committee has the power to request

an audit of the board's operation, have its members requested this and, if so, with what results?

*Mrs Maureen Cole:* We do not have the ability. We are not the Audit Committee of the ISB. We are the Audit Committee of the Archbishops' Council. The thing that we can do and we have got included in the safeguarding risk is actually the governance and set-up. Archbishops' Council are monitoring this situation, so we have to wait and see.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Have any members of the Audit Committee asked for an audit of the Archbishops' Council's decision in relation to the ISB and, if so, with what result?

*Mrs Maureen Cole:* Ian Paul, you are on the Audit Committee and you are aware of that answer. There were three that wrote, and we had that response that we are dealing with it with Archbishops' Council.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* So the answer is, yes, it has been requested but, no, nothing has been done, is that correct?

*The Chair:* You have had your question.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* Chair, my point of order is, under Standing Order 19(2), I am entitled to request that where something has been said that is not accurate and affects me personally, I can ask to make a correction and I hereby request the permission to do this.

*The Chair:* Please do. Could you just clarify what question number this relates to?

*Mr Clive Billenness:* I shall. It relates to the question currently being answered, Chair, 56.

*The Chair:* Yes, that is taken.

*Mr Clive Billenness:* Like my colleague, the Revd Dr Ian Paul, I am a member of the Audit Committee as well. The point I would like to just make clear, which has not been made clear, is that three members of the Audit Committee under exercise of their powers as the Audit Committee of the Archbishops' Council have requested an audit and it has been declined by the Archbishops' Council.

*Mrs Maureen Cole:* They have and they have had an answer for that.

57. *Mrs Jane Rosam (Rochester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops Council: When instructing professional advisors, does the Archbishops Council require periodic substantial disclosure of the complaints records, both internal and/or externally recorded with the appropriate professional regulators, in order to monitor the continuing suitability of such parties to act for the Established Church as its lawyers, accountants, and PR advisors?

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

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

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

*Mr Richard Brown:* Given that the order is made under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956, will the intended wider consultation that appears in the written answer extend to parochial church councils, the people who are actually affected by this order, and not just diocesan officers?

*Mrs Maureen Cole:* I do not know the answer to that question. I know that the Finance Committee do desperately want to do this but Covid held it back. I will feed that back to the team and it is a good suggestion.

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

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

60. *The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Why do the Statistics for Mission published by the Archbishops' Council for 2020 and 2021 not show the number of confirmations in each diocese (as in previous years)?

*Mr Matthew Frost replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The reason for not reporting the data is due to the COVID pandemic. The decision not to publish this data was taken due to low return rates caused by minimal resources being available to collect the data across Dioceses, and also considering the restrictions impacting on holding confirmation services during this period.

61. *The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Will the Archbishops' Council publish the confirmation figures for 2020 and 2021?

*Mr Matthew Frost replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The collection of the 2022 confirmation data is underway. An assessment will be made when producing the 2022 Statistics for Mission Report to establish if the minimal data for 2020 and 2021 can bring value to the Report.

62. *Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: When will the Ministry Statistics, compiled by the Research and Statistics Department and due in summer 2022, be published?

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

*Dr Felicity Cooke.* Thank you very much for the explanation as to why the data has not been published yet. The data published from 2012 to 2020 is very much valued and as the data for 2021 ---

*The Chair:* Just one moment, could we just pause for a moment. Could Matthew Frost come forward. We will have to come back to that question.

63. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What is the current plan, with dates, for extending the National Register of Clergy so as to include Readers and other lay ministers?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Significant challenges must be addressed in identifying, categorising and unifying lay data across the Church for this work to proceed. The Lay Ministry Data Project Report outlines the challenges and makes

recommendations. The Report can be obtained from <https://tinyurl.com/yckvhux7>. We currently do not have specific plans to start this work.

The current focus of the People and Payroll System project team is on the payroll aspects of the solution and ensuring that we have a smooth go-live of this functionality given the importance of ensuring that the data is right. Once this is live and embedded and we have clarity on what is needed, then we can consider further developments.

*Mr Nigel Bacon:* Thank you, Bishop, for a very informative answer which explains a lot of what is going on. My question is what lessons have been drawn from the establishment of the National Register of Clergy that will help inform its extension in time to include readers and other lay ministers?

*The Bishop of Chester:* That was not the supplementary I was expecting, although I was going to compliment you on the way that you feed my inner pedant by inviting us to extend a Register of Clergy to include lay people. I am scanning quickly to see if I have been given the answer to that. I think I am going to have to write to you.

What I can assure you is we are seeking to learn the lessons. This is part of our response to IICSA and we are trying to do it well and so I am absolutely confident that we are seeking to learn the lessons. I cannot give you a detailed answer based on the information I have.

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

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

*Mr Adrian Greenwood:* Thank you, Bishop Mark, for your reply and for your support for growing funding for our children's youth and family workers. At a total cost, including on costs of, say, £40,000 per full-time youth work ministers, 3,000 new youth workers and ministers will cost £120 million per annum. Where do you expect this money to come from and might I suggest two places? The Strategic Mission and

Ministry Investment Board, will that be open to applications for funding for newly employed youth workers and ministers? And will dioceses be encouraged to make available surplus clergy accommodation for housing for such workers?

*The Bishop of Chester.* You will understand that the detail of the question is beyond an answer from here. What I can assure you of though is that this is a really important priority. I think I speak for most of my fellow Bishops, for us as the Church of England and I am fairly sure I speak for the Archbishops. I was literally in a meeting this morning discussing this. We are very clear that there needs to be simple ways of applying for funding. One of the ways we could derail this is if you have to get a little bit from here, a little bit from there and it becomes very complicated. I cannot give you a detailed answer but I can assure you that your question matters and makes my heart sing rather than sink.

*The Revd Jon Carter (London).* Thank you for your answer and for noting the scale of activity that is needed for this kind of resource and for this kind of bold outcome. Appreciating the lengthy lead time there will be in the development and releasing of leaders through this project, can I ask what reporting mechanisms are in place either to this group or otherwise to get us to 2031?

*The Bishop of Chester.* Actually, it is almost as if you were eavesdropping on our meeting this morning because the governance of this, particularly when we are spending large amounts of money, is really important. No, I cannot give you a detailed answer in terms of reporting mechanism. I am clear that it will feed back to the Ministry Council, which I chair. It will also feed back through education and needs to come back to Synod. But, in terms of detail, I am afraid you are beyond where we are right now.

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

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: We are committed to supporting clergy who are ministering to increasingly diverse congregations. Official translations of some *Common Worship* materials are available in several languages including Farsi, with other informal translations in circulation. Whilst these resources represent the extent of our provision in official translation, this will be an area for consideration by the recently established Racial Justice Unit, which began its work in December 2022.

66. *Mrs Sue Slater (Lincoln)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What are the Terms of Reference agreed by the Archbishops' Council for the sub-committee on same-sex marriage and local ecumenical partnerships?

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

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

*Mrs Sue Slater:* I am confused by your answer because the document that we were given, GS Misc 1333, which was about decisions made by the Archbishops' Council, specifically says that at the meeting on 22 September, held by Zoom, the Council approved the terms of reference for the Sub-Committee on Same-Sex Marriage and Local Ecumenical Partnerships. Your reply suggests that different guidance from the House of Bishops changed that decision. Is that true that the House of Bishops changed what the Council had originally said?

*The Bishop of Durham:* I will have to get back to you.

67. *Mr Matt Orr (Bath & Wells)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What does it mean to say the Council "engaged" with the younger element of the Vision and Strategy, in Section 11 of GS Misc 1333, and what specific work is being done to ensure that it holds prominence in future agendas of the Council?

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

68. *Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What assessment has been made of the cost saving of encouraging NCI staff to work from home and if this will reduce the financial burden on parishes and diocese. Has there been an assessment of any knock-on effects such as staff morale and welfare?

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

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

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

*Mr Stephen Hogg:* You have piqued my interest with the excerpts from the staff survey. Could the staff survey Report be made available?

*Mr Alan Smith:* Yes, and we will make sure that we get that distributed.

69. *The Revd Marcus Walker (London)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: How much has been spent on developing and implementing the Vision and Strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s, including (but not limited to) the costs for recruiting and employing the strategy company, running the consultation process, staff costs working on the development of the strategy, cost of staff implementing the vision and strategy.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In 2020, the total cost was under £20,000. No strategy company was recruited and employed. Facilitation and graphical recording for two conferences and a small number of focus groups were paid for. Employees of the NCIs supported the Archbishop of York and short-term groups across the church. The ability to do this on-line reflected the ceasing of some activity during the pandemic, therefore was not specifically costed.

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

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

*Mr Marcus Walker:* I am intrigued by the answer to this question, partially for the earlier accounting in that it does not attempt to give any form of numbers as to how much the Church of England spent on Still Moving, the company recruited to conduct this; and, at the end, that we appear unable to disaggregate our employees as to how many are working on Vision and Strategy. Would it be possible to take this question back and to come back with these figures so that the Synod can know how much money it has spent on this?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* I think the response there explains Vision and Strategy going forward. We cannot disaggregate it but I will see what more detail we can get. In



terms of Still Moving, a note I have here explains that there was a facilitator working from Still Moving who came because they had particular skills to do some facilitation. My understanding is that is the only role that they played, but I will come back with more detail for you.

## HOUSE OF BISHOPS

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

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The PCR2 national Report was published on 5 October 2022. The independent reviewers across the 45 settings identified 383 new safeguarding cases ranging from the 1940s to the present day. The 242 cases against clergy included individuals who are now deceased. The newly identified cases are being managed by the local safeguarding leads with oversight from the local Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel or equivalent.

*Mr Paul Waddell:* Thank you for the answer to the question which seems to imply that the responsibility for follow-up of new cases from the Past Cases Review 2 seems to fall to the dioceses and other settings. I would like to ask what system is in place that will ensure that those cases are appropriately dealt with by those dioceses that were missed last time and, also, what system is in place to ensure that every victim of abuse newly identified is being given appropriate support?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* Yes, essentially, responsibility for follow-up on PCR2 does rest with the dioceses. Each diocese has produced its own report. What you get in the national Report is an aggregation of those details. The responsibility for that rests firmly with the bishop, with the diocesan board of finance but, of course, in terms of the structure of each diocese what you have is a diocesan safeguarding advisory panel which exercises scrutiny within the diocese. Some dioceses refer to them by another name. You have got local accountability both in terms of the trustees but also in terms of the independent scrutiny by the diocesan safeguarding advisory panel.

I am advised also that, following an exercise with another learning lessons review in which dioceses who were involved in that were brought together by the National Safeguarding Team to look at, okay, what are you doing in terms of follow-up with that, the intention is that the NST will be working with dioceses to encourage further scrutiny of what has been done in relation to PCR2. Again, with regard to the answer about the crucial issue of support for victims and survivors who are identified, that responsibility rests with the diocese. I would expect that to be an important point of discussion when those cross-diocesan conversations are facilitated by the NST.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* Of the 383 cases that were already recorded but not adequately dealt with, can I ask how many of them had already been subject to complaints by two church bodies and those complaints had not been upheld and have the victims of those 383 cases been contacted since the completion of PCR2 with an apology for the fact that their disclosure had not been dealt with properly?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* Again, Gavin, I am not able to give you the detailed answer on that question because the responsibility for what was done rests at the diocesan level.

71. *Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Could a full list of all recommendations made by independent reviewers under the PCR2 initiative be published (suitably redacted if necessary to ensure appropriate confidentiality of individual cases), so that we can see trends of safeguarding issues facing dioceses?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The 45 local PCR2 Reports contained over 800 recommendations. All of these recommendations have been analysed and developed into the 26 national recommendations, with many being specific to local settings. Individual settings are responsible for developing action plans to deliver on their local recommendations. There are no plans to publish the 800 plus recommendations.

*Mr Gavin Drake:* Diocesan safeguarding advisory panels are not independent and in many cases the membership of the DSAPs are the people who are carrying out the safeguarding management in the dioceses anyway: archdeacons, bishops, diocesan secretaries and so on. What accountability measures is the national Church applying to ensure that the follow-up to PCR2 and the cases that have raised concerns are going to be dealt with properly?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* Well, I have already referred to the exercise which the NST is proposing to conduct by bringing dioceses together to look at the quality of their response to PCR2. Beyond that, what I can refer to is IICSA Recommendations 1 and 8 which provide for the introduction of a national system of professional supervision and quality assurance for the quality of work done by dioceses in safeguarding. A pilot is underway in that at the moment. This is precisely about ensuring that there is consistency of the quality of safeguarding across our dioceses. That is part of our response to IICSA.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* Bishop, work on the Past Cases Review in my Diocese of Europe was unavoidably delayed. Owing to the many case files being held outside the United Kingdom and Covid travel restrictions, it was inevitable. Will the PCR2 Report please be updated, both numerically and also within its recommendations, to include this work that could not be delivered in time for the first version?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* That seems a very important request. I will certainly talk to my colleagues about how that is best done.

72. *The Revd Dr Brenda Wallace (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Past Cases Review 2 Report, published by the Church of England in

October 2022, highlights the particular challenge of unrecognised domestic abuse in clergy households.

Recommendation 26 states: "All church bodies to raise awareness of domestic abuse, including the understanding of the harmful impact of domestic abuse on children". What moves are being taken to raise this awareness and to provide properly funded practical and emotional support to those who are suffering from church related abuse, particularly where clergy spouses have been abused either by their husband or the systems of the institution?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Domestic abuse is an issue of real concern within the Church, and the subject of a high percentage of safeguarding concerns and allegations reported to diocesan safeguarding teams. In response to the PCR2 recommendation, the National Safeguarding Steering Group has agreed to the establishment of a working group to develop recommendations and plans to build capacity in both our understanding and responding to domestic abuse within the Church. This work, as with our national campaign during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, will be undertaken in collaboration and partnership with survivors of domestic abuse, in addition to external partners such as the Mothers' Union and "Restored".

*The Revd Dr Brenda Wallace:* Will the proposed working group that you refer to in your answer to me specifically address the emotional, legal and financial challenges that face separated and divorced clergy spouses, particularly where they have been victims of physical or emotional abuse, and include in the consultation with the bodies you refer to Broken Rites, the charity founded by Frank Field in 1983 to specifically support these particularly vulnerable group of people?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* I recognise very much the importance of this issue for the health and wellbeing of the whole Church and, in particular, for the health and wellbeing of those who have been the victims of such abuse. It is really important that we do work with partners here. I do think there is also a question about joining this up with other areas of work within the life of the Church and I would thoroughly encourage the kind of response that you have indicated.

73. *Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Members of Synod have been previously told that the Lessons Learnt Reviews into Trevor Devamanikkam and John Smyth would be published in autumn 2022, despite this, no such publication has taken place. When will these reviews be published?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:*

Makin review into John Smyth

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

#### Humphrey review into Trevor Devamanikkam

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

*Canon Peter Adams (St Albans).* Bishop, given the prolonged nature of delay on the Makin Report, the continued anxiety of survivors to see this come to a conclusion and Synod's desire to understand and act on this Report, will you ensure that this Report is delivered before Synod in July?

*The Bishop of Rochester.* Peter, I would love to see this Report delivered as soon as possible. I recognise the delays there have been. What I can say to Synod is that significant information is still being received. This is very challenging. I know that the reviewers are committed to delivering their Report as soon as possible. We are in the stage at the moment of consulting with victims and survivors about their input to the Report and then there is a further process to be engaged in in terms of the Maxwellisation, the process of representation that we heard about earlier on. It is in the hands of the independent reviewers. I hear the plea for urgency. I share the desire that this should be published as soon as possible, but it is in the hands of the reviewers. Everything is being done to expedite this and I share the concern that you have expressed.

74. *The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: A number of safeguarding reports commissioned by the CofE remain delayed and outstanding. Can the Bishop provide a comprehensive list of these, with the dates they were originally due and the best projected dates of delivery, based upon current information?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There are two ongoing independent learning lesson reviews commissioned by the NST.

#### Makin review into John Smyth

The review was formally announced in August 2019. The original terms of reference anticipated that the Review shall be completed within no more than nine months from commencement. On 9 January 2023 the review started consulting with victims in relation to factual accuracy of their contribution to the Report. Once this is completed the representation process will commence, which relates to individuals and organisations who will be criticised in the Report. Further announcements will be made regarding publication when these stages have been completed.

#### Humphrey review into Trevor Devamanikkam

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

The original intention was to complete and publish during 2020 however the process was seriously hampered by the Covid pandemic and due to concerns raised by a key person in the review. The ISB reviewed the process and recommended that the review

proceed. The NST is currently conducting the representation process for those individuals who are criticised.

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

*The Revd Canon Mark Bennet:* Given the substantial delays and costs of these reviews, what have we learnt from our reflection about the way in which we commission and resource such reports in the future? We do not want this to happen again.

*The Bishop of Rochester:* I completely understand your question. I do think, in particular with regard to the Makin Review, no-one envisaged quite how complex and how enormous this was going to be and I have already indicated that fresh significant information is still coming forward. There have been a number of significant reviews within the life of the Church over the last year or two at both diocesan and national levels which have progressed more or less in line with the timetable which was envisaged. These are the two that have not and that is because of the complexity of the case.

With regard to something as huge as Smyth was, I think what is clear is the importance of scoping, of developing something more like a project management approach to these things, of looking at the level of resource that needs to be undertaken so that once a Review like this is launched we have done as much as we can to scope out what resource it will take and how long it will take. Those are the kinds of lessons I think we need to learn.

75. *Mrs Kat D'Arcy-Cumber (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Who is the point of contact for concerns about a Diocesan Safeguarding Team?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The diocese concerned should be approached. Exactly who should be approached might vary from diocese to diocese because of the different organisational and management structures. But a starting point might be the person responsible for the overall management of the team. In some cases this will be the diocesan secretary. Dioceses will also have complaints procedures if informal resolution is not possible.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* There is a procedural deficit in the Church and a lot of the answers you have given, Bishop Jonathan, refer to the responsibilities with the dioceses. The recent SCIE Report into Bishopthorpe Palace highlighted one of these issues when it said at a provincial level there is no external body that exists to hold senior clergy to account for their management of safeguarding issues, complaints and representations. It says, "Such a body could enable the formal engagement of survivors with the Church to support the positive contribution to improvement and transparency". I have been banging on about this for the past couple of years. Will the NST or the NSSG consider setting up a process where complaints about the dioceses' handling of safeguarding issues can be properly investigated and addressed, please?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* I have referred already to IICSA Recommendations 1 and 8 for the introduction of professional supervision and quality assurance across the dioceses, precisely to ensure that there is consistency of quality of safeguarding work. I would anticipate that one of the questions it will need to consider is what happens when things go wrong.

76. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What should happen if a parish has a long-standing and ongoing vacancy for the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The guidance emphasises that the requirement is to have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), appointed by and working with the Incumbent and PCC. If there is a long-standing and ongoing vacancy for the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer, for instance in rural parishes or parishes held in plurality, the Incumbent and PCCs should consider joining together to share a PSO while remembering that legal responsibility will continue to rest with the individual parishes.

77. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What actions, if any, are being taken to make the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer more attractive, less onerous and easier to fill?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) play a vital role in keeping people safe. To support them, there is a Parish Safeguarding Officers' induction training module – this can be completed on-line but some dioceses deliver in-person. Data systems which allow tracking of key safeguarding activity/requirements, such as the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, have proven very helpful and supportive. Safeguarding guidance is now available on the Church's E-manual and the guidance on safer recruitment and people management provides many templates which can be adopted easily. Individual dioceses are responsible for support and a range of approaches have been adopted by some, e.g. PSO networking, development and information-giving sessions; one diocese is planning a PSO Thanksgiving Service at the cathedral. Building up relationships between the diocese safeguarding team and the PSOs will reduce a sense of isolation.

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

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Support for clergy in respect of their safeguarding role is given through the provision of safeguarding training and access to safeguarding guidance. The NST is not aware of any formal arrangements for professional supervision in respect of safeguarding.

79. *Mr Clive Billenness (Europe)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What steps are being taken in the UK and Europe to ensure that the Guidelines contained in the Anglican Safe Church Commission's publication "Guidelines to enhance the safety of all persons – especially children, young people and vulnerable adults – within the provinces of the Anglican Communion", which was unanimously adopted at the 2022 Lambeth Conference, are fully integrated into Safeguarding Protocols and Procedures?

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

80. *Professor Helen King (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can Synod members be updated on the progress with setting up a Survivors' Reference Group, as originally requested when Bishop Peter Hancock was Lead Bishop for Safeguarding?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The NST is working to develop and implement a survivor engagement strategy to ensure that the voices and experience of victims and survivors are central to all of its work. This includes appointment of a Partnership & Engagement Lead, who is working with various groups and individual survivors, as not everyone wishes to participate as part of any one group or organisation.

Further information can be found on the NST website as follows:  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/survivor-engagement>

*Professor Helen King:* I looked on the website but I cannot see anything on that about the Survivors' Reference Group, as such. There are other things mentioned, like the Partnership and Engagement Lead in your answer. My question arose from the Survivors' document saying that they put lots of hours into putting together a Survivors' Reference Group but the last Director of Safeguarding but two had refused to ratify the terms of reference. Has the idea of a Survivors' Reference Group been given up or transmuted into something else?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* To be clear, my answer outlines the Survivor Engagement Strategy with which the NST is engaged. That includes work with a group called the Survivors' Reference Group. Several of the members of that group are actively involved in particular consultations at the moment. The Survivors' Reference Group, which has existed for some time, is one of the partners with which the NST works. There are other people who are not members of that group, who are members of other organisations, Survivor Voices and so on. There are other individuals who do not want

to engage with a particular group but, nevertheless, have a really important voice to share. I can express the NST's clear commitment to working – yes, with the Survivors' Reference Group and members of that group – but also with other bodies. What we have done over the last year or two is to develop a new and more broad-ranging strategy which is outlined in my answer.

81. *Mr Clive Billenness (Europe)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB) does not exist as a legal entity and cannot therefore enter into contracts, by what means (i.e. role or Church of England body) are goods and services authorized, commissioned and paid for on its behalf?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The ISB members decide in any case what services they wish to commission and from which source. As an example, the ISB has asked the Archbishops' Council to provide secure email accounts which it provides at the instruction of the ISB members and for which it makes no charge.

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

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

*Canon Peter Adams:* My question asks about accountability to Synod. Since the ISB is not on this occasion making a report to Synod, despite the apparent challenges we have heard about, how is that accountability to be exercised?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* Part of the accountability is exercised through questions at Synod. Obviously, safeguarding is on the agenda of Synod at every meeting. This time we have a Report from our new Director of Safeguarding and a take note debate on the ongoing workstreams being undertaken by the NST. The Independent Safeguarding Board has presented to the last two Synods. I anticipate that they will be coming to the July Synod.



The other side of accountability, of course, is also engagement with the Archbishops' Council and the Independent Safeguarding Board has also been engaging with the Archbishops' Council. There are various structures of accountability. We look forward to the ISB being able to present and, indeed, challenge us about our safeguarding work as they have done in the publication of their recent Report.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* The ISB wanted to report back to this group of sessions, as they have said on their website, but they have been denied the opportunity. Will the House of Bishops please use its influence to ask the Business Committee to ensure that the ISB is able to report to this Synod any time it asks to and at least annually?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* The Business Committee, of course, has to make final decisions about the conduct of the business of this Synod. I have indicated already part of the problem is we have got a limited amount of time available. This time we have got a new Director of Safeguarding who is going to be delivering a presentation and then there will be a debate about the ongoing work of the National Safeguarding Team. That is part of accountability and reporting back. As it happens, this time my understanding is that there was not a formal request from the Independent Safeguarding Board in time for the Business Committee to make that decision. It so happens as well, as you will be aware, that we are working through a process with the ISB to resolve some challenges and some difficulties in its work. Hopefully, those will all be resolved and we will look forward to a full presentation from the ISB at our next meeting.

83. *Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Survivors of CofE abuse have circulated General Synod members with a briefing summarising their ongoing concerns. It contains the assertion that their confidentiality is "routinely breached" and that the ISB Chair remains "stood aside" for six months whilst multiple data breaches are being investigated by the Office of the Information Commissioner. How many data breaches by the ISB are being currently investigated?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The ICO will not inform the Archbishops' Council about investigations regarding any alleged data breach for which members of the Independent Safeguarding Board may be responsible. Accordingly, the Council is unable to confirm whether such investigations are underway, nor the number of such investigations.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* Bishop Jonathan, cheer up, it will soon be over and you will never have to do this again. For old time's sake, I am thoroughly confused. If the ISB possesses no legal personality in law, I ask myself how has it managed to secure registration with the Office of the Information Commissioner? My question is might you invite the Audit Committee to investigate that and, if appropriate, clarify the situation with the ICO, lest Archbishops' Council has been inadvertently complicit in misleading the ICO as to the ISB's status?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* There are some legal questions in there which others might be better placed to answer but my understanding, however, is that the individual members of the ISB are data controllers.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* In relation to the claim by survivors of routinely breaching confidentiality, from the NST's supervision and oversight of diocesan safeguarding and its own reflection on its own practice, does the Bishop recognise that concern as one that needs to be addressed?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* Wherever data is breached, in particular that of a survivor, it is a matter of great concern. Where there are particular issues over such things – we know there have been references in other contexts to the Information Commissioner's Office – that is a matter of great concern and it must be worked through. If there are particular complaints, those complaints need to be addressed. But there is also a matter of great sensitivity in terms of how we handle information and data that we receive from victims and survivors and that must be at the forefront of our minds when dealing with those victims and survivors.

84. *Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At the beginning of November the Independent Safeguarding Board produced its first Report and recommendations on the care of victims and survivors of church abuse. Can the House of Bishops please report to Synod which of these recommendations have been rejected and accepted together with what progress is being made on implementation?

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The National Safeguarding Steering Group which acts on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops was due to consider the NST's response to the ISB's recommendations at its meeting on 31 January, after the deadline for answers to Synod questions. Once this has been approved by the National Safeguarding Steering Group it will be published and a Report will be included in NST's regular update to the House of Bishops.

85. *The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will you please inform the General Synod, in round figures, the total costs to date, broken down by financial years, for the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB), which sums should include the creation, capital resourcing, day to day costs, administration, outsourced servicing including initial recruitment, legal services and accountancy for creation and ongoing advice, together with emoluments for the members and staff (such costs to include recruitment, and legal costs both of establishing and advising the Board members)?

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

*The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford):* What consideration has been given to whether the sums spent on the Independent Safeguarding Board have been sufficient to enable it to do its job properly and to progress its work at sufficient speed?

*The Bishop of Rochester:* My understanding is that the Independent Safeguarding Board is going to bring forward proposals to the Archbishops' Council which would be

considered with regard to the Archbishops' Council's future budget. Those questions about resourcing will be central to that discussion.

86. *The Ven. Adrian Youings (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At the General Synod in February 2022 members were told that the SCIE Reports for Lambeth and Bishopthorpe would be published by Easter 2022. These have still not been published. Why has there been this delay and when can we expect publication?  
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87. *Mrs Jane Rosam (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At General Synod on February last year we were told that the SCIE Report for Bishopthorpe Palace would be published by Easter 2022, with the Report for Lambeth Palace due to follow afterwards. These have still not been published. Why is there a delay and when can we expect publication?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as *Chair of the House of Bishops*: With your permission Chair, I will answer questions 86 and 87 together.

The Bishopthorpe Palace SCIE Audit, along with an action plan, was published on 31 January 2023. A number of staff at Bishopthorpe have moved on since the audit, yet it was necessary for us to ensure they had seen the Report from SCIE and had been afforded the opportunity to discuss this with the auditors where further clarity was needed. This took longer than we anticipated, for which I apologise, by which time the auditors were immersed with the Lambeth Palace audit, which inevitably added further delay.

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

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

88. *The Revd Dr Michael Brydon (Sodor & Man)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In 1953 the Coronation Rite was in the public domain six months in advance. If the Coronation Rite has not been published, by the start of Synod, when may we look forward to it being released?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* replied as *Chair of the House of Bishops*: In 1953 there were almost 18 months between the death of the late King and the date of the Coronation. On this occasion there will have been roughly eight months. Six months' notice would have been very difficult. In addition, the Court of Claims has yet to consider a number of claims that would have an impact on some of the fine detail of the rite (although not on anything of any great significance).

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

89. *Mr Benjamin John (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the current policy, process or protocol regarding a Bishop who ceases to believe, teach, or uphold the doctrine of the Church of England on essential matters? If none, would the House of Bishops consider proposing formal processes for such a situation?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops does not have an internal policy, process or protocol for such a situation. The Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963 apply to bishops, as with all other clergy, and it is for those processes to determine any such complaint that may be made.

*Mr Benjamin John:* Thank you for this answer to this and, noting the Archbishop of Canterbury's answer to question 171, will the House of Bishops consider publishing *Pastoral Guidance* for themselves considering how to walk with integrity by maybe resigning if they cease to believe, teach or uphold the doctrine of the Church of England on essential matters?

*The Archbishop of York:* My reflection would be that I understand – let me speak personally but I think I probably speak for my colleagues – it is the job of the bishops to teach the faith as we have received it. If we find ourselves unable to do that, then, clearly, that is a matter for conscience. For the rest of the Church, there are the mechanisms available which, of course, are not for the bishops themselves to administer. Clearly, that would be inappropriate. But as well as it being the job of bishops to teach the faith as we have received it, it is also the job of bishops, indeed the whole Church, to explore what is sometimes called the development of doctrine, to which in my own thinking I tend to follow Newman on this. I am going to have to paraphrase Newman's thesis on the development of doctrine, but I think it is something like: within the acorn there is, as it were, potentially the whole of the oak tree and so doctrine does not change but doctrine does develop.

On some of those issues you may be aware – I am sure this was not in your mind when you asked the question – that there are some issues at the moment facing the Church which are precisely in that area where at the moment the bishops have said: No, no, doctrine does not change, but there is a discussion about the development of doctrine. The doctrine of the Trinity would be the best example of that where we find, as it were, the acorn of the doctrine in Scripture but it is some centuries later it becomes the doctrine as we know it. That is the view I take. I feel confident it is the view my fellow bishops take. If you want to read a book on the subject, I recommend the New Testament.

90. *The Revd Canon Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the deteriorating situation in Israel and Palestine, what will the Church do and say in response to those who suffer ongoing physical and psychological oppression, and loss of land, in particular the Palestinian people?

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

*The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford).* I will try not to ask for an opinion this time. I note the Bishop's reference in his answer to the Occupied Territories, Gaza and Jordan. I am sure the Bishop is aware from his extensive travels in the region that the United Nations and European Union refer to the occupied Palestinian territory singular, which comprises the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where the Anglican Cathedral is, of course, located, and Gaza, which remains under effective occupation through Israel's blockade. Could he please ensure that future communications and answers by the Church of England use this more accurate and legal terminology?

*The Bishop of Southwark:* I think that is a very helpful comment. I will pass that on, thank you.

91. *The Revd Mike Tufnell (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What does our research evidence suggest about the impact of pooling parishes into multi-parish benefices on the potential for numerical church growth, and how are members of the House of Bishops taking that research into account in diocesan organisation and deployment plans?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Three significant research reports are available on the Church of England website<sup>1</sup>, each building on the last. The final version 'Growing Deeper'<sup>2</sup> concludes that once rurality, population change and size of congregation are taken into account:

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

The Report does note that an increase in clergy is linked with the likelihood of growth in attendance. These trends are correlations, and do not hold in every circumstance.

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

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

Nonetheless, there has been significant investment in increasing clergy numbers by dioceses and the national Church through funding for increasing vocations by 50%, IME 1 and curacies.

*The Revd Matt Beer (Lichfield).* Are there plans in place that, should numbers continue to fall in average Sunday attendance, or electoral roll in multi-parish benefices or pooled parishes, to reduce decline by raising clergy numbers?

*The Bishop of Manchester.* Well, at the moment, I know my diocese and most dioceses have been working hard to raise clergy numbers. I think I ordained the highest record number of stipendiary deacons ever in 2021 that we can find in the history of the Diocese of Manchester. It is the case that through the work that we have been doing through the Triennium Funding Working Group, the Emerging Church Steering Group and the Strategic Ministry Board that we have been able to ensure that there are an equivalent number of posts available for curates coming out of training to find their first title posts. We have now been working to ensure that, again, there is the right number of posts available for those who have completed curacies to move into incumbencies. We are not cutting clergy numbers below the number that are making themselves available through discerning God's call.

*The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn).* Is the House of Bishops aware of the review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure GS 2222, which states, "The data leans towards parishes in non-teams having a better trend of attendance change than team parishes and anecdotal evidence from Wales suggests that a super-parish type model has not worked well"?

*The Bishop of Manchester.* I think what we found is – and you are getting on to my favourite subject here as a statistician – there was some research a few years ago that seemed to suggest kind of combining parishes and benefices in various ways seem to correlate to a reduction in numbers. But, actually, when you control for factors like rurality, population change, whole areas of inner cities get depopulated and new housing developments are made, and changes in clergy numbers, once you control for those that kind of correlation disappears. The work that Dr Tweedie has done, and the full Report is on the Church of England website, I think that deals with those issues that there were with some of the early bits of research.

92. *Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The pessimistic results coming from the Chote Report on LInC and SDF support suggest that only 12,074 new disciples out of an expected 89,375 were recruited into SDF-funded resource churches in the period 2014-2021. Since the scheme will only run until 2027, the hope of achieving the target seems very remote. Is it not time for the Church to admit that the SDF scheme has been a failure, and that future monies be invested in more productive exercises like properly funding the traditional parishes?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishop: The question mischaracterises the figures of new disciples – it takes time (especially in light of a pandemic) to set up projects and grow faith, and 70,000 of the new disciples figures are expected from projects started since 2018. The Independent Review's Report notes in Figure 6 that 70% of projects are on track

to achieve their objectives, meeting the aims of the fund. I rejoice that there are new people coming to know Jesus through the inspiring work done in churches throughout this country.

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

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

93. *Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What plans are there to examine, document, and celebrate the role of Church of England and other British Christian leaders in the opposition to the slave trade?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The fight for racial equality has not been an easy one. Activists for racial equality and racial justice in the Church have for centuries been organising and doing essential advocacy and educational work.

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

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

*Mr Christopher Townsend:* To supplement the list of names helpfully provided in the answer to Question 93, the names of courageous and inspiring people who contributed to the fight for racial justice, please would the Bishop name for us the men and women born in Britain in the 18th or 19th century who attended church or ministered in church in this country and who fought in this country for the abolition of slavery here and overseas and the promotion of racial justice here and overseas? That is, the names of which people who are on a shortlist to have their efforts documented and celebrated at the proposed event in October 2023, if it takes place, or, if not then, in some other way. I ask partly because we should not assume younger generations know these names.

*The Bishop of Manchester:* I do not have a list of names available with me at the moment. I know that I was the Bishop on CMEAC for a number of years, including when we came to the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade where we put on a major event at York Minster as part of that. We do celebrate all those who have taken part in work to abolish slavery, but we have to recognise that

we also have a fairly dismal history in the Church in terms of slavery and many people supported it. Of course, you will be aware that the Church Commissioners, of which I am the Deputy Chair, have recently published a very important Report into our response to at least that part of the Church's heritage of slavery.

94. *Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Following trends in church statistics provided in answers to previous GS questions, church attendance will be zero by 2045. At the same time there will be 10,000 support staff (200 per Diocese), and half the current 7,210 vicars (3,607 – 80 per Diocese). What plans does the church have to avoid Net Zero in church attendance by 2045?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Vision and Strategy set out by the Archbishop of York, the finances for which were approved by Synod in July 2022; the ministry of all God's people, lay and ordained, in parishes, chaplaincies, and other contexts; and the gifts and blessings of the Holy Spirit.

*Professor Roy Faulkner:* My question pointed out that, whilst the number of parishioners and vicars is decreasing, the number of diocesan support staff is increasing. What plans does the Church have to limit this area of its growth bearing in mind that the trend is totally contradictory to those of vicar numbers and parishioners?

*The Bishop of Manchester:* I have to say, Chair, going back to my experience as a statistician, I really do find the way that statistics are used and extrapolated in this question is so outwith the normal statistical methods and acceptable methodologies, that it is very difficult to engage with the numbers in any meaningful way.

95. *The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Routemap to Net Zero Carbon sets many milestones for dioceses, but diocesan finances are extremely stretched. How is the national Church helping dioceses have the required capacity to meet these?

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Diocesan Boards of Finance and Education have a vital role in achieving Net Zero Carbon, both with assets under their direct management (such as clergy housing, offices and transport) and also supporting their churches and schools.

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

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



Full details of how to apply have been sent to Diocesan Secretaries and DEOs. In total, £190million of NZC funding will be available over the next three triennia, £30million of which is in 2023-25.

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

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

It is our understanding that rent schemes, such as the one described in this question, have largely disappeared as these were linked to the feed-in tariff. However, an alternative model is to provide solar panels with an agreement which outlines that any electricity used within the school is purchased by the school through the panels, which is provided at a lower rate to alternative energy suppliers. It is not yet clear if, in the context of schools, this agreement can be dealt with via power purchase arrangements without a leasehold arrangement of physical space. Legal advice will be required in each context.

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

*Mr Charles Houston:* I would just like to challenge some things in your answer, Bishop. It is not the case in my experience as a practitioner of solar PV that costs attach to all model agreements and nor is it the fact that rent schemes have disappeared with the Freedom Tariff in 2017. This is because of the high cost of electricity currently. You state in your answer that further guidance will be given and that legal advice will be required. Given we are in a climate emergency and this Synod has pledged itself to Net Zero at 2030, can we see more urgency in this and when will the answers to those questions be available?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* I can certainly take that back to colleagues who are working on this and we can respond to you with an idea of what timescale that will need. We are keen to also hear from local knowledge of where this is happening well and so do please write to me with your experience. That would be very helpful.

97. *Professor Lynn Nichol (Worcester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of a recently published study by Cambridge University indicating that not

eating meat on one day a week could 'bring about a major reduction in global carbon emissions', would the House of Bishops in line with the Church of England's commitment to Carbon Net Zero by 2030 commend to the Church and Nation the practice of committing to Meat-free Friday this Lent?

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

98. *The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Under the À Rocha Eco Church Scheme how many Churches, Dioceses and other church buildings have achieved Gold, Silver and Bronze awards?

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The À Rocha UK Eco Church scheme is instrumental in helping the Church of England to deepen its understanding of and commitment to creation care. We are grateful to the team at À Rocha UK who administer the programme.

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

39 out of 43 cathedrals are registered, 15 have reached bronze, 11 silver and 2 gold. 4,040 CofE churches are registered with Eco Church, including LEPS, roughly 25% of all churches. 1,147 have reached bronze, 397 silver and 23 gold. The target in the Routemap to Net Zero Carbon for 2026 is for 40% of all churches to be registered, and 30% to have gained an award.

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

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

*The Revd Andrew Yates:* Thank you, Bishop Graham, for the figures and for the work lying behind it. It looks like 25% is well on good target. I was never good at maths but I think those who have actually achieved the award is only at 10%, so we have got quite a long way to go with getting the awards. What are the things that you could suggest to the Church, particularly us as Synod members because we were the ones who voted for 2030 Net Zero, as to what more we can do to bump that number up and get more done, please?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* If every Synod member could ensure their local parish church is registered for Eco Church through À Rocha UK, that would be a fantastic start. Get

involved. Get involved with your local congregation in terms of getting to bronze and silver and then gold, and when you get to gold you get a personal letter from me.

99. *Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Following the announcement this month of the appointment of a diocesan bishop who does not ordain women or take communion from them, what provision is being made for those who in conscience cannot receive the oversight of a diocesan bishop who does not fully accept equality of men and women in priestly ministry?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops' Declaration contains within it some general principles around reciprocity.

These can be found in GS Misc 1076, paragraphs 9-13. Paragraph 11 is particularly helpful in this instance: "*Now that the Church of England has admitted women to the episcopate there should within each diocese be at least one serving bishop, whether the diocesan or a suffragan, who ordains women to the priesthood. This has a bearing on the considerations that the Crown Nominations Commission and diocesan bishops will need to take into account when considering diocesan and suffragan appointments.*"

100. *Mrs Sandie Turner (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the absence of centrally available data showing the number of complementarian senior appointments or the number of dioceses where requested extended episcopal oversight is declined, or the extent and nature of extended oversight extended by Diocesan bishops to the Bishop of Maidstone/Ebbsfleet, to what extent can the effectiveness of mutual flourishing be measured and evaluated?

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

*Mrs Sandie Turner:* Please could these findings be made readily available so that resolution parishes like mine can be confident that mutual flourishing is actually flourishing throughout the whole country?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* I am very happy to take that back to the Standing Commission on the House of Bishops' Declaration, which is working on those issues.

101. *Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In view of the evidence from Chichester where a very low proportion of stipendiary priests

are women, what steps are being taken to ensure that, should the appointment of another male Diocesan Bishop who does not accept Communion from women priests take place, that appointment will not have a detrimental effect upon the flourishing of women in the Church of England?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Crown Nominations Commission process, in nominating any person to a diocesan see, considers the flourishing of all people in the diocese. This includes conversations on Mutual Flourishing and whether the whole diocese is able to flourish under the care of a bishop who, for theological reasons, chooses not to ordain women to the priesthood. The House of Bishops does not consider that further steps are needed beyond that process.

Any bishop-elect will want to consider how they themselves will ensure flourishing for all in the diocese as they prepare for their new ministry in that place.

102. *Mr Benjamin John (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops considered what the bounds of an 'essential matter' are in respect of Canon B 5.3 and if so, what conclusion did they come to? If they have not, would they consider defining such bounds?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* In its section 'Common Prayer and the Law', the resource book *New Patterns for Worship* (2008 ed.) by the Liturgical Commission, citing the terms of Canon A 5, states that:

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

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

103. *The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The late Rt Revd Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town instructed that his body should not be buried or cremated but undergo Resomation (Alkaline Hydrolysis).

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

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

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* There has not been any formal theological consideration of either Resomation – whereby a body is dissolved over a matter of hours in a bath of lye or caustic soda and hot water, leaving bone residue behind that can be reduced to ‘ashes’, or Human Composting – where the natural decomposition process that takes place after burial is reduced to a matter of months using the body’s naturally-occurring bacteria to turn it into soil.

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

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

*The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin.* Members of Synod, this is apparently what is called being hoist on a petard of your own making. I look forward with great joy to working alongside the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission and also the Vice-Chair of the Liturgical Commission. Two points to make. Firstly, an encouragement to members of Synod to sign my Private Member’s Motion on the further use of churchyards and, secondly, could the Bishop give some indication of when this work is to be completed by and to whom I should be making the report?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* Question 103 is one of those questions, sadly not unfamiliar in my experience, where the questioner knows far more than the answerer. I think we are reliant not only on your wisdom but on your generous assumed offer of your time and so I will be in touch with you if I may.

104. *The Revd Barney de Berry (Canterbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Does the church have a settled and agreed theological definition of lust, where is that stated and what is it?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* There is no official definition of lust agreed formally by the Church of England.

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

105. *Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What steps is the House of Bishops taking to promote Biblical teaching and practice on ‘holiness’ and ‘purity’ in: a) churches; b) among clergy; c) in Synod; and d) among bishops, by both word and action?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The LLF resources explore questions of holiness in some detail (esp. chapters 11, 12 and 14), and purity (chapter 11). The LLF resources are meant to be for church-wide engagement at every level and we encourage their continued use.

All clergy commit themselves to 'grow in holiness' in their ordination vows.

Further thought will be given to this matter by the Pastoral Consultative Group, and in the production of new guidance.

*Mrs Rebecca Cowburn:* Given that we heard earlier this afternoon that there are a variety of views within the House of Bishops on the nature of marriage and interpretation of Scripture, is there any evidence from the House of Bishops' discussions that members hold different views on the nature of holiness, purity and sin?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* I am confident that all members of the House of Bishops recognise the centrality of holiness, the desirability of purity and the need to avoid sin, and are aware of the importance of long-term faithful, committed relationships expressing holiness.

106. *Mrs Sarah Finch (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How is the Church of England safeguarding vulnerable children and young people against the dangers of transgenderism, given their obvious immaturity in terms of mental, physical and psycho-sexual development?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The presumption about 'dangers' is not one which can be debated in the Questions format.

However, I can confirm that safeguarding is of the utmost importance in churches and schools. Schools fulfil their responsibility in this area in partnership with children and their parents and in collaboration with other agencies in the light of Government guidance and the law.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Sorry, I have lost my voice – all the wonderful conversations with people here at Synod. In relation to the question, a number of representatives of the Muslim community have actually raised concern about safeguarding children and the Church's potential change in regard to same-sex marriage. I wondered whether the House of Bishops would themselves be also rebuking the Muslim community for their concerns about same-sex marriage?

*The Chair:* That question is out of order. Thank you.

107. *Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Which dioceses have the members of their DBF be their Diocesan Synod (Oxford is an example, I believe) and which have the members of their DBF be something else (Winchester DBF for example has its Bishop's Council as its members)?

*The Bishop of Oxford (The Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Over half of dioceses kindly responded within a very short time-window to being asked this question, and of those in over two-thirds the members of the DBF are the Diocesan Synod.

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

108. *The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the latest information on how many dioceses are planning to reduce their number of stipendiary clergy posts, by how much in each diocese, and in total across the Church and how does that compare with reductions over the last ten years? Further, has the House of Bishops considered what impact these reductions will have on the goals for numerical growth?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* We are grateful to the 25 dioceses who have recently shared their current projections with us on a confidential basis. Of those 25, 8 are planning small reductions, 8 are planning no change and 9 are planning to increase stipendiary clergy numbers – in three cases by more than 10%. On this basis, we have reasonable confidence that the number of stipendiary clergy overall will be maintained at around 7,500.

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

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

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

109. *The Revd Matt Beer (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What role does a track record in effective leadership of a local church into growth play in the criteria for the appointment of archdeacons and suffragan bishops?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The recruitment process for archdeacons and suffragan bishops considers a wide range of criteria relating to the role, the context and any diocesan specific requirements. The previous ministerial experiences of candidates form a part of this discernment process.

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

*The Revd Matt Beer:* Are recent appointments where such a track record does not appear to be evident just an unfortunate anomaly to this?

*The Bishop of Chester:* I am not quite sure I can answer that question because I would need to know more details about recent appointments where such qualities are not in evidence. I can assure you that such qualities matter to the House of Bishops.

110. *Miss Jane Patterson (Sheffield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Where is the membership of the Advisory Committees which advise diocesan bishops on the appointment of archdeacons and suffragans published?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* It is a matter for the appointing diocesan bishop to decide if/where to publish details of the membership of an Advisory Group for a suffragan appointment. Obvious places where this might happen include diocesan websites and candidate information packs, but no central record of the information requested is held.

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

111. *The Revd Mark Lucas (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Does the House of Bishops have any plans to revise its “Policy on Granting PTO” 2018 document, particularly section 2.11, bullet point 6 which reads: PTO is held entirely at the bishop’s discretion and may be withdrawn by the bishop at any time, and without any right of appeal; which obscures the transparency of bishops and denies basic human rights to the one whose licence is withdrawn?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* PTO is a more flexible framework for exercising ministry without the legal obligations and entitlements that come with holding office under licence. When granted by the bishop, it is subject to the agreement of the relevant incumbent. PTO is only issued for a fixed (potentially renewable) period aligned to the period of a DBS check. If a safeguarding risk is identified, PTO must be withdrawn, as there is no provision for suspension with PTO, even if it is restored later. PTO is granted on the basis that it will be used. This means that there can be difficult decisions to be made once clergy are too frail to preside at the Eucharist, or if other challenges arise, which need to be sensitively handled. The guidance already makes it clear that any



withdrawal or non-renewal of PTO should be discussed with the cleric and their incumbent and that appropriate pastoral care should be provided, and that PTO may be reoffered if circumstances change. Work has already started on updating the policy on granting PTO but this is mainly to take account of changes to safer recruitment guidance and safeguarding training.

*The Revd Mark Lucas:* On a point of clarification, may I ask: the steps you have outlined towards the end of your answer when a PTO is withdrawn, are they mandatory for bishops or are they discretionary? In which case, a bishop can become an unaccountable dictator in his own diocese.

*The Bishop of Chester:* I wonder whether you are asking me to express an opinion. I have to say as a diocesan bishop I feel as if my decisions are usually constrained by good practice and by guidance, for example, around safeguarding. If there are more specific things, then because we are in London and beer is expensive I will not offer to buy you one but I will happily have a cup of tea with you and talk further.

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

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Work has continued in scoping out the nature of this exercise and this now sits with the Office of the Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Consultation continues with legal colleagues and those who have experience of making applications in the dioceses.

Changes being made in the draft Miscellaneous Provisions Measure, currently before the Synod, are designed to address some concerns previously raised about the inability for C4 applications to be made during a vacancy in see, and associated points. Decisions on the guidelines rest with the Archbishops and as part of the review will be invited to consider all aspects of the current guidance, including the criteria applied in determining applications. In the meantime, work is taking place to streamline the current process.

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

*The Revd Jeremy Moodey:* I thank the Bishop for his assurance that work to review Canon C 4 is now underway. Could he please indicate the approximate timetable for this work, including the deadline for any submissions to the Bishop to the Archbishops, and also when any proposed changes to Canon C 4 might be brought before this Synod?

*The Bishop of Chester:* I so wish that the answer to your question was, yes, I could indicate a timetable. I have had a number of staff members come up to me and indicate their own regrets that work has been delayed because of other priorities. I am assured that the work is ongoing and, further, that they are actively desiring to listen. So please do write when you have views, write soon and the work should be starting. Please feel free to ask me about it at the next Synod and I hope I might have a more detailed response for you.

113. *The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Could we please know when the House will be issuing formal guidance on the processes to be followed when a cleric is seeking to return to ministry after a period of prohibition?

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

*The Revd Canon Simon Talbott.* Can I press the urgency of this matter. I speak on behalf of CEECA here in Synod for our members and also Sheldon, we have a number of people expressing frustration that this work has not been completed. Can I press the Bishop to make sure it is done as soon as possible.

First of all, to welcome the progress that has been made but to really press home the need for this to be sorted out urgently both on behalf of CEECA, our members' helpline, and respondents to the Sheldon Hub as well. So as soon as possible, please.

*The Bishop of Chester:* My notes from staff, which are very full, say that we cannot give you a date right at the moment but we do believe that the work is significantly on its way to being completed and so I am hopeful.

114. *Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Clergy families are often badly damaged by the CDM process, being completely powerless and mostly ignored as it plays out. For example, families do not always receive a pastoral letter expressing concern from the bishop following dismissal of a case or its removal from the process. What recommended pastoral measures have bishops agreed to care for clergy families during and after CDMs and has this issue been discussed by the House?

Are there any examples of good practice that can be shared with Synod?

*The Bishop of Worcester (The Rt Revd Dr John Inge)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops is very alive to the impact disciplinary proceedings have on all who are involved in the process, not least of all clergy and their families. The House has recently discussed the processes around pastoral

support both in terms of the current CDM and also during a consultation on the proposed Clergy Conduct Measure. The House commends the current guidance issued by the Clergy Discipline Commission, and approved by Synod, in the Code of Practice at paragraph 138 that *'The bishop should be alert to the needs of the respondent and the respondent's close family for care and support. This may be needed, and should be made freely available, from the moment the respondent is notified and throughout the course of disciplinary proceedings, including after the proceedings have been concluded.'* The Code goes on to set out who and how that support might be given.

*Mrs Amanda Robbie:* Thank you for your answer to my question and the assurance that the House of Bishops is alive to the impact of disciplinary proceedings on clergy families. What recourse is available to clergy families who feel that bishops have not been alert to their needs, both during and after the CDM process? Have bishops considered developing guidance for interacting or giving pastoral care to family members as a completely separate exercise to that given to the CDM respondent, particularly in corresponding as separately rather than just via the respondent?

*The Bishop of Chester:* I am not aware of any route for a complaint other than through a Clergy Discipline Measure itself for the sorts of circumstances to which you are referring, but I would very much hope it would not come to that. Certainly, the House of Bishops is very alive to this question. It is something that we have discussed and, as you well know, I think, I have been chairing the CCM Implementation Group, and freeing up the bishop to be able to respond pastorally to families and respondents is a central plank of what the new proposals are about. I am confident that the problems, to which you are right to draw attention, are something which are very much going to be tackled by the new legislation which we hope will be coming into force quite soon.

115. *Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Talking Jesus* Report 2022 states that 24% of practising Christians (defined as those who worship regularly as part of a church community at least monthly and who read the Bible and pray at least weekly) identify reading the Bible as a key influence in them coming to faith, rising to 38% of 18-24-year-olds (pp.31-32 of the Report). In the light of this, how does the House of Bishops plan to encourage churches and individual Christians to make an invitation to read (or listen to) the Bible an integral part of their evangelism?

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

116. *Mr Martin Auton-Lloyd (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Following the publication of the *Coming Home* Report in February 2021 please can we have an update on the implementation of two recommendations – firstly that to create a social disposal power for PCCs and DBFs especially in the light of the current affordable housing crisis, and secondly what progress has been made with changes to the rules around glebe land notably empowering DBFs to use the proceeds of the sale for appropriate missional costs in addition to ministry costs?

*The Bishop of Chelmsford (The Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The national Church's Legal Office's view on the current extent of social disposal power of PCCs and DBFs can be found at: [Sale of land by DBFs and PCCs to further their objects.pdf](#) ([churchofengland.org](http://churchofengland.org)).

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

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

117. *Mr Stephen Boyall (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Do dioceses use a benchmarking scheme against other dioceses of similar size to assess appropriate staffing? If so, please can you publish the details of groupings of dioceses that are in place for this process.

*The Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham (The Rt Revd Paul Williams)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There is no formal benchmarking scheme for staffing levels amongst dioceses.

However, dioceses consult informally about staffing structures and levels for different areas of work on a regular basis, either in the national network or their regional network. Further work is being done in this area as Diocesan Boards of Finance seek to maximise effectiveness and minimise cost.

## **CHURCH COMMISSIONERS**

118. *Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: What did information about the role of bishops who campaigned against slavery contribute to the decisions to develop the £100m impact investment fund?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* replied as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners: We seek, through the research we have done and our response, to acknowledge the truth of our past, apologise for the wrongs that this

research has highlighted and to address these wrongs through repentance, remembrance, reconciliation, and renewal. It is impossible to repair the damage caused by the generations of human misery inflicted through the Transatlantic Slave Trade in any fair or meaningful way. The Church Commissioners see the proposed response as a means of investing in a better future for all – we want to help create a lasting positive legacy.

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

119. *The Revd Canon Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS)* asked the Church Commissioners: Could the Church Commissioners give details of how the oversight group for the management of £100 million Slavery fund will be constituted through fair representation, as well as guarantee the Synod that this oversight group will actually have the power to shape the process, investment and outcomes of the aforementioned fund.

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

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

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

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

*Canon Dr Addy Lazz-Onyenobi (Manchester).* Given that it is impossible to repair the damage caused by the generations of human misery inflicted through the transatlantic slave trade, as has been mentioned in the initial answer to the question, how do the Church Commissioners intend to share the fund that will include people of West Africa and West Indies because these people were very much inflicted?

*The Bishop of Manchester.* Absolutely, Addy, and we are going to be setting up an oversight board that will be drawn significantly from people of heritage from those parts of the world who were either of the countries that people were enslaved in and transported from, or the islands particularly where they were enslaved to. We are working on that over the course of the next few months and that board will have a very significant role to play in determining how we identify the appropriate places to invest the money that will be put into the fund over the next nine years. The non-bishop Alan Smith, myself and Gareth Mostyn from the Church Commissioners will be travelling to Accra next week to give a presentation to the Anglican Consultative Council which we hope will also help us take matters forward.

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

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* replied as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners: We seek, through the research we have done and our response, to acknowledge the truth of our past, apologise for the wrongs that this research has highlighted and to address these wrongs through repentance, remembrance, reconciliation, and renewal. It is impossible to repair the damage caused by the generations of human misery inflicted through the transatlantic slave trade in any fair or meaningful way. The Church Commissioners see the proposed response as a means of investing in a better future for all – we want to help create a lasting positive legacy.

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

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

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

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

121. *The Revd Canon Timothy Goode (Southwark)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given our ambition to be a church that is younger and more diverse and our desire to be an equal opportunities employer, could the Church Commissioners share how they are proactively ensuring that both clerical and lay posts are accessible and open to applications from disabled people?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* answered as *Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners*: The Church Commissioners are clear that diversity and inclusion are morally imperative, and crucial to effective governance and performance. We are fully committed to the NCIs' Belonging and Inclusion plan, part of which involves working with our Disability Network to review and monitor recruitment processes, reasonable adjustments and training approaches, as well as our continued work on mental and physical wellbeing for all our people and how hybrid working can support staff with different needs.

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

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode*: Thank you so much for your written answer and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to explore this further. Could you share whether the Church Commissioners are allocating any funds specifically to enhance the participation of disabled people in the life of the Church?

*The Bishop of Manchester*: Funnily enough, it was confirmed today, as you may be aware, that a sum of £142,425 has just been allocated to that work. It came as a bid from the Disability Task Group as part of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People. That comes out of a pot of some £4 million that was allocated through the Triennium Funding Process, which this Synod noted and was aware of last summer, that was to be spent on diversity priorities and social justice. I am delighted that we have now got a very specific bid that will enable some work to be done and I hope that you will be very much part of that work, Tim.

122. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: Which Christian groups and/or their representatives has the Second Estates Commissioner met with since his appointment and how many times has he met with them?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* replied as *Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners*: Since taking up the role in January 2020, the Second Church Estates Commissioner has met with representatives of the groups listed below. This is in addition to the large number of regular meetings with the NCIs' boards,

committees and officials, government ministers and officials, bishops and Members of Parliament.

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

Please find below further information on the timing of the meetings held with various Christian Groups, referred to in the main answer, and of other meetings not covered in the main answer (i.e. because they were with individuals rather than representatives of Christian groups).

#### **2020**

13 Feb Attended the launch of 'Faith in later life'.  
2 March Met with representatives of the Ozanne Foundation  
9 March Met with Revd Jonathan Alderton-Ford  
9 March Attended launch 'Reimagining Church in a Digital Age'.  
12 March Met with +Graham Tomlin and Charlie Arbuthnot (Archbishops' Housing Commission)  
16 March Met with Revd Nicky Gumbel, Holy Trinity Brompton  
16 June Attended Government & Christian Leaders round table.  
30 June Attended National Prayer Breakfast  
1 July Meeting Danny Kruger MP regarding his 'Faith Review'  
7 July Meeting with Mr Speaker and Dean of Westminster  
14 Aug Meeting with Bishop of Bedford  
29 Sept Speaker's Meeting on engagement with Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's Church  
2 Dec Meeting Jonathan Hellewell, 10 Downing Street

#### **2021**

14 Jan Open Doors Interview  
9 Feb Attended the EIAG meeting on the Big Tech Report  
3 March Meeting with Duchy of Cornwall  
16 March Attended Archbishop's Families Commission Launch  
26 March Prayer Broadcast – 'Reset the Debt', Methodist Church  
23 April Attended International Religious Freedom Event  
8 June Gave interview to Tim Farron MP for his Podcast  
15 June Association of English Cathedrals AGM  
22 June Meeting with National Churches Trust



25 June Attended National Prayer breakfast  
15 Nov Attended Church Revitalisation Trust Reception

## **2022**

10 Jan Meeting with Revd Nicky Gumbel, Holy Trinity Brompton  
1 March Evangelical Alliance Freedom of Religious Belief Conference  
31 March Meeting Anglican Communion Primates in Parliament  
5 July Meeting with representative of Anna Chaplaincy  
5 July Attended No.10 Downing St reception on Freedom of Religious Belief  
3 Aug Attended the Lambeth Day of The Lambeth Conference  
7 Nov Met representative of CofE Evangelical Council  
19 Dec Meeting with Bishop Graham Tomlin

## **2023**

18 Jan Attended the Open Doors Watch List launch

*Ms Jayne Ozanne:* I am very grateful to the Second Estates Commissioner for giving such a full list and making it available. Bishop David, I am not sure if I can ask through you the supplementary, which is I would like to understand the criteria he uses to differentiate between the meetings he has as an MP on a personal level and those that he has as a Second Estates Commissioner, or perhaps you are able to help with that? This is all part of the accountability process and I am surprised he is not here to actually answer a question to him.

*The Bishop of Manchester:* I would imagine as a backbench MP, and I think uniquely among backbench MPs, he actually has to answer urgent questions and the like in the House of Commons, the same as a Minister would. As a backbench MP, I presume the majority of his meetings are to do with his constituency work. The list of things here are largely things that will be in his capacity as the Second Church Estates Commissioner. He clearly makes himself very regularly available to meet with all manner of groups and individuals who represent different interests in the Church, as well as responding to questions in the House of Commons. I do draw members' attention to the fact that Parliamentlive.tv contains the various answers that the Second Church Estates Commissioner makes. They can also be found in *Hansard* if you prefer to read rather than watch.

123. *The Revd Anne Brown (Truro)* asked the Church Commissioners: If the Church of England National Investing Bodies decide that some fossil fuel companies are 'Paris Aligned' and so continue to invest in them, how will they ensure that these companies continue to be aligned with the Paris Agreement in future years?

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

The National Investing Bodies made a commitment in January 2020 for their investment portfolios to be net zero by 2050 as part of their commitment to the Net

Zero Asset Owner's Alliance (AOA) and other initiatives. This involves ongoing assessment of the emissions profile of our portfolio, to ensure we can meet our interim targets. See: <https://www.unepfi.org/net-zero-alliance/resources/target-setting-protocol-second-edition/>

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

124. *The Revd Anne Brown (Truro)* asked the Church Commissioners: In their assessment of the Paris alignment of fossil fuel companies, are the Church of England National Investing Bodies including Carbon Tracker's conclusions contained its December 2022 Report 'Paris Maligned', that the production plans of Shell, Total Energies and other major oil companies are not aligned with the Paris Agreement?

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

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

125. *The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Church Commissioners: What have the Church of England National Investing Bodies done to raise concerns with BP with regard to CEO Bernard Looney attending the COP27 climate talks as a delegate of Mauritania, one of the world's poorest nations?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* As the Church Commissioners no longer held shares in BP at the time of COP 27 in November 2022, they were not involved in engaging with the company at that time.

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

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners work closely with the CBF Church of England Funds, managed by

CCLA, as two of the three National Investing Bodies to implement the 2018 Synod Climate Motion (the third being the Church of England Pensions Board).

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

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

*The Revd Canon Katrina Scott:* Thank you very much for your response and for the web link and the email address which we shall use. May I ask you, given that dioceses like ours (Gloucester Diocese) are committed to divestment from fossil fuels, can the Church Commissioners give us any reassurance or any support that our funds invested in CCLA will remain disinvested?

*Mr Alan Smith:* Two things. The Church Commissioners are accountable to Synod in the direction that you have given us, and we are working towards that for the July meeting. With regards to the Commissioners' involvement in investments in CCLA, we ourselves do not invest in the CCLA, but we work very closely with them around ethical investment policies and have a very thoughtful discussion with them, and they are equally as committed to the guidance.

127. *Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark)* asked the Church Commissioners: At the end of 2022, how much money did the Church Commissioners have invested in oil and gas companies?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* At the end of 2022, the amount the Church Commissioners had invested in oil and gas firms was less than 1% of the total fund. I am unable to give an exact figure since it is not yet audited. Drawing on Transition Pathways Initiative data, we, along with the other National Investing Bodies, intend to divest from oil and gas companies that are not Paris-aligned by mid-2023, in line with the 2018 General Synod motion. We will report back to the July 2023 Synod.

128. *The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle)* asked the Church Commissioners: What plans do the Church Commissioners have to increase investment in climate solutions such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, battery storage and electric vehicle charging infrastructure?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* We regard investing in climate solutions as a continuation of our responsible investment strategy as we seek to influence the world positively with our capital.

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

We also see part of our work on climate solutions as collaborating with, and fostering, a community of responsible investors. As part of this, the Commissioners are members of the Financing Transition Track, one of the workstreams within the Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance (AoA). In 2021, the Commissioners along with AoA members developed the AoA's climate solutions reporting template, which draws from our own experience, regional taxonomies, and related research to develop a reporting template for climate solutions and applicable key performance indicators (KPIs) that are comparable across regions and investor types. This is now used by all members of the AoA, which will help compare and benchmark climate solution investments across different asset owners.

*The Revd Robert Lawrance:* It is heartening to hear how much has been invested and has been done to track performance in investment in climate solutions, but could you also tell us what is being planned for the future and whether the Church Commissioners intend to expand their portfolio in this regard?

*Mr Alan Smith:* We are. If you think, by definition, the entire portfolio of the Church Commissioners has to be aligned to how we get to net zero by 2050. We have to start from where we are starting. We have the numbers that are there, but there is very much that intentionality. Obviously, as you will appreciate, it is very complex in the current environment, but the one thing we are very transparent on, I do not know if you have seen our Stewardship Report, which actually shows where we are on the journey, and if you have not seen that yet I can share that with you.

129. *The Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester)* asked the Church Commissioners: What percentage of Church Commissioners' tenants have conducted a recent farm carbon audit, and what targets have the Commissioners made to increase this?

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

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

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

130. *The Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester)* asked the Church Commissioners: What targets have the Church Commissioners made for increasing hedges and small scale woodland on farmland, and what progress has been made so far?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* There is not a formal, portfolio-wide target as our focus is on farm-specific targets in new leases, and collaboration on specific planting projects. As part of all new leases, farm-specific initiatives relating to biodiversity are identified and included.

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

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

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

131. *Dr Cathy Rhodes (Sheffield)* asked the Church Commissioners: What formal partnerships have the Church Commissioners made in order to protect and restore peatland on its land?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The vast majority of peatland owned by the Church Commissioners is located in the Fens. As such we are active members of the "Fenland SOIL" group whose primary aim is to achieve climate mitigation and biodiversity enhancement in connection with agriculture in the Fens, whilst seeking to positively engage with policy makers and improve emission data around peaty soil used for agriculture.

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

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

132. *Mrs Sue Cavill (Derby)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given that dioceses continue to sell off land and vicarages to meet operational deficits, will the Church Commissioners bring forward a policy measure to offer first refusal on land sales to ensure that assets remain within the Church?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners manage the Church of England's endowment fund for the benefit of the mission and ministry of the wider Church. We adopt bespoke investment strategies which seek to maximise returns whilst minimising risk and adopting a sustainable and ethical approach to investing.

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

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

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* Through their management of the Church's endowment fund, the Church Commissioners seeks to make available the maximum sustainable level of funding to support the mission and ministry of the Church of England for current and future generations.

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

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

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

		(a)	(b)	(c)
	Commissioners' assets (before clergy pensions obligation) at start of year	Commissioners' expenditure in year (excluding investment management costs)	Annual change in distributions	Distribution as % of value at start of the year
	£m	£m	%	%
2008	5,674.4	192.7		3.4%
2009	4,364.5	192.6	-0.1%	4.4%
2010	4,815.2	212.8	10.5%	4.4%
2011	5,319.5	197.8	-7.0%	3.7%
2012	5,237.6	212.5	7.4%	4.1%
2013	5,503.1	210.1	-1.1%	3.8%
2014	6,125.3	216.5	3.0%	3.5%
2015	6,739.9	217.5	0.5%	3.2%

2016	7,004.7	228.3	5.0%	3.3%
2017	7,894.2	224.5	-1.7%	2.8%
2018	8,296.9	227.0	1.1%	2.7%
2019	8,120.5	238.2	4.9%	2.9%
2020	8,512.8	281.4	18.1%	3.3%
2021	9,049.8	263.4	-6.4%	2.9%
2022	10,000.4	319.9	21.5%	3.2%

Note. Expenditure in 2022 is based on latest available forecast, pending finalisation of 2022 results which remain draft and subject to audit.

134. *Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter)* asked the Church Commissioners: What additional measures are being considered to support our cathedrals during the current cost of living crisis?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners have continued to support cathedrals in a number of ways, in addition to our ongoing funding for the Dean and two Residentiary Canons at most cathedrals.

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

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

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

*Mr Luke Appleton:* I was pleased to hear of the additional support coming to our cathedrals. I was just wondering if there are any specific extra things being considered for our cathedral choirs?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield:* At present we have been responding to the particular questions that cathedrals have been asking us about, and they have been focused, as I am sure you will appreciate, very clearly on rising energy costs. That is the area where we have been working with them particularly at the moment, but I am happy to get back to you on any additional support for cathedral choirs. At the moment I do not think we are working on that directly because I do not think it is a matter that has arisen in our recent survey of cathedrals around their particular anxieties financially.

135. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Church Commissioners: In the light of Her Majesty's Treasury's 'Green Book' recently changing the way in which the Government measures well-being and the subsequent estimate by the National Churches' Trust that the actual social value of the UK's church buildings and the activities that take place within them is about £55.7 billion, up from the previous

(September 2020) estimate of £12.4 billion, will this updated evidence be provided to individual dioceses to take into account when making decisions on the possible closure of church buildings?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* In 2021 the National Churches' Trust published the 'House of Good' Report with an introductory statement from the Archbishops, who warmly welcomed the research. It was well publicised through national communications channels. This Report highlighted the valuable contribution that churches make in their local communities.

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

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

136. *Mr Andrew Gray (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Church Commissioners: In May 2022, an independent review was undertaken on the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). As its recommendations are now being considered by its Trustees, will the Report be published so that Synod may debate the effectiveness and future of the CCT?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners commissioned an independent review of the CCT, which was completed in May 2022. The Report and findings were shared with and fully accepted by the CCT Board in September 2022, an action plan has been approved at board level and progress is being made on implementation.

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

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

*Mrs Wendy Coombey (Hereford):* Following on from the independent review, have there been any material concerns raised about the effectiveness of the Churches Conservation Trust which Synod should be made aware of?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield:* Thank you, Wendy, very much indeed for your supplementary question. I know that the Churches Conservation Trust has taken very seriously the independent review, which was a comprehensive exercise covering its governance, its strategy and financial issues. The independent reviewer stated that they had not become aware of any fundamental issues of concern about governance or financial integrity. The Commissioners and the CCT board have considered the review's findings in detail and both have welcomed the opportunity to ensure maximum



robustness and continuous improvement across these areas and are committed to keeping them under regular review. The Commissioners are satisfied that there are no ongoing material concerns.

We would like to thank the CCT team for their engagement and support with the review. They have taken it very seriously. I think it is also good to report at this point that there is a new Chair and a new Chief Executive. Both have been appointed in the last year. Indeed, the previous Chief Executive was awarded an OBE in the last Honours List in recognition of his service.

137. *Mr Andrew Gray (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Church Commissioners: From 2018 to 2021, CCTEL, the commercial arm of the Churches Conservation Trust which operates consultancy services and “champing”, has paid the CCT £19,500. From the same period it owes the CCT a cumulative unpaid balance of £219,500. What has happened to this amount? (Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand)

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* The Churches Conservation Trust Enterprise Ltd (CCTEL) is the trading subsidiary of the Churches Conservation Trust. CCTEL does various activities including Champing and consultancy work and they reimburse the CCT for costs incurred, and then gift any profit to the CCT.

In the years 2018-2021 CCTEL reimbursed CCT for costs of £271,644 for staffing costs and facilities charges (\*see below), and in addition gifted profit of c£40,000 to the CCT. The payment of the costs by CCTEL to CCT is an internal cross charge which is accrued and accounted for in the CCTEL company accounts (which are lodged with Companies House) and is included as a creditor to the parent entity. We do not recognise the figures mentioned in the question but if the source can be clarified we will seek further analysis from the CCT.

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

138. *Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester)* asked the Church Commissioners: GS 2272Y clause 12 makes it clear there is no role for a PCC in disposal of land for provision of a highway in the absence of an incumbent. Are there any circumstances in which a PCC is actively involved in the disposal of land under the Church Property Measure 2018?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* Clause 12 (GS 2272Y) corrects a lacuna by allowing the bishop to make decisions about land, including highways, when a benefice is vacant. Clause 12(1) – which has specifically in view the dedication of land for highway – reflects the provision already made by s.1 of the Church Property Measure 2018 which enables the bishop to deal with a parsonage house during vacancy.

More generally, the Measure makes provision for the disposal of various kinds of land

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

*Dr Simon Eyre:* Thank you, Flora, for your detailed reply. As PCCs bear the brunt of any direct long-term consequences of any land disposal, often after a bishop or an incumbent has moved on, could consideration be given to a review of the Church Property Measure 2018 to allow PCCs a greater degree of involvement in the disposal of land?

*The Revd Canon Dr Fiona Winfield:* I do not think at the moment that we are looking specifically at that review, but if you would like to be in communication with me I am happy to have a further conversation about that possibility. I know that you know we take very seriously these questions around the proper disposal and right allocation of such assets.

## **PENSIONS BOARD**

139. *The Revd Nicki Pennington (Carlisle)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: At the end of 2022, how much money did the Church of England Pensions Board invest in oil and gas companies?

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

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

140. *The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What steps are the Pensions Board taking to increase investment in climate solutions? What new investments have they made in this area in the last 12 months?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:* Over the last 12 months, the Board, through its infrastructure fund managers, has made new investments in highly efficient waste-to-energy assets in the UK, a renewable energy (wind and solar) platform in Portugal and a renewable energy project developer in Taiwan (creating onshore wind, floating solar, rooftop solar and energy storage).

The Board has also reviewed its future asset allocation. This will result in further

changes to our investments over the next year. All allocations are considered in the light of our Net Zero commitment, which includes our commitment to increase climate solutions investments.

In 2022 the Board also set up and continues to lead a group of 12 UK Pension Funds to develop an approach to investing in support of the transition in emerging economies. The first outcome of this work was published during COP27.

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

141. *Mr Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: In view of recent reports questioning the validity of carbon offsetting by Shell and other major oil companies, do the Church of England National Investing Bodies make an independent assessment of the carbon offsetting plans of fossil fuel companies that are including such plans in their net zero 'ambitions'?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:* Yes, the National Investing Bodies draw upon a range of credible independent sources to form a view on a particular company plan. This includes guidance from: IIGCC, SBTi, TPI, CA100+ Carbon Tracker analysis as well as civil society views.

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

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

142. *Dr Cathy Rhodes (Sheffield)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What are the Church of England National Investing Bodies doing to raise concerns with TotalEnergies about their plans to increase gas production by 26% by 2030, according to Carbon Tracker's December 2022 'Paris Maligned' Report?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:* The Board continues to engage with TotalEnergies. There are a number of elements of this engagement including:

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

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

*The Chair.* Thank you very much, Synod. I just have one small question. Is Matthew Frost here? No. The two people who asked questions that were unable to be answered, Fiona Gibson and Felicity Cooke, if they could email their supplementary questions to the Synod Office, we will make sure they are answered. I do apologise for that.

I would like to thank you Synod for your good decorum during this set of Questions and I do hope this will continue in our Questions tomorrow.

## **EVENING WORSHIP**

*The Revd Gary Warrington* led the Synod in an act of worship.

## **FULL SYNOD: SECOND DAY TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2023**

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 10.15 am.

*The Chair.* Good morning, Synod. Please be seated. First we have an announcement from the Chair of the Business Committee.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Thank you, Chair. In view of the large number of amendments to Item 520 this morning and also the importance of the following item, Item 7, the Loyal Address, I would like to propose, Madam Chair, that a rubric of “no later than 11.35” be inserted before Item 7, which will ensure that we do take this item of business during this morning’s sessions.

*The Chair:* That has my consent. Does it have your consent, Synod? Thank you.

I also have a note from the staff about the microphones. When speaking from the podiums please make sure that you are speaking towards the microphone and not too much above it below it or to the side. As you can see, the microphones are robust and therefore please adjust them to make sure you are speaking into them, and that will help with audibility in the hall and for those on Zoom.

## **ITEM 510**

### **SPECIAL AGENDA I: LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

### **DIOCESAN BOARDS OF EDUCATION MEASURE 2021 (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENT TO REGULATIONS UNDER CANON B 12) REGULATIONS 2023 (GS 2285)**

*The Chair.* We now come to Item 510. It is the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021 (Consequential Amendment to Regulations under Canon B 12) Regulations 2023 (GS 2285) As well as Order Paper I, members will need the Regulations and Explanatory Notes GS 2285X. I invite the Chair of the Legislative Reform Committee, Canon Simon Butler, to move Item 510. He has up to ten minutes.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Good morning, Synod. This is peak geek moment so a great way to start the day by going full geek. The Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021 (Consequential Amendment to Regulations under Canon B 12) Regulations 2023. Some of you will know that the Church Assembly was a precursor to General Synod and I am told by a member of the staff that Alan Don, who was then Chaplain to the Archbishop Cosmo Gordon Lang, wrote in his diary in February 1932 the following words, “Church Assembly – not very invigorating.” Well, of course this is the moment you have all been waiting for and the peak of my synodical career to propose to you ---

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* That bit is true.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Thank you, Archbishop.

--- the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021 (Consequential Amendment to Regulations under Canon B12) Regulations 2023 – Canon B 12 provides that the General Synod may from time to time make Regulations concerning who may administer Holy Communion, and Synod did that in 2015. One of the places where Holy Communion is regularly administered is in our Church schools, and that is of course a crucial part of our ministry and mission.

In paragraph 5 of those 2015 Regulations, there is a definition of Church school which refers to the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 1991. It also provides that the head teacher includes an acting head teacher. Synod will remember, and the Archbishop is clearly remembering as I speak, that in 2021 we passed a new Diocesan Boards of Education Measure. A consequence of this is that the references in the 2015 Regulations are now out of date. The 2021 Measure provided for new definitions of “Church school” and “head teacher”, and of course it is important that the Regulations made under Canon B 12 refer to the most up-to-date definitions.

So, to fix all of this, these Regulations before you for approval on consequential amendment to provide that the terms “Church school” and “head teacher” each have the same meaning as in the new Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021. They do no more than that. It is a bit of tidying up.

So, Synod, we have to do this sort of thing so that our laws make sense and are coherent and that, when we do make changes, all the changes that follow are done and tidied up. I ask you please to approve these Regulations, to pick up some time if we do not need too much debate. They are important. They relate to our mission and ministry and, at the very least, the people sitting behind me, the lawyers, will be very happy indeed.

I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* This item is now open for debate. The speech limit is three minutes. I see people standing but they are not indicating they wish to speak; they are just finding a seat. I see no-one wishing to speak to this, so I now put Item 510 to a vote. The question is, "That the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021 (Consequential Amendment to Regulations under Canon B 12) Regulations 2023 be approved".

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. The regulations have been approved and that concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Very Revd Andrew Nunn (The Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 10.22 am.

## **ITEM 509**

### **DRAFT CHURCH OF ENGLAND (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) MEASURE (GS 2272A)**

*The Chair:* Good morning, Synod. We come now to Item 509, the Report by the Revision Committee on the draft Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure and draft Amending Canon No. 43. Members will need the Report of the Revision Committee and the draft Measure and Canon. You will also need Order Paper II. We heard from the Chair of the Business Committee about the timed adjournment at 11.35, and we are working toward that.

Obviously, these kinds of Miscellaneous Provisions Measures are a complex melange of bits and pieces. That is their purpose. It is much more fascinating than the name suggests. Believe me! And one of the changes that you will notice is that those who are proposing amendments, if there is a debate on it they now have a right of reply. If you are proposing an amendment then you get three minutes at the end to have your say, which is a good thing I think. So please bear that in mind. Also bear in mind, members of Synod, that as a legislative body this is our chance to scrutinise legislation, so it is important that whatever the processes seem to be like and however fast they seem to be going, that we take that opportunity.

I am now going to call the Chair of the Revision Committee, the Ven. Nikki Groarke, to move the motion that the Synod do take note of this Report. Archdeacon, you have up to ten minutes to do so.

*The Ven. Nicola Groarke (Worcester):* On reading papers in preparation for this session, which I am sure you have all undertaken with due diligence, you may have wondered why such a random array of topics are grouped together in this way. "Miscellaneous" is the right word here as what unites this disparate parade is that they are all useful and practical reforms of a kind that can only be made by legislation and, none of them would merit an entire Canon or Measure all by themselves. This is a convenient way for us to gather up a bunch of much-needed reforms and deal with

them reasonably quickly and efficiently. The (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure and Amending Canon No. 43 therefore mark key steps forward in the Church's mission.

Before going further I want to thank the Steering Committee, the other members of the Revision Committee, the brilliant Synod legal team and those members who made submissions.

The Revision Committee met twice and received 19 submissions. I believe that between us we have significantly improved the drafts which Synod approved at First Consideration in July 2022.

Turning first to the Measure, I will take the clauses one by one and summarise our decisions reminding you of history as appropriate.

Clause 1 makes two changes to our hybrid meetings. This Measure passed through its synodical stages in a single day in a special session summoned for that purpose on 24 September 2020 amidst the challenging times of ongoing lockdowns. Synod then rejected an amendment to bring Article 7 or 8 business into the scope of the provision, despite there being some support for that, because of concerns about the significance of that business and the fear that it could not be properly dealt with remotely. But experience has shown that hybrid meetings are immensely valuable. The vast majority of members choose to attend in person now they can, and those who do not attend in person are mostly those who have pressing medical issues for whom attendance is difficult. That minority should not be excluded from full participation in all business. So clause 1 enables Article 7 or 8 business to be considered.

While some members felt such business was too important for that, the Committee decided that hybrid meetings are clearly here to stay and Article 7 and 8 business should not be reserved exclusively for members in the hall. Secondly, clause 1 enables the Special Standing Orders on hybrid meetings to continue indefinitely. We think they provide welcome flexibility and should be kept.

Clause 2 makes the Legislative Reform Measure continue indefinitely. Currently it has a sunset clause and would expire in March next year unless we go through a special parliamentary procedure to remove the sunset clause. Some members felt now was too soon to remove it, but we think enough time has passed now to make the Measure permanent, and it is easier to do so in this Measure than by a separate parliamentary procedure. It will still of course be scrutinised by Parliament when it considers this Measure as a whole.

Clause 3 is new. Synod will no longer have to approve revisions to the Safeguarding Code of Practice which are insubstantial or provide guidance rather than new requirements.

Clause 4 is also new. Synod will no longer have to approve a change in name of a suffragan see but will still have to approve a change in name of diocese.

Clause 5 amends the terms of service regulations to make modest improvements to common tenure.

There were no submissions on clause 6 on delegating bishops' functions.

Clause 7 creates a new ecclesiastical office, the Lay Residentiary Canon. The Committee decided by a majority to support this new role given the desirability of equality where possible between lay and ordained ministry. We did though agree an important restriction that a person should be appointed a Lay Residentiary Canon only if they have at least six years' experience as a Reader or lay worker.

There were no submissions on clause 8 to Bishops' Mission Orders.

Clause 9 is new. It gives the diocesan board the right of patronage where the registered patron is disqualified.

On clause 10 on ecclesiastical judges we received a submission not to increase their retirement age to 75, which is when secular judges retire, but we saw no reason to treat ecclesiastical judges differently.

We received no submissions on clauses 11 to 13 on court procedure.

On clause 14 on the care of churches, one member asked how the new duty to regard environmental matters would work alongside the existing duty to have regard to the Church's purpose. We thought this did not need spelling out and could be assessed case-by-case.

Also on clause 14, Synod should note new subsection 4 which requires each DAC to have at least one member with experience of accessibility issues.

On class 15, on disposals of Church land, some members felt that where a benefice is vacant, the PCC not the bishop should take on the incumbent's role in land transactions, but the Committee noted that the bishop must already give consent in land transactions so it makes sense to give the bishop overall responsibility where there is a vacancy.

Clause 16 deals with the care of cathedrals, in particular the procedure if a cathedral puts any of its objects of special interest on display.

There were no submissions on clause 17 which brings our legislation into line with charity law on some procedural property matters.

On clause 18 on elections, the Committee received two notable submissions, first, that a close relative should not be able to nominate a person as a candidate in parochial elections and, second, that elections should include the option of re-opening nominations so that a person can vote for "none of the above" if they dislike all the candidates.

The Committee strongly supported the first submission but recognised it was best for the Elections Review Group to consider the point in depth. We also referred the second submission to the ERG, who have agreed to consider both points promptly.



Clause 9 amends the Church Commissioners' procedures to reflect the usual practice for a large charity dealing with complex financial transactions. Some members queried the need to allow the Commissioners to delegate functions to a sub-committee. They were though reassured to note that the clause already imposes the same procedural safeguards on delegations to sub-committees as it does on committees.

Clause 20 is new. Where the see of one Archbishop is vacant, the joint power of the Archbishops to make appointments to the Pensions Board will instead be exercisable by the other Archbishop.

Clause 21 is also new. Church bodies will be able to hold remote or hybrid meetings in the same way Synod does.

Clause 22 is new, being a drafting amendment that brings into one place the synodical procedure for making orders under the Measure.

Clause 23 contains standard provisions on commencement and extent. We also received a submission from the former Bishop of Blackburn seeking new powers for bishops following safeguarding risk assessments. We established a sub-committee to look at this and they advised there is a serious need to address this, but it is not feasible to do that now given the policy and legal work required. We stress our view that this must be progressed urgently.

That concludes the Measure and I now come to Amending Canon 43. Paragraphs 1 to 4 are new and respond to the recent demise of the Crown.

There were no submissions on paragraph 5 on services in parish churches.

Paragraphs 6 and 7 amend the Canons on Marriage following the recent change in secular law, to increase the minimum age for marriage from 16 to 18. We received submissions that the amendments are unnecessary, but we felt it was right to update the Canons to reflect changes in the general law. The fact that there is now an inconsistency between the age of consent and the minimum age for marriage is a matter for Parliament and not something the Canons can solve.

Paragraph 8 makes consequential amendments on Lay Residentiary Canons.

Paragraph 9 enables an archdeacon to delegate to a deputy other than a rural dean. We were satisfied that the delegation was necessarily confined to clergy.

There were no submissions on paragraphs 10 to 15 which make technical amendments.

That concludes Amending Canon No. 43.

I appreciate some of the points I have covered may seem dry and technical – dull even compared to some other items on Synod's agenda – but I do emphasise to Synod that although it will not make the front pages of the national press this legislation matters. It is the means for us to bring about important changes on how Synod conducts

business. It reforms our structures by creating Lay Residentiary Canons and it makes further strides in simplification.

I beg to move that Synod do take note of this Report.

*The Chair.* Thank you. The motion is now on for debate. I remind members that under Standing Order 57(6) it is not in order to debate a matter which is the subject of an amendment on the Order Paper. Those wishing to speak should stand or indicate. The speech limit will begin at five minutes.

*The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* I appeared in front of the Revision Committee and I have to say I did not find it a very satisfactory procedure. That is nothing to do with the membership of the Committee and how it was conducted, except that it was conducted on-line, and I think there was less discussion than there would have been had we met in person. I just put a note down that in future could consideration be given for such committees meeting in person, otherwise I fear that we will end up with a larger number of amendments on the floor of Synod because people feel their point has not been properly heard or understood in the Revision Committee.

*The Revd Fraser Oates (Worcester):* In relation to the BMO Measure at Item 8, in section 82 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, the initiation and continuation of a BMO rests heavily upon the “opinion” of a Bishop. Of course this allows for freedom and creativity in mission and scope for experimental and innovative projects which the Church needs, but it appears somewhat precarious that a BMO including associated stipends, pensions, property licences, employees and finances rests predominantly upon one person’s opinion.

What would be more reassuring here, considering the termination of licences and other potential risks, would be a more rigorous safety net of accountability, discernment and protection for BMOs and those involved in them.

I appreciate clause 4(8) refers to the consultative role of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, but it seems to be rather vague and open to some misuse, particularly considering people’s lives, vocations and families are bound up in this.

I encourage Synod to take note of this Report, but I would ask the Committee for a more robust review of the BMO provisions and processes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I just want to say a word about the proposals for changing the requirements for elections at APCMs which Nikki Groarke referred to. I am the Chair of the Elections Review Group to whom this knotty problem has been referred, and we always like a knotty problem to deal with. I just want to assure Synod that we are indeed undertaking this promptly. We are planning to start looking at it at our March meeting and we hope we may be able to bring some proposal on this to Synod in July. I am not promising that, but that is our hope at this moment.

*The Chair.* After the next speech I will reduce it to three minutes, although people have been really good.

*Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark):* I want to thank the Revision Committee for their

work on this and to particularly thank them for their comments on trust, which appears several times in their Report. Trust – that ephemeral thing which like respect or reputation takes years to build and can be destroyed in seconds.

But one person's lack of trust is another person's appropriate checks and balances. It is important to remember the reason that these checks and balances are here, for multiple safeguards, or added friction, depending on your perspective. When things work well, all manner of things shall be well, but checks and balances are there explicitly to prevent the abuse of power when things go wrong; to put limits on how much damage a misguided or even a malicious person can do with unchecked power.

As a legislative body we need to consider, unfortunate as it seems and as unholy as it can appear, what is the worst that could possibly happen, and how do we prevent that. We pray and we hope for the best, but we must recognise that we in the Church are all human, all flawed, all broken, and ask what limits must be put in place to prevent an abuse of power in the worst of circumstances and not just in the best. In the Church it can sometimes seem like this trust is slipping away as seen in this Report, which is just one example, and we need to recognise that. As we recognise that lack of trust, we can work to rebuild it. However tempting it might be, our response should not be to say, "We know what we're doing; you should just trust us", but to build bridges across the divide and seek to rebuild.

As Jesus empowered us broken and flawed humans to build his Church, he had that servant leadership which gave away all power, so we too should be empowering those at all levels of our Church.

I encourage Synod to take note of this Report and to take note in particular its comments on trust.

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

*The Revd Timothy Bateman (Birmingham):* I also want to speak as to the Bishops' Mission Order termination of licence, section 8. I want to suggest we take note of the Report but that the consultation be taken a bit further by the Revision Committee. One of the churches we planted last year as a BMO has grown to roughly 140-150 people meeting each week, bustling with children, young people, and people coming to faith. They now have staff too working at this location.

The proposal to terminate a BMO with immediate notice puts BMOs like these, clearly where God is doing something incredible, building a thriving Christian community and reaching out to the local area, under unnecessary pressure with little legal protection. Although I completely agree that a bishop or their delegated team should have the right to terminate BMOs, my suggestion is that this proposal needs more consultation. More thought could be put into a sensible timeframe of the termination period rather than it being immediate.

Church leaders going into these contexts need the security and support backing them, as well as their staff and congregations, that this is something that is supported and that planting and pioneering is a risk worth taking. They need to know that their jobs are not going to be pulled with immediate effect. Without this support it could impact

the mental health of clergy and staff with no protections, as we all care about here at General Synod.

Planting and the establishment of new worshipping communities is a courageous thing in itself but not having the infrastructure to support them will inhibit this happening when we are in desperate need to reach our nation. Let us not make it harder than it is already. I would really encourage the Revision Committee to consider this a little bit further.

*The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield):* I must declare an interest as I hold a Bishops' Mission Order licence. I can see the need to withdraw Bishops' Mission Orders, either with or without consultation, should things go disastrously wrong. Whilst broadly accepting this Measure, there seems to be little or no protection for clergy who hold Bishops' Mission Orders. There seems also to be no or little protection for lay staff who are working under a Bishops' Mission Order.

Where the Synod has asked about clergy and laity welfare, should there be further work carried out in consultation with BMO leaders within this Revision Committee, as these revisions continue to leave BMOs and churches in a precarious position without accurate safeguards in place. Therefore, I would ask the Revision Committee to please consult with BMOs as they take this forward. Please could we take note of this debate but further work and consultation needs to take place within this Committee.

*The Revd Preb. Pat Hawkins (Lichfield):* I want to speak just briefly to the question about hybrid meetings and to do so as the chair of our DAC, which is committed to hybrid working. I have no objection to what is proposed here and will vote in favour, but I just want to make a couple of comments about if we are committed to hybrid meetings how we actually work we them.

As the chair of our DAC I have sometimes felt like a medium carrying messages from one side of the veil to the other. Archbishop, I have never been a medium. I think there is an issue about how we, meeting in physical presence, engage with those who are joining us virtually. I also take Fr Benfield's point about what happens particularly when you get stuck in a meeting about the conversations that happen, as it were, off-piste and how that feeds into the discussions. This is probably not strictly the business of the Revision Committee, but I could not think where else to raise it and I think it is just worth flagging up.

*The Ven. Luke Miller (London):* Just a word on the BMOs. I am the visitor to a number of BMOs and, as Synod will know, we did some work a few years ago now in order to ensure that those who work in Bishops' Mission Orders have synodical representation. There are a number of synodical bits to unpick if a BMO were to be closed down, especially if that were to happen suddenly. Mr Scowen will tell us all about how that would affect your deanery synods.

I would draw the Revision Committee's attention to the role of the visitor and the report that the visitor can make into the life of the BMO and the consultation that could therefore take place to enable, where it were necessary to shut a BMO, for that not to take place suddenly where there are the consequences which other speakers have pointed to.

*The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford):* It is just a response that came into my head to the various BMO clergy and maybe laity as well we have just heard standing. I suppose this is a bit of a thing about legislation in Synod. The draft Measure was proposed at a previous group of sessions. It was available. We could all read it. It could be spotted that the then clause 6 referred to BMOs and made this provision which people have reasonable comments about. No submissions were received by the Revision Committee, of which I was a member, that anything should change in that clause so it stands unamended in the draft Measure. We are now at the Revision Stage with no revisions proposed by people who are concerned about it. So, we are faced with the dilemma of whether or not to hold up the whole Measure.

I defer to the Steering Committee as to perhaps what they wish to do with it, but it is just a thought for everyone: read the legislation when it comes in first draft, find out then whether there is something important about it and work out how to contribute to its development. It is complicated to do so at this stage.

*The Chair:* I see no-one standing so I call on Archdeacon Nikki to respond to the debate. Nikki, you have up to five minutes to do so.

*The Ven. Nicola Groarke (Worcester):* First, thank you to Fr Benfield and Pat Hawkins for their comments on hybrid meetings. I have to admit I sometimes hate Zoom meetings, I am sure we all do, but they have made it possible to gather people from all over the country to have very efficient meetings. I could not have chaired the Revision Committee if we had not been meeting on Zoom purely for time. It is not perfect but it does enable accessibility and much more efficient use of business.

A lot of concerns have been raised on BMOs from Fraser, Tim and Matt and thank you, Luke, as well. I have been asked to point out that there is also a general review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 which focuses on this quite a lot more than we have been able to. Please use the synodical processes to feed into that revision process. As Neil said, this is an opportunity to do so. It is only a small part of this business but you do have another stab at it. I would encourage all of you who have raised very valid concerns to feed them into that process. We want to protect you, but we also want to keep the freedom and creativity.

Mr Scowen, I am very glad that the ERG likes a knotty problem. We thought that was a good knotty problem to pass on to you, and we hope you have much fun in unravelling it.

Rebecca, thank you for noting the comments on trust. Trust came up quite a lot in our conversations. I am picking up that there were times when people were not quite sure they trusted the process. We need to get better at it and we thought it was important to raise that. There are checks and balances needed so keep an eye on and let us try to build trust with one another.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 509 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## ITEM 520

*The Chair:* We come now to the Revision Stage for the draft Measure. Members should note that the Revision Stage for the draft Amending Canon No. 43 will take place tomorrow. Because the Report of the Revision Committee related to both a Measure and a Canon, under Standing Order 57(4)(a), which is a new Standing Order, I must call first on a member of the Revision Committee to move, "That the draft Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure do proceed to the Revision Stage". I call on the Chair of the Steering Committee, Mr Stephen Hofmeyr, to move that motion.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* I move that motion.

*The Chair:* Thank you. The Standing Orders require me to put this motion to a vote without debate and so I will do that now. I am reading off the page if you think it does not sound like me.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. We will now proceed with the Revision Stage for the draft Measure. We will need to make use of the 25-member procedure in Standing Order 59. Where an amendment is moved by someone other than a member of the Steering Committee and is not simply consequential on an amendment that has already been passed, the mover has not more than five minutes to speak to it. After the mover has spoken, I will then call on the Chair of the Steering Committee to speak for not more than five minutes in reply. If the Steering Committee supports the amendment or indicates that although it does not support the amendment it nevertheless wishes the debate to continue, the debate on the amendment continues. Otherwise the amendment will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or, if unable to do so, indicate by some other means, or if you are on Zoom by using the green tick, that they wish the debate to continue or a vote to be taken. If that has not made any sense, it will become clear as we go through this, I hope to me as much as to anybody else.

## ITEM 521

*The Chair:* We begin with clause 1 of the Measure. I invite Mr Clive Scowen to move his amendment to that clause, Item 521. Clive, you may speak for not more than five minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Those who were members in the last what turned out to be sixquennium will remember that when we passed the Remote Meetings Measure in the middle of the pandemic, it was decided, as has already been referred to, to exclude Article 7 and Article 8 business from what could be considered at a fully remote meeting. The reason was that those matters that are considered under Article 7 and Article 8 tend to be difficult, often complex, often sensitive issues which it would be very difficult to debate entirely on-line. That was the judgment that was made at the time and, in my view, it was a correct judgment.

But that same Measure also enabled us to have hybrid meetings and of course now

all meetings are hybrid. It seems to work reasonably well, and so we clearly need to do something about what is in the original Remote Meetings Measure if we are ever going to be able to take Article 7 and Article 8 business.

The draft Measure seeks to remove the restrictions on taking Article 7 and 8 business in respect of all remote meetings, whether they are hybrid or fully remote. What my amendment seeks to do is to provide that Article 7 and 8 business can be taken at hybrid meetings when the majority of people, and I am suggesting two-thirds, are gathered in a single place, but not at fully remote meetings. Thus far in the hybrid meetings we have had, we have always had in excess of 80% of those present actually present together in the chamber with the rest on-line, so it seems to me that the two-thirds threshold that I am suggesting should not create a problem in practice. But I do believe that we need to continue the exclusion of Article 7 and 8 business from fully remote meetings.

You may say why worry about that; we are not doing that any more. Well, who knows what might be needed in the future. We are not doing it at the moment. I hope we will never ever need to do a fully remote meeting again. Those who took part in them will know how unsatisfactory they were, albeit necessary. But who knows? There might be another pandemic. There might be some other situation arising that we have not even contemplated which necessitated us to meet entirely on-line. And so what I am really asking for is a middle way between either full exclusion or no exclusion of Article 7 and 8 business so that we can do this business at our hybrid meetings as we need to be able to do without risking the possibility that if we needed fully remote meetings in the future that they could be taken there as well. I beg to move the amendment

*The Chair:* Thank you Mr Scowen. I now call Mr Hofmeyr to speak for not more than five minutes in reply.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* I will share the burden of dealing with these various amendments with one of my colleagues on the Steering Committee, the Archdeacon of Totnes, the Ven. Douglas Dettmer, but let me deal with this first. Clause 1, as you know, amends the Remote Meetings Measure which was passed in 2020 during the height of the Covid pandemic, and it enables General Synod to meet and to conduct business remotely including on a hybrid basis, on a temporary basis. It was intended as a temporary expedient. It provided for the making of temporary Standing Orders for remote meetings. The temporary Standing Orders expired and have had to be revived by Synod; however, as matters stand they can only be revived for a further temporary period. We do not currently have power to put in place permanent provision for hybrid meetings.

During the debate in February of last year there seemed to be strong support for some permanent provision to be made so that it would be possible for Synod meetings to continue to take place on at least a hybrid basis. That would ensure that those members who are unable to attend a physical meeting, for example, for medical reasons, will nevertheless be able to participate as fully as possible in the Synod's business.

Clause 1 of this draft Measure therefore amends the Remote Meetings Measure so

that Standing Orders for remote or hybrid meetings can continue in operation indefinitely if Synod wishes that to be the case.

The Remote Meetings Measure also currently excludes two types of business known as Article 7 and Article 8 business from being considered at a remote or hybrid meeting. Article 7, as you know, concerns matters of doctrine and worship. Article 8 includes the making of changes to the services of baptism and Holy Communion or in the Ordinal, and the making of certain ecumenical schemes.

Article 7 and Article 8 are subject to special procedure safeguards. When the Remote Meetings Measure was passed, we had no experience of hybrid meetings but, in the view of many, remote and hybrid meetings have been quite successful and there is a good case for hybrid arrangements for members who need them. But, as I have said, we cannot do that on an indefinite basis if certain important types of business are excluded from consideration when a meeting takes place on a remote or hybrid basis.

Clause 1 of the Measure would therefore remove the exclusion of Article 7 and 8 business from such meetings. Mr Scowen has proposed an amendment which would qualify that exclusion. The qualification he proposes is that Article 7 and 8 business may only be considered at a hybrid meeting if at least two-thirds of those attending are present in person.

The Revision Committee has unanimously rejected this qualification for two reasons. The first reason is the Revision Committee was of the view that the Measure had enabled a new and helpfully flexible approach on which Synod would continue to be able to rely even after the pandemic was over and that it should be empowered to rely on this flexibility in an unrestricted way.

The second reason, and related to the first, is that emergency legislation would be required should we enter into a period with restrictions similar to those imposed at the height of the Covid pandemic to enable Synod to deal with Article 7 and Article 8 business. We consider this to be an unnecessary and unhelpful restriction given the confidence which has built in hybrid meetings, and so for these reasons we would invite you to reject the amendment.

*The Chair.* The Steering Committee does not support the amendment and so, therefore if you, Synod, wish it to be debated I have to see 25 members standing or indicating or using the green tick if you are on-line. There are 25 members standing and so this amendment is now open for debate.

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

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* Imagine with me that Mr Scowen's dire prediction comes to pass, there is another pandemic and in the room there are 20 people and on that small screen on the desk there are 300 people, it makes it very difficult for the 20 people in here to generate a decent atmosphere and the only person who can see those 300 people is the Chair. That is a very difficult position to be in and so that is why I support Clive's amendment.



*The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* I would just like to say that, by its nature, Article 7 and Article 8 business can never be very urgent and so we can delay consideration of that business until more of us are able to meet in person and so I would support Mr Scowen's amendment.

*Miss Ruth Abernethy (Channel Islands):* I wish to speak against the amendment. My concerns do not relate to how easy it is or is not to debate things over Zoom. I attended this session of meetings last year on Zoom following surgery and found it quite satisfactory, although not as good as being here in person. My point relates to whether this offers those members among us who wish to use procedure to undermine debate another opportunity. It seems to me that most of our meetings, if not all, going forward will be hybrid meetings. We, therefore, all have the choice to participate either through being in this room or through Zoom and you are able to switch from one to the other during sessions.

That would mean if there were a matter put up for debate that were controversial and the group did not wish to debate that point, they could simply exit this chamber, request that their voting be switched to Zoom, stand on the street outside to ensure that not two-thirds of the people currently logged onto the meeting or present at the meeting were in the chamber and, therefore, thwart the debate entirely.

I do not think that is a reasonable thing for us to be putting through. We all intend to be here in person if we can and I think in good faith we should be here if we can. I do not think, therefore, this amendment is necessary. As I said, I think it offers the opportunity to those who may wish to use procedure to undermine debate another tool in their toolbox and I, therefore, request that people consider rejecting this amendment.

*The Chair:* I see no-one now standing. Standing Order 57 has recently been amended to give the mover of the amendment to legislation, as I said at the beginning, the right to speak in reply for not more than three minutes and so I invite Mr Scowen to speak for no more than three minutes in reply.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I just want to make it very clear, if it has not been already, that my amendment is not aimed at making difficulty for hybrid meetings. I agree, hybrid meetings have thus far been a great success and I do want us to be able to take Article 7 and 8 business at hybrid meetings. My concern is with trying to do such business at fully remote meetings and that is why I want to qualify the change that is being made by the draft Measure.

I confess I had not thought of the sort of Machiavellian approach. I am not sure standing in the street is going to help because I am not sure they are going to be on-line, are they? But, anyhow, perhaps they are. All our procedures are open to abuse in all sorts of ways. On the whole, most of us do not do that and I hope we will not. It seems to me that that sort of fear of something like that being done is not a good basis for empowering Article 7 and 8 business to be done at fully remote meetings when it will be very difficult to have a proper debate on what may well be a sensitive and complex, or both, issue.

That is what I am asking Synod to focus on: do you continue to share the judgment that Synod formed back in 2020 when it imposed this restraint on what could be taken at a fully remote meeting? If you think we were right then, then I invite you to vote for this amendment. If you do not, well, do not. But that is what I am seeking to achieve.

*The Chair.* Thank you, Clive. I now put Item 521 to the vote. That was a bit too close to call on that and so I am going to order a recorded vote of the Synod.

*The motion was put and lost, 127 voting in favour, 161 against, with 6 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 522**

*The Chair.* We now, therefore, come to Item 522, “That clause 1 stand part of the Measure”. As no member has indicated a wish to speak against it, Item 522 is deemed to be carried.

## **ITEM 523**

*The Chair.* Mr Carl Fender has given notice of his intention to speak against clause 2 and so I call Mr Hofmeyr to move Item 523, “That clause 2 stand part of the Measure”. He may speak for up to five minutes.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* Mr Fender is inviting you to reject clause 2 and I cannot fault him for consistency. He raised his concerns about clause 2 at First Consideration at the July sessions, the concern was repeated to the Revision Committee and Mr Fender is repeating his concern again today. The Revision Committee has not been persuaded and has voted to retain clause 2. Clause 2 makes another important change to legislation that concerns the way in which Synod conducts some of its business.

The Legislative Reform Measure 2018 enables the Synod to make legislative reform orders. These orders are used to amend measures and other primary legislation to remove or reduce burdens that result from that legislation. Some three Legislative Reform Orders have been made since 2018 and have resulted in the removal of a significant number of administrative and financial burdens. The Legislative Reform Measure contains a sunset clause: the power to make Legislative Reform Orders will expire in March 2024 unless it is extended.

The Legislative Reform Measure itself provides for extension by way of a special Order made with the approval of the General Synod and both Houses of Parliament. However, the same result can be achieved by including in this draft Measure removal of the sunset provision. That seems a more convenient and efficient way of extending the power to make Legislative Reform Orders. It will save time and expense and will avoid the need to obtain parliamentary time for a separate affirmative Order. The important point, Synod, to remember is that General Synod will always have the final sign-off and for this reason we invite you to vote against Mr Fender’s proposal that you should reject the clause.

*The Chair.* This item is now open for debate.

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

*Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln):* If I start with a declaration of interest. I am a member of the Scrutiny Committee for the Legislative Reform Measure and I did speak, as you have heard, about the intended removal of the sunset clause in July last year where I alerted Synod to the reasons for its inclusion. To recap, it was included at the suggestion of one of our Estates Commissioners, who was Dame Caroline Spelman. The clause was included to assuage any concerns Parliament may have had about the use of the Legislative Reform Measure.

As you know, the sunset clause operates as an automatic repeal clause unless the LRM is extended by this Synod. Under section 10 of the LRM, the Archbishops' Council can order, with the approval of Synod, an extension for a fixed or indefinite period. The Archbishops' Council is not the proposer of clause 2 today. I would suggest that the future of the LRM belongs to the Archbishops' Council and its own sub-committee. It is written into the LRM. The LRM is a unique piece of legislation. It can fast-track amendments to our primary legislation, as you know, but there are strict statutory tests for its use and which guard against misuse. There is also a Scrutiny Committee, of which I am a member, elected to objectively assess proposals for any amendments to any legislation.

Together with the sunset clause, the safeguards embedded within the statutory scheme overall protect us against inappropriate use. The approval sought today effectively is one which will make the LRM available indefinitely. That is obvious. But I would suggest that nowhere in GS 2272Y – which is the main paper on this draft Measure – is there any justification for why the statutory procedure in section 10 has not been followed; that is, for the Archbishops' Council to place before Synod an order seeking approval for an extension. Nor is there any exploration of the merits of a time-limited extension versus an indefinite one.

There is no consideration given to why the sunset clause was inserted. Given the short life that the LRM has so far had, there ought to be some consideration of its likely use in the future. Synod, would that not be a good indicator of the time we should extend it for? None of this is canvassed in the main paper. In short, do we need the LRM and for what? What workstreams are contemplated in the next few years? This is an unnecessary clause of this Miscellaneous Provisions Measure and I encourage you to vote in favour of its removal. There is a statutory scheme within the LRM itself and it should be used to justify any extension.

*The Ven. Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle):* Stewart Fyfe, Carlisle, 007, licensed to preach anywhere in the said diocese. I sat on the Revision Committee for the LRM and have been a staunch supporter of it. I think it has proved its worth over and over again, bringing unaccustomed speed to Synod's proceedings and remarkable efficiency for which we are not generally noted.

Synod does, however, for all its virtues, occasionally suffer from a lapse of memory. I speak as a fellow sufferer. It would be a great shame if this valuable Measure were to be lost simply because at some future date the Archbishops' Council or Synod itself forgot about the sunset clause and found that it had simply lapsed. As Mr Fender

says, the sunset clause was originally inserted at the request of Dame Caroline Spelman, who, in turn, was expressing the view of the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament.

The reason for it was simply to build up trust in Synod on behalf of Parliament in the way that we would use it. I think that trust has been built up. It has been shown to have its value. If the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament now approves this Measure, I think it can be said to have satisfied the test and the sunset clause is no longer necessary and let us just not run the risk of losing this valuable Measure simply through a lapse of ... I have forgotten what I was talking about.

*The Chair:* I wish everyone was so honest.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I am speaking as the Chair of the Legislative Reform Committee. I simply want to just aid those newer members of Synod to understand a little bit of the background here. There was a concern throughout the process of establishing the Legislative Reform Measure that it would be a bit of an opportunity for overreach by the Archbishops' Council in respect of wanting to do things that people might be worried we might do. The constraints that have been placed on us by the Measure have resulted in a fairly limited set of powers that we can exercise. Indeed, the Dean of the Arches at the time, Charles George, said to me, "I think you are going to find it very difficult to do very much with this Measure given the way it has been written".

The experience over the last three Measures has been that we have discovered the limit of our powers. Those of you who remember the debate on the governance of the Church Commissioners will realise that that was an incredibly close vote and that Synod provided itself with an opportunity to express its mind. We as a Committee know the limits of our powers and where we can go with them. As a result of that, Mr Fender's principled objection all the way through has been the same, that this might be an opportunity for people to take advantage and that the sunset clause provides protection against that happening from Parliament, have proved to be unfounded and, as a result of that, and because gaining parliamentary time is not an easy thing to do – let the hearer understand – we ought to simply allow ourselves to make this decision by use of the Measure which, do not forget, will have to go through the ecclesiastical process in Parliament as well in order to be deemed suitable for Royal Assent. There will be an opportunity for Parliament to deal with this if they are not happy and so I encourage you to support Mr Hofmeyr in his proposal.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I have got two concerns about this. I, like Mr Fender, am a member of the Scrutiny Committee – you will not be surprised to learn – and I think this has been a curate's egg, frankly. Some of the stuff that has been done under the Measure has been sensible and good. Other things have been outwith the scope of what many of us thought we were voting for when we passed the Measure in the first place, including what Simon Butler has just referred to on the governance of the Church Commissioners, which is why the vote was so close. Many of us thought this was not the sort of thing that should be done by that means. I do not think it is an unqualified success.

What particularly worries me – and again Simon Butler has just referred to this, but I think this is a problem – is Parliament will have to approve this Miscellaneous Provisions Measure ultimately and before they can do that the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament has to be satisfied that the Measure is expedient. We have already been told that the sunset clause was inserted at the request of the Second Church Estates Commissioner in order to get the Legislative Reform Measure through Parliament at all.

We do not know what members of that Committee are now going to think about the removal of the sunset clause. But there must be a risk that they will say, no, we do not want this, and because they cannot divide the Measure up it could result in the entire Measure being found inexpedient. If it does that, that is the end of it and we will have to go through all this again without the relevant clause. Synod needs to be aware that, given the particular parliamentary interest in this particular provision in the past, there must be a risk that if we leave the deletion of the sunset clause in, that the Ecclesiastical Committee will say no to the whole Measure. We just need to think about that before we vote on this.

*The Chair:* I see no-one standing. I now call Mr Hofmeyr to respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* You have heard the concerns expressed. We are of the view that the level of trust has now been built up to a sufficient degree and that this is an appropriate step forward to take with General Synod retaining power and authority to the last in order to simplify in removing unnecessary burdens in legislation and we would invite you to support the provision being retained.

Thank you, Mr Fender, for your concerns expressed. We have taken those into consideration but we, nevertheless, believe that this is the appropriate step to take at this stage having built up a level of trust and in order to avoid the procedure of each time having to go to Parliament with a proposal. For those reasons, we would invite you to resist any suggestion that clause 2 should not be approved.

*The Chair:* Therefore, I put Item 523, “That clause 2 stand part of the Measure”, to Synod. I think we are going to have to have another counted vote. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 523.

*The motion was put and carried, 168 voting in favour, 87 against, with 37 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 524**

*The Chair:* We come to Item 524, “That clauses 3 to 9 stand part of the Measure”. As no member has indicated an intention – point of order, Mr Scowen.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I would like to move under Standing Order 60 that this Measure be considered for further revision in Committee in respect of clause 8, which a number of members expressed concern about earlier.

*The Chair:* You clearly have the right to propose that, Clive, and you have the right to speak to Synod. Given that we have got a hard closure, would you be able to do that in three minutes, please?

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I hope I can do it in considerably less than that. We heard earlier on from Fraser Oates and Matt Beer and Tim Bateman, all of whom are actively involved with Bishops' Mission Orders and how they operate, of a real concern about the effect of clause 8. Now, it is unfortunate that that concern was not articulated to the Revision Committee earlier, but it is a real concern, and I hope we are all committed in this chamber to the use of Bishops' Mission Orders to enable and forward the mission of the Church.

They have been outstandingly successful in bringing particularly younger people, but not exclusively, to faith and into discipleship, and I think that now this concern has been raised it ought to be properly considered, and it would give those involved with the Bishops' Mission Orders the opportunity to write in and potentially propose amendments to what is proposed. So, that is why I think this particular clause does need further consideration before it stands part of the Measure.

*The Chair:* Can I just have an indication, please, of those who would wish to speak, if anyone wishes to speak in a debate on whether it is referred. Could you stand, please, or indicate in the normal way? Thank you. Because we need to adjourn, what I am going to suggest – and I know this is not very satisfactory but given the circumstances it is all we can do – is that we resume the debate tomorrow, Clive, on what you have just proposed. So, if you are able to remember what you were going to do or say, that would be really helpful and then we continue debating this Measure itself, tomorrow.

I now adjourn this particular item of business and we will resume it tomorrow when the Business Committee tells us when.

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 11.36 am.

## **ITEM 7**

### **LOYAL ADDRESS**

*The Chair:* Synod, we come now to Item 7 on the agenda, the Loyal Address, which will be moved by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Let me just explain how we will then proceed. Following that, there will be opportunity for speeches from the floor, but I have been informed that both the Prolocutor of York and the Chair of the House of Laity wish to contribute, as well, to this session, and they will take precedence over anyone speaking from the floor. We will deal with that as we get to it, but just so that you know the shape of the events, and there will, of course be a vote at the end.

So, I turn now to the Archbishop of Canterbury to speak to Item 7. The members of Synod will need Notice Paper 12 for this item, which is available on the App. The Archbishop of Canterbury has up to ten minutes, but I understand he is not likely to take ten minutes.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* I have no idea, Chair, where you got that understanding – certainly not from me.

As the nation prepares to come together this year, on 6 May, to celebrate the coronation of His Majesty the King, I wish to begin by reminding us of the tribute we have paid and continue to owe to Her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. Yesterday marked the 71st anniversary of her accession to the throne. Throughout the many years that followed we were blessed with a shining example of Christian faith and duty, which was recognised and mourned by Church, nation and by much of the world last year.

We remain encouraged by her discipleship and strengthened by her legacy and now, over 70 years later, we recommit our service to His Majesty King Charles III. The King reigns in a very different era. The world has changed hugely since 1952. New challenges have emerged, new opportunities have arisen, history has progressed and had its effect. Science and technological developments have been more rapid than any of us could have forecast.

Culture has changed, climate change has become the great threat of our times. We are once more observing a European war. And yet, as the years changed, the steadfast presence of Her late Majesty the Queen was a source of reassurance, and we are fortunate that the same reassurance is now found in His Majesty King Charles III. We know that His Majesty has been extremely prescient with regard to these changes. For many years he has spoken of the importance of protecting our climate, something which the Prince of Wales has also taken up. He was probably forty to fifty years ahead of his time in recognising those threats. Like his beloved father, the Duke of Edinburgh, he has been aware of and fascinated by the potential of scientific and industrial solutions to our modern problems.

These are issues of profound importance to the Church of England, and above all to the Anglican Communion. Christians around the Communion are at the forefront of climate change and we remember our brothers and sisters who are in countries that are already bearing its brunt. One of the things I heard this last weekend in South Sudan was the huge areas of the country still covered in water by the enormous floods of earlier this year, stagnant water now giving rise to a malaria epidemic on a scale they have never before experienced. At home, the Church of England maintains an ambitious but necessary Net Zero Carbon by 2030 as its objective. Churches care for the natural environment and their local communities; Christians are working together to protect our planet.

We know also that the King has been extremely active in the interfaith area. And yet, at the same time as drawing others into dialogue from different faiths around the world, he has spoken out passionately for the plight of Christians who are persecuted. Here at home, he has brought together so many of the different faiths and cultures in this country to enable better understanding.

This coronation year will be a time to celebrate the culture that he has begun to create and for which we long, of recognising how difference and diversity make us stronger, and the common values that unite us. I have, as has been reported on the news, had several nightmares about things going wrong at the coronation. But I have been inspired and comforted reading about the tips and mistakes of previous Archbishops.

Archbishop Fisher is said to have kept a flask of brandy with him on the day of the Queen's coronation. Given the service lasted four hours, one understands why.

Archbishop Lang and the other bishops at the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, perhaps finished their flasks before the ceremony. Archbishop Lang thought the Dean had given him St Edward's crown the wrong way round, one bishop stepped on the King's train and another put his thumb over the words of the oath when the King was about to read it. I do look now at the Bishop of Bath & Wells and the Bishop of Durham because it was one of them.

It is a privilege for the Church of England to be at the heart of this momentous event. We remain the only European country where there is a religious coronation. And I know that churches and cathedral churches all over the land will join and lead their local celebrations over that extraordinary weekend.

As we gather together to discern the will of God for the Church of England, we take great comfort in knowing for certain that the prayers of His Majesty the King are with us. In turn, we offer our own steadfast prayer that the Lord might succour and strengthen His Majesty the King and the Queen Consort. May the King be blessed with the wisdom and grace necessary for his reign as his late mother was in hers. And may he be blessed by the grace as he seeks to point towards the Kingdom of Heaven over which the King of Kings reigns eternal, the King for all of us. I move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* I now invite the Revd Kate Wharton to make her speech following the Loyal Address from the Archbishop, and she has two minutes. We are facing timed business at ten to twelve, as you will know from your agenda.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* It is, of course, only a very short time, just seven months in fact, since we gave a loyal address to Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of Her late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. And now we prepare for the coronation of His Majesty the King in just a few months' time. We look forward with joy and gratitude and with hopeful expectation for the years ahead.

It was my privilege to meet His Majesty some years ago when he was the Prince of Wales and I was a shiny new curate. Bishop James Jones and the then Prince had decided to run an exciting pilot project in one of the Prince's Trust programmes, a short-term project where a cohort of NEET young adults were gathered together and supported to plan and prepare for a different future. They were given access to a whole range of resources and opportunities, supported in changing the outcome that lay ahead.

And the success rate was extraordinary, a very high percentage ended up in employment or future education and training. Bishop James and the King are great friends and they decided that something was missing from these programmes – conversations about life and faith. And so, they set about creating a pilot project with a chaplaincy element. I realise this sounds for all of the world like the start of a joke, but they invited a Muslim, a Jew and a Christian to accompany the young people for the duration of the programme. It was a privilege to be part of it.



We facilitated conversations along the way as we climbed mountains, helped them write job applications, and then we celebrated with them at the end as we honoured their achievements. His Majesty came to Liverpool towards the end of that pilot project to meet with Bishop James and me, and the chaplains. I was extraordinarily impressed and moved by the King's passion for the project, not just for the Prince's Trust in the abstract, but for this one small programme with a gang of funny, grumpy, swearsy teenagers from Bootle. I hope it is neither irreverent or treasonous to say this ---

*The Chair:* I afraid that your time has come to an end.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* You cannot leave me on that line, Joyce, but in that conversation, there was no difference between the Muslim, the Jew, the Christian, the Bishop, the Prince and the commoners – faith mattered to us all.

*The Chair:* I now call upon Jamie Harrison as the Chair of the House of Laity to make a speech. It would be helpful if you could do it in one minute, please.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* With the passing over of our lovely Queen, the handing on of the baton of monarchy, we see much continuity, but also many new possibilities. His Majesty, as we have heard, has long challenged us about the effects of climate change and the need to protect nature, championed the needs of young people, been open to those not in the mainstream, and aware of those who have a different faith from him and from ourselves.

It must therefore be our prayer to ask God to continue to bless and inspire our new monarch and the Queen Consort. As we heard last night, we have changed our Evensong liturgy to “O Lord, save the King”, and we still respond, though, with “And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee”, so that as God hears us, we must at the same time be asking that our King should know the salvation that comes from the living God.

*The Chair:* I call upon the Archbishop of Canterbury to respond. I am sorry that we cannot take any comments from the floor but it is simply not possible.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* Thank you for those two contributions, which were very valuable and I am sure there are many that could have been made from the floor.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 7 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 11.51 am.

## **ITEM 8 QUESTIONS**

*The Chair:* We now come to Item 8, questions. Synod members will need Questions Notice Paper 2 for this session. All the questions for this session relate to *LLF*. I would like to just remind Synod that any supplementary questions must be questions, they must not ask for an opinion and they need to be able to be answered by facts. Question 143.

143. *Mrs Ruth Allan (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Following my previous question, (Q38 in November 2022), regarding the legislative change that increases the minimum age of Marriage and Civil Partnership to 18yrs (whilst the age of consent for sexual intercourse remains at 16yrs) has further consideration been undertaken by the College of Bishops and could you clarify the conclusions? If not, when might this be deliberated?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: In your previous question you asked about the implications of this legislative change for the teaching and practice of Christian sexual ethics as received by the Church of England, especially in Church of England schools and colleges and church-based youth groups. This is an area that will be considered and clarified as part of the process of writing the new *Pastoral Guidance* which we hope will be available in July 2023.

*Mrs Ruth Allan:* Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your consideration, and may I please ask that while we wait for the new *Pastoral Guidance* what should the Church be teaching in our youth groups and schools about the Church of England's position on sexual activity and marriage, given that the age of consent remains at 16, when the Act of Parliament raises the age of marriage and civil partnerships to 18, and this takes effect on the 27th of this month.

*The Bishop of London:* I am very aware of the very good work that already goes on in our schools and with our youth workers, and of course, the teaching of those things that we value in Holy Matrimony are the things that they pass on, around lifelong partnerships, also around honouring each other in that way. So, certainly, in a sense, teaching what already is at the root of what is central to Holy Matrimony is what I would expect to continue.

144. *Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In November 2022 (Q36) I asked the House of Bishops "In answer to a previous question from Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Q49 in February 2019) the then Bishop of Newcastle, on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops, confirmed that the House of Bishops' position on marriage is that set out in Canon B 30 – 'marriage is in its nature a union permanent and lifelong, for better for worse, till death them do part, of one man with one woman'. Is the position of the House of Bishops that this represents the doctrine of the Church and, if so, that any sexual relations outside of this definition of marriage is a sin?" In answer to that question the Bishop of London said "Canon B 30 does indeed continue to articulate the doctrine of the Church, including asserting that Holy Matrimony is the proper context for sexual intimacy".

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is that neither same sex couples or those living as married outside of the sacrament of marriage can receive God's blessing,

because the Church cannot bless a state of sin (see the response to a question of doctrine issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; 15.03.2021).

Whilst confirming that Canon B 30 and Canon A5 are to remain unchanged, GS 2289 (LLF Response and Recommendations) proposes the use of prayer or acts of worship which affirm, celebrate and bless “same-sex couples”, including those who have registered a civil partnership or entered into a civil marriage. This was also the position explained at the Synod Press Conference on the 20th January 2023.

Further, whilst the House of Bishops statement ‘Issues in Human Sexuality’ (1991) is also set to be revoked, according to the Guardian newspaper the Archbishop of Canterbury ‘affirms [the] validity’ of the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 on Human Sexuality that homosexual practice is incompatible with Scripture.

In order to provide clarity, and to understand the teaching of the House of Bishops, are the proposals in GS 2289 which ask Synod to affirm, celebrate and bless “same-sex couples” (including those who have registered a civil partnership or entered into a civil marriage) calling the Church to affirm, celebrate and bless a state of sin or are the House Bishops seeking to redefine what constitutes a sinful act?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The bishops’ response offers clergy who so including same-sex couples. The prayers are silent on the question of the sexual intimacy of the couple. The blessing that is conferred is God’s blessing on the two people. The new *Pastoral Guidance* will offer further clarity on the necessary qualities of a relationship for it to be considered chaste and holy for all God’s people, and what it means in practice for clergy to ‘endeavour to fashion their own life and that of their household according to the way of Christ’

*Mr Sam Margrave:* At the press conference two weeks ago on *LLF*, the Bishop of London said that the prayers offered are to mark stages of a relationship outside of marriage and that the relationship will be blessed and some of these relationships will be sexual in nature. For clarity, as it is not clear from this answer or the previous answer in November ---

*The Chair:* What is your question?

*Mr Sam Margrave:* The question is what is the theological position, the decided and agreed theological position on the blessing of sexual relationships outside of Canon B 30? Is the position of the House of Bishops that it is a sin or it is not a sin? Yes or no would do, Bishop, thank you.

*The Bishop of London:* The issue around the *Pastoral Guidance* and the prayers and blessings are silent on issues of sexual intimacy and they will be considered as part of the *Pastoral Guidance*.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I wonder has the House considered how the silence of the prayers on the question of sexual intimacy, which the Bishop has just referred to, works with the *Pastoral Principle* that we should speak into silence.

*The Bishop of London* Thank you, Clive, for your question. This afternoon there is a session which I am sure you will be at, which is an opportunity for the House of Bishops to listen to both the views around the *Pastoral Guidance* and also on the prayers, and we very much look forward to hearing the voices and comments of people, and we will respond to that.

145. *Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Canon A 5 states “The doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures”.

In relation to gender, sex, identity and human sexuality, this includes 2 Timothy 4.3, Genesis 5.2, Mark 10.6–9, Matthew 19.3–12, Leviticus 18.22, Romans 1.24–27, Genesis 2.24, 1 John 2.15–17, Romans 6, 1 Corinthians 4.6, Jeremiah 23.16–17, Luke 17.1–2, Matthew 18.6–9, Ezekiel 3.18–19, 2 Timothy 3.1–4, 2 Corinthians 5.17, 1 Corinthians 13.4 and 1 John 2.3–6.

Has the House of Bishops considered whether support for the ‘Pride’ movement is compatible with the above teaching, and if not, will it undertake to issue a view on this subject?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Pride movement takes many forms and seeks to communicate a range of messages. It is not a simple matter, therefore, to determine whether support for the movement is compatible with the teaching of the Scriptures that you list – especially as these Scriptures may also be interpreted in different ways by faithful Christians. Therefore, the House will not undertake to issue a view on this subject.

*Mr Sam Margrave:* While not all Pride is sexualised, there is evidence of sexual content on our streets that would not be allowed on TV before 9 pm, and there is evidence of sexualisation and grooming of children at Pride ---

*The Chair:* What is your question?

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* This is my question, Chair. There is evidence of sexualisation and grooming of children at some Pride events, what is the House of Bishops doing to protect children from that sexualisation at Pride or from Queer Theory?

*The Chair:* That does not relate to the original question, I am afraid.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* It does, it is about the Bishops’ position on Pride, Chair, and whether they are protecting children from Pride.

*The Chair:* That question is out of order.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* They should have a position and be able to tell me. Because you do not want to protect children and you dare not speak against Pride or Queer Theory. Shame on you.

*The Chair:* Please sit down.

146. *The Revd Leslie Siu (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The 2005 pastoral statement on civil partnerships states: “the Church of England teaches that ‘sexual intercourse, as an expression of faithful intimacy, properly belongs within marriage exclusively’ (Marriage: a teaching document of the House of Bishops, 1999). Sexual relationships outside marriage, whether heterosexual or between people of the same sex, are regarded as falling short of God’s purposes for human beings”. Does this still reflect the doctrine and teaching of the Church of England, and if not, by what process of theological engagement, synodical discussion, and legal approval has this been changed?

147. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops (i) decided to repudiate the historic teaching referred to in GS 2289 that the only rightful place for sexual activity is Holy Matrimony, and (ii) considered whether such teaching is part of the doctrine of the Church of England and whether the House has power to change it without the agreement of General Synod or of Parliament and, if so, to what conclusion did it come?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission I will answer questions 146 and 147 together.

While not explicitly stated in the Church’s Canons, for many years the Church has taught that the only rightful place for sexual activity is Holy Matrimony. The House of Bishops has not repudiated this but acknowledges that there is disagreement in the Church about how this applies today.

As part of developing the *Pastoral Guidance* bishops will need to clarify this situation and any procedural implications that may or may not follow.

*The Revd Leslie Siu:* I know this is hard. As well as the Canons of the Church, as you mentioned in your answer, the adoption of Holy Matrimony and right sexual relationships is articulated elsewhere – catechisms, homilies, the marriage service itself. What consideration has the House of Bishops given to those texts and whether they continue to apply today and as we look ahead to the development of *Pastoral Guidance*?

*The Bishop of London:* The House of Bishops considered a whole range of material, including some of those that you included in your answer, and as I say, at the moment, the doctrine of Holy Matrimony has not changed.

*Dr Ros Clarke (Lichfield):* The questions and answers here talk about sexual activity. In the Bishops' proposals and pastoral prayers, it talks about sexual intimacy. I wonder if you could tell me whether the House of Bishops have a definition of sexual intimacy, and if and how that might differ from sexual activity?

*The Bishop of London:* I think that the issue of sexual intimacy is something that we – not just as the House of Bishops but as Synod – will need to contend with, and it is further work that we expect to do as part of the *Pastoral Principles*.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* In the light of the Bishop's answer, will the House of Bishops consider, when refining the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, introducing a rubric making it clear that the prayers may not be used to indicate or imply affirmation of sexually active relationships outwith Holy Matrimony, or to invoke God's blessing on such relationships?

*The Bishop of London:* Thank you, Clive, for your comment, and I will take that back. It will be also helpful for you to reiterate that comment in the group work this afternoon.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Oh, I will Bishop, I will.

148. *Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the House of Bishops please confirm whether or not the offering of a service of dedication, thanksgiving and/or blessing for same-sex couples is meant to provide a form of granting approval for such relationships and licence for them to engage in sexual intimacy, when (a) the marriage of such couples is presently deemed to be unholy and not ordained by God (i.e. falling outwith the estate of Holy Matrimony) and (b) it is acknowledged by the bishops themselves on page 8 of GS 2289 that for many years (and hitherto) the Church has taught that the only rightful place for sexual activity is marriage (i.e. Holy Matrimony as defined in Canon B 30)?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* are silent on the question of sexual intimacy.

While not explicitly stated in the Church's Canons, for many years the Church has taught that the only rightful place for sexual activity is Holy Matrimony. The House of Bishops has not retracted this but acknowledges that there is disagreement in the Church about how this applies today.

As part of developing the *Pastoral Guidance* bishops will need to clarify this situation.

*Mr Daniel Matovu:* Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your answer but unfortunately it was not to my question. In their deliberations, the Bishops must have appreciated and considered the fact that many, if not most same-sex couples will be in an intimate sexual relationship. My question is this: are the Bishops commending the use of these Prayers for all same sex couples including those engaged in an active sexual

relationship or only for those who are celibate? In other words, are the Bishops accepting that it will be permissible to be in an active sexual relationship as a same-sex couple and appropriate for such a couple to receive God's blessing?

*The Bishop of London:* I think listening through the *Living in Love and Faith* programme and listening to all the voices that we heard, one of the things that we have learned as a House of Bishops is that there are many different types of relationships, and therefore it would be wrong for us to categorise it in the way you have suggested around "most". As I say, in terms of the issues around sexual intimacy, the Prayers at this stage are silent and further work needs to be done.

*Mr Daniel Matovu:* Sorry, is it possible to answer the question whether they are intended for all same-sex couples?

*The Chair:* You have asked your question.

149. *The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: On Radio 4 on Sunday 22 January, the Archbishop of York commented: 'Physical and sexual intimacy belongs in a committed, stable and faithful relationship, and therefore, when we see a committed, stable, faithful relationship between two people of the same sex we are now in a position where those people can be welcomed fully into the life of the church on their terms'. This is a contradiction of the position set out in the 2005 House of Bishops Statement on Civil Partnerships that: 'The Church of England teaches that 'sexual intercourse, as an expression of faithful intimacy, properly belongs within marriage exclusively' (Marriage: A teaching document of the House of Bishops, 1999)'. Which of these two positions was affirmed at any recent meetings of the House of Bishops, and if the former, what consideration was given to whether this represented a change in the Church's doctrine?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: All people, regardless of their marital status and the nature of their relationship are to be welcomed into the life of the Church.

While not explicitly stated in the Church's Canons, for many years the Church has taught that the only rightful place for sexual activity is Holy Matrimony. This is explicitly stated in a number of teaching documents of the Church, including the one quoted from 2005.

The House of Bishops has not retracted this teaching and the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* are silent about sexual intimacy. However, there is disagreement in the Church about how the Church's teaching applies today. As part of developing the *Pastoral Guidance* bishops will need to clarify this situation and any procedural implications that may or may not follow.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Bishop Sarah, thank you very much for your answer. Given that the documentation that was quoted in the question was almost entirely unambiguous, I wonder if you could clarify the nature of the "disagreement" in the Church about how the teaching applies today? Is there

disagreement about how it applies or is it disagreement about whether these documents still apply?

*The Bishop of London:* Sorry Ian, I am lost. You are going to have to tell me the document you are talking about.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* This is Question 149. The documents listed there are the position set out in the 2005 House of Bishops' statement, the Citation of Marriage 1999.

*The Bishop of London:* I have got it now. I did not see the list. Can you repeat your question? I apologise.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* Given that the statements within these documents repeatedly are entirely unambiguous about the nature of the application, could you clarify the nature of the disagreement in the Church about how they apply, and, in particular, could you clarify whether this is a disagreement about the nature of the application or whether this is a disagreement about whether these documents still apply.

*The Bishop of London:* No, I think there is agreement, as I have already said, that these documents still apply. I think the disagreement is as regards a pastoral response in terms of the future around what matters.

150. *Mr Stephen Boyall (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Where can the Church's teaching about sex outside heterosexual marriage be found?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Church's teaching is that the only rightful place for sexual activity is Holy Matrimony. While not explicitly stated in the Church's Canons, for many years this teaching has been maintained and is set out in a number of teaching documents, including 'Marriage: A Teaching Document from the House of Bishops, 1999'.

The House of Bishops has not retracted this teaching but acknowledges that there is disagreement in the Church about how this applies today. As part of developing the *Pastoral Guidance* bishops will need to clarify this situation and any procedural implications that may or may not follow.

151. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the many warnings in Scripture about false teaching, what work has been done on testing the proposed prayers for same-sex relationship blessings so that changes from previously clear unambiguous teaching (and indeed official statements from the House of Bishops) may be shown to be upheld by Scripture itself, and where can we read it?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* do not change the Church's teaching on Holy Matrimony, and they are silent on the question of sexual intimacy.



The Church is divided on the question of same-sex sexual intimacy. The biblical and theological arguments for both sides can be found in the LLF Book and in an excellent and detailed dialogue between Walter Moberly and Chris Wright, which can be found in the LLF online Library. Furthermore, an extended essay on the biblical understanding of 'blessing' which expands what is offered on page 6 of the Bishops' Response can also be found in the LLF online Library.

The *Pastoral Guidance* will need to offer clarity about the Church's teaching on these matters and the theological and biblical underpinning for any recommendations that may be made.

*Mrs Mary Durlacher.* Given the importance of this subject, silence is not always golden. Can we be given some indication of exactly how you intend to investigate properly the issue of true teaching, received teaching, because these documents that you refer to are not within the reach of most ordinary parishes and PCCs?

*The Bishop of London:* What the *Living in Love and Faith* programme tried to do was to engage people in conversation both around theology and Scripture, as well as listening to people's stories. On the LLF hub there is a whole wealth of information available that is in a very accessible form in the *Living in Love and Faith* document as well as a series of videos and podcasts, as well as a resource library of different views and different opinions. That is made available and through the course I think it was made very accessible for people to engage both with each other and with this material and I am very grateful to those who have done that. The House of Bishops has also engaged in that way.

152. *Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In answer to a question from Mrs Ruth Allan (Guildford) in the November Question Paper (Question 37), the Bishop of London stated that the Church's doctrine of marriage is set out in Canon B 30, in the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony contained in the Book of Common Prayer, and in the Marriage Service in *Common Worship*. When was the Marriage Service in *Common Worship* afforded this status and by whom?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Final Approval of the *Common Worship* Marriage Service was given by the General Synod in February 2000 for implementation from Advent 2000, when the majority of the core *Common Worship* provision went into use. As with all authorized forms of liturgy, it therefore communicates doctrine in the Church of England. Authorization details can be found in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* p.463.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr.* Thank you for the answer to my question. Under what provision was it authorized?

*The Bishop of London:* I would have to get back to you about that question.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr.* Thank you so much. That is very kind.

*The Bishop of London:* I assume you are talking about the *Common Worship* marriage service?

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr:* I am, yes.

153. *The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops' response to *Living in Love and Faith* moots a novel distinction between Holy Matrimony and Civil Marriage. Can the House state whether this distinction is its settled view or simply a passing observation with no standing; and, if the former, what further work it has commissioned to explore the implications of this distinction?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Whatever the position may have been before then, a distinction between Civil Marriage and Holy Matrimony was exposed when the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 came into force, because the civil and religious understandings of marriage now contradict each other. While the House has not yet focused further on this distinction, beyond its implications for same-sex couples entering a civil marriage only, it will be important for the House to do so.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler:* Chair, before I ask my question, could I just ask you from the chair if you might remind people to keep the tone of their questions a bit less aggressive than they seem to be at the moment.

*The Chair:* Thank you. I do endorse that view.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler:* Bishop Sarah, given that this is a novel idea and it is a process being worked out, could I remind you and Synod that we do have a document that once was a discussion document that became a policy. It was called *Issues in Human Sexuality*. You may have heard of it. At this time, can you confirm that this distinction is not one that is the policy or position of the House of Bishops?

*The Bishop of London:* It is not a policy but I think what we are trying to say is the Act of 2013 raised issues that probably should have been discussed at the time. In a sense *Living in Love and Faith* has raised them again and maybe we are better equipped to look at it.

154. *The Revd Leslie Siu (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS Misc 1027 The Church of England's response to the Government consultation on same-sex marriage – stated (page 1) that the consultation paper wrongly implied that there are two categories of marriage, "civil" and "religious". Did the House of Bishops consider whether their proposals on *Prayers of Love and Faith* were compatible with this statement? If yes, what legal and theological justifications were given? If no, why not?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS Misc 1027 goes on to say: 'The assertion that "religious marriage" will be unaffected by the proposals is therefore untrue, since fundamentally changing the state's understanding of marriage means that the nature of marriages solemnized in churches and other places of worship would

also be changed. [...] ... changing the law to embrace same-sex marriages, on the terms set out in the consultation, would necessitate introducing such a distinction for the first time’.

This shows that even in 2012, the Church of England was clear that introducing same-sex Civil Marriage would have the effect of creating a distinction between Civil Marriage and Holy Matrimony.

*The Revd Leslie Sui:* You mentioned the 2013 Act. A legal exemption was made so the Church of England would not be required or able to solemnize same-sex marriages. Has consideration been given as to whether the proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith* will undermine the plausibility of that legal exception, and if so what concerns were identified?

*The Bishop of London:* We did consider around the nature of prayers and our view is that that does not change the doctrine of holy marriage, the doctrine remains the same, and because of the difference view in the House around same sex-marriage, we are not pushing that at this time.

155. *The Revd Timothy Edwards (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The doctrine of the Church in relation to marriage is set out in the following sources; that according to our Lord’s teaching it is, ‘in its nature a union permanent and lifelong, for better for worse, till death them do part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others’ (Canon B 30) and that ‘sexual intercourse, as an expression of faithful intimacy, properly belongs within marriage exclusively’ (Marriage: A Teaching Document from the House of Bishops, 1999), and that all sexual activity outside of that context ‘are to be met with a call to repentance and the exercise of compassion’ (General Synod, 1987), By what mechanism did this doctrine change?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Bishops’ response, including the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith*, has not changed the Church’s doctrine of Holy Matrimony. The Church’s teaching on sexual intimacy is as described in the 1987 and 1999 documents to which you refer, although Canon B 30 is not as explicit as this.

Given that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are silent about sexual intimacy, and that there is disagreement in the Church about how this teaching applies today, bishops will need to clarify this situation and any procedural implications that may or may not follow as part of developing the *Pastoral Guidance*.

*The Revd Timothy Edwards:* Thank you, Bishop, for the clarity of your answer and thank you very much, I appreciate that you have in many ways drawn the short straw by being the person who has to respond these Questions.

*The Bishop of London:* I am not sure about that.

*The Revd Timothy Edwards:* Given that you have so helpfully clarified that the doctrine and teaching of the Church is not intended to change, what consideration has the House or College of Bishops given so far to how to ensure continuity with previous

statements from the House and College of Bishops in terms of the application of that teaching?

*The Bishop of London:* I think in our reflections we have been very mindful of those statements. I think what we have also heard already in this Synod, and we have heard in these Questions, is that there is still more work to do, particularly around the nature of sexual intimacy. We have seen the continuity but I think there is further work to do.

156. *Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops considered to what extent the proposed prayers for same-sex couples teach away from the doctrine of marriage in Canon B 30? And in turn, has the House considered calling for a return to the teaching contained in Holy Scripture, and calling a halt to any false teaching?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The House of Bishops has carefully considered the *Prayers of Love and Faith* in the light of the Church's doctrine and teaching. As explained in the pastoral introduction and legal notes to the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, "the prayers and forms of service commended here are 'neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter' (including, but not limited to, the definition of Holy Matrimony in Canon B 30). Any adaptation of these resources must meet the requirement of Canon B 5." See the [Legal Note \(p. 22\) for more detail.](#)

*Mr Richard Denno:* Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your reply to my question and for pointing us to the need to be neither contrary to nor indicative of any departure from the doctrine of the Church of England.

The second half my question was using a similar language of travel where I said, has the House of Bishops considered calling for a return to the teaching contained in Holy Scripture and calling a halt to any false teaching?

*The Bishop of London:* I think the House of Bishops in our time takes very seriously both Holy Scripture and its teaching, and we have engaged in wrestling with Scripture. You will know that within this Synod people will prayerfully study Scripture and they will come up with a different view on it. Therefore, it is important for us to listen to each other in that way, which is what we have been seeking to do, which is to listen to each other, but also we take very seriously our role as being teachers of the faith and teachers of Scripture.

157. *The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Under the new *Pastoral Guidance* would clergy from around the Anglican Communion who are already in same-sex marriages be able to hold a licence in the Church of England?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* This is an important question that will be answered in the new *Pastoral Guidance*.

*The Revd Mae Christie:* Thank you so much for this really helpful answer and we look

forward to reading the new *Pastoral Guidance*. The related question I had was whether or not the new *Pastoral Guidance* will touch on the possibility of Church of England clergy and licence holders getting married in churches around the Anglican Communion in same-sex marriages, particularly in Scotland, for instance?

*The Bishop of London:* It will consider that.

158. *Mr Nic Tall (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the new *Pastoral Guidance* be applicable to licensed lay ministers?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The new *Pastoral Guidance* will incorporate guidance for lay as well as ordained ministries of different kinds, including guidance concerning licensed lay ministers.

159. *The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Under the new *Pastoral Guidance* will clergy be able to enter into a same-sex civil marriage and subsequently be issued a licence?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The answer to this will be clarified as part of writing the new *Pastoral Guidance*.

160. *The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: If clergy are permitted to enter a same sex civil marriage under the new *Pastoral Guidance*, would this be a national policy observed by all diocesan bishops?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As you rightly say, the question regarding clergy in same-sex civil marriages will be clarified as part of the process of producing the *Pastoral Guidance*.

The policy will also clarify how such a decision would be implemented across dioceses in the light of bishops' agreement to walk together and to respect the different convictions that are held among themselves and among the clergy they serve in their dioceses.

161. *The Revd Rachel Wakefield (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the timetable for the redrafting of the commended prayers and the new *Pastoral Guidance*?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the *Pastoral Guidance* will be developed in tandem, and it is hoped that they will be ready in time for the meeting of the General Synod in July 2023.

162. *The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will potential ordinands be required to assent to the new *Pastoral Guidance*?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The new *Pastoral Guidance* will be written in such a way that it will invite potential ordinands to engage with a range of matters relating to the pastoral teaching of the Church in a meaningful and interactive way, rather than using it with the mechanistic approach you describe.

*The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark):* This question was helpfully put to me by the ordinands of Westcote House, who are watching this on livestream in the college common room, which I think is just about the geekiest and loveliest thing I have ever heard of in my life. They ask this really important question: will ordinands already in training at the time of the new *Pastoral Guidance*'s submission be asked to engage with it in the way that the Bishop describes for those already in training who have already in some way had to assent to *Issues in Human Sexuality*?

*The Bishop of London:* When the Guidance is produced it will not look like a book that people have to sign up to. It will be much more in a sense around those things some of us may understand as policy, and, therefore, it will be interwoven into discernment processes. It will be almost certainly be interwoven in a way that will fit those different stages of a discernment process. What I will do is look to those in the Ministry Division who will enable us to say how does that fit at certain times. All of us will know in our discernment process we are asked different questions at different times but sometimes they are repeated, so the working out of the *Pastoral Guidance* will need to come through collaboration with the Ministry Division.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* As the current mechanism is being withdrawn, how will bishops ensure those they are sponsoring are living a moral and Godly life in respect of sexual behaviour?

*The Bishop of London:* That is the purpose of the *Pastoral Guidance*.

163. *Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the House of Bishops confirm that there are no reasons given in 'Living in Love and Faith: A Response from the Bishops of the Church of England' ('Bishops' Response') which would preclude the *Prayers of Love and Faith* from being offered in respect of two people (whether of the same sex or the opposite sex) who are not married nor in a civil partnership but who are in a cohabitation relationship which is sexually active and that there is no indication given in the Bishops' Response as to the necessary qualities which such a cohabitation relationship must exhibit in order for the relationship to be considered committed and faithful for the purposes of these *Prayers* (so that, by way of example only, no indication is given as to the admissibility or otherwise of the use of these *Prayers* where one or both of the parties to the cohabitation relationship is married to a third person from whom he or she is separated but not divorced)?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The use of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* will be further described in the *Pastoral Guidance*. This will include setting out unequivocally the necessary qualities for a relationship to be considered chaste, faithful and holy. This will necessarily include ensuring that the relationship does not transgress existing legal relationships, such as a marriage or civil partnership.

*Mr Christopher Townsend:* My question concerns relationships which are neither civil marriage nor civil partnerships but are relationships of cohabitation and sexual intimacy. Can the Bishop confirm that at the present time the House of Bishops has not reached a settled mind on whether *the Prayers of Love and Faith* should be made available to couples in such relationships?

*The Bishop of London:* We have not reached a settled mind.

164. *Mrs Sandie Turner (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that *Prayers of Love and Faith* are the “means of which relationships between two people can be joyfully affirmed and celebrated in church, these prayers will give thanks and praise to God for the gift of two people who love one another; they will mark the couple’s commitment to one another and offer prayers with and for them. By selecting appropriate prayers and readings, it is envisaged that the service may be adapted to offer different ways for couples to publicly confirm, give thanks for, and celebrate their love and commitment. Some may wish to use the service for dedication and thanksgiving, and others for dedication and blessing. They may be used by a couple who have marked a significant stage in the development of their relationship”, could the bishop confirm that these prayers can also be used for a newly cohabiting, but unmarried, heterosexual couple, to mark both their commitment to one another and a significant stage in the development of their relationship?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for this suggestion. I will make sure it is brought to the attention of the *Pastoral Consultative Group* when it is formed and the group begins its work of writing the *Pastoral Guidance*.

*Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth):* Please could you help me with this: if the *Prayers* may be used for a man and a woman who have just moved in together, how will the Bishops make sure that use of the *Prayers* in that way will not undermine Canon B 30 and our doctrine of marriage?

*The Bishop of London:* That will be part of the *Pastoral Guidance*. I think it is probably important for us to say in our discussions as a House we have always underlined the need for permanent faithful stable committed relationships between two people.

*Mrs Sandie Turner:* Slightly following on from what we have just heard – thank you very much for your response to my question – could the consultative group consider giving really clear clarification and guidance over what does mark a significant stage in a relationship so that clergy avoid inadvertently offering prayers for a non-married couple for whom sexual intimacy may indeed be that significant stage they wish to mark?

*The Bishop of London:* It can.

165. *Mrs Jeanette Appleton (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will diocesan bishops be required to follow the new *Pastoral Guidance* or would it be discretionary?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The *Pastoral Guidance* will clarify how its content would be implemented across dioceses in the light of bishops' agreement to walk together and to respect the different convictions that are held among themselves and among the clergy they serve in their dioceses.

166. *The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At what point will *Issues in Human Sexuality* no longer be a document in use by the Church of England?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* When the new *Pastoral Guidance* has been finalised and approved by the House of Bishops, *Issues in Human Sexuality* will be rescinded. It is hoped that this will take place by July 2023.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I cannot remember whether this is 165 or 166. I am speaking to the one that refers to the House of Bishops, 166. The answer says that when the new *Pastoral Guidance* has been finalised and approved by the House of Bishops *Issues in Human Sexuality* will be rescinded. It is hoped this will be in July 2023. In light of the statement from the Next Steps Group last week, are we now to read that as following consideration of the Guidance by Synod in July 2023?

*The Bishop of London:* I think we hope that it will be rescinded by July 2023. I think we are waiting to hear the discussion that occurs in the rest of Synod.

*Mr Clive Scowen:* So we are not going to get it in July?

*The Chair:* You have had your question, I am afraid.

167. *Mrs Jeanette Appleton (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Will the application of the new *Pastoral Guidance* to the vocations process treat all potential ordinands equally regardless of sexuality or gender identity?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Yes this is and will continue to be the aspiration of dioceses and bishops.

*The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham):* Could you just confirm that there are plans to put clear safeguards in place for those who feel that this has not been their experience, please?

*The Bishop of London:* Yes.

168. *Mr Robin Hall (Europe)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Is it the case that there have been priests who have been denied a licence to minister, and therefore income and a home, due to having entered a same-sex civil marriage?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Yes, that is the case.



*Mr Robin Hall:* To ensure the apology is more than just a gesture, what will be done to extend an individual apology to those priests who have suffered these consequences and, where appropriate, to compensate them for loss of home and income?

*The Bishop of London:* I do not think I can answer that just because I do not think I have the ability to, so I will come back to you.

*A speaker:* He asked my question.

*The Bishop of London:* Same answer.

169. *The Very Revd Joe Hawes (Deans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the House of Bishops give details of the proposed membership of the 'Pastoral Consultative Group' referred to in GS 2289 para 4, and if it is not yet possible to do so, when will Synod be informed?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Yes, the membership of the Pastoral Consultative Group will be made public and will be published on the Church of England's website. At the time of writing, the membership has not been established and no-one has yet been invited to join the group.

*The Very Revd Joe Hawes:* Given the very tight timescales expected in the drawing up of *Pastoral Guidelines*, and indeed one understands the Bishops are to hear back by March so that July Synod can be briefed, what assurance can you give General Synod that the voices of those who have suffered the strictures of *Issues in Human Sexuality* will truly be heard and listened to given that tight timescale?

*The Bishop of London:* I think one of the very deep lessons that we have had is around how we listen to voices and ensure the make-up of our groups is right for the task ahead, so we are going to take that seriously. As soon as the membership of the Pastoral Consultative Group is known we will make that public, and I am sure people who have concerns about representation on it will let me know.

170. *Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How will members of, and consultants to, the new Pastoral Consultative Group (GS 2289, pp. 12-13) be appointed?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The episcopal members of the group will be formally agreed by the House of Bishops in consultation with the College of Bishops. The process for choosing consultants is as yet undecided. However, bishops will seek to make this process as transparent as possible, given the need to include expertise in a number of areas as well as ensuring diversity more generally. It is likely that a wider group will be drawn upon to respond to draft material during the process.

*Mrs Caroline Herbert:* Thank you, Bishop, for your answer and especially for the reassurance about being as transparent as possible with this process. I just wondered

whether the House of Bishops had actually had an opportunity to determine the timetable for appointing members of the group and, if not, when you might be able to tell us when things are going to happen.

*The Bishop of London:* We would hope that the Pastoral Advisory Group is appointed and made public as soon as possible, but I cannot give you a specific timescale.

171. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What discipline will the Archbishops exercise on bishops in their province who break their ordination oath to 'teach the doctrine of Christ as the Church of England has received it' (Ordination Vows) in relation to Canon B 30?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* replied as *Chair of the House of Bishops:* Canon B 30 expects bishops to stay within the discipline of the Church of England by not performing marriages outside of canonical provision, nor permitting clergy under their oversight to do so (which would be both illegal and invalid).

With regard to teaching, bishops are expected to teach that this is the official position of the Church of England.

Recognising the official position does not, however, exclude debate, exploration and ongoing conversations about doctrine since doctrine has developed over centuries and at times undergone significant change.

*Mr Chris Gill:* Thank you for your answer, Archbishop, outlining some of the options for discipline. In the process of discernment of diocesan and suffragan bishops, are candidates asked whether they personally believe and are prepared to teach the doctrines of the Church and the Church's teaching ---

*The Chair:* That is not directly related to the question that was originally asked. I am sorry, it is out of order.

*Mr Benjamin John (St Albans):* History – has it always been the case that bishops are expected simply to teach it is the official position of the Church of England, and not contradict it? Has that always been the case, or was there a time when bishops were expected to believe and uphold the teaching? Has there been a shift change there? Sorry, that is confusing.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* It is very confusing. Sorry, I am a bear of slightly small brain. Could you say it again in a way that I can understand, so I can understand exactly what you are asking?

*Mr Benjamin John:* I may have misunderstood the answer. It appears to be that bishops are not expected to believe and uphold the official positions of the Church of England; simply to teach that it is the official position of the Church of England. Has that always been the case or has that changed over time?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* I am rather inclined to go back to Elizabeth I's comment that we are not going to try and put windows into, well, she said men's souls,

so when someone says, "This is the teaching", I always assume that they believe it to be correct. I cannot tell unless they say, If they say, "This is the teaching but I think it is rubbish", then you know, but in the absence of them making it clear they do not believe it, I assume they believe it.

172. *The Revd Folli Olokose (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Whilst thanking the House of Bishops and the Next Steps Group for their work on the LLF, could the House of Bishops explain if the consequences of this motion on the doctrines of the Church of England, the Anglican Communion and the worldwide Church have been considered by them? If so, what are the implications? And, how have they been addressed?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* replied as *Chair of the House of Bishops*: Bishops recognise that Churches in different parts of the world are contending with very different historical, social, political and cultural realities. While the majority view globally is one that maintains the Church's current and traditional doctrine of marriage, churches ecumenically and in the Anglican Communion have come to different conclusions.

For that reason, the implications of decisions made within the Church of England are different for different Churches. A priority for the bishops is to seek to continue to relate well with all Churches and to make sure that sister churches across the world have been kept informed of the Church of England bishops' response to LLF and the process leading to it.

In relation to the Anglican Communion, its 42 member Churches are independent and autonomous, but interdependent. No province can bind another province, and no Instrument of Communion has any jurisdictional authority over any province.

173. *The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What discussion took place in the House of Bishops to ensure that their proposals respected the mind of Synod expressed in Feb 2007 that efforts "to prevent the diversity of opinion about human sexuality creating further division and impaired fellowship within the Church of England and the Anglican Communion... would not be advanced by doing anything that could be perceived as the Church of England qualifying its commitment to the entirety of the relevant Lambeth Conference Resolutions (1978:10; 1988:64; 1998:1.10)"? What further work do they now plan in the light of the statement of 24th January from Rt Revd Justin Badi on the future of the Communion, and will the House commit that continuing work in this area will also respect this Synod motion?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* replied on behalf of the *Chair of the House of Bishops*: In their discussions, bishops raised the question of the impact of the Church of England's decision-making on the Anglican Communion. Their agreement to continue to walk together *within* the Church of England mirrors the determination among churches of the Anglican Communion that was expressed at the Lambeth Conference session on Human Dignity. This 'walking together' is set in the context of the 42 member Churches of the Communion being interdependent, but autonomous. No province can bind another province, and no Instrument of Communion has any jurisdictional authority over any province.

A priority for the bishops is to seek to continue to relate well with all Churches across the Communion, responding to their concerns and keeping them informed of the bishops' response to LLF and the process leading to it. The Archbishop of Canterbury continues his practice of liaising closely with all the Primates regarding the future of the Anglican Communion.

174. *Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Which groups, committees, or NCIs were involved in the drafting of the draft 'Prayers for Love and Faith' released in GS 2289, and was there an effort to include LGBTQ+ voices in the process?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The drafting of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* was led by the episcopal members of the Liturgical Commission supported by the National Liturgical Adviser and the Bishops' Theological Adviser. The Next Steps Group were also involved and a number of bishops with a variety of convictions were consulted. In addition, five people, including three LGBTQI+ clergy, were invited to comment and to contribute prayers and suggestions, some of which are reflected in the current draft.

175. *Canon Lucy Docherty (Portsmouth)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What will be the process for drafting the prayers and liturgies for *Prayers of Love and Faith* and what scope will there be for the wider church to have an input to the drafting and refining of these prayers?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The process of finalising the *Prayers of Love and Faith* will continue to be collaborative. A number of clergy, lay leaders and lay members of churches will be invited to contribute and respond to the drafting and refining of the *Prayers*. This will include LGBTQI+ people as well as people with a range of convictions about these matters. The members of the Liturgical Commission will work with the Faith and Order Commission and will be supported by the National Liturgical Adviser and the Bishops' Theological Adviser.

*Canon Lucy Docherty*: Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your response to my question. Could I ask, once the *Prayers of Love and Faith* have been drafted, what scope will there be for some piloting of these prayers in different parish settings before they receive Final Approval?

*The Bishop of Lichfield*: Thank you very much for that suggestion. I think that will be one of the suggestions which we are hearing from this Synod and will consider in the redrafting process in the House of Bishops.

176. *The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Please will the House publish the full details of the original liturgical sources from which the prayers, acclamations and promises in *Prayers of Love and Faith* are drawn, individually for each item.

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: We will supply members of General Synod with this information.*

## **Draft Prayers of Love and Faith**

### **Source texts**

#### **Prayers of Dedication and Thanksgiving**

A Prayer of Dedication	n.c.
A Prayer of Thanksgiving	n.c.
For the gift of love	CWPS p.163
For guidance	CWPS p.161
For the fruit of the Spirit	CWPS p.162 alt.
For companionship	CWPS p.176 alt.
For grace to live well	CWPS p.162
For a covenanted friendship	n.c.
An Acclamation	n.c.

#### **Prayers for God's Blessing**

'God of generosity and joy'	n.c.
'Blessed are you, sovereign God'	n.c.

#### **Sealing of a Covenanted Friendship**

Bidding and words of promise	n.c.
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#### **Prayers which may be said with or by a couple**

A prayer of preparation	CWMV p.168
A general thanksgiving	CWDP p.405
A prayer to the Holy Spirit	CWDP p.409
A prayer of commitment	CWPS p.178 A
Prayer when rings are worn	n.c.
Prayers at the lighting of a candle	n.c.
A prayer of Augustine of Hippo	CWDP p.36 A
prayer of Richard of Chichester	CWDP p.48

#### **Prayers for a relationship entering a new stage**

For lifelong peace	CWPS p.165 alt.
For faithfulness and peace	CWPS p.166 alt.
For discipleship	CWPS p.162 alt.
For the healing of memory	CWPS p.164
For the support of friends	CWPS p.168

#### **Prayers for a Household or Family**

'God of love and mercy'	CWPS pp.127 alt., 158 alt.
For a home	CWPS p.161
A Prayer for a Couple's Family	n.c.
A Prayer as a Couple make a Home	n.c.

#### **Sample Service 1**

*A Service of the Word incorporating prayers from the above, and:*

Prayers of Intercession	CWPS pp.157-8
Dismissal	CWPS p.182

#### **Sample Service 2**

*Holy Communion Order One incorporating prayers from the above*

#### *Guide to abbreviations*

CWDP	<i>Common Worship: Daily Prayer</i>
CWMV	<i>Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England</i>
CWPS	<i>Common Worship: Pastoral Services</i>
n.c.	new composition
alt.	denotes amended text

Revised 4 February 2023

*The Revd Andrew Atherstone:* Thank you for the very full and comprehensive details you have supplied on the Notice Board. Bishop Sarah told us yesterday that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* do not change the Church's doctrine because "they do not use any of the liturgical material of the Church of England's authorized services of marriage". Your answer shows that many of the prayers are in fact borrowed directly from our marriage liturgies. Please can you help us to reconcile these apparently contradictory statements?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* To give an example, as you know, the *Common Worship* marriage service includes a wide provision of prayers, many of them optional in use. For example, one of the prayers as posted which does derive from the *Common Worship* marriage service is the prayer for grace to live well, and that simply asks for God to give two people wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life, asking that they may live together in love and peace and support one another in their various needs. It seems to me that a prayer like that is one which certainly could be prayed by any couple sharing a common life. It is not central to the marriage service, but it is part of the suite of prayers included in the marriage service.

177. *Mr Matt Orr (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: During the bishops' time together discerning their collective response to LLF, which provinces of the Anglican Communion, or alternatively other denominations, were considered as positive role models for the process of blessing same-sex relationships, and as a result are witnessing church growth through new forms of mission and evangelism?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As part of their deliberations, the bishops commissioned research into the impact of decision-making about same-sex relationships on other churches in the Anglican Communion. The outcomes of this research can be found in the LLF online Library. The example that bishops considered in some more depth during their residential meetings was that of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

The research and the anecdotal evidence from the Three Tikanga Church context shows that it is not possible to make definitive correlations between decision-making regarding same-sex relationships and church growth and/or new forms of evangelism or mission.

*Mr Matt Orr:* Thank you for your initial response. Just to clarify, whilst it may be complicated to conclude that there is a definitive correlation, statistical evidence would suggest that there is some form of correlation between such decisions and a decline in church attendance, especially here in the UK. Given the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia as referenced is not an example of growth, which Anglican provinces or alternative denominations who have made such decisions that were considered by the bishops are statistically growing?

*The Bishop of London:* I am surprised that there is any research in the UK. The research we did look at in the Anglican Communion, which is available on the LLF

website, more indicated that when there was a change, if there was decline, it was related to the way in which it was implemented, not necessarily that it was.

*Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester):* Thank you for the answer here. Does the House of Bishops have any plans to commission research in these provinces in the Church of England to see what the impact of the bishops' proposals will be?

*The Bishop of London:* There is some research around the impact of the Church making decisions regarding issues of sexuality and marriage. We did commission it and it is on the LLF website. It is linked in Question 178.

178. *Dr Nick Land (York)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What risk assessments were undertaken of the proposals contained in GS2289 with respect to their impact on diocesan relationships, diocesan finances and relationships within the Anglican Communion?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: While risk assessments have not been done nationally, some dioceses have undertaken such a risk assessment, and the impacts on diocesan relationships, diocesan finances and relationships within the Anglican Communion were on bishops' minds throughout the discernment process.

With these matters in view, bishops did commission research into the impact of decision-making regarding same-sex relationships in the Anglican Communion. The results of this research can be found in the LLF online Library: [impact on Churches of decision-making regarding questions of sexuality and marriage.](#)

*Dr Nick Land:* As you know, we do risk assessments to mitigate adverse impacts, so before knowing the proposals I think it is very difficult for dioceses to do detailed risk assessments, which is why I wrote to every member of the College of Bishops pleading that we have a risk assessment prior to any decision. Why did you decide not to do this, particularly given your answer to 177?

*The Bishop of London:* The House of Bishops did not make a decision on this in this way. If you wrote to individual bishops, it was up to individual bishops to make those decisions within their dioceses. As the response, I think, says somewhere, some have done that.

179. *Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Plans to help LGBTQIA+ seekers find a suitable church for them by a clear message in the church's and diocese's literature and on their website will be imperative to avoid any embarrassment and hurt when asking for a blessing that may not be forthcoming. Whilst some churches are open and honest, some use ambiguous phrases like 'all are welcome' when in practice, some are more welcome than others. Estchurch.org.ukves useful examples of this. What plans do the Bishops have to promote clarity and honesty in their churches around LGBTQIA+ inclusion and their potential use of *Prayers of love and faith*?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The process of *Living in Love and Faith* and the promotion of the *Pastoral Principles* have been important elements in helping churches to understand and examine their congregational life in relation to the welcome and acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people. The new *Pastoral Guidance* will build on this to help and strongly encourage churches to be open and pastorally sensitive in relation to their position on the use of *Prayers of Love and Faith*.

180. *Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the House of Bishops please confirm whether any consideration has been given to the damaging impact of their decision to commend the offering of a service of dedication, thanksgiving and/or blessing for same-sex couples on the faith of those same-sex attracted individuals who are faithful disciples of Christ and who seek to live in obedience to God's commands by remaining celibate in accordance with the will of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and in accordance with the clear, established doctrine and teaching of the Church of England as grounded in the same Holy Scriptures?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The House of Bishops is keenly aware of the deep personal, spiritual and emotional impact that offering the *Prayers of Love and Faith* may have on many people, especially people who are gay, or same-sex attracted, and/or in same-sex relationships. It will be important, in the forthcoming *Pastoral Guidance*, to include advice about how to offer the best possible pastoral care for all for whom these matters are particularly pertinent. This will include ensuring that same-sex attracted people who, in obedience to their conscience, have chosen the path of celibacy are honoured and supported.

*The Ven. Gavin Kirk (Lincoln):* Could you share with Synod how the House of Bishops has honoured those who feel called to celibacy, and how is it planning to support them in the future?

*The Bishop of London:* Thank you very much for what is a very important question. In the document that we produced – I cannot remember what the General Synod number is – we have highlighted that there are things that we need to pay more attention to, and one of them is celibacy. I think that there is further work for us to do to attend to this and also to make sure there is the appropriate pastoral support for people in place who choose this life.

181. *Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What exploration has been undertaken by the House of Bishops of the likely impact on clergy wellbeing of the controversies around their proposals after LLF in the light of the Care of Clergy Covenant?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Bishops are keenly aware of the impact on clergy of the work of LLF and the bishops' response, and a number of dioceses have established chaplaincy provision for LLF. The bishops have not yet undertaken



an exploration of the likely impact on clergy wellbeing specifically in the light of the *Care of Clergy Covenant*. However, this will need to be part of the work of the new *Pastoral Consultative Group* when it is formed and when it drafts the *Pastoral Guidance*.

*Dr Andrew Bell*: Thank you very much for your reply and for the welcome assurances that clergy well-being will be considered, specifically as the *Pastoral Guidance* is drafted. May I make my question a little more specific? I ask it on behalf of concerned clergy. Has the House of Bishops considered the effect on clergy of the risk to those who do choose to use the *Prayers of Love and Faith* may open themselves to a complaint under the Clergy Discipline Measure while those who decline to use them may open themselves to a claim of discrimination?

*The Bishop of London*: Yes, we have and part of the *Pastoral Guidance* will be very clear about the protections that will be put in place in that case. We are very aware of that concern.

*The Revd Mark Bennett (Oxford)*: As well as those personal aspects, many of us are leading churches that may become divided as a result of the Synod decision and that may also have an impact on clergy well-being. Will the *Pastoral Guidance* help those of us in such situations?

*The Bishop of London*: It will. The other thing I would encourage is for people to use the material already available for LLF both in terms of the *Pastoral Principles* and also the work that has been put together around facilitating. All of those tools recognise that these issues raise very difficult issues for us and difficult experiences in our congregations, so there is already a wealth of material available to help clergy and churchwardens and PCCs.

182. *Mr Robin Hall (Europe)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Does the apology offered by the House of Bishops extend to the language and rhetoric the Church of England used to describe same-sex civil marriages in recent years, including its assertion that same-sex marriage “dilutes the meaning of marriage for everyone”?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As a result of the Shared Conversations and the *Living in Love and Faith* process, the Church has become much more aware of and sensitised to how language can cause offence and hurt. The apology does, therefore, extend to the language and rhetoric that has been used by the Church, and the bishops will strive to avoid such mistakes in the future by ensuring inclusive processes for the development of future guidance.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)*: Does the language and rhetoric referred to include an apology for saying that gay sex is a sin?

*The Chair*: That is asking for an opinion. That is out of order.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Moving beyond this immediate process, what plans does the House of Bishops have for ensuring that there are robust ways of challenging homophobia in dioceses given our historic commitments to stand against racism and gender inequality?

*The Bishop of London:* Thank you, Simon, for what I think is a really important question. I do think that more work that needs to be done. There is work for us to attend to to understand what is bad behaviour regardless of our theology. *Living in Love and Faith* in terms of enabling us to listen to other people, began to enable us to hear where our bad behaviour is homophobic. So, I absolutely agree with you. I think there is work to do that says what is a healthy safe environment for people, in a sense, regardless of our theology.

*Questions not reached during Synod.*

183. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In respect of the Bishops' response to *Living in Love and Faith*, what was the timetable for the College and House of Bishops in relation to the circulation of the draft proposal to members, the discussion of them, the leak of news to the BBC, and the finalisation of the proposed prayers and statement?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The meeting of the College of Bishops, due to take place on 12-14 September was cancelled due to the death of Her Majesty the Queen. Instead, on 15 September bishops were sent a substantive request for their views to be submitted by 5 October.

The College met on 31 October-2 November at which bishops discussed the papers they had received on 27 October based on bishops' responses referred to above.

The College met on 12-14 December at which bishops discussed the papers they had received on 6 December.

The College met on 17 January 2023 at which bishops discussed the papers they had received on 12 January.

The final versions of the Bishops' Response and the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* were sent to members of the College on 19 January and were made public on 20 January.

The BBC reported the proposals on 17 January 2023.

184. *Dr Nick Land (York)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How long prior to the House of Bishops vote to approve the *Prayers of Love and Faith* were the *Prayers* made available to the members of the House for consideration?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* were

sent to bishops on 12 January 2023. The bishops met and approved the draft *Prayers* at their meeting on 17 January 2023.

185. *Mrs Gill Ball (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has it been possible to establish how details from the House of Bishops meeting to prepare their response to *Living in Love and Faith* appeared in the press earlier than was anticipated? What action been taken with regard to this matter?

186. *The Revd Stephen Corbett (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can this Synod be assured that, in future, major matters of importance and concern will be communicated to members through the appropriate channels, rather than via the national media? And further, that proposed changes involving the doctrine of the Church of England will cease to be announced via such media; especially, the news on BBC Radio Four?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission, I will answer Questions 185 and 186 together.

The College of Bishops met and reached the conclusions described in GS 2289 on 17 January 2023. They agreed to maintain total confidentiality until 10.30 AM on 20 January 2023, when the Bishops' Response would be shared with members of the General Synod and released to the public alongside a press statement and the beginning of the press conference.

To the anger and dismay of bishops, details of the bishops' deliberations and forthcoming papers were leaked to the BBC on the evening of 17 January. The source of the leak is unknown and therefore it has not been possible to take action.

The bishops are particularly aware of the pain that has been caused to many by hearing the news from a source other than the bishops themselves and in a way they would not have wished to communicate it.

187. *The Ven Adrian Youings (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: During the LLF consultation, roughly what proportion of submitted responses asked for the provision of prayers specifically for 'covenanted friendships'?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Listening with Love and Faith* document does not report any requests for prayers for covenanted friendships. However, a number of bishops had significant anecdotal evidence that such prayers would be welcomed by people in a variety of situations and contexts.

188. *Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In light of para 61 of GS 2055 and the legal position set out in Annex 1 to that paper, will the House of Bishops publish the legal advice underpinning their proposals in GS 2289?

189. *The Revd Chris Moore (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the House of Bishops please publish the full legal opinion that underpins the legal summary in the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* in Annex B of GS2289?

190. *The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the House of Bishops publish (ahead of Item 11 at the February 2023 Group of Sessions) all the legal advice they have received and considered in preparing GS2289? If not, why not?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission, I will answer Questions 188, 189 and 190 together.

This advice has now been published as GS Misc 1339.

191. *The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Bishops' response to LLF includes the statement (GS2289 p7): "It can be argued that a same-sex couple entering into a civil status which does not claim to be Holy Matrimony should not of itself be regarded as challenging or rejecting the Church's doctrine of marriage as expressed in Canon B 30 (of Holy Matrimony) and that those who do should not, therefore, be regarded as acting in disobedience to that doctrine".

Bearing in mind that Canon B 30 states that 'The Church of England affirms, according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage [not only 'Holy Matrimony'] is in its nature a union...of one man with one woman'? And the Bishops' teaching document on Marriage (1999) states that 'sexual intercourse...properly belongs within marriage exclusively', will the House publish a document setting out the theological or other reasoning for the statement contained in GS 2289?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The reasoning behind this is explained in the legal advice GS Misc 1339. It revolves around a distinction that the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 has brought to light between civil marriage and Holy Matrimony. This distinction was therefore not adhered to in the language used in Canon B 30, entitled 'Of Holy Matrimony', in which 'marriage' and 'Holy Matrimony' are used interchangeably. The same is true for the 1999 Bishops' teaching document on 'Marriage'.

Nevertheless, given the significance of this distinction, attention will be paid to the theological, legal and pastoral reasoning and implications as part of developing the *Pastoral Guidance*.

192. *Dr Julie Maxwell (Winchester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In their discussions about sexuality and identity, what consideration have the House of Bishops given to the evidence of harm done to some teenage girls by transgender ideology, for example as documented by Abigail Shrier?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* In the Bishops' Response to *Living in Love and Faith*, the bishops describe a number of areas to which they believe the Church needs to attend more closely. This includes the area of gender identity (see pages 16-17 of Annex A to GS 2289). Your question reinforces the need for the Church to attend to questions like the one you have raised.

193. *Mrs Sarah Finch (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the mounting evidence of sexual fluidity and change, what steps have been taken by the Church of England to enable individuals with unwanted sexual attractions, and gender confusion, to deal with the underlying and often unknown contributing factors, and thus fulfil their own aspirations and goals?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* While it will be important for the Church to be well-informed about a range of aspects concerning these matters, it is not the Church's responsibility to offer advice about 'dealing with underlying causes' which requires particular expertise.

GS 2899 indicates that one of the areas to which the Church needs to attend relates to the matters you raise, namely human identity. Questions about sexuality and gender in the context of human identity are complex and can be deeply contentious both in the Church and in wider society. A key role for the Church is to ensure that any engagement is rooted in pastoral care and conversation with the people concerned: People made in the image of God and unconditionally loved by God.

194. *Mr Philip Baldwin (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops. On what basis was a decision made to include a five-year period of evaluation in the *Living in Love and Faith* motion (GS 2289)?

195. *Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: On what basis was the decision made to suggest a five-year period to assess to the use and value of *Prayers of Love and Faith*? Was a shorter period of 2 years considered?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* With permission, I will answer Questions 194 and 195 together.

The *Prayers of Love and Faith* will need to be commended by the House of Bishops and it was considered important, therefore, to gauge whether the *Prayers* adequately meet a need felt by many clergy, congregations and couples; to determine how often the *Prayers* are used; and to offer an opportunity to revise the *Prayers* in the light of their use. A five-year period seemed to be sufficient time for the *Prayers* to be embedded in the life of the Church for this kind of evaluation to take place. The House of Bishops looks forward to hearing the mind of Synod on this.

196. *Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In light of campaigning groups making it clear they will not stop fighting for a formal change in

doctrine, what steps are being taken to ensure that the conclusion of the LLF process truly is a conclusion of the matter?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The response of the bishops makes no proposals for further decision-making, nor does it have plans to do so. However, it is not within the bishops' power to ensure or predict that there will never be further change in any direction.

197. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How many diocesan bishops have followed through on the Archbishops' request, set out in their letter to members of the General Synod on February 16th 2017, 'for every Diocesan Bishop to meet with their General Synod members for an extended conversation in order to establish clearly the desires of every member of Synod for the way forward' and how many then also went on to meet face to face with members of their LGBT+ community in their diocese?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* I do not have the answer to your questions but I can do my best to canvass the bishops to find out and report back my findings.

198. *The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: As part of ecumenical reflection on the question of marriage, what engagement have the House of Bishops undertaken with the *Responsum* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to a dubium regarding the blessing of the unions of persons of the same sex, issued on 15.03.2021, and what has been their theological response to this?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The House of Bishops has not engaged with this *Responsum* from the Roman Catholic Church, although individual bishops involved in ecumenical affairs may have done.

199. *Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What has been the total cost of the LLF process since 2017?

200. *The Revd Matt Beer (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What has been the financial cost of the LLF process thus far?

201. *Dr Tim Scott (York)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: With reference to Q.46 at the November 2021 sessions of General Synod submitted by Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter), how much has the LLF process now cost financially to date, including staff time, cost of materials and promotional costs, and how have these costs been funded including the contributions from dioceses?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* With permission, I will answer Questions 199, 200 and 201 together.

The total cost of the LLF process from 2018 (when LLF costs were first itemised) to 2022 is £994,071.

The table below shows how the money was spent and where the money came from.

Production costs refers to the cost of producing the LLF resources and reports: The LLF Book, course, videos, podcasts, on-line library and the 'Listening with Love and Faith' and 'Friendship and the body of Christ' publications.

Costs

Staff costs 474,734

Consultancy & production costs 382,285

Expenses staff and non-staff 54,316

Meeting costs 50,335

Other 32,399

Funded by

Church Commissioners 364,344

Archbishops' Council Reserves / Restricted funds 269,695

Archbishop of Canterbury's Charitable Fund 192,344

Archbishops' Council Operating Budget 167,688

202. *Miss Rosemary Wilson (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The commendation of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* is likely (on the basis of the Church's own research and evidence) to affect negatively the goals of the Archbishops' Council in the areas of numerical growth, diocesan finances, clergy deployment, clergy morale, vocations, engagement with young people, and the risk of schism. What consideration did the House of Bishops give to each of these before making this recommendation, and what evaluation was attempted in considering the impact on each of these for alternative possible courses of action?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The bishops have not had sight of this research. They have considered the impact of their response on various aspects of the life of the Church, but their response is based, above all, on bishops' prayerful discernment rather than conjecture about its impact.

203. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What consideration has been given to the impact of the proposed new set of prayers for the blessing of same-sex relationships on diocesan risk registers from a missional, financial, clergy wellbeing, legal and education perspective?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: In proposing the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith*, the bishops' primary consideration has been to seek the will of God together.

In their deliberations, bishops have touched on the areas of risk that you raise, and they will continue to do this as an integral part of their role as 'shepherds of Christ's

flock and guardians of the faith of the apostles, proclaiming the gospel of God's Kingdom and leading his people in mission' [words from the Ordinal].

204. *The Revd Tim Edwards (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What provision has been made for returning donations given to promote the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it, if the Church of England is changing its doctrine, noting that those donations would be used to promote something different to the purpose for which they were given?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Church of England has not changed its doctrine and no provision has been made for returning donations to promote the Christian faith.

205. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of the admitted disagreement between bishops in relation to the doctrine of marriage and teaching concerning sexual relationships outside Holy Matrimony, referred to in GS 2289, will members of the House of Bishops be free to speak and vote in accordance with their consciences in group work and the debate on agenda Item 11, or are they bound by collective responsibility not to dissent in word or deed from the views and proposals set out in GS 2289?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The bishops are free to speak their mind and vote in accordance with their convictions and consciences. As we would hope would be true for all members of Synod, bishops will strive to express their views in ways which are sensitive to and respectful of the convictions, consciences and lived experiences of others.

The role of bishops in the group work is largely to listen to other members of Synod as part of the process of feeding this into the next phase of work on the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the *Pastoral Guidance*.

206. *Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the recent Report "Living in Love and Faith: A response from the Bishops of the Church of England about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage" the bishops use several contested terms from the world of identity politics. Could the bishops please supply the definitions of the following terms and abbreviations that they employed in their deliberations and in the production of the Report:

- a) Gender identity
- b) T (in the term LGBTQI+)
- c) Q (in the term LGBTQI+)
- d) I (in the term LGBTQI+)
- e) + (in the term LGBTQI+)

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The definitions of these terms can be found in the LLF Book Glossary on pages 425-427. There is also an Explanatory Note



in the first paragraph on page xi. Finally, there is a more extensive Lexicon in the LLF online Library.

In these notes, it is explained that choices have had to be made about which letters to use but they are not intended to close down the questions or pre-empt the discussions that these matters raise. Some of these letters have multiple meanings, and the use of the letters does not imply endorsement.

*The Chair.* Thank you, Synod. This ends Item 8.

I do have a short notice to read. I wish to inform Synod that between 1.00 and 1.20 there will be a Zoom meeting to pray for a doubling of the number of children and young active disciples in the Church of England by 2030. This takes place every Tuesday lunchtime and members are invited to join this. This will take place in the chamber and for those on Zoom a separate Zoom link has been sent out. Thank you. We now adjourn for lunch.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 2.00 pm.

*The Chair.* We have a notice from the Chair of the House of Laity.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a reminder for members of the House of Laity that tomorrow we are aiming to meet here in the chamber at 8.00 am but also on-line for those who wish to do it in that form. This relates to a gravamen and reformandum raised by a member of the House. This is a form of grievance and proposed redress as shown on the note sent out to the House which also includes the whole of Standing Order 12 showing the consequences of voting for or against this particular business. A vote will be taken. I would be very grateful for people to be able to attend here in person or on the live stream.

## **ITEM 9**

### **RESOURCING MINISTERIAL FORMATION (GS 2286)**

*The Chair.* We come now to Item 9, Resourcing Ministerial Formation. Members will need GS 2286 and you will also need Notice Paper 5 which is a financial memo as this item has a financial impact. I now invite the Bishop of Chester to speak to Item 9 and he has up to ten minutes.

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner):* Mark Tanner, Chester 12, which always sounds me to like a criminal gang rather than a Synod number but I assure you that it is not. Right, Synod, this is the item you have been waiting for. Somebody said to me Synod is all about a three letter acronym ending in F and I was immensely excited that you were all looking forward to RMF. A friend of mine said to me the other day, "What's Synod going to be like for you?" I said, "It is all about RMF, LLF, TBF", and he said, "What the blazes are you talking about?"

You also need Notice Paper 13 in which there is a list of the abbreviations which have been used in this paper. I apologise in advance, I signed them off in a hurry forgetting that not all of you speak fluent National Ministry Team abbreviation.

I joke about the fact you have all been looking forward to this but I hope genuinely that you have. We in the Church are supremely well-served by and large by our ministers, lay and ordained. One of the great jewels in our crown, particularly when you compare us with provision elsewhere in the Communion and the world, is we have a remarkably healthy TEI sector and, indeed, in our HEI sector many outstanding theological faculties. I hope that what we are doing is both transparent and, although it is important, relatively uncontentious as we continue work and bring to you this paper which indicates progress made but not progress finished in every area.

I am going to outline to you just to remind you why we are doing this, why we think it is important, how we are doing it and where we have got to. Different workstreams – and there are four of them – are progressing at different speeds and that is simply the reality of life. To those of you who ask why we are bringing to you a piece of work which is not yet completely finished, done and dusted, there are three answers. I beg your pardon, two answers – I can count to two, honestly. Firstly, this is to do with the cycle of the year. If we do not agree this now, then we cannot bring financial provision into place until September 2024 and that will bring a great deal of stress to many institutions.

Secondly, you will, I hope, continue to appreciate that what we are trying to do from the Ministry Council is continue to be open and transparent about work we are doing in complexity. There are times when it feels like the work of this Committee is about rebuilding an aeroplane whilst it is in flight. That means that different parts get worked on at different speeds. Why then are we doing this? Well, because we have an urgent need to make sure that we continue to train ministers, lay and ordained, who are appropriate for the tasks that we face today as a Church, building on our strengths and looking forward. The links to the academy that we have are precious and they are valued and this rather unique Anglican symbiosis that we see whereby institutions have a degree of independence which is essential if they are to do good theology but a high degree of linkedness with the Church matters and we are trying to capture that in the financial systems, in the service level agreement (SLA) that you will see in front of you.

We need to address some of the unintended consequences of Resourcing Ministerial Education (RME), which was the precursor to RMF, which brought accountability to the dioceses in a more explicit way but ended up with a number of surpluses in the dioceses which were not being spent where they should be and did not address questions around lay training or clear links with the national Vision and Strategy. We are seeking to work in a way which is set out in paragraph 3 in your paper, which works according to very clear principles around fairness, around justice, around mission and, although you might not believe it on first reading of this paper, around simplicity – although, perhaps I ought to say, around the maximum simplicity that is possible given the complexity that we are dealing with.

What are we aiming for? We are aiming for a sector which is accountable but which is also sustainable. As a former TEI principal, I have to say to you that one of the most draining things of running an institution which is complex at best is waking up in the middle of the night not knowing whether you are going to be able to pay your staff next year because every penny depends simply on the money that comes through the door with students. That is why you will see an element but not a totality of block grant in the system that we are introducing. It is not a totality because we need to keep the supply and demand accountability that that provides, but it sits alongside greater stability over the medium term.

In our work, we have sought to be as accountable as we possibly can be. We have consulted with dioceses, with the Archbishops' Council, with IME2 officers and particularly with TEIs – the theological colleges and courses and schemes if you prefer the old language. We are working in four areas: finances for our TEIs; maintenance, which is immensely complicated and moving forward more slowly; working through how we can extend the training offer that we give to those who are training for lay ministry, which is a piece of work that we continue to meet about but which is not yet ready to bring back to you; and, finally, the service level agreement, how do we set forth the symbiosis that I talked about earlier.

So, three headlines. Firstly, what we present to you today is simply a matter of trying to put into practice what you, Synod, agreed last summer. You will see details of the work we have done on the service level agreement. That is outlined at Annex 2 which seeks to capture exactly the flavour that we are talking about. Secondly, work on TEI funding set out in great detail in Annex 1. It is a multi-year block grant and it is being worked through and in ongoing conversation. Thirdly, release of funds for lay training, especially around those who have disabilities – but not only around those who have disabilities, working too on wider diversity. Fourthly, introducing an innovation fund in order that we can be working in line with our Vision and Strategy. Finally, fifthly, making sure that we keep the decision-making process in our dioceses. The work that we are progressing will continue to be consultative, which means that when I invite you to comment not only from the floor of this chamber but also very warmly to write to us, to express your concerns in conversation – or I was going to say in other ways, but I am not sure what other ways there may be – to continue in dialogue with us. That is not merely words that are coming out of my mouth but the deep desire that we have to be serving the Church as best we can.

Finally, I want to say to you that we acknowledge that there are bits of work that are not yet done because we seek to work in partnership with you. I have already mentioned the lay work which needs to be continued further and, indeed, faster. Secondly, the maintenance piece, i.e. the money that is paid in order that ordinands and their families can continue to clothe and feed themselves. National complexities, local complexities and individual complexities make equity in this regard really quite tricky but we are working on it and we are convinced that we will manage to get there or at least get considerably closer to there than we currently are.

Synod, I am asking you to do three things in the motion that stands in my name. Firstly, to welcome and endorse the work that we are doing, in other words asking you the

question are we still headed in the right direction?; secondly, to agree that we need to do the further work that we have highlighted; and, thirdly, to continue to endorse our continued monitoring of and care for our TEIs. I welcome your comments. I look forward to the conversation and I beg to move the motion which is now standing in my name.

*The Chair.* This item is now open for debate.

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

*The Revd Ross Meikle (Oxford):* This is my maiden speech. I am weirdly obsessed with Church administration. I think it is because I am so bad at it. I wrote a little list of administrators throughout the Church who have influenced me. There is Shirley from the Diocese of York; you have got Patsy, Alastair and Shon, who used to work here; Bishop Mark, you will remember Val and Lorraine and from Cranmer Hall; there was a Michelle in my curacy church and now Sarah.

When I was looking for first incumbencies, I was looking specifically for parishes that had an administrator because I cannot do it and that is something that I do not think should be added into the syllabus for ordinands. There is enough being added in as it is. I am grateful to Sarah for her ministry as administrator. She has been in various parishes. It is a ministry that supports me, the PCC, the wider Church body and, indeed, the random church visitors, the waifs and strays to whom she has a pastoral relationship. The nature of her work is diaconal, perhaps in the most biblically true sense.

In Acts 6 we hear of the disciples overworked, unable to keep distributing foods to the poor and losing their ability to focus on prayer and the Word of God and so they appoint seven people to assist them. The result in Verse 7: the Word of God continued to spread, the number of disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem.

My question really is around the training of Church administrators as lay ministry. Many see it as vocational. I was wondering – big questions really – are parish administrators recognised by the Church of England as lay ministers? Has it ever been considered that the rise of parish administrators over the last few decades as a job and vocation might be the resource that some churches need to develop mission and evangelism in parishes that may not be able to afford them? What Church of England training is available? How affordable or accessible is it? And a really wild card question: is there scope for parish administrators who see their work as vocational to have that recognised either as a licensed lay ministry or even as deacons within the life of our Church?

*Mr Kenson Li (UKME co-opted):* In my maiden speech, which I made in York last year, I welcomed the proposal of reform in funding ministerial formation. However, in this review update I am quite disappointed – although I am glad to hear of all the good works the Bishop of Chester has been doing – that aspects of reform previously mentioned in the paper have now completely disappeared in this review update. There is no mention of special provision for funding BAME candidates whose training in

ordained or lay ministry often incur more costs. This also includes funding initiatives which encouraged them to explore their vocation perhaps through parish assistance schemes like lay ministry in the parish as the parish clerk.

In the last paper, we got a passing mention and this time it has disappeared altogether. While the paper is supposed to only provide some details in the proposal, I know too well that in this system we operate in, if something is not mentioned then it is most likely going to be forgotten very quickly. Moreover, it seems to suggest that to me we have not been given enough thought in this process. Furthermore, my colleagues at theological colleges and I do not feel that the current proposal has given this new direction which we welcome for lay ministry within the Church a clearly defined remit. We feel that there is a danger that we cannot safeguard people, especially those from minority backgrounds, from being persuaded to consider lay ministry and not ordained ministry because it is a new initiative.

Lastly, as my colleagues here pointed out last time in Synod in York, we would like to see special provision for the mental and physical wellbeing of ordinands and candidates for lay ministry during and after training which can either be provided through the revamped maintenance grant scheme or new funding opportunities. This morning, I had a conversation with the Head of Formation, Keith Beech-Grüneberg, who reassured me that all these things I have mentioned above are being taken care of. But, for the record of the House, I would like to put this out here so that we can all consider it fully and contribute to the conversation with the Bishop of Chester and Ministry Division. We want to be ambitious. We want to equip all people of God, for this God of mission which we worship.

I believe that the RMF funding will be a crucial part to this hope, but we need to put our money where our mouths are and also, actually, our mouths where our monies are. I hope that the issues I have outlined here will be addressed so that I can look forward to endorsing the proposals more enthusiastically when they are presented to us again at Synod next time.

*The Chair:* May I just remind, folks, that if you have put your name in to speak but you are not standing, I am going to assume you are no longer interested in speaking.

*The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury):* In Canterbury Diocese, we welcome the proposals put forward in GS 2286 and the direction of travel that is being proposed. However, the sudden change of system leaves us with a problem. We had been anticipating spending some of the surplus we had built up in recent years through underspending on those who are entering training in 2023, this year.

There are three people who would benefit from having full-time training, one of whom turns 40 at the end of August just before the cut-off, but we will now only receive funding for part-time training for them leaving the diocesan board of finance with a difference in cost which, frankly, as one of the poorest dioceses in the country, we cannot easily afford. If different transitional arrangements could be put in place this year, we could still follow through on the plans to equip these ordinands with the

training that would best fit them before the introduction of changes to Resourcing of Ministerial Formation.

It would benefit us if Ministry Division could arrange for a contribution perhaps from some of our previous surplus towards this year's allocation, maybe just for those who we had already planned to send full-time or those we could make a strong case for. After this transition year, we would know what to expect and plan accordingly. There may be other dioceses in this particular situation also.

I am grateful for an initial conversation with Bishop Mark this morning and, like Kenson, for the record, can I ask that as work continues the Resourcing Ministerial Formation review includes consideration of transitional arrangements for dioceses like Canterbury who have no surplus to cushion this change in funding.

*Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds):* I begin by declaring an interest as a member of the governing council of one of our TEIs. Whilst being a significant improvement on the current arrangements, the proposals that we have before us fail to reflect the cost of tuition especially for non-residential students, of which there are many. There is still, thus, a lack of transparency and justice, and competition between TEIs will therefore necessarily continue. As a matter of urgency, can further work please be done on the tuition formula in the light of current evidence?

The TEIs have provided the information necessary. Clearly, as we read the Report, there was an intention to test the current formula for tuition against current reality, but, as the paper seems to tell us, this was abandoned once the replies from the TEIs came in. Did it get put in the "too difficult" box I wonder? But, if it did, that is not good enough and, whatever the reason is, it is not good enough. Other areas of higher education and further education with complexities which are at least as great if not greater than our very modest sector are able to price everything. Here, I speak as a former pro-vice-chancellor of one of the largest universities in the country and as, subsequently, director of a policy unit for the whole of higher education throughout the UK.

There does seem to be some evidence from within TEIs that the true cost of tuition for non-residential students – and I am talking here about the provision of actual tuition not about other costs – is significantly underestimated. I have not seen all the figures and I am not in a position to do the arithmetic myself in the absence of all the evidence, but the general view among many TEI principals is that the true cost of tuition for non-residential students is underestimated by between 30% and 40%. The continued use of the old tuition formula – which I presume, I do not know, derives from the Hind Report published in 2012, but based on work predating that – is discriminatory and unjust and hides from the Church the true cost of ministerial formation putting unreasonable burdens on the staff of TEIs.

I would argue that, as things stand, we are faced with an opportunity missed, or, if you would like to put it another way, a responsibility avoided and I greatly hope that the further work that is to be done will include serious engagement with this issue.

*The Bishop of Leicester (The Rt Revd Martyn Snow):* I speak as the Co-Chair of the Lay Ministry Advisory Group, something I do with Dr Paula Gooder as a sign of ordained and lay ministers working in partnership. Synod will note that the lay ministry proposals within RMF have not progressed as fully as we had hoped since the last Synod. We spoke then about setting up a new grant fund for dioceses to encourage lay ministry training and that that would come from the Vote 1 underspend. However, following feedback from dioceses, TEIs and Archbishops' Council, it was concluded that there was no point in setting up a separate grant fund for this work when new core funding had been agreed for the Triennium Funding Group.

The Lay Ministry Advisory Group will now start work in the next couple of months addressing the question of how we bring together three strands of funding: the RMF funding, although though we have heard the concerns already raised by one speaker on that, together with Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment and the Triennium Funding for lay ministry. Synod, I hope you will note that there is something around £1 million a year Vote 1 money for ministry training which is potentially allocated for lay ministry, plus £10 million within the Triennium Funding also allocated for lay ministry, much of which may well be spent on children and youth workers, together with the £100 million allocated for dioceses which again may well be used for lay and ordained posts. This is the most significant funding ever for lay ministry and means that for the first time all our good words and all our reports that we love writing will now be properly resourced. I hope you will join me in saying halleluiah to that.

But, of course, we need to get it right and that is why we are not rushing it, hence the lack of detail in the Reports before you. I do, however, want to reassure you that TEIs will be central to the delivery of much of this work while also looking at working in partnership with other organisations, parachurch organisations in particular. As far as the ministry of administrators mentioned by one speaker already, I again want to say yes, yes, yes to that. Research has shown that admin can be one of the most demoralising elements for many ordained ministers. We are considering that area of ministry but have not yet drawn up detailed proposals.

Finally, as part of the youth and children's work strand – and I do now chair also the project board aiming to raise up 30,000 new children and youth and families ministers which had its first meeting just a couple of weeks ago – we will seek to work with and learn from existing CYPF ministers. Their work is deeply, deeply valued and we want to ensure that they are at the forefront of future proposals for expanding that work. I hope Synod will join me in thanking them for all that they do.

*The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford):* Thank you, Chair, for inviting me for my maiden speech. I declare an interest as a trustee and finance committee member at one of our TEIs. I support these proposals and the greater financial assurance that they will give to TEIs. But, let us be clear, our theological education sector will continue to need very careful support, particularly after the delays caused by the new two-stage discernment process for ordinands.

TEIs still often feel that they are competing with each other for business and, as GS 2286 admits, there is no clarity on the real underlying costs of different training

pathways which I believe means that residential training in particular could be disadvantaged. These proposals will, hopefully, enable TEIs to survive but will it enable them to flourish, to invest in their often elderly infrastructure, to invest in teaching and academic excellence and to invest in innovation and improved access? Our vision is for a Church that is simpler, humbler and bolder. If we think we can do this with a TEI sector that is constantly teetering on the financial brink, then we are, I fear, deluding ourselves.

On the other side of the coin is the ordinands themselves. I speak as a former CEO of Clergy Support Trust which provides debt support for many ordained Anglican clergy. What has struck me is how many of these debt problems begin during ordination training. Ordained stipendiary clergy receive a stipend to ensure that they can “live without undue financial worry”, so why are we not making the same provision for those training for ordained ministry? We must create a maintenance system that is fair, non-means tested and which enables full access for all. I support these proposals, but there is still much more work to be done.

*The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TEIs):* Thank you Chair, and thank you Synod for looking at this topic again. I speak as one of the TEI reps and a member of the Principals’ Steering Group, and my comments come having canvassed the range of TEI principals as a whole for their responses, some of whom I believe are in the gallery with us this afternoon.

I want to start by noting the vital role that TEIs have in order for us to fulfil our Vision and Strategy as a Church. We are going to need theologically well-equipped ordained and lay leaders, for example, just to take one, to be a Church where a mixed ecology is the norm and where our leaders are well able to contextualise and adapt to different mission and ministry circumstances. We welcome, and I welcome, the reiteration of the desire in GS 2286 for an increase in the number of people in training, although we still have some disquiet about the timing of candidates coming through the new discernment process, and the much need improved predictability and stability the proposals will bring.

The document refers to the surpluses which have accrued to some dioceses during the period of RME, and Bishop Mark referred to that, to those being recouped for a proposed Innovation Fund. Let us remember that this was money which Synod voted to fund the training of ordinands and, as a result of this money not reaching TEIs, many of us have been making deficits since the introduction of RME.

By contrast, we are hopeful that these proposals should mitigate this issue and provide mechanisms for negotiation where needed. The document speaks supportively of partnering with us, of wanting to sustain and expand our work, to focus on formational excellence rather than, again as Bishop Mark alluded to, being distracted by annual concerns about intake. So, we are very grateful that the Ministry Development Team and Ministry Council have been collaborative and responsive, we really value this very clear partnership way of working.



We have already made quite a few changes to the documents in response to feedback. For example, the proposal to do further work on lay ministry training, we really welcome the allocation of national resources to this. Again, to take part of our Vision and Strategy as a Church, to be a Church of missionary disciples, one part of this will surely be enabling greater access to theological education for lay people, whether that is in church administration – Ross Mickle, we would love to help, for example – or right across the board. We are there for you as a resource, please use us, we are here with these amazing resources in terms of our tutors, in terms of our sites, in terms of our libraries, in terms of our communities, and we are strategically placed to help, so we would love to do that.

We look forward to the further work, though, which has also been alluded to, around questions of fee levels and differentials between the modes of study, part-time, full-time non-residential and full-time residential training, which Joyce Hill has already alluded to, so I will not say anything more about that, to repeat her.

But just to reassure you, we do not want a cushy number, we do not want to be protected and insulated from the challenges which the wider Church is facing, but we do think it is really important that we know what it costs to train somebody and then to have an honest conversation about whether that cost can actually be met through this funding.

Likewise, we think, as Kenson Li mentioned, that there is further vital work to be done around reducing barriers in terms of access and inclusion, and diversity in relation to maternity and parental leave, childcare costs, for example, and global majority heritage students' wellbeing. If Synod members have not come across the Report on GMH clergy wellbeing 'If it Wasn't for God', I strongly commend that excellent piece of research to you.

Finally, the motion asks the Synod to be invited to discuss the proposals again, after further work has been done on maintenance, and we think that is vital and look forward to that conversation in due course.

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

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I speak as one of three members of St Mellitus College and I want to start by thanking those who work in our TEIs. I am very grateful for all that you do in terms of the formation and the training of those undertaking ministry within the Church, so thank you.

I have two very specific points in GS 2286, firstly relating to paragraph 8(f), which states "continuing to make TEIs the current residential accommodation payment with inflationary increase for each residential ordinand". The residential accommodation payment is made exclusively to resident TEIs, but this is not a payment for accommodation but other related costs. Most of these costs, non-residential TEIs also incur, for example, term-time meals, study spaces and unspecified provision of other facilities. It is unfair for non-residential TEIs not to receive a contribution towards this

to match the residential financial model. RMF presented an ideal opportunity to remove this discrepancy, and I feel that it has been ignored.

Related to paragraph 9, which sets out the proposals for an Innovation Fund, which is intended to fund the start-up costs only for new initiatives, I wonder what thought has been given to ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that the ongoing costs of such initiatives will be covered, and therefore will ensure that this investment is not wasted.

*Dr Ros Clarke (Lichfield):* As others have already said, it is really wonderful that there will now be funding specifically dedicated to the training of lay people for various kinds of ministry, and I am delighted to hear that work to consider how best to allocate that funding is ongoing. However, whilst I recognise the differences between dioceses that are referred to in point 18 of the paper, concerning the recognition of and training for lay ministry, I would like to suggest that a set of guidelines might usefully be drawn up for dioceses to ensure that lay training does not become a postcode lottery. There could be minimum standards and general principles to be applied appropriately in the different contexts.

One such principle, as we have already heard, could be that lay people will be encouraged and enabled to make use of existing TELs to provide really thorough biblical doctrinal and pastoral training for the diverse ministries in which lay people serve.

I would like to offer you an example to show why this matters so much. A five-year-old child in your Sunday School asks their teacher if Jesus is really a person or really God. You cannot tell a five-year-old that you need to go away, read some books and think about it. You cannot give them a ten minute long answer exploring all the theological evidence and implications of that. You have to be able to give them a clear answer, a simple answer, a brief answer, an accurate answer, and you have to do it on the spot. This is, I submit, a more difficult task than preparing a sermon. We need to be equipping lay people properly for their tasks.

*The Bishop of Burnley (The Rt Revd Philip North):* Thanks for this update and for those who grapple with the byzantine complexities of the issues at play here. It would be reckless to oppose these proposals as there is much here to welcome, but I would love two strong reassurances about them.

The proposal for funding TELs, whilst nuanced, feels to me a bit too much like a block grant system. The problem with block grants is that they incentivise stasis and disincentivise initiative and reform. And we are being asked to approve this at a stage in the process where the proposals for a service level agreement and an Innovation Fund are too undeveloped to reach a judgment.

Yet this is a sector, which, let us face it, is in need of reform. In many aspects, the current TELs are doing a great job, in other areas they are slow to respond to the needs of dioceses, more accountable to independent trustee bodies than to those who send them ordinands, often tradition-bound, often resistant to changes in their training

models and they are sending out ordinands who are not always well prepared or resourced for the profound challenges of contemporary mission and ministry.

The PR inspection mechanism is clumsy and burdensome, and too often fails to ask the right questions. Moreover, as I know to my cost, innovation in this area is incredibly difficult. You immediately run up against extremely powerful vested interests, and accessing the funds necessary for experimentation is painfully slow or more usually simply impossible. My fear is that what we have here is a status quo funding proposal in a Church that desperately needs transformation in the way we form our priests and deacons to minister to a post-Christian nation.

So, I would love two assurances. First, that behind these proposals there will be a real, ongoing drive for reform and experimentation in this sector and it would be good to know exactly where responsibility for that will lie. Second, it would be helpful to learn the exact timescale for the long-promised, long-awaited Innovation Fund, which has the potential to bring to this sector more of the imagination and freshness that it needs.

*Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn):* Very briefly, I just want to make one point really. I am really pleased that these proposals will give some greater financial stability to the TEIs, and I know that a number of people have already alluded to the fact that that does need more work in terms of the maintenance for ordinands.

My real key point that I want to make is that I do have some concern that for a number of reasons, residential training in future seems to be under a degree of threat. To me, all types of training have their advantages and disadvantages, and, in the wider sense, their costs and benefits.

The benefits of residential training are really considerable. When I was thinking about this, I actually spoke to a couple of people, a retired priest in our diocese who now has PTO, and someone who was recently ordained, and they both talked about the tremendous depth of formation that they received in residential training. The daily rhythm of saying the Office together, the building up of friendships, which often last for the entire life of ministry, and, indeed, a lifetime. I do hope that these benefits of this type of training will continue to be available to candidates from all backgrounds all over the country and to those of all churchmanships in the foreseeable future.

*The Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam (York):* I declare an interest as the Dean at St Hild College. Chair, I support this motion, but I wish also to highlight some developing areas of ministerial formation, which are already known to the Ministry Council. At a meeting at Bishopthorpe Palace in November last year, representatives of all the northern TEIs and most northern dioceses agreed together to explore a new framework for access pathways, two of which build on pioneering work done by St Mellitus College and the Church Revitalisation Trust.

First, Caleb, a one-year cohort for seasoned saints, and a programme that extends the formation of lay people who have substantial ministry experience and prior learning, equipping them to serve as self-supporting focal ministers in a parish context.

Second, a pathway inspired by St Peter, who was unschooled and ordinary, yet considered by Jesus to be a rock of ministry and a leading apostle. This pathway recognises that a variety of candidates still experience unconscious bias in the vocational system and they might need more help than others to find confidence in their calling. Typically, these candidates are highly effective in reaching people in the Church of England that we often do not currently reach. And third, a proposed reimagined training pathway that, whilst still theological and robust, would not rely on academic assessment as primary evidence of learning and formation. This work is being led by Emmanuel Theological College.

In addition, I hope we might see more purposeful connections between lay training and future ordained ministry, an approach that is common in the global Church, where authorized lay ministry experience is typically the first step in discernment and training for those who are later ordained, for example, lay catechists are often congregational focal leaders and lay evangelists are often starting and developing new churches.

To illustrate, one Indian bishop told me that he would not have a first vocational conversation with anyone unless they had started at least three house churches. Chair, I hope Ministry Council will continue their interest in these pathways and look, perhaps with some imaginative leaps, for how we might encourage and resource these developing areas.

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

*The Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities):* Much of what I wanted to say has been said already and I am not going to repeat it. One thing which I think does need to be borne in mind is that if one wants good ministers, if one wants good missionary ministers, lay or ordained, one needs to pay for it and to pay well. Good theological training, and it needs to be good theological training, costs money. We have been through the wonderful expertise of TEI teaching, we have a high degree of good theological teaching, and it is money well spent. If one wishes to interpret the Word of God in the light of the world, and vice versa, then you need good theology, liturgical, systematic, biblical.

On a very different note, I do note an increasing tendency, which is an alertness to the issues posed by neurodiversity. I think one of the benefits of residential training is that the discovery – I do not use the word diagnosis – of neurodiverse candidates is something which is enabled by residential training, perhaps by other forms of training as well. I do think that financial allowance needs to be made for the discovery and the support of those who are neurodiverse. It is an increasing number of discoveries and it is a great challenge to us, it is a great opportunity to us, and also to them, but those who live with neurodiversity, in whatever shape or form, need our support, our fostering and welcome. That also costs money.

*The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford):* I am a member of a TEI governing body and I was on one of the workstreams that contributed to the Annex A, substantially, in the papers. There is a lot of great work in here. I am also a DDO who has had to make decisions about candidates and their training options.

I mainly, however, want to flag up the brevity of paragraph 17 on maintenance, a very brief paragraph covering what I fear may be a very large elephant trap. Now, if there is anybody who can leap over an elephant trap nimbly it is probably Bishop Mark. But Synod itself, I think we can acknowledge ourselves to be more of a lumbering beast.

There are a lot of complexities. Every TEI has a different financial model, different models of accommodation for married ordinands whether in accommodation belonging to the TEI, private rental, paying private mortgages. At the moment there are at least three sources of money that go into that: the grant maintenance that has been mentioned, the pooling that is then aggregated between dioceses and in some cases, other top-up payments. And there is a huge mass of unintended consequences.

On the whole, many of us have great links to one or other TEI, often that means we have a passionate commitment towards them, just occasionally the opposite. So, I ask that in bringing the proposal on maintenance, the group looks as hard as they can to be as transparent and complete as possible so that the vested interests are identified, challenged where necessary, engaged with as well so that we come forward with something which this Synod can support and does not become interpreted as a matter of battles between different views of the best forms of training.

*The Chair:* Sarah Finch, after which I will be testing the mind of Synod with regards to closure.

*Mrs Sarah Finch (London):* I declare an interest too; I am a General Synod rep on the council of a theological college. I welcome the further proposals that we are now receiving, but I would like to put forward a request on behalf of the people who govern a theological college. The request is that whatever is introduced should be workable and have as few unintended consequences as possible. I would ask please leave enough time for the implementation planning so that the TEI has enough time to get questions answered and to plan accordingly.

Incidentally, I would like to make a second point. One of the consequences of the current uncertainties in the Church of England is that some ordinands are already putting their training on hold. I have knowledge of this. There is a real risk that we will lose godly men and women when we desperately need them for the sake of future generations.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 9 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 9.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* I now invite the Bishop of Chester to respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner):* Synod, one of the main things I want to do is thank you for your engagement, your interest and what I have heard as a broad welcome of the direction of work, despite a high level of further work needing to happen. I am genuinely touched by that and repeat my invitation to you to be involved. I have also noticed how many people have stood up and said “I need to declare an interest”, and that is a sign of how well our TElS of all different forms and styles are engaged in the wider life of the Church. I think we ought to take notice of that. We do not have a remote, a disinterested or a disengaged sector, we are very much working together.

Ros, thank you so much for pointing out that lay ministry involves a variety of different forms. I completely agree. I cannot make any promises but I agree on that. Kenson, I need to apologise to you, I cannot see where you are, but I am genuinely sorry that UKME, a global majority heritage, was not reflected in this paper. That does not reflect the heart of the Working Group, because we are very keen and indeed are working with a variety of groups to make sure that is the case. We have heard you, so apologies.

Rachel, there is a proposal for transition funding already in paragraph 14, we will come back to that and make sure that that is sufficient or at least what we can do to that. I can go through naming, although I do not have time, the various different levels of complexity that you will have noticed that we are seeking to wrestle with. Your points are well received, they have been noted, we will seek to take them forward. This is not straightforward, particularly around maintenance.

The point around postcode lottery is one that matters very deeply to me because it is entirely possible when you live and minister where I do that somebody on two different sides of the River Mersey can have completely different provision for them whether they are in lay or ordained training and clearly that will not do. And thus, transparency and justice in order that people can train for the ministry to which God is calling them and where we desperately need them must be at the heart of this work.

Finally, I want to just rejoice at the number of ways in which this debate has reflected the fact that we need ministers who are going to serve the people of this nation. I often say in the Diocese of Chester, there are 56 million people in England who do not know the peace, the hope, the joy, the security, the salvation, the forgiveness and the grace, personally, that we rejoice in in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are our priority. This is the priority in our training, we stand together, committed, not just to the present but also to the future. This is the aim that this sector serves. We are proud to be served by them and my hope is in this we can serve as best we possibly can. I commend to you the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 9 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* This brings to an end Item 9. The next business will begin at 3.00 pm sharply, so you have a moment for a comfort break.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 3.00 pm

*The Chair:* I have to tell you that the Standing Orders do not apply to this item of business so you may wonder why I am sitting here. I wonder that all the time. I might do even more tomorrow. We had a discussion before I came in as to what my role really was and the debate seemed to be either an elderly grandfather or a guardian angel, and I am not sure which I prefer, but my role here is simply to make sure you all behave, I suppose.

I am going to introduce Bishop Sarah to introduce the group work and then we are going to move on in due course. Because the Standing Orders do not apply, there are no points of order for me to consider and there can of course be no procedural motions, so hurrah. Bishop Sarah.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I have to say although you say that, I do expect somebody to push it, but anyway. Shall we pray?

(Prayers)

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I want to begin by thanking you for taking part in the group work that we had planned for you this afternoon. Just as listening to the whole Church has been an important part of the Bishops' discernment and decision-making, so listening to your voice here at Synod is important and we look forward to your contributions. The aims of these group sessions are first to engage briefly with the *Pastoral Principles*, especially in the context of our discussions and debate regarding *Living in Love and Faith*. Our hope is that this will help to create the braver and safer space that I spoke of yesterday.

Secondly, we have structured the group work to enable individuals and groups to explore and reflect on both the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the plans for the *Pastoral Guidance*. In GS Misc 139 we only mentioned feeding back on *Prayers*, but we have since decided that it would be helpful to hear your initial thoughts on what you would like to be included in the *Pastoral Guidance* as well. The *Prayers* and the *Guidance* belong together. Your feedback will be gathered, recorded and reported to the Bishops to help shape the next phase of work.

Thirdly, this is an opportunity for us to witness the spectrum of convictions and views within Synod and so to own the situation the Church finds itself in. It also gives every Synod member an opportunity to speak, something which is not possible in the debates with so many members.

At the end of the group work sessions we will gather here at 6.00 pm. Members of the Next Steps Group will be present to receive and reflect on the questions and comments that are brought back from your groups. I will now hand over to Eeva to say a few words about the facilitation and the logistics.

*Dr Eeva John (ex officio):* Thank you, Bishop Sarah. I want to echo Bishop Sarah's thanks to you for being willing to take part in this group work. It really is a very important part of what we are doing at Synod, I believe, because it does give you that opportunity to relate in a slightly more intimate atmosphere than here in the Assembly Hall.

Having said that, I am also keenly aware of the nervousness of many about doing this kind of group work. Discussing matters like this which are so personal, with people you may not know so well, who may hold very different views, and whose very identity might be at stake, is challenging, but I think it is something to which we as a Church are all called.

In response to the concerns that have been expressed, we have arranged for all the groups to be facilitated by external facilitators. Many of them have been or are *Living in Love and Faith* advocates in their dioceses and have undergone the *Living in Love and Faith* facilitation training. Others are people who have been involved in *Living in Love and Faith* in various ways and are experienced facilitators, so I think you are in very good hands, and I am very thankful to these facilitators for offering a day in order to do this.

They met last week to talk through the group work together and to ensure a consistent approach across all the groups that will be meeting.

I should also say that the detailed plan that we have for the group work has been run past the National Safeguarding Team and they are confident that we have adequate safeguards in place to be able to run these sessions safely.

In order to create the safer and braver space that we all need in order to enable our conversations to be fruitful, we are asking you to respect the ground rules that have been set out in GS Misc 1329. Let me highlight a few of them. I will not run through them all by any means. You have had an opportunity to read them and perhaps you are familiar with them through your own engagement with *Living in Love and Faith*.

We hope that you will hold each other before God in prayer as you meet together in your groups, and that you will make sure there is space for everyone in the group to speak who wishes to speak. We hope of course that you will be sensitive to one another's feelings. In particular, when talking about your convictions, do remember to speak from your own perspective rather than claiming to speak for others, or indeed for everyone. That usually means starting a sentence with "In my view", or "My understanding is", et cetera. It goes without saying that we need to avoid personalising or stereotyping the views of others.

Taking part in groups that are brave and safe also means committing to confidentiality within the group. That means agreeing not to share what is said in the group on social media either during or after the group work. I am sure you all understand the reason for that and for the security that that will hopefully bring.



So, some practicalities. There are 20 groups plus one on Zoom and each of them has one, sometimes two facilitators. The group to which you have been allocated and its location should be on the Notice Paper. Please make sure that you look on the most recent Notice Paper for the right location. It seems that there has been a little bit of a change. For example, if you are in group 8 you are in Mary Sumner House in the Princess Beatrice Room, but that all should be correct in the latest Notice Paper. Georgie is here behind me for any questions if you for some reason cannot find your name in the groups or any other practical questions. There will be lots of people dotted around helping to you to navigate your way to your location. I should say that for those of you who are going to the third floor of Church House, I think that is the Old Library, only one of the lifts is working, so if you feel like you need a bit of an exercise, feel free to use the stairs and let those who need to use the lifts use the lifts.

In each group there is a mix of lay members, members of the House of Clergy and of the House of Bishops. It has to be said that it has been challenging to find 20 rooms for people to meet in, so our apologies in advance if some of the rooms are not absolutely ideal and may be a little bit cramped. I hope you can bear with us. My colleagues have worked incredibly hard to find spaces for all those 20 groups to meet. Some of the groups are here in Church House, including four groups here in the Assembly Hall, and we will make those arrangements as soon as this session is over. There will be plenty of staff to guide you and we have built in 20 minutes for you to get from here to the groups and then 20 minutes for coming back at the end before 6 o'clock.

The group work is in two parts. The first and slightly shorter part is the session that will be about 40 minutes long and its focus is the *Pastoral Principles*. After a short break the focus will be on the *Prayers of Love and Faith* followed by the *Pastoral Guidance*. We have built in a process by which you will have opportunities to reflect together as a group as well as offering individual feedback in a confidential way. We really want to make sure that we have gathered all the feedback we possibly can.

One thing I must remember to say is that in order to fill in your individual feedback you will need a pen. I know that is quite novel these days but if you could try and remember to bring a writing implement that would be fantastic.

And finally, a word about bishops. The Bishops will be attending each of your groups. They are largely there in listening mode. They have not exactly taken a vow of silence, but they are there to be reflective listeners, while of course being happy to clarify any misconceptions or questions relating to the Bishops' response to *Living in Love and Faith*.

I think that covers everything. I very much look forward to welcoming you back at 6 o'clock when we will be able to reflect and hear what has been taking place in the different groups. Chair, any process questions, practical questions, we are open to that. Thank you so much.

The Chair: I have been asked to make sure that members return the handsets before they leave because I suspect they will beep at you forever if you take them with you.

*Dr Eeva John (ex officio):* Any questions of practicality?

*A Speaker:* The App has not been updated with the new rooms so I wonder if could you just share briefly or read out which room different groups are in.

*Dr Eeva John (ex officio):* While we are waiting for that information, I do need to say if for some reason you feel uncomfortable in the group please feel absolutely free to leave and take a break. That is absolutely understandable. There is no coercion whatsoever. It is entirely voluntary.

The list of groups is on the notice board just outside here so you can just check that there.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 6.02 pm

*The Chair:* Now in this well-oiled, non-Standing Orders mode which we seem to be in, I have a script and it says, "Chair to invite the Bishop of London to introduce the feedback session", and so I shall do that.

## **LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH GROUP WORK (GS MISC 1329)**

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Can I thank you for having taken part in the group work. I know that for some it would have been costly and so just a reminder that there are chaplains and there is pastoral support available for anybody that would like to access it.

From the groups, we have received some questions and also areas which have been raised and so what I am going to do is to invite the Next Steps Group to address some of the questions or concerns that have been raised. What they will do is they will introduce themselves the first time they speak. They are then going to talk to some of the points and it may be that they then pass it to some of the other members. This is not the full cohort of the Next Steps Group but they are a fine part of it and they are going to pass it along. If we have covered all the areas, it may be that we finish worship earlier. We have, more generally, taken feedback from the groups as well.

So, Philip, because you have not made eye contact with me, I wonder whether you may want to start off in terms of the areas that have been raised with you. Just to say that they are a clustering of questions and concerns. Philip, can I start off with you, if you could introduce yourself.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mountstephen):* I am Philip Mountstephen and I am the Bishop of Truro and on the Next Steps Group. I have two contrasting comments in front of me here. Let me read them both to you. The first one says, "There is frustration, anger, confusion and a sense of disempowerment felt by much

of the group in relation to the process so far and the role of General Synod going forward". I have this one too, "We are not there yet fully but we are hopeful and trust in the relational aspect of these groups going forward working in the messy middle". I imagine those two groups had fairly different experiences.

I do think that one of the things we do need to recognise is the significant difference that there is between those two experiences and the very different range of emotions, the experience we have just been through in these groups and, of course, through the process more fully have raised in us. I have always felt that the tone with which we approach these issues and the heart with which we approach these issues is no less important than the things we actually say.

There was just a sort of complementary comment I think from another group that I thought was really helpful. It says, "In our session we enjoyed conscious silence between contributions and questions. Could we allow silence in this way during the debate tomorrow?". I pass that to Mr Chairman, but I do think that the manner with which we deal with this tomorrow is of really very great importance.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I wonder whether anybody else from the group would want to contribute to that discussion, so particularly about tone as well as recognising the difference of views.

*The Bishop of Newcastle (The Rt Revd Helen-Ann Hartley):* Hello. I am Helen-Ann Hartley, the Bishop of Newcastle and a member of the Next Steps Group. Some of the comments that I have in front of me relate to both character and how we inhabit that and how we, therefore, engage. Also, I have got the word "clarity" in front of me. Just one word, and that is a word that I attend to quite a lot in my day-to-day life. But clarity in terms of honesty and how we can be really honest with one another about our difference and how, therefore, we attend to and hold that difference together and what that might look like.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Karen, do you want to talk about what issues or questions you have had raised on your green sheets.

*The Bishop of Sherborne (The Rt Revd Karen Gorham):* Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne, also on the Next Steps Group. A number of comments about the *Pastoral Guidance* and conscience. Someone has put, "The graceful safeguarding of conscience and how this can be achieved". I think that is something, as we go forward, we need to emphasise and work on because another group has just put two words on their green piece of paper, "Costly pain". I think we need to acknowledge that this is costly, this is painful and we need to acknowledge that people's vulnerability in their sin, all that they share as well and be really mindful of that, particularly tomorrow.

But there is also something about the production of the *Pastoral Guidance*, what would be a good and timely process I think involving lots of people in that Guidance. We heard today about Ministry Division, but there are also DDOs amongst us. There are those who are seeing clergy through the process involving those in the production of

*Pastoral Guidance.* Again, “How are you going to define holiness, a holy relationship, setting the *Pastoral Guidance* in those terms?” “What are the parameters of that Guidance and how can we feed into the process?” I do not know whether any of my colleagues have got some thoughts about that?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I have to say with the temperature warning, which I am told is behind us, we are going to come back to sex in a minute. A round of applause. Now you are going to make me blush. Anyway, before we come to sex and Jonathan, I want to pick up the issue of freedom of conscience. On the sheets I have got, I have also got, “How much freedom of conscience will there be?” This came up in the Questions, which was only I think this morning. It has come up in the Questions about the need for conscience, so whether you use the Prayers or you do not use the Prayers and what that does that look like. I picked up that people feel very vulnerable around some of the proposals. I just wonder whether anybody else on the Next Steps Group wants to make a reflection. We have heard this before. Does anybody want to make a reflection about how important it is that the *Pastoral Guidance* do provide protection for people going forward?

*The Bishop of Sherborne (The Rt Revd Karen Gorham):* I think they will need to have legal advice, particularly about clergy conduct. I think we can also learn from other denominations. We have got some ecumenical guests amongst us and I am hoping they will be able to speak tomorrow and share something of their experience.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Bev, do you also want to introduce yourself?

*The Bishop of Warrington (The Rt Revd Beverley Mason):* Beverley Mason, Bishop of Warrington, Liverpool. Just following on from that, in our group discussion and what we have been hearing a lot of as the Next Steps Group is, in terms of the *Pastoral Guidance*, how do people input into it, how do we shape it? Who is responsible for the shaping of it? These are key concerns for people on the ground. What are the implications for me? What are the implications for my brothers, for those people who are holding very diverse opinions? These are all matters that are going to be addressed. They are being addressed and are going to be addressed but agency is really important, is it not?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Thank you, Bev. Philip.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mountstephen):* Yes. I just wanted to say we are not, temperamentally, a coercive Church and nor should we be. Not all members of Synod may be aware of this but the use of commended liturgy, of course, is not a new thing. For many, many years, we have had commended liturgy that people do not have to use if it does not sit easy with their conscience that they should do. This is not novel, suggesting this approach, and I think the respecting of freedom of conscience is hardwired into our identity and the way that we do business.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Jonathan, I said I would come back to sexual intimacy. This has been raised over the last 24 hours and I think you have got some comments that have come back and I just wonder whether you could talk about the comments you have got and maybe some reflections.

*The Bishop of Fulham (The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker):* My relationship with my diocesan bishop has changed forever by the introduction, “Jonathan, it’s back to sexual intimacy”, but we look forward to future working together in the diocese. I am the Bishop of Fulham and ---

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mountstephen):* Or you were until recently.

*The Bishop of Fulham (The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker):* No, no, I was going to say I think my name should be “Mr Mullaly”. I was a former member of this House for many years but no longer – just a visitor among you. One of the questions which bubbled up in the groups which has landed on my plate is, “Can there be clarity about the place of sexual intimacy?” The first thing I would want to say about that is that if there is anyone in this room who thinks that our lives as sexual beings, whether that is in terms of our desires or our feelings or our actions is a clear area of human living, then I would like to meet you and find out how you do it because – it is impossible to speak in this part of the debate without this happening all the time. Class, let us get the giggles out of the way now.

We inherit a tradition, which is very clear in our foundational liturgies, in the Book of Common Prayer, which draws together sexual intercourse and the procreation of life. That is there as a foundational bond in our core liturgies. We also know that in all sorts of ways we have evolved a more subtle understanding of the way in which two people within marriage may express their sexual intimacy. The most important thing of all that I would want to say is that, speaking as a member of clergy – but it is true, of course, I am sure, of many lay people in this chamber as well – we come at this as pastors. We approach this in terms of those deep relationships that we hope to form with the people in our care about guiding them after the manner of Christ in the path of holiness and guiding people along the path to heaven, remembering always that the Church is a school for sinners as much as a home for saints.

These are very complex, personal and sensitive. This is very sensitive ground on which we tread. I am not personally well-disposed to the sort of tabloid headline exchange in this very precious and intimate area of life. We need standards to direct people towards. We need to be able to guide people as pastors in Christian living. That is a key part of what it means to be a priest or a worship. Of course, it is. But we also recognise the complexity of human life and that we are all called together into the body of Christ with all that complexity. I am not going to give – you would not expect me to, I do not think – a black and white answer to that question, but I am going to say that the Church needs to be able to guide people confidently in Christian living. It needs its clergy and bishops to be able to offer that guidance competently, but we also need to recognise that we are all in this together and in this area of life *par excellence* I think things are seldom clear.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Bev, in some of your questions that you have, you have got something about disagreement; I wonder whether you could reflect on the comments that have come forward about how we handle that disagreement?

*The Bishop of Warrington (The Rt Revd Beverley Mason):* Six of the sheets I have got speak of disagreement, so it is clearly something that is felt very strongly in this room. There is a recognition that there are deep disagreements leading to polarisation and so the question that is coming from the floor is, well, how do we hold together? Where are the red lines in all of this? What happens when red lines are crossed? There is a real concern with regard to how we stay together. What we are also hearing from the feedback is a deep desire for God's grace because, instinctively, there is going to be a separation unless we hold together by God's grace. It is really good to hear one of the groups actually raising that: by God's grace all things are possible.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I think it is also important for us to recognise that there are some for which the disagreement is so great. We are aware that some have spoken about differentiation which we have not spoken about to this date. I do not know whether anybody else from the Next Steps Group would like to make a comment on disagreement, some of the reflections that we have heard around differentiation?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mountstephen):* I know someone who says, "The trouble with bishops, they always say 'as a bishop'. No-one else prefaces their sentences with saying 'as a priest', 'as a deacon' or 'as a lay person'", so I am a little bit hesitant to say this but not so hesitant that I am not going to say it. I do think there is something given to us in our office about unity and I do not think you realise it actually until you occupy the office, that attending to the unity of the Church is something that is given to us and in many ways I would say that weighs heavily upon us and is not something I think that we want to sacrifice at all lightly. For myself, I would want to say: is the doctrine of marriage and matters of sexual ethics, et cetera, adiaphora? No, they are not. But the unity of the Church is absolutely not adiaphora to me in any sense.

Let me just share another general reflection. I think one of the things we need to recognise about ourselves as a Church – and you sit on this platform and, as Jonathan has amply demonstrated, you make yourself a hostage to fortune but I will, nonetheless, say this – I think in many ways we are a more creedly orthodox Church than we have been in a very long time and, at the same time, we are very deeply divided on this issue. But let us not forget the first of that. We are I think in many ways a more creedly orthodox Church than we have been in a long time. That, to me, is something very special and very valuable and it is foundational also to our unity.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Yes, Jonathan, would you like to follow on?

*The Bishop of Fulham (The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker):* Just to say, I said when I was introducing myself that I am formerly a member of this Synod. There are not many of

us left, there are some, but there are not many of us left who were here for all the debates in 2005, 6, 7, 8 and 9 when we were feeling our way towards the admission of women to the episcopate. There were what were then called structural solutions being proposed and they were being advocated at times by me and by other people who were very good friends of mine. Actually, I look back on that now with gladness that the Lord delivered us from that really substantial cleaving of the Church.

A personal comments. I do think for the mission of God in this land, to atomise what is not exactly a massively growing body of disciples just feels extraordinarily counterintuitive. That is not to say that there may well not need to be local pastoral arrangements within dioceses and between dioceses to help us through all of this, but I think the idea that we really have a sort of Judgement of Solomon moment and it is that nature of division, I think we want to be very, very wary of that indeed. That is a personal comment.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* One of the pieces of paper that I have got talks about the need for a theologically articulate process and guidance. I wonder whether any of you would want to comment on your reflections on how the College and the House has in a sense being using theology as one of the foundations along with Scripture, along with the legal advice, along with pastoral concern and prayer in terms of the process that we have been using and how you see that continuing with *Pastoral Guidance*?

*The Bishop of Sherborne (The Rt Revd Karen Gorham):* I think it has been a really rich process which has been more than just the Bishops, it has been the whole Church. I think having over 300 people involved in putting together the resources with their thoughts and opinions as well as other people sharing in local groups about their real experiences has been rich. We cannot have ignored Scripture, tradition, reason and doing the theology together. What has really helped us also is the *Listening in Love and Faith* booklet and the interaction with art, because sometimes pictures can speak louder than words. There has been something about a whole evolvment in the listening process. I think in the listening process, as Bishops we then need to do our own dissemination of that and how that comes together with our own fundamental beliefs and feelings and how we can then bring that out into practice into what we have offered together. I think it has been rich in that.

*The Bishop of Newcastle (The Rt Revd Helen-Ann Hartley):* I think I would add to that by saying inasmuch as liturgy is also an important part of how we articulate our faith and, of course, it is very scripturally based and couched, the College's work has been very much framed in the liturgy of the Church and in prayer and I think that that has affected us deeply in a way in which we are embodied beings and how we worship with our bodies matters and, therefore, how we live with one another matters and holding all that in our prayer and our liturgy has been a really important part of how the College has engaged over the residentials that we have had.

*The Bishop of Warrington (The Rt Revd Beverley Mason):* I am not going to add very much more to what you have said, Bishop Helen-Ann. At all times, as Bishops we have sought the mind of Christ. It has been an immersive time in prayer; in delving

into the Scriptures; in listening to the theologians; in finding answers to the very many questions that we have been wrestling with; in looking at those places of divergence and looking for convergence, coming back to the prayer of unity of our Lord Jesus Christ. This has been essential. The image of Emmaus and the Emmaus story has been hugely important to us as those leading LLF and the Bishops immersed in this process.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I am going to come to Jonathan, but can I just check whether there are any other points on the paper? I have got a couple here but if there is anything else on any of those sheets that we have not quite covered. There were some strong themes and I know we have covered some of them but, Jonathan, do you want to go first.

*The Bishop of Fulham (The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker):* On the sort of theological method, I just wanted to say very briefly, with all respect to our ecumenical observers – I do not know if any of them are still in the chamber – one thing that is abundantly clear is that we as Church of England or as Anglican Communion are not having these conversations in a bubble. Every part of the universal Church, the Church catholic, is engaged in reflection and in thinking about, particularly, how pastorally to engage with situations which are more transparent and commonplace in the modern world than they have been in previous centuries. That has filtered through into our thinking as a College of Bishops. I suppose I would like to see as we go on even more of that, even more rich being irrigated by other parts of the Church and offering something back into what is the work of the whole Church.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Philip, I think you have got another area.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mountstephen):* Yes, this is a really important comment. Let me read it to you, “In our group, we had a diverse range of celibate people through situation, obedience and/or choice. Could we have more resources to enable provision and recognition, affirmation and celebration of their lives?” Personally, I think that is so very, very important. We do in many way face a crisis of loneliness in society and sometimes we face that in our churches and I do not think we are particularly good at attending to that and, if that were one of the outcomes of the ongoing work that we do, then so much the better.

*The Bishop of Warrington (The Rt Revd Beverley Mason):* Can I just jump in here. Speaking from within the tradition, as someone called to the single celibate life, when I worked in the City being single was a non-issue. It was a bit of a plus in many ways. Coming into the Church, one is treated as though one is not fully human and as though one has only got half a brain. There is always suspicion and ambiguity that you are living with and misunderstanding. I have lived with that for the last 20 something years being in the Church. When I began the LLF process one of the challenges for me was actually getting my head around some of the stuff I had raised the lid on because, actually, the Church had been such a hostile place for a single person. As I have spoken about this in various places, and I know this will resonate with so many of my



sisters and brothers in this gathering, we do need to be addressing this because it is problematic.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* One of the areas that has come up is about the concern about whether Synod has been involved enough in the process over the last few years. In a sense, I think as I said yesterday, the LLF has been discussed at every Synod since 2017 but that may be different compared to, for example, the involvement that you have had over the last two days and will have.

It is interesting – I realised this the other day – being somebody with dyslexia I have to see an order of service from beginning to end and I have to see the service that I am actually going to give – not one that I saw on my computer – because that is how I follow it. If, in fact, I do not see all of the service and it comes up on overhead projector slides that I have not seen before, I am completely lost at the time because of that. I think that is true, I believe, for neurodivergent people as well. Therefore, I recognise the challenge it has been for Synod in these three days to be faced with the material that we have given you because, in a sense, you have not, like the College and the House of Bishops, followed the journey particularly over the last two or three months. I recognise that.

I also think the other theme that has come up is around there is a challenge that I think we as Bishops are asked to provide leadership but also at the same time there is a concern about whether we have too much power. I do not know whether anybody has a reflection about some of that challenge really about providing leadership as the College, the House of Bishops, but at the same time that risk that maybe we have too much power and that power imbalance that maybe exists in a gathering like this? I have not given pre-warning of this question, really.

*The Bishop of Sherborne (The Rt Revd Karen Gorham):* I guess it is about process as well because Synod is used to legislative process and this is not one. Those of us who have travelled through Synod when *Common Worship* was happening, we went through every prayer, we went through every lectionary and Synod felt that they owned every stage. I guess that this is because some of this has been done by the Bishops and led by the Bishops and now we are opening it up because it will affect the whole Church. It is then getting the balance right between that as to the Bishops producing, if we say issues in human sexuality was a Bishops' teaching document and there is something about producing guidelines that the whole Church can follow and have a say in and have clarity over, Synod having a say in the running of the Church but also the role of the Bishops.

*The Bishop of Fulham (The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker):* Sorry to make a point again about Bishops but I think it is a very important part of this particular conversation. There is something for the bishop. Many of us have just recently been to a service of consecration in Canterbury Cathedral and you cannot hear the Ordination of a Bishop service without that emphasis on guarding and teaching the received faith of the Church. Yet, there is also the bishop as theologian. People like Newman wrote extensively about how do we hold together the bishop as theologian and the bishop

as guardian and that sort of sense probably in the end that part of the episcopal office is to just always have a sense of a foot on the brake. But that does not mean that Bishops are not called to expound the faith in a deep and fresh way and sometimes to be the stream of development as well as of tradition. I think that is just a tension we have to live with. It is both.

*The Bishop of Newcastle (The Rt Revd Helen-Ann Hartley):* I have been a diocesan bishop for less than four days and so am sort of uniquely placed to reflect not extensively on what it is to be a diocesan bishop. I am learning. I think that desire to learn and to listen together is really important. One of the things I have observed in the College meetings particularly is because there are so many of us, actually, we have had a really good opportunity to listen and learn carefully from one another. Perhaps it is shaping and changing what the Church is and how its leadership operates because we have become better at being with one another and listening and learning and, hopefully, loving together. Sorry, that is the Diocese of Leeds strapline. I am now Newcastle. But I think there is something to be gained really from that capacity to reflect well together as a College and as a House.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Can I just ask, are there any questions or issues that we have not covered? Bev, you have got one. Can I just check with Eeva, because I always check with Eeva, if there is anything we have not covered do you want to just scribble it down. Bev, have you got one that we have not covered?

*The Bishop of Warrington (The Rt Revd Beverley Mason):* Yes. The image of stepping stones was important to a particular group reflecting the fact that we are on a journey, that we are a people of God who are moving. For other people, the image of stepping stones has been really problematic because we do not know what we are moving into.

What we have been hearing, and certainly within the group that I have just come from, is an articulated sense of fear, of conflict, of confusion and it is really borne out of where are we going with a lot of this stuff. We are a people on the move. We always have been. Nothing has changed there. We do not know the destination. Is there a destination other than the glorious, radiant splendour of God when we enter eternity? Is that our destination? Where are we going as a Church? We do not know at this stage. What we do know is there is a lot more work to be done and that is when we flip back to the *Pastoral Guidance*. I do not know if you want to say anymore on that?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Thank you to the members of the Next Steps Group. Just a couple of reflections to finish with.

One of the reflections that has come through is the desire for honesty and that need for us to recognise that we are all wanting clarity, but actually within that there are a whole range of different answers to that clarity. Going forward, that is something that we have to hold as we take the next steps forward. Just to say that we are very grateful as Bishops to have been part of the groups this afternoon and to have listened. The reflections, as I have already said, will be fed back both in terms of influencing prayer for *Love and Faith* as well as the *Pastoral Guidance*. We are very grateful that you,

Synod, have been willing to take part in the group brought work and those reflections will feed through. Also, just a reminder that, because this touches on issues that are very close to us, if you require pastoral support there is both a pastoral support team and there are also chaplains available around. I am just going to invite you to hold a few moments' silence before I pass back to the Chair.

*(A moment's silence)*

*The Chair:* I am sure we are all very grateful to Bishop Sarah and the Next Steps Group for their insight into all these matters and that closes this item of non-business. We will move to worship.

*Canon Linda Ali (York)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

## **Full Synod: Third Day Wednesday 8 February 2023**

### **MORNING WORSHIP**

Synod was led in an act of Worship by the Community of St Anselm

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 9.17 am

*The Chair:* I would like to call on Robert Hammond, Chair of the Business Committee, to speak to us.

### **VARIATION**

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* First of all, a quick notice. Order Paper V for this afternoon's session was emailed to members by Synod support this morning at about a quarter to nine. A printed version of that will be available later and it will be put on the App as soon as possible. Can I just take this opportunity to thank staff for the incredible amount of work they have done in preparing everything for us.

Chair, I would like to propose a variation in the order of business. Because we were unable to complete Item 520, the draft Miscellaneous Provisions Measure yesterday, I would like to propose that we resume that debate after Item 10 this morning.

*The Chair:* That has my approval. Does it have the approval of the Synod?

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Thank you very much.

## **ITEM 10 COST OF LIVING (GS 2287)**

*The Chair:* Good morning, Synod. We come now to Item 10. Members will need GS 2287 for this debate. We have a number of amendments and a significant number of people who would like to speak in this debate, so from the outset I am going to be lowering the speech limit. I will also be asking that we address the amendments straight after the mover has moved the debate. May I call on John Spence, please. You have up to ten minutes.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Good morning, and may I thank those members of Synod who, given my skin colour, have been enquiring after my health. Yes, I have been on holiday, yes, I did have a good time, and yes, it felt like an eternity waiting for the moment when I could leave the hot sun in order to spend the week with you.

This morning's debate on the cost of living is not a hot sunshine topic, but it is a hot one. The motion before you has four lettered paragraphs and could I say at the outset, I am minded to accept all the amendments this morning. Firstly, because they contain many good points which enrich the wording of the motion, and, secondly, because I would rather we had a debate on the real substance of the matter rather than particular words. In that first paragraph, reminding ourselves of the importance of prayer both for those in need but also for those who seek to address symptoms and resolve the issues.

Secondly, our commitment to action with Helen and Peter's amendments enriched so that it is individual and collective action across the whole Church ecology to include schools and chaplaincies. And then thirdly, at the very centre of this motion, the call on Government to recognise that this is an issue which is beyond the scale of Government themselves, that they do need a very strong voluntary and community sector and faith sector, and that that needs to be resilient through generous policies. And fourthly, the commendation for what has already been done to try to ease the lives of those who work for the Church, who give leadership to their local communities, but with Robin's amendment enriched to remind us that that is an ongoing commitment that all of us must continue to address.

It is actually in the preamble that I would like to start. We are not, today, debating those factors which created, through the post-lockdown demand surge, the post-lockdown supply chain difficulties or that war in Ukraine that created this perfect inflationary storm. Nor are we debating the actions Government is taking to try to squeeze inflation out of the system, although I think we all understand that it is through a low inflation and higher growth economy, with growing levels of good quality and well paid employment that eventually we will bring back into balance the ability to match demand with the Government financial situation to meet that demand.

What we are addressing is the here and now, what is happening to members of our own worshipping communities and the communities in which we all live. It was several Prime Ministers ago but not many years when the focus was on the JAMs, the just-about-managing. Well, we can be sure that however many JAMs there were in 2017, there will be more today, and that some of them will have slipped from JAMs to NEMs – the not-even-managing.

And this is not a short-term issue. Let me make four points. Firstly, whatever the Government does to achieve a reduction in inflation, it will not bring back the damage to the household incomes and finances that has been done due to the crisis we have faced.

Secondly, we have not seen the worst of this yet. As every month goes by, as households seek to balance their energy and food costs against their available income, so more and more will reach the point where savings are exhausted, credit card capacity is exhausted and they get into that piece where they are in what we would describe as deprivation or poverty.

Thirdly, that once families and individuals – thanks again, Robin, for reminding us it is not just families but people generally – are in a situation of deprivation it becomes very hard to get out of it, and that with deprivation come long-term implications. Children born into deprived households are much less likely to be school-ready by the age of five, and if they are not school-ready, they will never have the ability or are very unlikely to have the ability to achieve their full lifetime capabilities. Deprivation can be linked to premature mortality and to the ongoing onset of chronic illnesses and disabilities. These are long term, major factors which we will live with for decades to come.

Fourthly, given the other hats that I wear beyond this place, we were already seeing the post-Covid harvest, a dreadful harvest, of increased levels of mental illness and frailty, with referrals running at record levels from people ever younger, but across all sections of the community.

So, absolutely, ladies and gentlemen, we need to commit ourselves to prayer. It must never be side-lined because of the necessities of other parts of our lives, prayer must be at the centre of all we think about and do. But equally, we must commit to individually, collectively and across the whole Church ecology to that action. We may beat ourselves up sometimes and we may worry about things, but we remain the biggest single force for social good in this country, when our efforts at parochial, chaplaincy, school, diocesan level, deanery levels, are taken all together. Tens of thousands of social impact pieces of work are underway through the Church of England. We must commit ourselves to continue doing so.

We need the Government to recognise the vital role of the voluntary, faith and community sectors with generous policies. Again, we have not seen the worst yet, as every month goes by, of households and personal budgets being squeezed, so it will become more difficult for people to commit to what they regard as discretionary giving, that which goes beyond the needs of their immediate family. As a Church, we are already seeing giving as measured by Parish Share down 7% in 2022 against 2019, and that is in excess of a 20% reduction of spending power in real terms. It is estimated that many charities will lose anything up to 60% of their income this year due to the squeeze on wallets and purses.

So, we do need Government to recognise that whole-system approaches are required, that the funding needs to be there that enables the resilience of the sector. But equally, ladies and gentlemen, we need to respond with whole-system thinking. Your briefing

papers talk about the Warm Welcomes Initiative, and I have seen this on the ground and it has been wonderful to see churches, parish councils, other councils, voluntary groups and the public sector coming together to create networks of places where people can go to receive warm welcomes across the week, a collaboration where communities are well served by a collective rather than by organisations which might appear to be in competition with each other.

But I would like us to go further. Some of us have gone to the all-party political groups on faith, chaired by Stephen Timms MP, and seen the work of faith covenants in practice. There will be a faith covenant somewhere near you between the local authorities and the churches, denominations and different faiths, but typically with the Church of England in the vanguard. Some of those are so strong. I think of Lancashire in particular, parts of Lancashire where the strength of the relationship between local authorities and the churches is so strong that the provision of services becomes seamless, when it is just natural for the local authority to turn to the churches for their expertise, the recognition that if you are really going to address issues of mental illness and frailty, removing loneliness and social isolation is critical, and no-one is better placed than us to do so.

And then I would talk about the integrated care systems and partnerships, of which the Government has created 42 across England, they are statutory bodies created on 1 July 2022. They have a legal requirement to address the wider determinants of health, which includes deprivation, things like poor housing, where Bishop Guli is so involved, other aspects of the issues that will cause long-term, health-limiting factors. And they are required by law to create partnerships with all parts of their local community, including the voluntary community, faith and social enterprise sectors.

If we are going to call on the Government to think about things in a whole-system way and be generous into our sector, we need to be generous and imaginative in our thinking about how we get involved. I will merely say to you that as somebody who sits on three of those integrated care system partnership, straddling Hertfordshire, Essex, Southend, Thurrock and Suffolk, I regret to say that I am not seeing the Church of England play the sort of role I would like us to be playing.

The final element of this motion, again, commending the work that has been done to ease the pressures on the lives of those who give themselves to the Church for our work and for their local communities, and a recognition that we must continue placing that at the very forefront of our thinking.

Ladies and gentlemen, the cost of living, particularly given the squeeze on family incomes and personal incomes at the same time, is a real issue, and we have the ability today to debate seriously the thrust of this, in the recognition that we are so, so critical to the resolution and the addressing of the symptoms that emerge from this. We are very well placed, both to call on Government through the advocacy of the Lords Spiritual, through dioceses and other deaneries within faith covenants and conversations with local authorities and through those integrated care systems, to play a real role in achieving the generosity of policy which is at the heart of this motion. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* As indicated earlier, I would like to move immediately to the amendments. So, I am now going to call Mr Robin Lunn to speak to and move Item 37.

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

## **ITEM 37**

*Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester):* With your permission, Chair, I ask if I can speak to both of my amendments and allow more people to speak, but I will just move the first one.

*The Chair:* That has my approval.

*Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester):* Thank you. When settling this distinctly unhostile amendment, I want to make clear immediately that I fully support both the motion and its sentiments, and will be voting enthusiastically for it. I thank Canon Spence for accepting both the amendments.

At a time when there are apparently 93 food banks in Surrey and the recent Liverpool Victoria Financial Survey declared that five million people cannot pay their bills and up to another 25 million are experiencing some discomfort in this area, we need to be both highlighting the challenge and what we can do about helping.

It was just that I thought that mentioning the Ukrainian war specifically, to the exclusion of all other external factors facing the current Government, was both unnecessary and, frankly, misleading. It implies that by mentioning it, the Ukraine war is the major economic factor, when actually I would argue there have been many others. Please do not think that I am in any way belittling the Ukraine war, which is an appalling and totally avoidable tragedy caused by the Russian invasion. It is a great pleasure to see that President Zelensky is visiting the UK today.

Turning to the wording of the motion, it is more appropriate to leave this phrase out, as I do not believe in economic terms that the Ukraine war has had more impact than a host of other matters: Covid, Brexit, huge increases in energy prices which were happening in the autumn of 2021, months before the war broke out, and excess demand over supply, which led to increased inflation. The Chinese zero-Covid policy, until recently, was a major factor here as well. To just mention the Ukraine war is a bit too convenient and plays into a narrative that if it had not been for the events of 24 February last year, everything would be rosy in the garden.

I am reminded of a sketch on the Radio 4 comedy programme *Dead Ringers* at the end of last year, which was a Government Minister appearing on *Newsnight*. On being thanked for coming, his response was “Yes, no thanks to Putin”, which rather captured a sense of blaming every ill on that one matter rather than the more complex range of issues. I instantly thought of that sketch when I read this motion and thought that that line should be removed.

I am not exactly Piers Morgan's biggest fan, but I thought he struck a chord back in October on Question Time, when in response to a Government Minister blaming Russia and the war for all our cost of living problems, retorted "Well, it was not Vladimir Putin who stood at the dispatch box on 23 September and delivered an economically illiterate financial statement which cost the country billions of pounds". Those billions of pounds would have helped enormously in mitigating the human suffering of this crisis.

This is not 2020 hindsight, by the way. In my day job I am a financial planner. Pretty much every financial planner in the UK would have greeted the statement of 23 September with open mouths. Truly, to quote Michael Gove, "It was a holiday from economic reality", and they would have been opened-mouthed again, I dare say, to wake up on Sunday morning to hear the former Prime Minister bemoan the fact that she was not warned about the impact the statement would have on gilts and defined benefit pension funds. I would have thought that pretty much every financial planner, or any person who has ever served on a pension committee could have told her.

I would also urge Synod to make a simple change, replacing the word "families" with "people". Many single people, widows and widowers, are caught in the cost of living trap and to simply mention families would appear to exclude them, which I can tell is not the sentiment of the motion at all.

We must unite behind this motion, hopefully amended, to show what we are doing and to call for the fairness for the burden to be spread and not concentrated. I dream of the day when there will be no food banks in Surrey, Worcestershire or anywhere else, for that matter. Only then can we rest in our endeavours. I move my first amendment, thank you Synod.

*The Chair:* For the eagle-eyed, you would have noticed he had more than two minutes as he was speaking to both of his amendments. I now call on John Spence to respond. You have up to two minutes.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you, Chair, and I am happy to accept amendment 1.

*The Chair:* Item 37 is now open for debate.

*Professor Lynn Nichol (Worcester):* I would encourage you to support this amendment, brought forward by my colleague Robin, that seeks a change of wording by deleting "families" and inserting "people" for one simple reason – I do not think the word "families" captures the breadth of the impact of the cost of living crisis. The Office for National Statistics' definition of a family is "a married, civil-partnered or co-habiting couple with or without children, or a lone parent with one child". I would absolutely agree that many, many families within this definition are severely impacted by the deepening cost of living crisis. However, I am certain that the impact of the crisis goes far wider than those included within this definition.



I worship at a church in the Deanery of Greater Dudley in the Black Country, where the household income of the community, compared to the national average, is low, and where I know the cost of living crisis is having a severe impact. This week, we learned that the Black Country Food Bank is running short of food, a situation no doubt mirrored across other communities in the UK, demonstrating the deep impact of the cost of living crisis.

However, that impact is felt by many different types of households. For example, it impacts on single people with limited income with increasing costs of fuel and food, it impacts on a single person caring for an elderly relative who needs to keep their home warm. And I am sure you can think of many other examples of households who do not quite fit into the definition of a family used by the ONS.

So, Synod, I would encourage you to support this amendment, that seeks not in any way to underestimate the impact of the crisis on families, but by using the more inclusive term “people” seeks to emphasise the breadth and depth of the impact of the deepening cost of living crisis on people in diverse communities and households in the UK.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* I also want to speak warmly in favour of this motion and particularly of this amendment. I speak as someone who is part of a church that has no money, in a community that has no money, in a city that has no money, and I am sorry to tell you, Bishop John, in a diocese that has no money. I see the effects of the cost of living crisis all around me, the poverty that people are faced with, affecting their ability to pay for their heating, for their food, for their clothing, for the basic necessities of life.

It is often assumed that for single people this burden is easier, there is, after all, only one of us. I know, personally, if I could speak very honestly for a moment, that I could not have paid my own energy bills this winter without support, it has been a cold winter in the vicarage. I also want to just mention that F word. Not that one, obviously, the “family” word that I speak about so often when I talk about singleness. It has been my calling and my joy for the past ten plus years to speak, write and act on behalf of single people.

Of course, there is only one of us, but some of us have children, and even when we do not, there are still many costs for us. We still have to heat our house, we still have to buy food, we lose out often on economies of scale. Do not start me on those two-for-one offers in the supermarket – I cannot eat that many satsumas.

Society and the Government often feel as though their language around families is very excluding to us. I am very grateful to Robin for his amendment; only a little bit annoyed that I did not think to bring it myself. I fully support this motion and, indeed, this amendment.

*The Chair:* I am going to call on the gentleman standing, and afterwards I will be testing the mind of Synod for a closure on Item 37. You have up to two minutes.

*The Revd Alex Frost (Blackburn):* First of all, I am disappointed that there are so many empty seats in this chamber as we discuss the cost of living crisis this morning. I am embarrassed to be part of this Synod that gives so little attention to such an important matter. I want to support this amendment and this motion and I want to draw you to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Report, released just a few days ago, which suggests that 28% of children are living in poverty in the United Kingdom.

In the context of my own diocese in Blackburn and my own parish in Burnley, I want to draw out some stark realities for you here this morning. In Burnley, 38% of children are now considered to be living in poverty, in Blackburn 38% of people and in Pendle 38% of people are considered to be living in poverty. In the north east, in the land of the Mack'ems, 40% of children are living in poverty. And my friend Bishop Helen-Ann, the new Bishop of Newcastle, 43% of children are living in poverty. We should be ashamed of that statistic.

But last year in my opening address I asked you to tell your stories, to tell your parables, and by good fortune I published a book before Christmas talking about the cost of living crisis and people living in poverty.

So, I want to quickly tell you about some of their stories, like Judy, who has not had a boiler working in her rented accommodation since Christmas; a lady who has been waiting for 14 weeks for mental health support, and without the desire and love of the Church to step in, where would she be? A single mother who has an autistic child, who needs a specialised pram and has been waiting six months for that piece of equipment. I want to quickly say thank you to churches that step up and step out and speak out and tell your parables.

But my plea to those who are far more powerful than I am, who can control the purse strings and the dosh that this church holds is to relieve some of the burden on those parishes that stand up and stand out and speak out and remove even the prospect of a Parish Share, the poverty that that brings to that particular parish is immense, I urge you to take away that burden and allow them to use any money they have to go to serve the community and to truly speak into Jesus's Gospel.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 37 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 37.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* We now vote on Item 37.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. I now call on Professor Helen King to speak to and move Item 38, her amendment.

## **ITEM 38**

*Professor Helen King (Oxford):* I would like to insert after “commit ourselves” the extra words “as individuals” Why? Debates like this on national or international affairs run the risk of becoming a succession of stories about what various church communities are doing. I think there are two problems here which my amendment is intended to address.

The focus of the phrasing on worshipping communities suggests that this is the only place in which we as Christians are active in caring for others, but we do not exist only in these worshipping communities. We work with secular groups too whether in our workplaces, with Citizens Advice, voluntary organisations, political groups or local government. We do all we can in far more contexts than the motion at present suggests. As individuals, far beyond our worshipping communities, we work for justice, not just the sticking plaster work of donating to and running food banks, for instance, but in working to challenge the structural inequalities of our society, the underlying causes of poverty.

My amendment is intended to go further, to make the point that people in need do not always ask for help. Even if they do, they may not go to the authorities or the structures but may feel better talking to a person, to someone they know. There is a lot of talk about friendship at the moment as a result of LLF and as friends, as individuals in networks, we can perceive a situation where someone is not aware of the support that already exists. I believe that as Christians we all have a responsibility to be aware of the basics of the benefits system, of the schemes utility companies run to reduce payments for those on low incomes and we should then be sharing that knowledge. I speak from experience here of an Oxfordshire market town. Not everyone has a computer, not everyone can cope with long forms, many are too proud to admit the difficulties they are in. It is friendship between individuals sitting alongside them that is the best way to be Jesus to them.

I beg to move the amendment standing in my name

*The Chair:* I now call on John Spence to respond.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* As previously indicated, I am very happy to accept this amendment. It does seem so important that we do not just assume this is all down to others, but we recognise the responsibility that each of us has and the opportunity each of us has to use our talents for the benefit of those around us. I am happy to accept the amendment.

*The Chair:* As we are almost halfway through, if there is no-one wishing to speak to this amendment, can we move straight to the vote?

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 39**

*The Chair:* I will now call on Mr Peter Adams to speak to Item 39 and also to move his amendment. You have up to two minutes.

*Canon Peter Adams (St Albans):* Thank you, Chair, and thank you, John, for the breadth of emotion and the breadth of the focus that you brought in your speech. I fully support the motion before us. I have to say I am not quite sure how the previous amendment impacts my words but you get the heart of it.

The impact of the crisis we face is disproportionately impacting the poor. In Luton, the community I am privileged to serve, where I am extensively involved, demand on our food bank, for example, has risen 30% in the last three months.

As churches we are responding, as so many of our faith and no faith are. We are struggling to keep the food bank working, just like so many around the nation. This amendment was born out of a desire to say more. However, I am mindful it is very easy to hijack emotion like this to make it so exhaustive in scope, a wish list where there is little we can do, but the motion it seems to me is not about that. It is about what we can do within our areas of immediate remit, as individuals and as churches.

I believe the amendment that I put forward is in line with the spirit of the motion. At one level it is simple and formulaic. It does what we often do to ensure our statements consistently speak about the whole culture of the Church, our dioceses, parishes and other worshipping communities, and our schools and chaplaincies. As such it extends the scope of this important call to the wider CofE realm, and especially where through our school communities we touch the lives of many young people and their families.

It is within our reach. But we need to do more than that reach. The scale of the needs we now face goes beyond the capacity of charity, I suggest. We now seek wage justice for many. For six years I chaired the governing body of a Church school in Luton where around half of our families are on free school meals, with more eligible. Many of our staff – TAs and kitchen staff, et cetera – were from the local community. I was always saddened when they had children claiming free school meals or when family workers told me the number of staff being referred to a food bank. We pay the real living wage but we are very conscious that does not go far enough.

*The Chair:* I call on John Spence to respond.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I again accept the amendment, Chair.

*The Revd Jack Shepherd (Liverpool):* I strongly welcome this amendment because it emphasises the sense that this is something that we are sharing. The original motion talked about our parishes, our dioceses, whereas we are learning not merely to exercise charity but to stand together in solidarity.

In a survey that I carried out in the parish of Skelmersdale, 93% of people said that they were struggling to pay for food for themselves and their family, and that they were aware of people worrying about staying warm this winter. In St Andrew's Community Network, which works with 11 food banks and 11 pantries in the north-east of

Liverpool, it has been found that the use of food banks has increased three times since October.

I have found through opening a Warm Space in autumn that the primary outcome has not been to meet people's physical needs but to provide friendship and community, providing a pathway for people into the church, a key part of why I want to support this amendment. I would say church groups are among our nation's biggest providers of emergency food, Warm Spaces and debt and budgeting support, yet it is so important that we do not do it in isolation. Through Together Liverpool's Networks of Kindness we have seen the beginnings of working together, and I believe that by developing a coherent strategy in every diocese and across the Church of England as a whole, working together to support the most vulnerable in society; I am hopeful that we can more authentically become a visible Christian presence in every community.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 39 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 39.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. We now move to vote on Item 39.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 40**

*The Chair:* Item 39 is clearly carried. Can I ask Mr Robin Lunn simply to move Item 40.

*Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester):* I move Item 40.

*The Chair:* I call on John Spence.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Given Robin's earlier explanation as to the motives for this amendment, I am happy to accept.

*The Chair:* Item 40 is now open for debate.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I want to resist this amendment. The motion does not say that the war in Ukraine is to blame for everything, it does not even say that it is the only external factor, but the fact of the matter is that it is an enormous external factor in the crisis we have. It led very directly to a much higher rise in the cost of fuel, and especially gas, and in the case of gas one that is being sustained, than would otherwise have happened. It is the fuel cost rise which has had such a powerful knock-on effect on the cost of fertilisers, of food and so many other things. It seems to me entirely appropriate to reflect the fact that, although there is no doubt that a whole range of different matters that have caused this problem, this one, which was wholly beyond the control of anyone in this country, has played an enormous part in it. I

simply do not think that it is sensible to remove from consideration something that has been so powerful.

If we were trying to say it is all Putin's fault and nothing to do with anyone here, I would understand the point, but that is not what the motion says. No doubt the decision of the Truss Government to pursue certain policies had an effect, but it is really very small by comparison with the effect of the war in Ukraine. Let us just be sensible and realistic about what has actually contributed to this, and where there is one thing that is so significant, let's name it.

*The Revd Dr Susan Lucas (Chelmsford):* I wish to speak in support of the amendment. In spite of what my friend Mr Scowen has said, undoubtedly the war in Ukraine has had a significant effect, however that would not be the case were it not for an underlying economic settlement which has actually been the default for the last 40 years, and in fact there is a standing temptation to use the awful truth of the war in Ukraine and the awful effect that it has had as something of a fig leaf. I do not mean by anybody in this chamber but by those who control the levers of power. By putting that in its place that actually risks us condoning that use of the fig leaf. I would urge Synod to support the amendment.

*The Chair:* As no-one is standing, I would like to move straight to a vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 41**

*The Chair:* I would now like to call on Mr Luke Appleton to speak to and move his amendment. You have up to two minutes.

*Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter):* I would imagine everybody in the chamber, like me, would welcome Canon Spence's motion in principle. Clearly the Church has been a central pillar of the national response to the cost of living crisis. Much like the pandemic, it has shown the strengths and the measurable benefits of the parish system and our church communities up and down the country. It is commendable that we are focused on helping our community in an important part of our call to love our neighbour.

We must however also be people who practise what we preach. Part (c) of this motion calls upon His Majesty's Government to take action and be generous towards our communities, and rightly so, but are we as a national Church, or even at a diocesan level doing enough to support our parishes which are struggling? I have been contacted by a number of small rural parishes which are deeply distressed. The feeling is that demographically, not the church itself but the demographic it is in, the community is too affluent or not diverse enough to get some of the existing packages. I emphasise this is how they feel. I am not saying this is reality but these are their feelings. They cannot pay the bills – that is the reality – and the response several of them, they say, has been they have just been told to pray about it.

Do we forget James's call for our faith to be evidenced by works or Jesus's rebuke of the Pharisee who binds up burdens but does not lift a finger to help. I am sure we do not. I am not being dramatic. This is just me expressing how these people feel. They have given so much to the Church, so much of their money, of their time, of their hearts, and I am sure we all agree we cannot turn our back on them in their hour of need. My amendment is very simple. It recognises that there are many faithful Common Fund paying parishes crying out for help in deep distress.

But this amendment is not just about small parishes. It is about all our wonderful churches, their staff, their clergy, the families associated with them, and it is Canon Spence sending a message to all of them that their Church cares and that the Church is there to support them in their hour of need. I move the motion to the chamber.

*The Chair:* I call on Mr John Spence to respond.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* As I rather kick myself for not spotting that in the first place, I am very happy, Luke, to accept the amendment.

*Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds):* I want to support in particular part (e) of Mr Appleton's amendment. The work done by our clergy in making efforts to alleviate poverty comes at great personal cost. Many of our clergy are burnt out and I add to that the fact that some clergy are themselves facing poverty. It is good that some funds have been made available from the centre for heating costs but more is needed.

I declare an interest. I am a trustee of the Clergy Support Trust and in 2022 we gave help to 18% of Church of England clergy. Nearly one in five clergy got grants from us: £4.8 million of grants, £250,000 on energy bills alone, £ 800,000 support for cost of living. The massive increase in the grants being paid by the Clergy Support Trust was not on school fees and luxuries; they were on repairs to cars, new washing machines, glasses, an otherwise unaffordable laptop, and the greatest concern of all, to cover basics like heating costs.

I have often said to my fellow trustees I wish we did not exist, but we do. I encourage us to do all we can to help with the cost living, but let's get our own house in order with the central and local church bodies responsible for remuneration, for maintaining parsonages, and for pensions, look at what more they could be doing. What more could we as a Church be doing to support clergy in poverty? The Clergy Support Trust has supported clergy for 350 plus years. It is a bit of a scandal that clergy are in poverty at all.

*Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham):* I would like to support Mr Appleton's amendment, and, in particular, to encourage the Archbishops' Council and our dioceses to keep under constant review the gap which has developed between stipends and recent inflation rates and consider whether that gap can be closed more quickly. Yes, budgeting is difficult for dioceses, but I believe the cost of closing that gap is very small compared to the total resources of the Church of England spread across all its constituent bodies. Budgeting is hard also for families and individuals and it seems to me questionable, at least, if under financial pressure the uprating of

stipends becomes one of the balancing factors in our budgets. Perhaps it should be a higher priority than that. We have dedicated people called by God to lead the proclamation of the good news across the country. That in itself is good news. It is a pity if the bad news is that we cannot sustain the real value of their income whilst they carry out that blessed work.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 41 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 41.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* I now put Item 41 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. We now go back to the main motion as amended by Items 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41. This is now open for debate. I am going to call Angela Hannafin for a maiden speech followed by Bishop Anne Hollinghurst. You have up to two minutes.

*The Revd Angela Hannafin (Leeds):* Thank you for calling me to speak. I was not planning to give my maiden speech on this debate. However, yesterday morning I received an email from my energy provider informing me that our direct debit was not sufficient to cover our usage and would be increased to £430. As you can imagine, I was concerned and temporarily distracted from the business of Synod, although I forwarded it to my husband to ask him to look into it urgently. If this has happened to you, you have my sympathies. We are not yet on skid row and will work out how best to challenge the energy companies, but this little anecdote made me reflect on the importance of this debate.

There are many people who are feeling the financial squeeze in various ways. Christmas is over but the cost of it may not yet be paid for. Money worries bring increased stress and physical and mental health issues which in turn impact the NHS. The cost of living crisis is the issue facing many homes in our country and many of our parishioners.

The Church is called to speak up for those who cannot defend themselves, to be a political actor, a partner and a vital component in every local community. Our Gospel reading last Sunday reminded us that we are salt and light, elements which have impact to those around and which if not used are useless. Therefore, I would like to encourage Synod to vote for this motion. This issue is not going away and we need to act now.

*The Bishop of Aston (The Rt Revd Anne Hollinghurst):* Anne Hollinghurst, Bishop of Aston but Birmingham. I am thrilled to be the new female 007, by the way.

Last autumn the leader of Birmingham City Council declared a local state of emergency in relation to the cost of living crisis. He was clear that the enormity of the



challenge required a pandemic level of response and was also clear that an important strand of that response was the need to work with third sector partners amongst which our own, Thrive Together Birmingham, is seen as key. This is a charity formed by our Community Regeneration Team and has earned real credibility. I am immensely proud of the dedicated work of my colleagues who have taken a lead in the Birmingham response.

In brief, Thrive has two current priorities: food poverty, supporting many churches in their hosting of food bank and pantries as a regional partner of Church Action on Poverty, and the Warm Welcome initiative which brings in Birmingham on our original Places of Welcome model, now adopted nationally in partnership with the Together Network and the Church Urban Fund.

Thrive persuaded the city council away from the initial idea of Warm Banks, advocating an approach which put the dignity of the individual at its heart in line with the Poverty Truth Commission work which Thrive has been hosting with participation from senior leaders, councillors and local politicians.

Essentially, Thrive exemplifies work in the three arenas outlined in the briefing paper: the Church as partner, the Church in the local community and the Church as political actor. One of Thrive's favourite quotes as popularised by Desmond Tutu is, "There comes a point when we need to stop just pulling people out of the river; we need to go upstream." We need to ask of and along with those in Government why, yes beyond the Ukraine factor, they are falling in.

*The Revd Preb. Rosie Austin (Exeter):* This is my maiden speech. Thank you, Synod, for taking precious time today to talk about this. The privilege of our deep connection with our communities means that the Church plays an important role in highlighting the needs we see, meeting needs wherever possible and partnering with community organisations.

I want to briefly highlight the particular challenges being faced by isolated rural communities. Poverty in these communities is often described as "hidden". People are resilient and have to be, turning to family and friends first, but this resilience is being sorely tested.

Some examples of what looks different in rural communities. The Report mentions food banks requested as much or more for people in low paid seasonal work than out of it. For those villages fortunate enough to have a bus service, the food bank is two bus rides away and only open during working hours. So the churches have set up small-scale pantries or found volunteers for a 15-mile plus round trip. Warm Spaces are great but only where there is a community building still standing. Often that is the church but without heating or toilets to offer. The energy cap helps but there has not been any help yet to fill up oil tanks. Some people have not been able to fill up since last summer, with oil prices doubling in a year, and before you mention net zero, these are rented properties, speaking of which many have been made homeless because of Airbnb and holiday rentals and care workers, as a community worker myself, not paid for petrol or travel time in the past. That is still true, so please remember the rural.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* It is a great pleasure to follow Rosie Austin. It is so important to hear about rural poverty which is often so neglected.

Last year at Bishopthorpe we had a symposium on the cost of living crisis and various issues of poverty with lots of people active in this area coming to see us. This was the overwhelming conclusion: that the cost of living crisis, as we call it, is best understood as a spike on top of a long-term trend. It is important to understand the long-term trend of poverty in this nation.

Secondly, that what was needed from the Church was a narrative of hope that would re-set the whole way that we approach this. And because I am not very politically savvy, if I had read my papers in time, I would have offered an amendment – continue to pray, yes, commit ourselves, yes, offer generous support, yes, commend steps, yes, yes, yes. I agree with all of this but there is something missing which is the prophetic voice of the Church to say, “This is not how it is meant to be”, and then to offer a coherent narrative of hope of what it could be, which is ironically what we are very good at and also what we have been doing. Look at the work of the Housing Commission. Look two weeks ago at the launch of the Reimagining Care Commission, the idea of a national care covenant. These are things that will re-set the compass of our nation.

Let me give you just one example. Sadly, there are so many hundreds we could reach for, but just this week the British Dental Association told us that 83% of teachers in secondary schools report the fact that they are handing out toothpaste and toothbrushes to students. That is how bad it has got. That is how far away we have come as a nation from the world I grew up in where you could get dental treatment for free. Now if you want a toothbrush you need to ask your teacher. It is just appalling.

I went to a school in Middlesbrough last year and whereas I used to send my kids to school with a lunch box with lunch in it. We need not just to do all those things – of course I support them – but there is something missing which we are doing and we should be proud of, which is offering a narrative of hope.

*The Chair:* After Nicki Pennington, I am afraid I will be testing the mind of Synod for closure on this motion.

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

*The Revd Nicki Pennington (Carlisle):* I serve four parishes on the west coast of Cumbria and, like many clergy across this country, I am seeing the impact, the life-threatening and life-limiting impact, that the figures we are talking about here today are having on people’s lives. This is not overstating the case. I cannot be the only clergy person ministering in areas of economic need experiencing a significantly higher number of funerals this winter.

The Report calls upon the Church to pray, to continue to advocate on behalf of those most in need and vulnerable to the crippling cost of living, to seek to engage with the needs of those in their local communities, working collaboratively with other agencies, offering what resources we have at our disposal to ease the measure of the burden of the impact of the cost of living on people's lives.

In a few months' time, as a Church we will be engaging in a period of prayer and evangelism known to many as Thy Kingdom Come. This is, surely, an opportunity for faith communities across the country to witness to the kind of kingdom the Scriptures encourage us all to work for and advocate; a kingdom in which justice and mercy flow down; a kingdom where the needs of the most vulnerable are placed at the centre and given priority; a kingdom where all are welcomed, valued and included. As we look at the life of Jesus and the mandate we are given through Scriptures, it is clear that as Christ followers we are called to do justice.

Alongside all the many ways in which faith communities are seeking to meet the needs of those in desperate need, I invite communities up and down the country to use this period of prayer and evangelism as a time for practical action to counter the day-to-day cost of living crisis. Why not go to the streets? Why not take part in walks of witness and solidarity, raising our voices, standing out and speaking out on behalf of those who are most in need in our parishes?

*The Chair.* I now wish to test the mind of the Synod on whether Item 10, as amended, has been sufficiently debated. I, therefore, put the motion for closure on Item 10 as amended.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* I now call on John Spence to respond to the debate. You have up to three minutes.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Chair, thank you, and I thank all those who moved amendments, only one of which received resistance. Clive, I absolutely get the importance of Ukraine – I just accepted the amendment so that we could focus on the main discussion. Stephen and Ian, please be assured that we do not see stipends as a balancing measure. I am grateful to Alex and Angela who gave examples of what it is like in real time – Angela from a very personal, painful perspective.

Bishop Anne, you could be my special agent of Birmingham any time and, by golly, what a city it is for demonstrating the power of working together. Nicki and Rosie, reminding us of the universality of need and the depth of it. I am grateful to all those speakers. Kate and Jack both gave us the Liverpool perspective. Archbishop Stephen, I really do not know what you do with your time all the time. You really must get more up-to-date so that you can move these amendments in good time. But I share with you, of course, that we have to have a narrative of hope and I suggest to you that we are the living epitome of it.

The whole point about the amendment from Helen, that this is up to us individually and we can write narratives, yes, we can be advocates, but it is the living example of what we do that creates the narrative of hope from which others are inspired. Kate and Jack, I say to you, Liverpool, your parish, your families, your community, your city may be very short of money but they have you, they have the wonderful spirit that you show, they have a strong diocesan team under a brilliant Chief Executive and they have Bishop John and I invite you to show us the narrative of hope that is Liverpool, the Church of England.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* Point of order. Chair, given the importance of this item and in particular under paragraph (c) where we are calling for action by those who meet in another place, it would be good to have an accurate count of the Synod. Would you order a count of the Synod, please?

*The Chair:* That has my approval, thank you. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 10 as amended.

*The motion was put and carried, 301 voting in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* This concludes the item of business, thank you.

THE CHAIR *The Very Revd Andrew Nunn (The Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 10.26 am

## **ITEM 524**

### **DRAFT CHURCH OF ENGLAND (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) MEASURE (GS 2272A)**

*The Chair:* Good morning, Synod. We are now going back to the draft Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure. The debate had to be adjourned yesterday, as you will remember. We had got to Item 523, “That clause 2 stand part of the Measure”, which was carried. You are going to need Order Paper II for this – not the Order Paper IV that we have had for this morning – and GS 2272A. After we had done Item 523, Mr Scowen then moved, pursuant to Standing Order 60, that the Measure be considered for further revision in Committee.

The effect of that motion, if carried, would be that the entire Measure was returned to the Revision Committee for further revision. Members would then have the opportunity to send further proposals to the Revision Committee for its consideration. However, I now understand that Mr Scowen wishes to withdraw his motion on the understanding that the Steering Committee will withdraw clause 8, the clause Mr Scowen and some other members who spoke in the debate on the Report of the Revision Committee were concerned about. A motion once moved may be withdrawn only with the leave of the Synod. I, therefore, call Mr Scowen to speak for up to two minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I do not think I shall need that, Chair. Yes, I can confirm that your understanding is correct. I am extremely grateful to Stephen Hofmeyr and the members of the Steering Committee who have considered this matter and seen that, actually, there was a bigger issue behind clause 8 than first appears and that it does need to be properly considered. My understanding is that the group that is currently working on the revision to the Mission and Pastoral Measure will be asked to consider not only clause 8 but the other matters related to it and that will give those who are particularly concerned about the protection of those running BMOs to have their say and to seek to influence the changes to the Mission and Pastoral Measure. I am very grateful that what I have sought to achieve has been achieved and I withdraw my motion.

*The Chair.* Mr Scowen has sought leave to withdraw his motion for recommittal of the Measure to the Revision Committee. I assume that this is agreed. The motion for recommittal is withdrawn.

In light of the indication from the Steering Committee about their intention to withdraw clause 8, Item 524 becomes the motion, "That clauses 3 to 7 stand part of the Measure". Given that that is a new item, does any member wish to speak against that motion? As no member has indicated an intention to speak against the motion, "That clauses 3 to 7 stand part of the Measure", that motion is deemed carried. I now call Mr Stephen Hofmeyr to move that clause 8 be withdrawn. Stephen, you have up to five minutes.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* I will not use that but, just to reiterate what Clive has said, following very helpful discussions involving those who spoke on clause 8 in the take note debate yesterday and, indeed, other holders of BMOs and Mr Scowen, the agreement was reached that he would withdraw his request that the matter go for further revision. In the circumstances, we are inviting you, please, to vote in favour of our motion that clause 8 be withdrawn.

The two reasons for that are, as Mr Scowen said, the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 is currently under review generally and amending proposals will be brought back to Synod in the near future. Bishop's Mission Orders are being considered as part of that review and the Steering Committee is of the view that the amendment proposed by clause 8 would be better considered as part of a general review rather than being taken in a piecemeal manner at this stage.

Secondly, as has been pointed out, if clause 8 is not withdrawn there is a risk that the whole Measure will be delayed by more than six months whilst clause 8 is given further consideration. In the view of the Steering Committee, that would be an unfortunate and disproportionate by-product of a course which can be avoided in the way we have suggested and the added benefit that the amendment proposed by clause 8 can be considered in the context of a thorough review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 generally and BMOs in particular. For these two reasons, we would invite you to support the motion that clause 8 be withdrawn.

*The Chair.* The motion to withdraw clause 8 has been moved and there is an opportunity, if you desire, to speak to this.

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

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I thought it was worth noting, because this is a slightly unusual thing for Synod to do and just to make it very clear how grateful I am personally to Stephen Hofmeyr and to Clive Scowen and to others for coming up with what I think is an elegant and very helpful way forward. Synod will realise I have great sympathy with people who perhaps read their papers too late to enter into the legislative process in the way that we might and so it was really helpful to hear from practitioners in BMOs yesterday morning. This seems to me to be a good example of Synod working at its best and, therefore, we ought to note that.

I thought the other thing it might be worth saying from the front here is sometimes the issue of trust comes up, which obviously distresses all of us because we want to be people of trust. I thought it would be good also to put on record that I do not for a moment think that there is any issue of trust here with bishops. It is about proper process for BMOs. I did not hear that from any of the speakers yesterday. I am in favour of approaching it in this way. I think Synod also needs to bear in mind the things Luke Miller was saying yesterday about the role of the visitor. I am sure we can sort this out. I am very grateful that we found this way of sorting it out and I just thought it might be helpful for Synod to hear, from here as it were, thanks and support for this way forward.

*The Ven. Luke Miller (London):* Very quickly, just to say that this also gives an opportunity to look into one of the things that needs smoothing around about BMOs. They are such an important part of our ecology. They are so successful in so many ways. We have had to struggle with things like the synodical representation. I have mentioned before about how difficult it is to start a parish without having a BMO because we need to have some sort of structure before you can construct all the synodical bits. The PCC has to rest on an electoral roll. Where do you get an electoral roll from? Therefore, when we started a parish I had to chair a BMO CIO. There is all of that. There is an opportunity here to make BMOs even better and I hope we can note that that will be the outcome of this rather than any kind of diminution of their role amongst us.

*The Chair.* I now put this item to Synod, that clause 8 be withdrawn from the Measure.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 524A**

*The Chair.* We come to the motion which I suggest be numbered 524A, "That clause 9 stand part of the Measure". As no member has indicated an intention to speak against the motion, Item 524A is deemed carried.

## ITEM 525

*The Chair.* We, therefore, come to clause 10. I invite Mr Geoffrey Tattersall KC to move his amendment at Item 525. Geoffrey, you have up to five minutes.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* And now for something entirely different. I have to declare an interest. In a previous life, I was a barrister and for many years I was the Chancellor of the Diocese of Manchester and Carlisle and the Vicar General of Sodor & Man. Contrary to what was said originally in Notice Paper 8, this modest amendment does not simply seek to retain a retirement age of 70 for chancellors when the retirement age for secular judges has recently risen to 75.

That is because for many years the default retirement age for chancellors has been 70 but it was expressly provided that if a chancellor wished to remain in office beyond the age of 70, a diocesan bishop has to consider, after consultation with the Dean of the Arches, whether it is in the best interests of the diocese that he or she should continue to serve in office beyond the age of 70, initially until 72 and then annually until the age of 75. So it was that many chancellors, like me, remained in office until the age of 75. I know you cannot believe I am so old, but I just wear well, so the wife says, so it must be true. Of course, some do tend to elect to retire when they are 70 and, of course, chancellors can retire at any age.

The current provisions have been in force for very many years and have worked well and it is not suggested that they have ever been abused by a diocesan bishop. What is proposed now in this draft Measure is that a chancellor will have a right – I stress the word “right” – to remain in office until the age of 75 irrespective of whether or not that is in the interests of the diocese or whatever the views of the diocesan bishop may be. I do not believe that this is appropriate.

At the Revision Committee, I proposed the retention of the existing legal position and this was rejected by the Revision Committee on the grounds of consistency with the terms of service for secular judges, and that was so important and that there was no rational basis for distinguishing chancellors from secular judges. But there is no need for such consistency and I give two examples. Secular judges are often appointed in their 50s and want to work beyond the age of 70 to obtain their full pension which is only earned after 20 years’ service. By contrast, chancellors receive no pension, and I should add quickly that it is not suggested that they should.

Secondly, secular judges are employed with detailed conditions of service and may be removed from office for good reason by the Lord Chancellor. By contrast, chancellors have no terms of service and the only basis for their removal from office is pursuant to section 3(3) of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018 and that is if the Upper House of Convocation, the appropriate Convocation, resolves that the chancellor is incapable of acting or unfit for office. I am not aware that this provision has ever been used and certainly it could not be used, one would think, to deal with a chancellor who simply took too long to make decisions or one who, for whatever reason, had lost the confidence of the diocesan bishop and/or the diocese.

I know that if this debate is allowed to proceed, which I hope that it will, notwithstanding time constraints, the Vicar General of York would like to address an additional point of the unintended consequence as to the adverse effect on diversity of what is proposed in the Measure on the basis that most of the chancellors are, unhappily, white men. I beg to move the amendment standing in my name at 525.

*The Chair.* Mr Tattersall has moved his amendment, I therefore call Mr Hofmeyr to speak for not more than five minutes in reply.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* First, I declare an interest as a Deputy High Court Judge and Recorder but not an ecclesiastical judge. The Revision Committee, of which the Steering Committee forms a part, unanimously rejected the amendment at the Revision Stage and continue to do so for two reasons. In the public square, as you have heard, the judicial retirement age has been put back to 75. It was 75 for many, many years. About 20 years ago, it was reduced to 72 and then to 70. This was found to have been a mistake. The decision has been reversed and the historic position has recently been restored.

The Revision Committee considers that the reasons which caused a judicial retirement age to be restored are sound and should apply equally to ecclesiastical judges and that ecclesiastical judges should not be an exception.

Second, insofar as the amendment is being driven by the fact that there is currently, I understand, a surfeit of ecclesiastical judges, this is not a good reason for the amendment. If this were a good reason, it would make it necessary for us to tinker with the provision on a regular basis depending on the movements in supply and demand. Regular tinkering would not be practical and, in principle, would not be appropriate. For these reasons, I would encourage you to resist the amendment.

*The Chair.* Mr Hofmeyr has resisted the tinkering and so the debate can only continue if I see 25 or more members standing or indicating or using a green tick that they want the debate to take place. There are more than 25 members. The debate is now then open.

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

*The Rt Worshipful Peter Collier KC (ex officio):* I also declare an interest. I am currently the Chancellor of York for another 19 days and then I will be replaced. I have been the subject of extensions and I am currently 74. I did not really want those extensions to go on for quite so long. There were good reasons on each occasion. Usually, the unintended consequences of legislation reveal themselves only after it has been enacted and in operation for a while.

Sometimes, it is possible to spot the unintended consequences and rather late in the day I think I have identified a significant one in relation to this provision. Not for the reasons put forward by Geoffrey Tattersall when he addressed the Revision Committee and they have not considered this – at least they have not heard my



argument at any length and it is not going to be particularly long. But knowing as I do the identity of all current chancellors, and courtesy of Who's Who their dates of birth and ages, I can tell you that there are ten chancellors between the ages of 65 and 69. If, as I think is likely, they all took advantage of the new proposed retirement age, it would mean there would be no new chancellors appointed, deaths apart, until 2029.

It will not surprise you to know that those chancellors are all, as Geoffrey has already said, elderly, white males. The Dean of Arches has previously told Synod of her ambition to bring diversity to the ecclesiastical judiciary and she has been quite successful in that in recruiting people as deputies. But bringing in this extended age limit will have a significant torpedo effect on those ambitions because of the consequence I have just stated: 2029 being the first date when we will have new chancellors. Whatever else they tell you, the real reason the secular judiciary have moved their age back to 75 is because of very serious recruitment problems.

I was speaking to a very senior judge only last night who was telling me exactly that. That is the real reason for this, in addition to some problems they had with pension proposals. But we do not have any such problems. The issue of perceived bias is unreal in our world. The court is the bishop's court. It has often been said the chancellor is the alter ego of the bishop. I was the alter ego, therefore, of the previous Archbishop of York and I am now adjusting to being the alter ego of the present Archbishop of York. Of course, if the bishop himself were a party or, as in the Rustat case, Jesus College, Cambridge, a witness, then, as happened there, the chancellor would ask someone to step in as a deputy.

I cannot see any circumstances where chancellors might be tempted or even be thought to be tempted to decide contested matters so as to curry favour with a bishop in order to earn an extension, which is one of the reasons it has not been referred but has been stated as a need for this to happen. The risk of obstructing future diversity is a much greater problem and a real one which Synod can address by rejecting this proposal.

*The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* I know that the Chancellor of Blackburn, His Honour Judge David Hodge KC, is concerned about this amendment. The Rustat case has been mentioned, he was the judge in that case, sitting as a deputy in the Diocese of Ely. He is concerned that had it been in the Blackburn Consistory Court and the Bishop did not like the result, he would be put in a difficult position in seeking to have his term of office extended. It is a fundamental principle that judges should be independent, and I think we are in danger here of judges looking over their shoulder, will my diocesan bishop like this, will he agree to the extension of my term of office. So, I oppose this amendment.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* I stand to ask you to accept clause 10 in all its fullness and reject Mr Tattersall's request to leave out subsection 3. I was a member of the Revision Committee on this Measure and it was a pleasure to serve under Archdeacon Nikki Groarke. Revision Committees have a completely different feel to debates in the Synod chamber, there is much more listening and discussion to understand each other's position and find common ground. I recommend the

opportunity to serve in this way to all Synod members, and I pray that we can apply that sense of working together to other aspects of Synod business.

But to the matter in hand. All subsection 3 does is to align the retirement age of a certain class of ecclesiastical judges, diocesan chancellors, with that of judges in the secular sphere. Are there bad ecclesiastical judges? Possibly. I will not say yes, because they understand defamation law better than I do. Are there bad judicial decisions? Possibly. But this section of the Miscellaneous Provision Measure does not address how to deal with poor judges, poor judicial decisions, the timings of judgment, capability or diversity, it merely raises the retirement age to 75 in line with practice in the secular courts.

If there are poor judges making poor judicial decisions, a lack of diversity and absence of terms of service, then let us introduce legislation and procedures to deal with those. A poor ecclesiastical judge aged 45 is as bad as a poor ecclesiastical judge aged 69. Waiting until a poor ecclesiastical judge is required to retire, whether at 70 or 75, is not the answer to the problems Mr Tattersall and the Vicar General of York raise.

But they do raise important points about poor ecclesiastical judges and the system of appointment and terms of service and I would be delighted if we as a Synod could address this, not just in the case of diocesan chancellors and commissaries but also with proper challenge and appeal processes for judges appointed under the Clergy Discipline Measure. But the solution sought by Mr Tattersall, of not letting them serve an additional five years automatically, is not the way to do it. This subsection is not about poor ecclesiastical judges or diversity, the Synod can deal with that, but that is not what this clause is trying to do. So, I ask Synod to retain subsection 3 as part of clause 10 and to accept it as part of the Measure.

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (The Dean of the Arches and Auditor):* I do not intend to speak one way or the other on this motion, I merely wish to clarify one point. The reason why I do not wish to speak one way or the other is because I do feel somewhat conflicted. I am 60 years of age, and the legislation allows me to continue to the age of 75. So you are stuck with me for a long time, the Lord willing.

The point which I just wanted to make in clarification responds to something that Stephen Hofmeyr said. He suggested that there might be a surfeit of ecclesiastical judges, too many of them, well, some of you might think that there are too many lawyers on the earth, full stop. But I wish to reassure Synod that we do not have a surfeit of judges, there are one or two vacancies for deputies, which are under active consideration. We do not have a surfeit, I think we have quite a good number of judges. That is the only thing which I wish to say.

*The Chair:* I see no-one standing, so I call on Geoffrey Tattersall to respond to the debate. You have up to three minutes, Geoffrey.

*Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester):* Well, you would think that I would be in favour of giving a right to the chancellor to sit for longer, that would have enabled me to sit for longer without having to ask my diocesan bishop. But I think as a matter of principle

it is the wrong thing. Please listen carefully to what Stephen Hofmeyr said about the need for consistency, because it is not really giving any reason at all. Comparing secular judges and ecclesiastical judges is like comparing apples with pears. They are not the same thing.

Peter Collier made a point about why the judges' retirement age has risen. If you read The Times yesterday, you will discover that the Lord Chancellor was interviewed by, I think, Joshua Rozenberg, about the number of judges, and he said that there were 16 unfilled circuit judge appointments which they had not been able to fill through competition, and therefore they had appointed 30 district judges to sit with juries to try and clear the backlog. That is why the judicial age limit is being raised, apart from the fact they are appointing people later and they need to get a pension.

So, I do not want to repeat myself, the arguments are that the system works very well at the moment as it is and there is no need to tinker with it.

*The Chair:* I therefore put Item 525 to the vote. This is, as you will see on Order Paper II, to leave out subsection 3 of clause 10.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 526**

*The Chair:* We come to Item 526, "that clause 10 [as amended] stand part of the Measure". As no member has indicated a wish to speak against it, Item 526 is deemed to be carried.

## **Item 527**

*The Chair:* We come to Item 527, the stand part motion for clauses 11 to 13. As no member has indicated intention to speak against the motion, Item 527 is deemed carried.

## **ITEM 528**

*The Chair:* We move to clause 14. I invite the Reverend Paul Benfield to move his amendment at Item 528. Paul, you may speak for up to five minutes.

*The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* As the law stands at present, anyone who is carrying out functions of care and conservation of churches must have due regard to the role of a church as a centre of worship and mission. As clause 14 is drafted at the moment it adds to that the duty to have due regard to environment protection. I have no problem with considering environment protection but I am concerned as to whether environment protection considerations might trump the duty to have regard to the role of a church as a centre of worship and mission.

As the Explanatory Memorandum helpfully states, this amendment would provide that if there were to be a conflict between the new duty on environment matters and the

existing duty on worship and mission, then the latter is to have priority. The Revision Committee Report points out that the Five Marks of Mission include environment protection. This is true. But the Five Marks of Mission also include responding to human need by loving service, yet that is not mentioned in this new clause. Leaving environmental protection with an equal status to worship and mission might suggest that this is more important than using churches for community service. My amendment makes clear that worship and mission are the primary duty but that environmental and other matters are subsidiary if there is a conflict. I beg to move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair:* I call the Ven. Douglas Dettmer, a member of the Steering Committee, to respond and to speak for not more than five minutes in reply.

*The Ven. Douglas Dettmer (Exeter):* The Steering Committee wishes to resist this amendment and would encourage you to vote against it. I would like to start by referring to Fr Benfield's comments yesterday to say that I and the Committee very much hear what he said about the different dynamics of Revision Committees on-line and in person. That said, we want to assure Fr Benfield that his points were received and understood.

However, as Fr Benfield has already said, section 35 of the Care of Churches Measure already requires anyone carrying out functions of care and conservation under the Measure to have due regard to the role of a church as a local centre of worship and mission. The additional wording, obviously, seeks to strengthen the arm of those who are exercising responsibilities in the care of churches for meeting the Church of England's Net Carbon Zero goals.

What we need to remember, of course, as Fr Benfield has already said, is that worship and mission, on the one hand, and environmental protection on the other, are not two different things. Environmental protection, along with evangelism and discipleship formation and loving service of our communities and striving for social justice are the Marks of Mission. Environmental protection is one of those, and the constant business of PCCs and incumbents and DACs and chancellors in making decisions about how best to care for and conserve churches is to balance all those factors, worship and mission.

To artificially constrain the ability of PCCs and incumbents and DACs and chancellors in coming to an appropriate balance of those considerations by saying that one area of mission is to trump all the rest, or even that worship and four areas of mission are to trump one, is unduly to predetermine decisions which are properly made by those who know their own local contexts and their church buildings best. So, I would ask you, Synod, to resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* Given that the Steering Committee resists this amendment, for the debate to continue, I have to see 25 members or more standing, indicating or using the green tick. There are more than 25, therefore this item is open for debate. You have up to five minutes initially.

*The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds):* I am Vice-Chair of the General Synod Environment Group, member of the Environmental Working Group. I wish to oppose this amendment because it suggests that environmental protection runs contrary to the purpose of a church, that is worship and mission. But, as has been established, environmental protection is part of the Church's mission, the Fifth Mark, but also in a time not only of climate change but of a biodiversity crisis, both of which are and will impact on human flourishing in this country and globally, then environmental protection falls within Marks Three and Four, to respond to human need by loving service, and to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.

Whilst I fully accept that there are occasions when the local church must choose between competing goods in its expression of mission, for example, when a church that has not yet dispensed with its oil boiler is seeking to be a warm space, then it must choose between its missional priorities. I am not advocating environmental puritanism, which sees Net Zero as the trump card, and neither, I would suggest, is this motion.

But I would like to see it, indeed it would be a relief to see it, together with the accessibility considerations that are also in the motion, trump built heritage occasionally and be considered more regularly. I would like to see it in terms of environment proofing rather than pursuing a solely environmental mission. And I cannot conceive of an occasion where environmental protection is not mission. I would also like to remind Synod that all creation worships God and that His glory is shown through it. So, it is not only humans who have a role in worshipping God. Rather than being a distraction from worship, environmental protection enhances the worship that all creation, humans included, can offer to God.

Additionally, I would like to address the misapprehension, which I have heard, but which has not been raised in this debate, that attentiveness to environmental protection is a novel innovation in mission, and that the Church, in adopting it, is following the world's agenda. I am proud that in 1941, following the Malvern Conference, members of the Church of England, including Archbishop William Temple, issued what is believed to be the first high level statement on the environment by a mainstream denomination.

The Church of England was ahead of the game then, and I would like it to remain so. Environmental protection is mission, it is not the Cinderella of the Marks of Mission. We were ahead of the game and I hope that we can remain so. I urge you to resist this amendment.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* I would like to support this amendment. It has been suggested that this amendment in some way removes or downplays the importance of environmental protection but, as has already been pointed out, environmental protection is included within worship and mission and so, effectively, the way the proposal is currently worded, unamended, puts environmental protection in there doubly, it is included in worship and mission and then it comes as a separate function.

By expressing it in that way, it elevates environmental protection amongst all the other elements of worship and mission, which I am sure is not the intention.

If somebody were to say to you, say a visitor from Mars said “There’s a church over there, what is it for, what does that church do, what is its function?” Probably the first thing you would not say is “It is there to look after environmental protection”, the first thing you would say is “It is there for worship and mission”. Yes, environmental protection is important, but this amendment does not seek to remove that, it just seeks to put it back into its proper context as one of the elements of worship and mission on a par with the others. Indeed, it still gets special mention, it does not even take out the special mention that environmental protection gets, it just seeks to make it clear that it does not trump all the other equally important aspects of worship and mission. So, I would urge Synod, please, to support this amendment.

*Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter):* I completely support the amendment. I think it is important for us to be sustainable to continue to exist, but we do not exist to be sustainable. I would urge us to seek first the Kingdom of God and then all else will be added to us, so I think I just want to say that I really, really support the amendment.

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis QC (The Dean of the Arches and Auditor):* I wish to speak against Father Benfield’s proposed amendment for two reasons. One, it is unnecessary, two it is unhelpful. And at the same time, I want to persuade members of Synod that even legislation can be written in what the Archbishop of Canterbury has referred to as the language of Christian, and that in the case of the proposed amendment to section 35 of the 2018 Measure, it is written in Christian.

Some of you will remember the debate this time last year on the zero carbon amendments to the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules. Those amendments were voted for by a large majority in the light of Synod’s own resolution previously to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. The new Rules introduced a requirement for a careful process to inform choices that parishes and others make about matters with implications for carbon neutrality. I spoke about the Fifth Mark of Mission, to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the Earth.

The proposed amendment to the Measure is in line with those changes to the Rules which are underpinned by the very practical zero carbon guidance of the Church Buildings Council. Fr Benfield’s amendment, with respect, presupposes a contest between mission and environmental responsibility, but there is, in truth, no contest, because the legislation, as drafted, is drafted and written in Christian, requiring due regard both to the local role and to the wider environmental implications recalling that care for the environment is an integral element of the mission of the Church. Fr Benfield’s amendment is therefore unnecessary.

Secondly, it would also be unhelpful, because potentially it would reduce the incentive to put every effort into exploring green options. As drafted, the proposed addition to the Measure means that PCCs, DACs, archdeacons and others concerned with the care of churches will have due regard to both on a case-by-case basis to reach the

best decisions in each case. There is no talk of trumping or anything like it in the Explanatory Note when one reads it.

*The Chair:* I see no-one standing, so I call Father Benfield to respond to the debate, and you have up to three minutes, Paul.

*The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* Ruth Newton seeks to oppose my amendment, because she says the amendment suggests that environmental protection runs contrary to the Church's mission. It does not do that; I think there is a misunderstanding there. I agree with Prudence Dailey. She points out that this clause as it stands seems to put environmental protection into the equation twice. The first thing a church is there for is worship and mission, and that is why it should have priority.

Sorry, going back to Ruth Newton, if she cannot conceive of a situation where environmental protection is not mission, then surely clause 14 is not needed at all, why are we mentioning it at all? We should vote clause 14 down, it is just extra words for the sake of it because environmental protection is included in mission.

I think you will have to make your own mind up as regards the Dean of Arches' comments that my amendment is both unnecessary and unhelpful but I would urge you that it is not and I urge you to support this amendment.

*The Chair:* Thank you, I therefore put Item 528, the amendment to Synod.

*The motion was put and lost on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 529**

*The Chair:* We come to Item 529, "That clause 14 stand part of the Measure". As no member has indicated a wish to speak against it, Item 529 is deemed to be carried.

## **ITEM 530**

*The Chair:* We come to clause 15. I invite the Reverend Tom Woolford to move his amendments. Tom, I understand you would quite like to speak to all of them, is that right?

*The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* Yes please, Items 530 to 534 inclusive.

*The Chair:* I am happy that you do that, but you still only get five minutes.

*The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* I am delighted with the explanatory statements provided in the Order Paper, because they confirm that my proposed amendments do exactly what I hoped they would. This is the Ronseal of miscellaneous provisions amendments; it does exactly what it says on the tin.

The unamended Measure in clause 15 subsections 1 and 2 simply confers the incumbent's powers concerning land to the bishop in case of vacancy, these amendments would give those powers instead to a priest in charge or, if there is none, still to the bishop but only at the request of the PCC. Yes, full disclosure, my amendment is a Save the Parish type amendment, since it resists the flow of decision-making away from on-the-ground, in-the-parish priests and parishioners to the episcopal diocesan centre.

But it is at the soft and cuddly end of Save the Parish style amendments. The hard Save the Parish play here would have been to strike out the whole of clauses 1 and 2, which I confess was my first gambit to the Revision Committee. That would have prevented the designation or sale of parish land indefinitely until the bishop licensed an incumbent. But the amendments I am moving today are far more modest. They still allow for the bishop, ultimately, to exercise the rights of an incumbent over land in a vacancy, but they insert two little provisions that keep the initiative for decisions to be made about land more local for longer.

The amended mechanism puts the PCC in the driving seat, but still confers the necessary power to the bishop. In practical terms it means that if the designation or disposal of land is a no-brainer, so it is needed for the parish, it is good for the mission of the Church, it provides a common sense solution to an anomalous situation, something like that, then what this clause of the Measure intends to achieve will go smoothly and quickly ahead.

But if it is controversial, if parishioners might strenuously object, if the overall effect of the designation or disposal of land on the Church's witness and mission is uncertain, well then it is only appropriate that the initiative for proceeding belongs on the ground, in the community directly affected, with the people in the parish.

One might hope, of course, that in most cases there would not be much difference between a bishop initiating a course of action and then involving the PCC in consultation and the faculty process on the one hand, and a PCC first resolving to ask the bishop to act, on the other. So, in both cases one would expect local sensitivities and sentiments to feature prominently.

But as one of our *Pastoral Principles* that pertains to today's second most controversial and high-profile debate after this one puts it, we need to pay attention to power. The power dynamic over Church land between a PCC and vacancy and a bishop may be shared but it is not symmetrical. It would be easy for a PCC to get the impression, erroneously I am sure, that they were under pressure to accede to a bishop's scheme to designate or dispose of land. But if the initiative lies with the PCR in the first instance that impression of pressure would be considerably less likely to occur.

Please, Synod, vote for my ever so soft and cuddly Save the Parish style amendment, to keep those on the ground in the community being directly affected in the driving seat concerning the designation or disposal of land in their parish. I formally beg to move the first amendment at 530 standing in my name.



*The Chair:* I therefore call the Ven. Douglas Dettmer to speak in response. You have up to five minutes to reply.

*The Ven. Douglas Dettmer (Exeter):* I am delighted to get to respond to a soft and cuddly amendment. I do not know what the opposite would look like. Thank you to Revd Woolford for the great thoughtfulness that has gone into the framing of this amendment. However, the Steering Committee does wish to resist it and asks the Synod to do so.

Sometimes legislation, proposed legislation or proposed amendments might seem to be addressing a great point of principle. I think that is what Revd Woolford had in mind when he said just now this relates to the incumbent's powers concerning land being taken over by the bishop during a vacancy. In fact, this is a minor technical, utterly boring change to the legislation, the Church Property Measure, which is simply part of the ironing out of an inconsistency, the filling in of a lacuna. Everywhere else in the Church Property Measure during a vacancy the incumbent's powers relating to benefice land revert to the bishop, so during a vacancy the bishop is empowered already to sell the parsonage house, or divide it, or to sell part of its garden, to grant a covenant in relation to benefice property, to grant an easement over benefice land, and to do things relating to churches and churchyards which even so require the bishop to obtain a faculty from his or her own consistory court. All these things are already in the province of the diocesan bishop during a vacancy.

For some reason the Church Property Measure left out and therefore created a problem when things need to happen in this area, what to do during a vacancy, when what needs to happen is the granting of permission for a highway/public road/right of way to run across benefice land. This simply fills in that lacuna.

There are a couple problems though with this amendment, whatever you think about the principle of making such a meal out of such a small technical matter in a miscellaneous provisions Measure. The first is this. The amendment refers to "the PCC" having certain powers, particularly the power to ask the bishops to do something. "The PCC" is fine where we are talking about a one-parish benefice. For those of us who serve in rural areas, we know that sometimes two, three, four, five, ten, 15, 20 ecclesiastical parishes are within the area of a benefice. Which is the "the PCC" we are talking about? Is it the PCC of the parish within the boundaries of which the parsonage house is? In a multi-parish benefice every PCC is an interested party in anything to do with the parsonage house of that benefice. It is their parson and their parsonage house as much as it is of the parish in which the house is situated. Either one PCC and a benefice is privileged over another, or we are talking about perhaps 20 PCCs needing to consent to a technicality enabling a highway to be put through a bit of benefice land.

The second is the provision around the priest in charge having this power during a vacancy in the benefice, which could have the unintended consequence of preventing the appointment of a priest in charge to exercise pastoral care of the benefice during a vacancy when ongoing property transactions mean that it would be inadvisable to put in an incumbent who could potentially take decisions to change things which had

already begun. That is the reality of the way property transactions sometimes have to happen. Priests in charge and suspensions of presentations to benefices often need to happen for precisely that reason.

For all these reasons I would ask the Synod, if it wants to, to reverse many sections of the Church Property Measure 2018, and change the system whereby the bishop exercises powers over benefice property during a vacancy of the benefice to do so. Otherwise, please resist the amendment.

*The Chair.* The Steering Committee is resisting the amendment. Therefore I need to see 25 members or more standing or indicating using a green tick in order for the debate to take place. There are more than 25 Members. This debate is now open. Remember we are debating Item 530 at this moment. Marcus Walker and then Adrian Greenfield. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Marcus Walker (London):* I am delighted to follow Tom Woolford and perhaps to move this debate from the cuddlier end of Save the Parish to the cuddliest, to our Archbishops who have each at some point in the last year and a half said, “I am Save the Parish” or, “I support Save the Parish”. Both over the course of the last year have recognised the huge breakdown in trust that has happened between parishes and dioceses and both have pledged at different times to work to ameliorate that breakdown of trust. This is an ideal opportunity to demonstrate that.

Yes, there are many Measures which in the past have granted powers to bishops during incumbencies to dispose of land, parsonage houses and other things on behalf of and sometimes, sadly, in the teeth of opposition from parishes and PCCs and priests in charge. This has seriously damaged the trust between people and the centre. This Measure gives us an opportunity to make good that damage, to show from the centre that you have heard this problem and that you would like to work to improve the situation.

What is the problem with approving this? If the PCC agrees with the disposal of this land for this highway then everybody's happy. If the PCC does not, then there is trouble. We want that trouble to be ironed out properly. Let us restore trust. Let us start the process of restoring trust. I hope that I can invite Archbishop Stephen who is here, and Archbishop Justin – to give them equality of name – who is not, but will probably be here for the vote, to support this Measure, and to show that they would like to stand with the restoration of trust in our Church.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark):* I want to say, as my Bishop is sitting in front of me, that I fully trust him. I do want to raise a question language and that is to ask you, Synod, to consider what is it that is vacant when there is no incumbent in a parish? Is it the mind of the PCC that is vacant I ask?

It is incumbent on all organisations, including the Church of England, to keep its arrangements for governance under review. We are actively involved in that. There is an item on the agenda tomorrow about the review of Church governance particularly affecting the Archbishops' Council. There is also an ongoing consultation regarding

the role of bishops. That is not on this Synod's agenda but it is very important and, although the outcome is not yet clear, I am discerning a shift, I think a helpful shift, which will focus the role of bishops on mission, unity, evangelism, those sorts of spiritual and pastoral issues, and a greater emphasis – and it is absolutely clear in my own Diocese of Southwark – on the administrative, property and financial stuff being left to the diocesan secretary supported by their team. We will see the outcome of the consultation as it goes forward.

The Canterbury Diocesan Synod motion last summer put the spotlight on the governance of PCCs and raised a number of questions which I hope will be addressed by the Synod over the coming months. For those of you who are eagle eyed, you will notice that I submitted some amendments to the Revision Committee on the governance of PCCs. Unfortunately, they were rejected but if you want to read it, it is paragraphs 94 to 99. For me this touches on the role of a PCC in relation to property and finance matters and the importance of good process and good governance.

And for all those reasons, I would ask that we support this amendment so that it is made clear that during a vacancy the PCC is not vacant; it remains competent to deal with financial and property issues.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* I must ask you not to support this amendment for very simple reasons. I am a member of the glebe committee which looks at property and land within the Diocese of Lichfield. We have some very hard decisions to make sometimes about land and property and sometimes they have to be made with a very commercial interest, and sometimes they have to be made with a very personal one. Sometimes properties have to be sold because rearrangements are taking place with parishes. Sometimes properties have to be sold because they are unfit for purpose. Sometimes properties have to be sold because we need to release for mission a different arrangement.

Recently I have had a case where an entire property disposal of land was really held up because we could not provide a visible display for entrance to that land because the land in question was inside a garden belonging to a parsonage. The parsonage was finding this difficult. We held up land worth millions of pounds which we really needed to support our diocesan funds because we could not access this land easily.

There are sometimes big conflicts between what we are recommended to do by our land agents, who are responsible for giving us the advice that we try to follow as much as we can, because in order to support our diocesan funds so that we support our parish priests by £10,000 each per year for each full-time post we have sold some considerable amounts of land in the last few years.

I want to support as many priests as possible. We have tried our utmost to facilitate a fund which enables us to continue to support ministry in our dioceses.

Conflicting commercial decisions are sometimes really difficult. We look at every aspect. We have a full report at the glebe committee. We sit very seriously with those decisions and I must ask you, please, to allow the dioceses and diocesan bishops to

continue to exercise this authority. Without that authority, some dioceses are going to lose money which is extremely important to them. And without this authority – and I do trust our bishops to give this authority in a trustworthy way – you will be holding up processes which will impede our mission, prevent us from amassing certain capital funding which we can use then for the mission in our dioceses. It is really important that bishops retain this responsibility.

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

*Mrs Debbie McIsaac (Salisbury):* I want to address a comment that the Archdeacon made concerning a multi-parish benefice. In a multi-parish benefice, it is my understanding that the PCCs continue to have the legal personality and while it may be multi, it is not a mega benefice where the parishes have been collapsed into one and have constituted a new PCC from the amalgamation of those parishes. So, each of the parishes continues to have a PCC, and I think that is an important understanding that we should share.

*The Chair:* After the next speaker I am going to test the mind of Synod about closure of this debate.

*Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester):* This is an extension really of my Question 139. I am a churchwarden and lay chair of our PCC. In a benefice where a church has been left unoccupied for over 20 years and demolished four years ago, and where we have a vicarage that has not been occupied for over 20 years, I can testify to the frustration that a PCC feels about the lack of power they feel they have in this kind of situation. I think anything that can enhance the role of the PCC is to be welcomed. I see this amendment as a small way forward.

The reform of the Church Property Measure 2018 is perhaps a way forward, and obviously that would be for future discussion, but I would urge you to support this amendment because it does at least give a pointer to giving PCCs a greater say in the disposal of church land.

*The Chair:* I am minded to end this debate here.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* Revd Woolford, you have up to three minutes to respond on this Item 530.

*The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* Thank you everyone for contributing to the debate. First, to Archdeacon Douglas, the amendment was tabled with the full advice of the legal team, for which I am very grateful, so I do think it is sound and would work. If it is as insubstantial, as Douglas said, then why resist it, I did wonder.

Thank you, Marcus, for adding that this is an ideal opportunity to start to rebuild trust. Adrian's speech as well, thank you. What is vacant in a vacancy is not the PCC. The PCC remains competent to deal with property and financial matters.

Penny's speech was against this amendment. This amendment still gives the bishop the necessary authority to act. It just means that the process has to start with the PCC, the people on the ground. Again, if it is a very obvious and good decision to make there will be no additional hold-up. Debbie, thank you for your clarifying comments on PCCs in multi-parish benefices. Simon, thank you for your speech about this being a small step towards restoring agency in PCCs that often feel frustrated at the lack of agency particularly in vacancies.

I do urge Synod to vote in favour of the amendment.

*The Chair:* Item 530 as on Order Paper II is now to be voted on. I think it is not completely clear on the show of hands so I order a counted vote of Synod. You will need your machines and cards.

*The motion was put and carried, 109 voting in favour, 86 against, with 13 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* Revd Woolford, I now invite you to move Item 531.

## **ITEM 531**

*Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* I do so move.

*The Chair:* That is perfect for me, thank you. I invite the Ven. Douglas Dettner to respond to the amendment.

*The Ven. Douglas Dettmer (Exeter):* The Steering Committee continues to have concerns about the amendment; however, as the point of principle has now been established, in order not to waste time further we would not wish to oppose it and require the ensuing procedure.

*The Chair:* As the Steering Committee now does not oppose this amendment I will put this amendment to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 532**

*The Chair:* Item 532, Revd Woolford would you move that amendment.

*Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* I do so move.

*The Chair:* Archdeacon Douglas.

*The Ven. Douglas Dettmer (Exeter):* Likewise.

*The Chair:* Thank you very much. I now put Item 532 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

### **ITEM 533**

*The Chair:* Item 533, could you move that one, please?

*Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* Yes.

*The Chair:* It is getting shorter. I do not have to ask him. I therefore put Item 533 to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands*

### **ITEM 534**

*The Chair:* Item 534, Tom.

*Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* Yes.

*The Chair:* Next is just a thumbs up, I think.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

### **ITEM 535**

*The Chair:* We therefore come to Item 535 “That clause 15, as amended, stand part of the Measure”.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

### **ITEM 536**

*The Chair:* We come to Item 536, the stand part motion for clauses 16 to 18. As no member has indicated an intention to speak against the motion, Item 536 is deemed carried.

### **ITEM 537**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 537, “That clause 19 stand part of the Measure”. Mr Clive Billenness has given notice of his intention to speak against clause 19, so I call Mr Hofmeyr to move Item 537. He may speak for up to five minutes.

### **ITEM 537**

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* Mr Billenness, as I understand it, opposes these provisions on the grounds that he considers they ought properly to be dealt with in a

separate Measure. The provisions themselves are explained at GS 2272X2, at paragraphs 81 through to 87. These are important changes which need to be made now. They are spelt out in those paragraphs and I do not propose to deal with them.

The issue really before you is whether these provisions ought to be dealt with in a separate Measure or in this Measure. The Steering Committee unanimously rejects the contention that these matters should be excluded and dealt with in a separate Measure. Our reason is that it would be wasteful of time and money for these matters not to be addressed now and in a miscellaneous provisions Measure. In our view, this is an appropriate way to deal with these matters and it would be most unfortunate if they were delayed and dealt with in a separate Measure which would take over a year to get through General Synod.

For these reasons I would invite you to support clause 19 and to reject Mr Billenness's wish to have it removed.

*The Chair.* This item is now open for debate. You have up to five minutes, Clive.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* Members, Chair, the reason I oppose this is because of a little hidden part of clause 19(1)(4C). There is something about paragraphs 19 and me that seems to bring me to the podium on a regular basis, unfortunately. This section extends the powers of delegation by the Church Commissioners down all the way to an individual or an officer. When we began the consideration of this, I remember Rebecca Chapman talking about what could be a worst-case scenario.

I consider, because by profession I am a pessimist, that there are three misses involved in this. We have mistake, mischief and misidentification. Mistake is a genuine error but it has a sibling, misunderstanding, because where this can go to an individual there could be a genuine error if there is no other check. Mischief occurs when someone who has had delegated powers to make a decision does so without the best of intentions. We then come to misidentification. We live in a world where so much is now done electronically. I ask all members of Synod to reflect whether or not they are completely certain that nobody else anywhere in the world has their identity or access to their electronic devices.

Thinking back to Rebecca Chapman's comment about what is the worst case, well, this is a real worst case. The Charity Commission have about £10.5 billion pounds of assets, so your worst case is the Charity Commissioners find themselves £10 billion poorer but the proud owner of a handful of magic beans. You can talk about checks and balances later in any of these systems, but to continue the nursery rhyme theme: in my world, subsequent precautions are known as Humpty Dumpty precautions because you are trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together again after the event.

Having once had to help a public authority reverse an £8 million fraud, believe me it is very stressful trying to put Humpty back together again. It will be told to you that all charities have this kind of power. They do not. Unlimited delegation to any person, which is what this Measure provides, is a vast power. I am the finance trustee of a charity with a budget which would fit nicely in the small change purse of the Church

Commissioners and when I defined my role, and with the full support of my trustees, I deliberately removed from my own power any financial authority to act on my own authority in relation to financial processes or expenditure. In my opinion, as the Measure stands, the level of delegation goes too far and this is why I beg to oppose this motion. Chair, Mr Hofmeyr, thank you.

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio):* Mr Billenness, thanks for raising a really very important point about how we are held to account. I appreciate the challenge, but I will ask that Synod opposes it because the root of this is actually to allow us to be a more effective steward of the Church's £10.1 billion funds. The root of this actually comes from a bond issue this year. When we came to do that bond issue, the first ever done in the Church's history, they said, well, where do we show we have this power to do this, and our lawyers actually brought back the original 1704 Queen Anne's Bounty Act.

We cannot steward an endowment fund on behalf of the Church having to go back to a 320 year old Act and this is all that this is doing. Alongside all of those procedures which actually do exist is to formalise it and make it transparent, but actually alongside that there are so many checks and balances. When we were in the heat of that deal, we actually had to refer back to a whole series of controls. We had to refer to a whole series of checks and balances in that.

I appreciate your challenge, but there is nothing sinister in there. Believe you me, the weight that the Commissioners have and the weight that the office of the First Church Estates Commissioner has has no desire to bring more things on it. But we appreciate your challenge and thanks for bringing it transparently in this way, but the backdrop of this is actually to make us more efficient in managing the funds today.

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

*Mrs Debbie McIsaac (Salisbury):* There are choices, of course, between reverting to 1702 or 1704 and implementing good and up-to-date governance. It is anathema to good governance to see an individual exercising a function without some specific check or balance and I think that is particularly so in this case. I would urge you to support this amendment.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* I am a member of the Reference Group on the Governance Review. The major reason given for the Governance Review being in operation was that there are too many committees and it is too easy to form a committee. It strikes me that this item here, 19, gives absolute free licence to committees being established almost willy-nilly. It must be fundamentally wrong that we have a major piece of revision going through the Governance Review on the one hand and we have the ability to create committees out of thin air on the other. I am also reminded that the checks and balances that were referred to earlier did not stop the various frauds that we have noted in the recent past in various dioceses. I support Mr Billenness in this. I think it is absolutely right. I detect a kind of support for the Revision Committee. If I may say so, Synod needs to take a far more objective view of these things and its own mind. I would support this amendment.



*The Chair.* I do now see no-one standing and so I invite Stephen Hofmeyr to respond to the debate. Stephen, you have up to three minutes.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* Synod, this is not an amendment. What is being proposed is that clause 19 is removed in its entirety from the Measure. I just want you to be absolutely clear in what you are being invited to do. The 1947 Measure already allows for delegation to officers and it has done since inception in 1947. This has not been an issue. The point that has been made by Mr Billenness relates to he would like to see an amendment to one part of one of the provisions. The appropriate course would have been for that to have been brought by way of an amendment so that the amendment could then be debated without interfering with all the other provisions which he is not concerned with which are contained in clause 19.

So this is not an amendment. The Measure has always allowed delegations to officers. If there is to be a debate on the question of delegation, then now is not the right place to have that debate. We need to have that debate in the context of an overall consideration in a governance context of the extent to which delegation is appropriate or not appropriate. Thank you to Alan Smith for explaining to us the background to these proposals and why they are being included in the Miscellaneous Provision Measure and why they are necessary and why they are necessary now.

Thank you also to Mrs McIsaac and to Mr Johnston for the points you make, but I fear those points would relate to an amendment if it were opposed, not to what is before you now which is whether this clause should be rejected in full or whether it should be accepted. As I say, if there is to be a debate on the principle of delegation, now is not the place to have that debate. For these reasons, I would invite you to support clause 19 forming part of the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure.

*The Chair.* We are voting on Item 537, "That clause 19 stand part of the Measure".

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 538**

*The Chair.* We come to Item 538, the stand part motion for clauses 20 to 23. As no member has indicated an intention to speak against those clauses, Item 538 is deemed carried.

## **ITEM 539**

*The Chair.* We then move to Item 539, the stand part motion for Schedules 1 and 2. Again, as no-one has indicated an intention to speak, that item is deemed carried.

## **ITEM 540**

*The Chair.* Finally, we move to Item 540, "That the Long Title stands part of the Measure", which is also deemed to be carried. Synod, that completes the Revision Stage for the draft Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure, which now

stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting. Thank you very much. We now move to the next item of business.

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 11.59 am.

**ITEM 511**  
**SPECIAL AGENDA I**  
**LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**  
**DRAFT PAROCHIAL FEES ORDER 2023 (GS 2288)**

*The Chair.* Thank you, Synod. We come to Item 511. I am just going to tell you how we are going to manage this item of business in layperson's terms first. We are going to discuss whether to agree to consider the Parochial Fees Order 2023. We will then look at the amendments.

Finally, we will look at the Order as amended or not for approval. We come to Item 511A, the draft Parochial Fees (Amendment) Order 2023, which is to be considered under the preliminary motion procedure set out in Standing Order 73. Members will need the draft Order GS 2288 and the Explanatory Notes GS 2288X and also Order Paper IV which sets out the amendments which have been received.

Synod should be aware that there is a financial implication for this item for which the detail is set out in the Fourteenth Notice Paper. I would like to invite Mr John Spence to move Item 511A, the preliminary motion that the draft Parochial Fees Order be considered. He has up to ten minutes.

**ITEM 511A**

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* When the Parochial Fees Order was agreed in 2019 to last from 2020 to 2024, it was intended to be helpful to diocesan boards of finance and parochial church councils in enabling them to do their budgeting. They would know by the August of each year what their CPI was and, on that basis, they would know that the fees would increase in line with the CPI rounded up to the nearest pound. Nobody then could have envisaged that in August 2022 the CPI increase would be 9.9%.

If we allow the current Order to stand, that is where the fees have already gone up from 1 January and that will continue to be the increase. This matter was brought to the attention of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee and the Archbishops' Council at the end of last year. As an economist, I would argue that there may or may not be a price elasticity of demand. Would somebody, for instance, be less likely to be married in church because the fee had gone up from £480 to £528 than they would be if the fee went up from £480 to £504?

But the point is it was about the message that it sends. We would be saying to those people who wish to come to church for their services, we are passing on the full considerable increase in the Consumer Price Index while at the same time we have

only increased the recommended stipends of the priests who will be undertaking those ceremonies by 5%. It was the conclusion of the Archbishops' Council that this just did not feel equitable and that we should, therefore, bring this amendment before you today.

That is what we ask you to do, to agree that the fees for the rest of this year – so we can lay the Order immediately after you have agreed it into Parliament and then it will come into force – should be the less of CPI or 5%, so by definition that will be 5% given that it is based on August last year, and that for 2024 again the fee increase should be 5% or CPI increase, whichever is the lower.

I do need to say to you that I am going to have to resist the amendments that have been moved. Firstly, it seems to me in principle that if somebody is recommending a much bigger increase than CPI, as is in the case of Ian's amendment, or if one is moving a difference, a change in the split between diocesan boards of finance and parochial church councils, the right way to do that is as the result of a proper consultation. Given that the current Order in any case expires at the end of 2024, we will need to undertake that consultation over the next 12 months in order to bring you a new Order to apply from 1 January 2025 in a year's time.

But, secondly, I have been given advice from our officials that we can only, as a Synod, agree the amendment as is presented to you today. If any amendment is made to that, then that will have to be referred back to Archbishops' Council for a future meeting. They can either then accept the amendment and lay the Order in Parliament at that time, which will mean at least a delay of probably two more months, or they can resist that amendment in which case they would have to accept that this Order is lost and they would have to bring completely new proposals to you which could be done no sooner than July 2023.

Basically, we are given something of a difficult choice here. We ask you to accept the Amendment Order which will reduce the increase to be applied across the rest of this year and across 2024 to the numbers I have quoted or else if you choose to move any of the amendments or to resist the Amendment Order completely, amend it upwards, so 10% plus will apply and will continue to apply across this year and with next year's increase being whatever CPI is in August 2023. I do hope that is very clear. I look forward very much to receiving the views of Synod on this and I move the motion in my name.

*The Chair:* The motion at Item 511A is now open for debate. This is the opportunity for general debate on the draft Order as laid before the Synod. If after any debate the motion is carried, we will move to the amendments.

*The Ven. Darren Miller (Canterbury):* Thank you, Chair, for calling me for my maiden speech. I do feel possibly a little bit of a heel bringing this speech before Synod not least in the light of the work that we did earlier today. However, I need to oppose this Amendment Order, not because what it aims to do is wrong but I very much feel that this is the wrong way to achieve it. In a time of the cost of living crisis, it is important for the Church to do its bit to help everybody but this is not the way. For many, the

saving to each individual will be, frankly, a token: a little over £25 for a marriage that has probably cost many of the people coming to our churches thousands.

The problem with this Order is that it is neither focused nor nuanced. It is a blanket cut taking no account of someone's circumstances or ability to pay the full fee. The cost of living is also affecting our churches, putting stressors on local budgets. Additionally, this change – and I am sorry if I missed anything that came our way to the dioceses and parishes – is unexpected and comes months after parishes and dioceses have set budgets for this current year. Many, if this is considered and passed, will suffer income cuts that will make a real difference in their ability to serve, not least in their ongoing social impact projects – those we heard about earlier. As an example, a benefice in my archdeaconry that currently struggles financially, if this goes through as it stands will lose over £1,100 this year.

For the Diocese of Canterbury, which has the second fewest historic resources to draw upon – in most listings it is the second poorest in the country – that means that we have to try and balance our budget each year and it can be a pretty close run thing. We will be losing 21 and a half thousand pounds. That is the equivalent of half a stipended post which we have not budgeted for and cannot afford. Notice Paper 5, which we only received on Friday, makes clear that the effect of this Order will be a centrally imposed revenue cut to parishes and dioceses of a sum of £3.6 million. That is at a time when our local budgets are already hard pressed. Most importantly, this Amendment Order is unnecessary. Parishes already have the right to waive PCC and DBF fees where there is real hardship. I know from my own work in my area, where we have some of the most deprived communities in the country with rural poverty rife, coastal poverty and lots of different areas where there are challenges, parishes do waive fees.

We need to trust them to do so where that is the appropriate thing, where those who can afford can pay the full increase and where those who cannot afford are known by their local parish who can then exercise their right to waive a fee where that is the appropriate thing to do. A blanket revenue cut to our parishes and dioceses is not the way to help people in need. We need to be able to trust our parishes to make those decisions for themselves, to make a difference where they can that is real for them and those whom they serve. If we need to remind parishes that they can do this, then let us do so, but I would urge us not to do it by this blanket cut across the board that will do more harm than it intends to do good.

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

*Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield):* I declare an interest in this item as both the treasurer of my church and as a trustee of the diocesan board of finance. As an accountant, I like a good process, a system for calculating fees which is robust, fair, equitable and timely, but to my mind the proposed Fees Order lacks all three attributes. The introduction of a cap may be reasonable, particularly as a significant proportion of the fee relates to the time cost of clergy and at 5% the cap mirrors the increase in the National Stipend Benchmark from April 2023. But what about next year? If the increase in the Stipend Benchmark is some other figure, will there be a proposal to change the cap again?

There is then the embarrassing issue of timing and the fact that introducing reduced rates at this point in the year, or whenever the Order commences, would mean that people being charged the reduced fees will be paying less than those who were charged earlier in the year. Can this be fair? Would we be morally bound to reimburse part of the fees charged in the first part of this year?

Chair, it might be that the fees are too high, but I would suggest that this is not the way to rectify the matter and it may be better for the Archbishops' Council to go away and do more work on this in time for the determination of the 2024 fees. I would ask Synod to vote against the draft Order.

*The Revd Canon Ian Flintoft (Newcastle):* Thank you for calling me for my maiden speech. I speak in favour of the draft Order. I speak as a passionate advocate of the part that occasional offices can play in our ministry of love and service and in the sensitive proclamation of the Gospel for those who live in our parishes. I have the privilege of ministering in a parish where people still turn to the Church for these offices and have just finished a run of 12 funerals between Christmas and last week. What I say relates specifically to funeral fees but some of it is applicable more widely.

Yes, the amounts we are talking about are small. Yes, they represent only a small proportion of the total costs of a funeral. Yes, there are other things that we can do to ensure that people turn to us at these key moments of life, like replying promptly to funeral directors, responding sensitively and creatively to families' requests and offering good follow-up in pastoral care, but I do believe the changes proposed in this Order are for the good. The community theologian, Ann Morisy, speaks of "cascades of grace". She means those often small acts of generosity and grace we can do which, in turn, often provoke further acts of grace and generosity from others and sometimes turn into a cascade.

The proposals we are debating today might be that first act of grace prompting the generosity of a bereaved family and perhaps even of others in the funeral industry as they reflect on what it is just to be charging for their services during a cost of living crisis. I support this Order and I ask us to continue to be attentive to the missional value of this part of our ministry to our nation.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* I think somebody yesterday talked about a lack of memory, so in case a lack of memory is widespread in the Synod can I remind you that we have just passed a motion that says we are mindful of the impact of the deepening cost of living crisis on ordinary people. This draft Amendment to the Fees Order is a way in which this Synod and this Church can do something about that practically. It is time that we walk our talk. Please let us have this debate and let us pass this Amendment Order.

*The Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield):* It has just occurred to me to mention how many times I am now dealing with families who have had their family members have a direct cremation because of cost and the upset that that is causing when a family realise they cannot even attend a funeral. I think it is so vital that we are able to keep

our fees as low as possible so that we can serve families who are in need and who may increasingly choose a direct cremation as an alternative to a funeral and this is not something that we should be encouraging.

*The Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds):* Although my diocesan secretary and chief financial officer of our DBF have said that they are content with this, I do just want to respond to those previous couple of speeches about generosity. When people speak about generosity they need to be aware that they are being generous with other people's money. It is not that this money does not need to be found, it is that it needs to be found if not by the fees but basically through Parish Share and so they are being generous with money that has to be given by other ordinary people who are regular worshippers. I think we should keep that in mind when we, as we are often urged to do, give things away, who is it that is actually doing the giving?

*The Chair:* I see no-one else standing and so I would like to invite Mr Spence to reply.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you very much for actually a very short but really terrific debate. There were two notable maiden speeches for me. Darren, I agree with so much of what you have said and your sentiment. The only words with which I really disagreed was the piece, "centrally imposed". Actually, this is a real test of democracy. Archbishops' Council will do what Synod directs us to do as a result of this debate.

Chris, I do appreciate what you said about timeliness but, given the CPI increase was only in August and the last time Synod met was in July when the earliest available figures were very different, there was not much we could do about it as we are required to come back to Synod if we wish to amend the Order any the other way. But the other maiden speech was Ian's and I do love that phrase, "The cascade of grace". I do appreciate, Paul, that we are potentially spending other people's money but it just seems to me so important about the signals that we send.

As Eleanor said in terms of funerals, we understand where you are. Yes, we understand it will cause us an issue. What the financial impact will be, as I say, who would know whether anybody or how many people would change their plans because of the scale of the increase?

I look forward, as do my colleagues in Archbishops' Council, to receiving the will of Synod on this matter. If you approve the Amendment Order, we will act accordingly. If you choose not to, then, of course, we will have to consider what further order we might bring in future, but I thank you very much for the debate.

*The Chair:* I now put this item, 511A, to the vote with a show of hands.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* I am going to make a request of Synod to extend this sitting by up to 15 minutes, if we need it, to finish this business.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 541**

*The Chair:* That is carried. Thank you very much, Synod. We now come to the amendments. I call on the Revd Marcus Walker to move his first amendment at Item 541. He may speak for up to five minutes.

*The Revd Marcus Walker (London):* I come before Synod by way of a public confession and, in the manner of a confession, I suppose I have both a confession and then – oh, how did it go? No, the bit before penance – an act of contrition and then my act of penance. The confession is that a fat thumb and an attempt to copy from a PDF into an email meant that what I wanted to do was not, in fact, done for this amendment, which was to ensure that funerals taken in crematoria would have the fees split in the same way that funerals undertaken in churches are split.

Even I do not wish to denude the diocesan boards of finance of all of the revenues of the hard work of the parish clergy across the country. I did not do this and I confess this before the Synod: my act of contrition, therefore, is to withdraw my amendments.

My penance, however, is, after conversation with John Spence, he has invited me and others who are interested in this to be part of the conversations as to what the fees should look like after 2025 and how there can be a fairer and more equitable division between the monies going to the parish council and the monies going to the diocesan board of finance, because it is only fair that the hard work of the parish clergy is reflected in the monies that go to the parishes and to the dioceses. I, therefore, withdraw my amendments.

## **ITEM 543**

*The Chair:* As Mr Walker has withdrawn his amendments, we move straight to the amendment at Item 543. Would the Ven. Ian Bishop like to speak to his amendment.

*The Ven. Ian Bishop (Chester):* Synod, what I am proposing here is actually a very simple change to the parochial fees – or at least I hope it is simple. I do not mean to cause legal difficulties. I am standing here following a conversation I had with a treasurer of a small rural church. He is trying to do his best to manage their almost full churchyard. The church is coming under some pressure from the local community to extend the churchyard but, as he said to me, “We would like to help but we cannot afford it. We have on average two burials a year and the income we get from that will not even pay to cut the grass. Our volunteers are exhausted and getting older and so we have to buy in help. Why would we extend the churchyard? But, if we do not, I fear the criticism we will get from people in the village who expect to be buried there will damage our mission”.

Now, I do not think that that church is unique. Indeed, I think most of our small rural parishes cannot cover the cost of churchyard maintenance from the fees they receive, but they have huge problems of management and they put up with abuse from

everyone who thinks they should do a better job. We all know the stories of parishes publicly criticised for clearing makeshift shrines or for not keeping the place neat and tidy. I want to say that I support the principle that underpins these fees, that we should keep fees low for those financially struggling in our society. We recognise the very high costs that the public experience at weddings and funerals and we want to make these very important pastoral and community events affordable and missional. I endorse that aim, but I do not really want to support the cap on fees for the very good reasons that Darren Miller said earlier.

The fact is I think that the base level of parochial fees operating since 2019 is not really working for small rural churches. Can I suggest an increase in just one particular element that I think would make a bit of a difference. I am asking that the fee for the burial of a body should increase from just under £400 to £1,000 to help struggling parishes afford the cost of churchyard maintenance. Leave the rest of the fees alone, preferably without the cap, because the principle of lower fees is still in place, but increase the fee for the burial of a body. You can still inter ashes very cheaply. You can still have a church service very cheaply, but if you want the privilege of taking significant space in the churchyard then you should pay a reasonable figure. If you think that the increase I am suggesting is excessive, please just note that the Church of England would still be well below the local authority and private cemetery costs.

In my own area of Cheshire East, a pretty average area of the country, you would pay £2,200 for a single depth grave. I am suggesting a figure less than half of our local authority rate and if you go to the nice, private burial ground at Adlington Hall just outside Macclesfield, it will be double that as well. The fact is we are miles below the market. I do understand why we apply such low fees and I am the last person who wants to see us charging excessively so that only the wealthy can afford full body burial, but do not forget we always have the option of waiving fees, as we have already heard, for those in financial hardship.

The figure suggested here in this motion is not fair on the parishes asked to look after the bodies that want burying. It may, of course, lead to people opting for the then much cheaper cremation and internment of ashes, but would that not be a good thing, a much better use of the diminishing space in our burial grounds, easier to maintain and more environmentally sensible? This is a small change that I am asking for but for many small churches it might just make a big difference, so, please, come on, Synod, throw a few parishes a lifeline and support this amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair.* I would like to invite Mr Spence to respond to this amendment.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Chairman, to save time and elegance, if I can reply from here. Ian makes good points. If we are worried about the reputation, I wonder how a recommended increase of nearly 300% would appear to the outside population? But I come back, Ian, to if we ask to look at this one Measure alone, it will have the impact of requiring the whole Order to be referred back to Archbishops' Council with a delay of at least two more months for enactment I would think. Secondly, the right thing to do is for us to be involved in a full consultation and conversation exercise over



the coming months so that such good arguments as you made can be considered properly.

Just as I have invited Marcus to be involved in that – and, by golly, how amazing that even Marcus can make a mistake – Ian, I say to you that you are very warmly welcome to come into that dialogue. Let us have a full, inclusive conversation and make sure that we create a fee structure from 2025 onwards that really satisfies everybody in terms of splits, in terms of fee levels and so on. I thank you very much for the amendment but I must resist it.

*The Chair.* The amendment will lapse unless 25 members stand. I do not see 25 members standing and so the amendment, therefore, lapses.

## **ITEM 511B**

*The Chair:* We come straight to Item 511B, “That the Draft Parochial Fees (Amendment) Order 2023 be approved”. Would Mr Spence like to move this item.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Chair, I am happy to move the motion.

*Canon Dr John Mason (Chester):* I am entirely in favour of this amendment. I note the basis on which it is based that it should reflect the costs and the fact that the recommended stipend increase is only 5%, which is why we are capping it at 5%. I just would wonder whether or not we could be reassured that in the unlikely but potential situation that the stipend were increased one year by more than CPI that we would be seeking potentially to set the fees at that higher level?

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* This is a speech that I had written to oppose the amendment that has lapsed, but I am going to tweak it for the general purpose of this. I want to talk about my own experiences of the Church’s funeral care in 2017 because I then want to address some of the points that were made earlier. In our first item of business today, we said we were mindful of the impact of the deepening cost of living crisis on ordinary people and we recalled our Lord’s commitment to those who were hungry or lacked the essentials of life.

I am happily married. I have three wonderful adult children and four amazing step-children and the future is bright. But the life that I have now looked impossible in January 2017 when my first wife died in hospital two days after collapsing at home. She had had a stroke. Jilly was 51. Her death was unexpected. I was devastated. My whole life and world imploded and in 2017 I did very little work. I was self-employed and this had a major impact on finances.

My family and I were supported by the Church, not only by my vicar but by the Dean of Lichfield who made his wonderful Cathedral in Staffordshire available for the funeral, the Bishop of Wolverhampton offered his personal support as did priests from a number of my former parishes. I was supported by members of one of my former churches who set up a rota to deliver meals on wheels to feed my boys and me. A former lay member of that church had become a curate of another nearby church and

members of that church who did not know me also set up a meals on wheels rota and fed my boys and me for another week. Also, the Archbishop of Canterbury who, on one of the few pieces of work that I did do in 2017 reporting on his visit to Jerusalem, Israel and Palestine for the *Church Times* and others, took time out of his busy schedule on that trip to talk with me, to console me and to pray for me.

When I was overcome with grief, the Church was there for me and got me through 2017. I am concerned when we talk about fees for funerals in particular as a way of funding parish life. I am concerned about it because the bereaved in particular, and I know that fees cover weddings and so on as well, but particularly with fees for funerals we are talking about somebody having to pay them at potentially the lowest point of their lives. Not everyone who is bereaved will receive the same extent of love and care from the Church that I received, but if we put fees up many people will receive no care from the Church.

We should not price ourselves out of our calling to bless those who mourn. There are ways in which churchyard costs can be met: working with parish councils, that is civil parish councils and others, to help with those costs. I know some churchyards extended not by extending the churchyard but by buying a civil cemetery next to it and combined them so that the people there do not know whether they are in the churchyard or the civil cemetery. There are ways in which this can be done and I encourage Synod and the Church to address ways in which we can fund funeral ministry without using it as a tax on those who grieve.

*The Chair:* I see no-one else standing. Would Mr John Spence like to respond.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* If I may, again, speak from here, Chair, thank you. To John, please be assured the Amendment Order, if agreed, will apply only for 2023 and 2024. There will be no question of fees rising by more than CPI in that time as it will be the lower of CPI or 5%. All our expectations are that by August this year CPI will be rising by less than 5% and so that will be the fee level. Gavin, can I just thank you for sharing with us that very sad story and, yet, an inspiring story of the support you received.

It is just worth me reflecting that, while the numbers here seem huge, the entire income to the entire Church of England from parochial fees at £65 million is less than 10% of that which comes in from Parish Share. The financial impact as laid out in your Memorandum, even if the increased fees at 10% would have no impact on demand, is less than half of 1% of that Parish Share figure. I very rarely suggest to you something that will reduce income. I do so on behalf of Archbishops' Council now and I ask you to agree the Parish Fee Amendment Order 2023.

*The Chair:* I now put this item to the vote, "That the Draft Parochial Fees (Amendment) Order 2023 be approved".

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* I can say that the draft Amending Canon No. 43 will be taken now. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR *The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 12.38 pm

*The Chair.* Before commencing the next item and getting to our lunch break, Synod, I have been asked to remind members to return handsets to their charging stations during lunch-time because we want them to be fully charged for this afternoon.

## **ITEM 544**

### **DRAFT AMENDING CANON NO. 43 (GS 2273A) Draft Amending Canon for Revision**

*The Chair.* We now come to Items 544 and 545, draft Amending Canon No. 43, for which you will need GS 2273A. We come to the item at the Revision Stage for the draft Amending Canon No. 43. Members will recall that Synod took note of the Report of the Revision Committee for this Amending Canon on Tuesday morning – it seems a long time ago.

*A Speaker.* Point of order. Is the House of Bishops quorate?

*The Chair.* We will just count. Can I invite bishops to stand or indicate their presence in another way. That is much quicker. We need nine. We are quorate, you will be pleased to note, thank you.

Because the Report related to both a Measure and a Canon under Standing Order 57(4A), which is a new Standing Order, I must first call on a member of the Revision Committee to move that the draft Amending Canon No. 43 (Miscellaneous Provisions) do proceed to the Revision Stage. I call on the Chair of the Steering Committee, Mr Stephen Hofmeyr, to move that motion.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* I formally move that the draft Amending Canon No. 43 (Miscellaneous Provisions) do proceed to the Revision Stage.

*The Chair.* Thank you. The Standing Orders require me to put this motion to a vote without a debate and so I will do that now.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 545**

*The Chair.* We now come to Item 545, the stand part motion for paragraphs 1 to 16 of the draft Canon. As no member has indicated a wish to speak against those paragraphs, Item 545 is deemed carried. That completes the Revision Stage for the draft Amending Canon No. 43 (Miscellaneous Provisions) which now stands committed to the Steering Committee in respect of its final drafting.

That concludes this item of business, thank you.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 2.00 pm

*The Chair.* Can I first of all say to the person who left the chocolates that it will be much appreciated, in due course, and if we need replenishments I shall raise it as a point of order.

Before we begin, may I just make a few brief observations. For some, if not all of us, this may well be, at the very least, an uncomfortable few hours, which we will be able to reflect on at our leisure. If we choose to do so, there is no doubt that we may offend dear friends and loyal colleagues believing that we are only speaking truth. My role is a very simple one, I think, and that is to ensure that we comply with the Standing Orders and I will endeavour to do that as best I can. But my sincere hope and prayer for today's debate is that in all we say and, in particular, how we express ourselves we will be filled with a generosity of spirit towards each other and that we do not use language which proclaims an automatic entitlement over the deeply held views of our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we believe that we are capable of disagreeing well, now is the time to show it.

We are going to be here for the next five hours. My bladder tells me that I cannot. Well, we talked about sex last night so I thought I was on a runner here. So, it will be necessary for us to take a short break. Hopefully, we can manage (it depends on my bladder) with just one break at about 4.15 but we will see how we go. Those who want to sustain themselves rather more readily and better can of course go the tea room where they can listen to what is going on.

As to the structure of the debate, after Bishop Sarah has opened the debate we will probably have half a dozen speakers or so, of hopefully five minutes each, to give us some really detailed understanding of what we are about before we turn to the amendments and work our way through them. We will do that in the order that the amendments strike the text. There are quite a lot of amendments, as you will see. On reaching the amendments it is probably inevitable that I will have to reduce the speech limit, although, hopefully, I will not have to reduce it below three minutes. When we have gone through all the amendments we will have the original or an amended motion, which we can then further debate before voting on it. That is the procedure.

Please remember that when you are allowed to speak for up to X minutes, it is not compulsory for you to do so, and indeed some might think – my wife certainly does – that sometimes saying less is much better than saying more. If there are any unexpected interruptions to the vote I will of course adjourn the debate. I can confirm – we have been asked this – that it will be in order to vote from the gallery electronically by means of counted vote of the Synod or a vote by Houses but it will not be in order for a member to intervene in the debate or to vote by a show of hands or participate in the 25-member rule from the gallery. May I also remind members that it is the usual practice of Synod to receive votes in silence. Having said all that, I call upon the Bishop of London who may speak for up to ten minutes.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Let us pray.

(Prayer)

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I would like to start by saying a few words about the nature of our debate before introducing the motion that I am moving on behalf of the House of Bishops. I would like to begin by thanking you again for engaging in our deliberations together. Having the time and space to encounter each other, to listen to each other and to hear our different concerns and perspectives is a gift, and I am grateful for the way you have received and valued this gift by participating in the group work yesterday and in our time together so far. As we move from the more intimate gatherings of our group to debate, I very much hope that we will strive for our exchanges to be in the spirit of dialogue. Let us not allow the procedural aspects of our discussions and decision-making, as essential as they are, to determine and overtake the relational mode of engagement that is so much more fruitful.

As we seek to be honest in our conversations, we will need to take care of how we express our views and our disagreements. We need to be looking out for each other as we discuss matters that touch us so personally in relation to who we are and how we understand what it means to be faithful to Christ.

We also need to be attentive to ourselves remembering that there are teams of chaplains ready to serve us and to be a listening ear. The debate may be long and arduous so do take time out, a sabbath rest as and when you need one.

I would now like to say a few words about the introduction to the motion that you have before you and that I will move on behalf of my fellow Bishops in the House. In our meetings together over the last few months and years we bishops have discerned the reality of our disagreements, and those disagreements have not changed. But within that uncomfortable reality we also discern our call to walk together in that disagreement allowing for conscience and the continuing work of the Spirit among us.

That does not mean that we have not heard the voices that dissent from this view. In the *Listening with Love and Faith* Report, and in our engagement with clergy and congregations across our dioceses, we have heard that there are some who believe that these differences between us about same-sex relationships are far too great for us to walk together in the way that we propose. We have heard that for some these matters are core to their understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ and that they have no option but to separate visibly from one another. We have also heard that for some not to oppose equal marriage is tantamount to discrimination and is a betrayal of their understanding of what it means to follow Christ faithfully.

I hope, Synod, that you have also heard the breadth of voices across the Church of England and not just in this chamber, who tell us of their growing empathy and respect as different perspectives were shared and better understood, and who look to our

leadership to reflect that experience. There have been many who tell us that they want to continue to relate together, to learn together and to serve despite their differences.

What we the Bishops have tried to accomplish through this motion is to create the space in which we can just about touch each other, understanding each other as beloved followers of Jesus Christ. It is a call to exercise perhaps the most challenging of what it means to embrace radical Christian inclusion that is founded in Scripture, in reason, in tradition, in theology and the Christian faith of the Church of England as it received it, and based on good healthy flourishing relationships and in a proper 21st century understanding of being human and being sexual.

That is what undergirds this motion, the motion that you have before you. It is first and foremost a motion that commits the Church to a journey of repentance for our failure to welcome and love LGBTI+ people among us, and repentance requires change – change in the way that we behave in our life together.

The five clauses that follow describe what the change needs to look like for our repentance to have integrity. This change is about our commitment to continue to examine our life together through the lens of the *Pastoral Principles*. We know that many church communities have already found that engaging with the *Pastoral Principles* has been transformative. This change is about intentionally continuing to be a learning church, a community that is not afraid to engage with the difficult and challenging issues that our society throws at us. It is about cherishing the gift of learning together, listening deeply to one another, and to the world around us, as we immerse ourselves in Scripture, in worship and the living tradition of the Church. This change is about recognising that the documents and guidance that the bishops have produced in the past need to be reviewed so that they reflect our collective calling to profess the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the Catholic Creeds which the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation.

That is why the motion invites you to welcome the Bishops' decision to replace *Issues in Human Sexuality* with new *Pastoral Guidance*. This is not just a matter of replacing one document with another but, as explained on page 10 of the Bishops' response, it is to review past guidance and delineating necessary areas for future guidance. This will involve gathering and reviewing all existing guidance, pastoral statements and teaching documents relating to the questions of sexuality, civil partnerships and marriage. It will also involve identifying and addressing areas where there is little or no guidance, for example, regarding singleness, celibacy. This work will gather the relevant material into a single new *Pastoral Guidance* resource which is renewed when required.

This change is about offering *Prayers of Love and Faith* that respond to the urgent pastoral need to affirm and celebrate same-sex couples who have formed lifelong committed faithful relationships without changing the doctrine of marriage.

In line with our commitment to be a listening and learning Church we want to listen to you, members of Synod, and others across the Church as we produce the guidance

and as we further define the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. In our commitment to creating a space that allows for conscience and for the continuing work of the Spirit among us, we want to make sure that there is freedom and protection for clergy who choose to use the prayers in different ways, or who choose not to use them at all.

And finally, Synod, this change is about continuing to learn and to listen to one another, and to God, as these prayers are used around the country, being open to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.

Members of Synod, the House of Bishops commends this motion for your prayerful consideration.

*The Chair.* This matter is open for debate and there is a five-minute speech limit – up to five minutes.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* We are not divided but we disagree and that is very painful. I will use again the words close to those that I used to the Bishops gathered at the Lambeth Conference in a very similar debate. For some to question the inherited teaching damages witness and is sinful. You point out that in many provinces across the Anglican Communion any change might make the Church a victim of derision, contempt and even attack for being part of what is called the gay Church for we are often seen as the mother Church.

For others who have not arrived easily at the conclusion that we need to change, you are not careless about Scripture, you do not reject Christ and His authority, but to question this change makes the Church here and abroad a victim of derision, contempt and even attack for being part of the perceived homophobic Church. Listening and loving is about what has been brought forward by the House of Bishops. It has been consulted extensively with the Primates and many others in the Anglican Communion. What we are seeking is what we understand from the Spirit is right, not which is convenient or easy. There are no convenient or easy ways forward.

What we have in this conversation in the decision we make today is at its heart the chance publicly to witness to Christ in the most difficult, distinctive and radical way; to disagree passionately and yet to be clear that we uphold our need for one another and for the world to come to the knowledge of being loved by God in Christ.

Let me be clear on this point. We do that by saying to the world that unity in Jesus Christ is our common identity and difference must be worked out within that identity. We are told by Christ himself that such unity reveals Christ in the world. We heard that in the New Testament lectionary reading for Morning Prayer today. Even things that are so important and so painful for us are not as important as the essentialness of others. That is our witness to a world that throws others away, excludes them, divides in the face of disagreement, that sides with its own echo chamber. This is the countercultural decision.

In 1 Corinthians 12 we read about the need we have for other people. The eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of you. We need everyone in the body of Christ if we

are to be genuine ambassadors of reconciliation. We need the Communion. We need all other Christians for we are a church catholic. I know there is fear of a slippery slope, of what may or may not happen at some point in the future, but let us not give in to the fear of a future which we can neither predict nor control. Fear leads us to do the wrong things: trying to secure the future for God tomorrow rather than trusting the Holy Spirit today.

I have just been in Westminster Hall hearing President Zelensky, who knows well what it means for the world to change overnight. And who knows here what will come to us in the next few years, not least from there?

Each of us will answer to God at the judgment for our decisions on this matter. We are personally responsible. I am supporting these resources not I think because I am controlled by culture but because of Scripture, tradition and reason evidenced in the vast work done over the last six years so ably by so many. I may be wrong, of course I may, but I cannot duck the issue any more than anyone else here. I ask each member of Synod to vote with their Spirit-inspired consciences scripturally and spiritually guided and not because groups or lobbies or outsiders have told you to. I have heard them over the last two weeks in Parliament and been told exactly what to do. I am not doing any of it.

Pope Francis – sorry to drop the name but I am terribly conscious of it – talked about LGBTQI+ people in his press conference on the plane coming back from South Sudan on Sunday. I quote him exactly: “I am not talking about groups but about people.”

So let us decide as we each conclude the Lord’s desires. Above all, let us debate remembering that all Christians are indispensable members of God’s Church – all Christians – and whatever our views, or theirs, will remain so. Let us show that in how we speak and let us show that in how we decide, and that we are above all the Church that demonstrates the call of God to people whom he desires to know and love. Thank you.

*The Revd Canon Vaughan Roberts (Oxford):* I am grateful to the Bishops and especially to Bishop Sarah for their hard and sacrificial work as they have sought to find a way for us to move forward. There are elements of this motion I gladly support. I very much share the longing that lies behind it that we should find a way in which we can stay together. But I cannot support this motion as a whole because I believe the approach it offers will not keep us united but will only drive us further apart.

There is much we agree on. The vital importance of welcoming all, the recognition that there are many positive qualities displayed in same-sex partnerships, the challenge we all have of upholding Christian convictions, differing as they maybe, and applying them pastorally within the sexual maelstrom of our contemporary world.

The fundamental issue that divides us is about sex. Until now our doctrine has been clear: the place for sex in God’s design is within the marriage of a man and a woman. Leeway has been given about how that teaching has been applied pastorally but the doctrine has been clear. Now for the first time, if these proposals proceed, we will be



allowing clergy to bless sexual relationships outside of marriage between a man and a woman. That will mean a de facto change in our doctrine and we will be effectively naming as holy what we, along with the universal church down the ages and still the predominant view throughout the world, have always before now called sin. Let us be in no doubt whatsoever that that is very, very serious step to take. As we vote, we do so not just before a watching world or Parliament across the road but before Almighty God. These blessings that we are invited to endorse will be given in His name. Can we honestly say that the biblical case has been made for such a momentous decision, or indeed the ecumenical case?

Before making that decision let us think very, very carefully about the implications. This is no modest step, as one bishop put it to me. As we seek to encourage some of our brothers and sisters, we will massively discourage many others, including same-sex attracted Christians like myself who believe it is right to live within the teaching that we have always heard that sex is for the marriage of a man and women. The message will be for many, not just same-sex attracted Christians, you need not have bothered.

At a time when the hostility to the historic teaching of the Church is increasing, those who continue to uphold it will lose, as one friend put it, their “cover” and many will lose their jobs. It is hard to believe that any chaplains who hold to those convictions will be able to stay in post in hospitals, churches, prisons, schools. There will also be a deep fracture within the Church of England because many of us cannot go along with this and will be forced to distance ourselves from those who do. That is not a political act. It will be an act of conscience. The Anglican Communion is already deeply divided. It is hard to believe that it would survive a step of this nature. At the very least, the historic role of the Church of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury within it, it is very hard to believe that will continue.

Let us be clear, this is just a first step, massive as it is. Other provinces who have begun to go down this road have moved towards equal marriage, so the exhausting arguments will not be finished if we make this decision. It will continue and the costs will be enormous – emotionally, financially, missionally and above all pastorally. The cost is heavy, especially for those gay same-sex attracted.

I plead for a better way. I long for a reaffirmation of what we have always believed. If that is not possible, can we not seek to move towards a mediated settlement which takes seriously the very deep irreconcilable differences that are between us and which seeks to find the maximum unity without theology compromise? I urge us to oppose the motion.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* Over the centuries the voice of laity in the Church has often proved important; on occasions marginalised, often neglected. The 1919 Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act formalised an elected House of Laity within the newly established Church Assembly and the 1969 Synodical Government Measure created this General Synod, with the House of Laity fully engaged in decision-making and able to participate fully in decisions, notably over legislation.

The 1919 Act has been described as an early exercise in devolution. Yet despite the Archbishop's concerns, Parliament remains legislatively supreme, despite power having been delegated to us the General Synod. Parliament has the authority to pass laws affecting the Church of England without our involvement, but by convention it does not do so.

So, why is this important? One key concern for some members of the House of Laity has been the pace and scope of what lies within the proposals of GS 2289, in particular whether the House of Bishops and the College have overstepped the mark in bringing this particular motion at this particular time, and whether it should be supported, and what role the laity have in this particular debate. In the past some bishops have questioned the validity of this lay voice in the formulation of doctrine and liturgy. Yet it was actually the slowness and distraction of the lay voice in Parliament which led to the establishment of the House of Laity. The 1916 Report to the Archbishops lamented the inactivity of Parliament having neither the leisure, fitness nor inclination to perform sufficiently the functions of an ecclesiastical legislature.

In one sense, the laity at Parliament looked to us in the House of Laity particularly to take up that work which they have delegated to us and which of course they still hold through the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament and onwards to the two Houses.

So, it seemed entirely appropriate that the House of Laity should pose questions both now and before this debate to move amendments, to explore Standing Orders, to ask about Article 7, to raise issues of due process, to stress test the system, bringing their lay experiences, theologies and interpretations of Scripture.

Equally, I would suggest that the Bishops and those who advise on legal matters also have the right to bring their papers and their motions regarding the substance of what is proposed in today's business, but I want to make three brief observations, first, about the legal advice given in GS 1339. In my now long experience of the Synod, the legal advice we receive is well-considered and in good faith. Legal advice is, by its very nature, advisory. It is advice. Certainly, in medical practice, my world, you can find all sorts of opinions over the same case looking back to past experiences, medical precedents and what the situation demands. It always is contingent. It always is open to other views. Certainly, in the House of Laity we have a number of very distinguished lawyers who have also brought their views and given their advice.

It is up to us not just in the House of Laity but across the whole Synod to discuss and to weigh how we make decisions about that advice we are given, the advice from our very good and excellent legal department as well as comments from our very good and excellent legal colleagues in the House. There is then the issue of pace and timing. Some feel that they are being rushed even after six years, papers coming into Synod perhaps later than they had hoped and without the sight of the proper revision coming of *Issues in Human Sexuality*.

We have decided that codes of practice should come along now in tandem with draft Canons and Measures. But I am grateful for assurances I have received from the Bishops in relation to their desire to bring stuff forward early to our York Synod should

we get that far. I do hope that we can keep talking together, we can keep discussing and walking and further clarify those issues rather than closing down the debate today. That is why I am at this moment in this debate.

There is then that matter of delegation, delegation from the sovereign Parliament in 1919, reaffirmed in 1969 to this Synod. What should the House of Laity make of that delegation? Should it only concern itself with the needs, i.e. concerns, of those in their own parish churches and congregations and so on that they are hearing? Or is there a wider responsibility to the wider population of the nation, noting that as an established Church we have a very particular role to fulfil in this nation? So, something about legal advice, something about pace and timing and something about our delegated role.

However we decide, I do pray we can hold together in this debate, that we can respect one another, keep well-hydrated, move the legs to avoid DVTs and by continuing to stand at least you will help some of that as you seek to catch the Chairman's eye.

*The Bishop of Lancaster (The Rt Revd Jill Duff):* "We wish the Bishops would talk about sex". That is what my group said yesterday. Really? Bishops have been teased for talking about sex too much. But, hang on, we had six days to work through the implications of six years of LLF, have we actually talked about sex or did something a little bit ambiguous slip through and evolve in a press spotlight, just a suggestion in a small grey box? Did God really say sex is for marriage? Hang on, what is the basis for changing 2,000 years of Christian teaching expressed in Scripture, so sex is now, and I quote the suggestion on page 8, "For faithful, fruitful relationships".

Christian teaching about sex has always been at odds with culture, especially New Testament culture and, for all my adult life, the Christian view on sex has been out of step with my friends and my colleagues. That does not make the Christian faith necessarily unattractive. One church leader in one of our mainstream churches ran a series on sex and sexuality recently in his morning services, including that sex is for marriage between a man and a woman, and two young women came to faith through this and they said, "This is weird, we've never heard it before but if this is what Jesus calls for, then we are in". Most of my ministry has been in deprived urban areas and local women my age were astonished that I believe that sex is for marriage: you mean, I am worth it.

Sex is about intimacy in relationships. Relationships make up the fabric of life in society and that is why sex is so important and why talking about it is so important. A senior journalist from the BBC said to me the other day, "A brilliant thing about the Church of England is that you dare to have the conversation that many other faiths would love to have and you do it in public". That has been the gift of LLF. Let us not lose that in a last minute rush. Our Christian ethics on sex speaks so preciously into our culture that is craving intimacy and worth, a culture that can squeeze out the dignity of children and the value of family life.

Yes, of course, Christian beliefs look strange at first glance. Jesus's death on the Cross makes no sense at all until you realise the seismic power of His death. Jesus

was radically welcoming and where that has not been the case we absolutely need to repent, and yet he had such crazy high standards if you signed up for following Him to the Cross. If you look at a woman lustfully ... fill in the blanks. You are teaching human precepts as doctrines, says Jesus in our Gospel reading yesterday. That is why I cannot vote for this motion and did not vote for this motion.

This suggestion in a little grey box on page 8 would be a seismic shift in Christian teaching. It would distance LGBTQI+ Christians living faithful celibate lives. It would distance mainstream Christian denominations never mind the freedom of conscience for other faiths. It would be distancing the majority of the Anglican community who seem to be rather silent in our discernment. But, finally, one plus about being on Synod is late night TV in your hotel room past your normal bedtime, BBC1, *Planet Sex*, a brilliant documentary billed as a wild ride through sex. There was a great case on Monday made for polyamory: faithful, truthful relationships. It could spice up Synod.

*The Bishop of Oxford (The Rt Revd Steven Croft):* I speak in favour of the motion. Jesus says you will know them by their fruits. There is some comfort there in that the task of discernment according to Jesus between right and wrong is often difficult. Jesus's own discernment in the Gospels is always surprising. Jesus finds ways of mercy and gentleness in every encounter. These words on fruitfulness and Jesus's actions are the foundation for a whole Christian tradition of discernment which stretches through Augustine and Ignatius to the present day. The Scriptures are to be interpreted through the lens of love of God and neighbour.

Synod, we need to recognise there is so much bad fruit in our present pastoral practice: rejection, harm, confusion, dishonesty, burdens which are too heavy to bear, long-term fracture between Church and the society we serve. I have been moved to tears by the personal accounts of this bad fruit which LGBTQIA+ people have sent to me since I published *Together in Love and Faith* in November.

Conversely, it seems to me there is so much good fruit which flows from loving, permanent, stable same-sex relationships. I thank God for the LGBTQIA+ clergy and lay ministers and disciples I have been privileged to know. I pay tribute to their resilience and dedication and commitment to Christ's call and the love and care they offer and their fruitful, fruitful ministry.

Both the pain and witness of these saints of God have caused me to revisit Scripture and tradition and have changed my heart and mind on these issues and I am very sorry it took me so long to change. I want us to agree and affirm these proposals today and I pray they will be a stepping stone on the journey and, for me, I hope and pray that will lead to equal marriage in our Church. Through this process and through what I hope is agreed in the coming months, people in same-sex relationships and those relationships will become more visible. That, in turn, I know, will change other hearts and minds in the months and years to come. But we will not all change hearts and minds, of course.

I also want us to affirm today those who will continue to hold a traditional view of marriage. I believe we will need a careful exploration of a new and imaginative provision which will be needed in the light of these proposals and as we continue to explore equal marriage in the future – a mediated settlement as Vaughan said a few moments ago. For I see fruitfulness also in those who disagree with me profoundly on this issue. I have benefitted greatly in recent years through being part of the St Hugh's Conversation, an informal regular meeting of those in favour and those opposed to change on this issue. I know that the Church of England will continue to need the Conservative Reformed tradition moving forward and that tradition will continue to need the wider Church.

I am particularly thankful for Vaughan who spoke earlier and who published a gracious response to my own essay and, indeed, for St Ebbes in Oxford where Vaughan is Rector and where Anne and I were married almost 45 years ago – we were very young. My vision for the Diocese of Oxford is that we will be a diocese where all are affirmed and cherished, where same-sex relationships can be cherished and those who hold the traditional view are honoured, respected and loved. "By their fruits you will know them", says Jesus. We need to move forward in this debate but may love and joy and peace for all flow from the decisions we make today.

*The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle):* This is my maiden speech. As a parish priest with over 30 years' ministry in the Northern Province across a variety of parochial chaplaincy and diocesan roles, I speak in favour of the Bishop's motion, hoping that within this quinquennium the Synod will begin to create the conditions to allow us to conduct all marriages irrespective of the gender of the people getting married whilst allowing those opposed to it not to be constrained to do so. The proposed prayers risk creating a fog that will please no-one. Those opposed to equal marriage regard them as the thin end of a wedge whereas those in favour of equal marriage find that the prayers fail to bless same-sex unions no matter how much a liturgy could be made to look like a wedding. That many such blessings will probably look like weddings means that the worst fears of those opposed will be realised.

The fact that people on all sides of this debate feel dissatisfied suggests to me that we are now having the debate but becoming polarised will not serve us or wider society well. I urge us all to engage in the ongoing conversation as a response to our baptismal calling and to do so with an open mind. As the Bishops' document states, we need to address the Church's understanding of marriage. I would argue that we should accept that marriage is not a foundation stone of Christian doctrine and nor should we allow the false distinction between civil marriage and Holy Matrimony to persist. It is not Anglican polity and if it were to become embedded it will paint us even further into a confessional corner, making us less and less useful to society and undermining our fading legitimacy in the body politic.

My chaplaincy colleagues in healthcare, the Armed Forces, schools, prisons and other agencies will recognise the importance of this, let alone those of us in parish ministry. I am struck by the warm support I receive from people of all generations in the community I serve at St Francis, High Heaton, a suburb of Newcastle, just about as Middle England, middle of the road Anglican as you can get. Furthermore, LLF is not

just about homosexuality. The focus on same-sex relationships means that we have not addressed what constitutes holiness in any intimate human relationship.

As a Franciscan tertiary, I share with you that Franciscan spirituality flows from the doctrines of incarnation, salvation and communion, God sharing our humanity, reaching out to us from the Cross in spite of ourselves and continuing to inspire us in the life of the Church even when we get into a tangle like this. If “What Would Jesus Do” bracelets had existed in the 13th century, St Francis would have worn one. When I reflect on that question, I am sure that Jesus would consider each person as an individual, loved and in need of grace and then take it from there.

The Third Order Principles define chastity as seeing others as belonging to God and not as a means of self-fulfilment. What matters in any relationship is where the power lies. That is how we measure love, that it is mutual, self-giving and lifelong and, frankly, gender is only one of a range of considerations. We need the debate. The Bishops’ document rightly says that we should attend to a range of things: human embodiment, singleness, celibacy, friendship, community, family and household, human identity and everyday faithful relationships. But let us not lose sense of what is urgently required: a better theology of sex, a less totemic view of marriage and clarity about what we mean when we say we bless something. In that spirit, I beg to support the motion.

## **ITEM 42**

*The Chair.* We are now going to move to the amendments. You will see from Order Paper V there are a lot of them and we need to work our way through them. I call upon Mr Margrave to speak to and move his amendment at Item 42.

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

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* To allow more voices to be heard, I withdraw amendments 42 and 49. Thank you, Chairman.

## **ITEM 43**

*The Chair.* Mr Margrave, we come to Item 43, which you can speak to and move if you would, please.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Synod, I have put forward a number of amendments today, not to take up your precious time but to give Synod an opportunity, a chance to have a proper say, to speak into the silence and for Synod to offer clarity where the House of Bishops have not about the position of the Church of England.

Items 43 and 44 seek to test the mind of Synod on whether it supports marriage as outlined in Canon B 30 and to give Synod a chance to vote for what I believe is a truly orthodox position. Other amendments give Synod an opportunity to procedurally divide the text as if it would have been under Standing Order 24.

Synod, I am concerned that we have not had the chance to sit around tables and to discuss the proposals in detail and to find a way forward as the body of Christ, which includes lay and ordained. My preference is to bring all of the information needed to make a decision on a theological paper to July Synod as I do not feel we have the information before us today to take a decision, and I am worried about good governance. But in Corinthians, St Paul speaks to the church of Corinth saying, "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and same judgment". Revelation also tells us that Jesus rebuked the Church saying, "When we are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, He will spit us out".

These two passages tell us that we will know God's will when we are of one mind and we should not simply adopt a half-hearted position. We must find the truth. The Church of England should be clear one way or another and its doctrine should match its teaching and practice. We should call our nation away from sin and to repentance. We need to offer love to the world and show them a better way to know Jesus, to show that sin and temptation has no place in people's lives and that to live their life in their fullest they can come to know Jesus Christ. Because we are here to be countercultural.

I commend my motions and I ask for a count of the whole Synod, if possible, Chair. I do not know whether I need to make a point of order to do that but that is all of it, thank you, Chair.

*The Chair:* Well, first of all, I need to ask the Bishop to respond and then we will take it in stages.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Sorry, Chair, can I ask for clarity, are we just speaking to 43?

*The Chair:* 43.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* 43, thank you. I am resisting this amendment. Over the last five years, we have done probably the widest listening exercise ever in the Church of England that has included a range of people, particularly lay and ordained. It has been on the agenda of this House every session since 2017 and, therefore, to accept this amendment would be to undermine that five years' work which has been about listening to Scripture, theology and God and also this wide breadth.

I would also resist it because it takes out our apology from the House of Bishops. It would also remove the fact that we want to affirm the need to continue to engage and apply with the *Pastoral Principles* in the life of the Church. To accept this amendment means that we would remove the requirement to replace *Issues in Human Sexuality* with new *Pastoral Guidance* which I think is probably accepted right across this Synod as well as the Church. It also would fail to recognise that we need to continue to learn together. *Living in Love and Faith* has not concluded and there is more work for us to attend to. So I would resist it.

*The Chair:* As the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. I do not see 25 people standing, therefore that item lapses.

## **ITEM 44**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 44. Mr Margrave, please, will you move.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Bishop, would you like to respond to those brief words?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Taking this amendment in two parts, the first one relating to Canon B 30, the House of Bishops have acknowledged in GSC 2289 in our response that we have not changed the doctrine of marriage. Taking the second part of the amendment, that quote I think rightly comes from the House of Bishops' *Marriage: A Teaching Document* in 1999. This document predates the 2003 Remarriage of Divorcees legislation and the 2013 Marriage Act and uses the word "marriage" in the sense of Holy Matrimony, a union of permanent and lifelong, of one man and one woman.

As the amendment stands, it has, I believe, unintended consequences. For example, it excludes opposite sex couples who have entered into civil marriage and have prayers of dedication and blessing in Church. The other part for us as well is that the House also believes in our discussions that, obviously, the right context for sexual intimacy is within lifelong and committed and faithful relationships. There are different views in this Synod and the House regarding sexual intimacy, as we have already heard: Holy Matrimony and civil marriage and civil partnership. Because of that, although I have to say I resist the amendment, I think the House of Bishops would like to hear the views of Synod.

*The Chair:* Well, then the debate continues on this amendment.

*Mrs Abigail Ogier (Manchester):* I wish to speak against this amendment. The amendment states clearly that this Synod welcomes the reaffirmation of the current definition of marriage. I believe that our discussions throughout have shown that we are not of one mind and it would, therefore, not be correct to say that. I also think it would have a very negative impact to give that message to those who are watching from outside. I have to confess a particular interest in this. One of those people will be my married to a woman daughter who would be negatively affected in terms of her view of the Church were we to suggest that this whole Synod sees no room for a development of the doctrine of marriage.

My final point is that I do not actually think that the doctrine as currently stated completely follows our current practice. Again, I speak from a point of personal interest. I myself was privileged to be remarried after divorce in church. The current doctrine states very clearly that marriage is lifelong not, as I think would be more



accurate, that it intends at the point that is undertaken to be lifelong. I as one member of this Synod, but I feel I am not on my own, feel that we should at some point revisit the question of the doctrine of marriage and that, therefore, I would not want to welcome the affirmation of it as it currently stands.

*The Chair.* Can I hear you first because I want to make sure there is a balance.

*The Bishop of Leicester (The Rt Revd Martyn Snow):* I want to start by saying that I hold to a traditional view of marriage and, therefore, I am broadly in support of what Mr Margrave is seeking to do in terms of preserving the Church of England's current view of marriage. However, I cannot for a moment condone the way in which Mr Margrave is seeking to achieve this aim both here in Synod and more broadly in terms of his media campaign. I understand that Mr Margrave now attends a church in my diocese ---

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Point of order. I have not been given notice, Mr Chairman, that I would be mentioned and it actually says in the Standing Orders that a member is meant to be given notice if they are going to be mentioned in a debate.

*The Chair.* Well, let us just pause for a moment. Are you going to refer to Mr Margrave again, Bishop?

*The Bishop of Leicester (The Rt Revd Martyn Snow):* No, I can withdraw that.

*The Chair.* Well, let us just proceed without referring to individuals.

*The Bishop of Leicester (The Rt Revd Martyn Snow):* Okay. I do, however, need it to be known that untold hurt has been caused to LGBT+ people in my diocese and, therefore, as chief shepherd of the Diocese of Leicester I cannot stay silent while people are hurt in this way. I will, therefore, be voting against this amendment, not because I necessarily disagree with all the content but because of the way in which this campaign has been conducted. I suspect other bishops may well be with me on this and, therefore, I want to stress that those voting against this are not necessarily disagreeing with the content. They simply cannot align themselves with such an adversarial approach to this discernment exercise.

Furthermore, I appeal to all those who, like me, hold a traditional view to consider carefully how we go about arguing our case. In a recent meeting with LGBTQI+ people in my diocese, I listened to story after story of people who have been greatly hurt by the Church and some, of course, were open in their criticism of me for seeking to uphold the traditional view of marriage. I have had to search my own soul to ask whether my doctrinal beliefs are causing others to stumble, but I remain convinced that it is possible to be pastoral and to show love and respect, kindness and friendship even while believing that the case for changing our doctrine has not been made.

I am doing my best to hold together a diocese which is split down the middle on same-sex marriage. It may be I am naive in even thinking that that is possible but, come what may, I will support the LGBTQI+ people in my diocese and defend them against

those who use hurtful words. I urge Synod to resist this amendment, not because of the content but because of the method.

*The Chair:* I think the longer you clap the less time we have to debate, which is okay by me, but I think probably not okay by you, because the one person who is not going to speak is me, but you are. I think we have a sense of what this amendment is about and I think it has been sufficiently debated to proceed to the vote.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Could I ask for a count of the whole Synod, please, Mr Chairman? I would like to see who believes in marriage and who does not.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Point of order.

*The Chair:* No, we can only deal with one point of order at once, because that is the way we operate. I have said that I believe that the matter has been sufficiently debated and I am going to ask the Synod whether they agree. They may not agree. So those in favour of the closure, please show.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* Now, Mr Margrave.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I would like to know and people in the nation would like to know who in this chamber supports Canon B 30 and the doctrine of marriage and who does not. It is a very clear motion, and I would ask that it is moved and counted by the whole Synod as a recorded vote.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Point of order.

*The Chair:* Yes, I will hear your point of order first.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* I would call for a count by Houses, Chair.

*The Chair:* So, do I see 25 members standing for a count by Houses? I think I do see 25 people standing therefore we will have a counted vote by Houses on Item 44. I am going to, for the rest of this session, dispense with the use of the bell, because – it is a tragedy I know – I think everybody is in here so there is no need to warn anybody else. So, I am not going to order the bell to be rung. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 44.

The vote on Item 44: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 1, against 28, with 11 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 54 in favour, 115 against, with 26 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 67 in favour, 113 against, with 17 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Point of order. Chair, I wonder if we can clarify the business of this Synod, and when we are voting on amendments and

motions are we voting on the content and the words of what is given, or has it now become an assessment of the version of the question and the person bringing it?

*The Chair:* I do not think I want to get involved in the personality issue, I do not think it is helpful, and I think we need to move on, move on carefully, and I am going to say no more about that. I am asked to rule whether that was a point of order, and I am not sure it is a point of order, I have answered your query, and there it is.

## **ITEM 45**

*The Chair:* I am going to move to Item 45 and call Ms Jayne Ozanne to speak and move her amendment at 45.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* I believe it was James Baldwin, the civil rights campaigner, who once wrote “I can’t believe what you say because I see what you do”. And Synod, many of us in the LGBT community cannot believe what you say because we see and hear and live with the consequences of what you do and do not do. We have heard countless apologies for years now. One of the first actions I took was to organise a letter asking for an apology to the LGBT community, which many of you here signed, ahead of the 2016 Primates’ Meeting.

Archbishop Justin, you kindly offered a personal apology at the press conference and the Primates themselves apologised in their communiqué. That was 2016, and we have had numerous apologies since, but still we continue to officially teach that we must never express our love in sexual union even in a marriage or civil partnership. We tell young people that they must transform themselves and the damage continues in plain sight with the Church’s full knowledge and blessing.

Words, words and words, but we have absolutely no action to stop this ongoing discrimination and abuse, for we continue to teach a doctrine, a theology of difference, that tells people like me that we are second class and that our understanding of the Holy Scriptures is un-Christian.

So, why yet another apology? Who does it serve? It seems to me, and I am going to be frank, that its primary purpose is to make you feel better, even if by doing so it makes those of us it is aimed at increasingly angry. It is akin to that of an abusive partner who keeps telling the one they abuse that they love them and that they are sorry, and they will never do it again.

Any psychotherapist will tell you that that is a harmful cycle of abuse, and that whilst the abusive partner might mean it at the time they say it, their inability to change their behaviour renders the apology totally meaningless. It also results in the abused finding it incredibly hard, indeed virtually impossible, to trust anything that the abuser goes on to say. The only language we will ever really believe is that of deeds, and not words.

But what actions, seriously, have you offered? Prayers of blessings that are not blessing our actual relationships. And what is more, Archbishop Justin, you have even

gone on to say that you yourself cannot conduct them, so it really is completely incomprehensible and it seems to many of us hypocritical. No, an apology that is to be believed and received requires more than words, it requires the source of the pain to be removed. So, can I suggest that these words are saved until something is done to remove the discrimination and the harm that the Church's teachings inflict, until that moment, when we as a Church of England, all of us, can truly repent for the lives we have ruined and indeed, sadly, even lost. But be warned, even then, you will need to forgive the LGBT community if we take some time to believe you and wait to see what you actually do.

*The Chair:* I call on the Bishop to respond.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* The apology from the House of Bishops is heartfelt, and I do agree with Jayne that repentance presumes a commitment to change. The response from the House of Bishops to the *Living in Love and Faith* process, as represented in GS 2289, represents the beginning of a journey of repentance and change. I also agree that I do absolutely hear Jayne's comment that she would want to see what we undertake as a result, and I hope that Synod would hold us accountable for that.

However, I am going to resist the amendment because I do think it is important that the apology is there and I do look forward to Synod holding us accountable to the progress that is made on the actions that are outlined in GS 2289.

*The Chair:* Well, as the Bishop does not support the amendment it will lapse again unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. Yes there are, so the debate continues. Andrew Moughtin-Mumby, are you going to speak in favour or against the amendment?

*The Revd Andrew Moughtin-Mumby (Southwark):* In favour.

*The Chair:* Right, so is somebody prepared to speak against? You, sir, Sean Doherty.

*The Revd Andrew Moughtin-Mumby (Southwark):* Friends, I would not be standing now if Jayne's amendment at 64 for equal marriage were already before us, but I think it is important that I speak in favour of this amendment, because I have a dream. I have a dream that one day the image of God in you and in me and in you and in you will be recognised in our Church equally and fully. I have a dream that we will no more mar the image of God in black people, women, gay people, differently abled people, older people, younger people, by distinguishing between people in our Church, as St James puts it.

In February 2020 I told you right here of our sister in Christ, Muriel Walters, whose British Barbadian family were literally barred from entering their parish church by my predecessor as rector because of the plain fact of the colour of their black skin. Muriel's sister Doreen was here in the public gallery. Archbishop Justin apologised, tore up his prepared speech and spoke from the heart movingly on that occasion.

Countless members of the Windrush generation and others were told that they were not welcome, that they did not belong in the Church of England. Muriel and her family thankfully were eventually welcomed into St Peter's, and yet the welcome was half-hearted, second-class, sit at the back, they were told. You can come here but you cannot receive Communion, they were told, because of their black skin. When I interviewed Muriel in preparation, she said, "I would say no-one should ever be turned away from a church, it is God's house, and it is for everybody".

Dear friends, I can no more change the colour of my skin than my friend can change their sexual orientation. And so, I say to you today, I hope that we will vote to allow us at St Peter's to be able to give a full and proper welcome, as Archbishop Justin put it, to show LGBTQIA+ people that they really are essential and cherished members of the body of Christ and fully belong.

Today we buried Muriel, I have just come from her funeral. She died in January, bless her. The church was packed full of people of every colour, every sexual orientation, every kind of God's children. We have made progress on racial justice in concrete terms, and so that apology rings true. And yet we are about to say that people might still be considered as second-class citizens.

Friends, whether or not you would like to use these options, I want to be able to marry Christopher and Charles – not their real names – who come every Sunday to church with their children and want to publicly commit to one another and ask for God's blessing. How will this apology sound to them? How will it sound to the young woman who came and asked for a blessing? We said yes, and then we found out that her partner was a woman, and had to say no. Please, I beg, let us err on the side of grace and generosity.

*The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TElS):* I am in two minds about this amendment and I have a lot of sympathy with Jayne Ozanne's arguments about it. I have been fully involved with the Church of England's *Living in Love and Faith* process since it began. As an Anglican ethicist I was part of the Theology and Ethics Working Group, but also as one of the minority of LGBT+ people who believe that the current teaching of the Church is true and good for us, and should not change.

I appreciate the irony, therefore, of the proposals we have before us. On the one hand, not giving the majority of LGBT people what they want, whilst apologising, and taking away from the minority of LGBT people, such as myself, what we believe is so important and safe for us and helps us flourish in the Church, whilst apologising to us. So, it is like punching everyone in the face whilst saying sorry at the same time.

Nevertheless, I think the apology is sincere and well-meant and there is a process of learning here that is a journey that the House of Bishops and all of us are all on and I think if the headline is 'Church of England refuses to apologise to LGBT+ people', that would be just so much worse.

I do have a couple of suggestions as to how we might move forward in this. There is studied equivocation and deliberate ambiguity in the proposals that are before us

which emerges from the fact that the Bishops, as they acknowledge in their paper, do not agree. And therefore, as an ethicist, that is why, it is very clear to me, there is no theological or rationale given for the proposals that we have. The Bishops say, "We cannot agree about the substantive issues but this is what we can agree on, this practical way forward". When we just say 'do this' without giving a rationale for it, that is not an exercise of authority it is an exercise of power.

There will be other amendments that I will be supporting that I think try and draw the fangs out of this, particularly the Prolocutor's later on which I think will help us with that. So, I do want to keep the apology in but that does not mean, by any means, as an LGBT person that I think the motion, if it is not amended, will be unproblematic, so I hope we will take the later amendment seriously on that basis.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Point of order. After those three very helpful speeches, I propose a motion for closure on this item.

*The Chair:* Well, I was about to say, and it is true, honest, that I thought, actually, that what (a) said on page 1 of Order Paper V was pretty straightforward and I thought it had been explained to us, so I would have thought we could proceed to the vote.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Point of order. Can we have a vote of the whole House?

*The Chair:* Well, forgive me, you are a bit early, because if I took the view that we had sufficiently debated this, I have to get the approval of Synod first to that. So those in favour of the closure, please show.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* Thank you very much. Now, Ms Ozanne?

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Point of order.

*The Chair:* Yes.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* We are learning, Mr Chairman. Could we have a vote of the whole House, perhaps, please?

*The Chair:* 25 members standing? Growing in number as we speak. I think there are 25 standing, so yes, we can have a vote of the whole Synod. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 45.

*The motion was put and lost, 102 voting in favour, 309 against, with 30 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 46**

*The Chair:* We move to Items 46, 47 and 48, which you will see are fairly similar. If I can call Mr Margrave. Mr Margrave, I am in your hands, unhappily... no, I am only

joking. I think that what we could do is if you wanted to speak to all of them at the same time, but we will move them on at a time. Or if you want to speak to them separately, I am quite content. Which would you prefer?

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I am happy to speak to them all at the same time, and move them.

*The Chair:* Yes, well we will move them in turn, so you speak to them all, please. Three minutes.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Synod, we are making an apology. We need to be clear who we make to and why. I am concerned the worded apology may be read as apologising for upholding God's word and proclaiming the doctrine of the Church, or used to validate particular terms which *LLF* has not considered. For example, it may cause offence to say something is sin, but does that mean we can no longer speak about sin? The Bible, to many, is offensive, does that mean we can no longer read aloud God's word? Is that, too, to be silenced?

I am particularly concerned about the 'plus' in this motion, as it is a blank cheque for an ever-expanding list of sexual identities or terms, which can be found on Stonewall's website, including pansexual, polyamory, non-binary, LO, et cetera. Adding "Q" also concerns me, because it is not clear when and where that came from. What Queer Theory, in relation to hermeneutics was briefly mentioned in *LLF*? There was no sociological, ideological or political exploration of terms, such as Queer Theory, queering of the term queer.

According to Beresford, in *The Age of Consent and the Ending of Queer Theory*, the term queer is, by definition, whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate and the dominant, and aims to destabilise dominant ideas of identity, whether sexual or other. This would suggest that queer or queering is diametrically opposed to either what the House of Bishops want to do or the current doctrine of the Church.

The term queer is associated with Queer Theory, as I have raised before, and was said on Radio 4 – it is not my phrase. Queer Theory has roots in the work of paedophiles, and so we need to be clear that we do not support the "Q" until *LLF* have looked at this along with non-binary. I would ask that we look at these issues and look at these definitions before we vote for them, because we could be validating something that has not been used by the Church before, we have never added the "Q" before now and we have not added the other things.

*The Chair:* So, Mr Margrave, you will formally move Item 46.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I formally move.

*The Chair:* I call upon the Bishop of London to reply to 46 and to state if she supports the amendment at 46.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Synod, I would like to remind us that this is about people. Our apology is that we have failed to welcome people and we have harmed them and continue to do so. And in our apology, we have, in a sense, used the letters that people choose to use to denote their identity. They reflect the way in which people choose to identify themselves, and my belief is that the Church is not at liberty to change that, so I am resisting this because we have and continue to harm people.

*The Chair:* As the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. I do not see 25 members stand so that item lapses.

## **ITEM 47**

*The Chair:* Mr Margrave, will you move 47? I do not think you have spoken about “T” yet, but do you want to? If you want to, you can do.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* The “T” in the world today is very contentious. It is not clear what the definition of the “T” is and LLF has said that more work needs to be done on understanding the “T”. It says that in the documents. The point is we are agreeing to apologise for something we do not fully understand and we do not know what it fully is. It is just a very simple thing where we need to go away and look at this properly and then come back and say, “This is what our definition is, this is what we want to apologise for”, and then, “This is how we are going to approach this as a Church”. That is in your hands. I wanted to put these forward to improve the motion and to make sure that our apology was honest, because if we do not understand something I do not know how we can apologise for it.

*The Chair:* I call on the Bishop of London to respond to Item 47.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Synod, our apology is about people. We have failed to welcome people. We have harmed them and continue to do so. In the way people identify themselves they have chosen to use the letters LGBTQI+, and it is how they choose to identify themselves. The Church is not at liberty to change that. This is about people whom we have failed and I resist the motion.

*The Chair:* Again since the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or indicate that they wish the debate to continue. I do not see 25 members, so the amendment lapses.

## **ITEM 48**

*The Chair:* Mr Margrave, we have moved to Item 48. You could probably formally move this, I think.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Just to say that the “+” is not the cross on which Jesus died. It is a range of terms in an ever-expanding list by Stonewall of sexual identities,



many of which we still do not understand and have not discussed in LLF. We are supporting something we have not considered. Having said that, I move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Bishop, if you could respond to 48.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* This apology is around people. The Church has failed to welcome and we have harmed and continue to harm people. They choose to use the letters LGBTQI+ to denote themselves. People choose the identity and therefore the Church is not at liberty to change that. This motion is about people whom we have failed and our apology. I resist the motion.

*The Chair:* As the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. Do I see 25 members? No, I do not. So, that amendment lapses.

## **ITEM 49**

*The Chair:* Mr Margrave, I think you said earlier on that item 49 you did not wish to move, so that will be treated as not moved.

## **ITEM 50**

*The Chair:* We come to Item 50, which I would like you to speak to and move.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Principally, Mr Chairman, with all of the other amendments that I put, I put within the Standing Orders within the method of this place where we decide on items. I put forward all of those items in order for us to be able to divide the motion because you, with respect, did not allow for us under Standing Order 24 to do that.

I am not going to move any of those amendments. It is for other people if they want to move them for 40 people to stand. I have put them there for Synod to take out anything they disagree with to give them that opportunity, Mr Chairman. If people want to move on, they can move on.

*The Chair:* Mr Margrave, do I understand you do not wish to move Item 50?

*Sam Margrave:* I do not wish to move any further amendments that I have made on this Standing Order paper. It is up to Synod if they want to retain and discuss the motion by division.

*The Chair:* I think we will move on.

## **ITEM 51**

*The Chair:* We come to Item 51. I call upon Mrs Busola Sodeinde to move Item 51, please.

*Mrs Busola Sodeinde (London):* I am a Church Commissioner for the Church of England and I sit on the Audit and Risk Committee, as well as several boards. I also sit on the PCC of my home church HTB which has 42% of its attendees from global majority heritage.

I want to address the impending racial injustice, disunity and racial segregation we may witness in the Church if we were to introduce same-sex blessings without further evidential consultation and consideration.

I am originally from Nigeria and I am very proud of my heritage. Although I was born in Leeds, I hold dual citizenship. I spent 12 years in Nigeria and it was there I had my confirmation. My grandmother lived in England and in her early years she spoke fondly of her attendance at St Gabriel's Church in Cricklewood. At 18 when I came back to London I was alone and the first church I visited was St Gabriel's Church. The diaspora living in the UK strongly identifies with its roots. There is a strong bond and connection and we have a strong fellowship in our parish churches. I am worried that there may be an exodus of diverse communities from our parish churches, thus having a profound impact on the racial diversity which up to now we have worked so hard to encourage.

Archbishop Justin has said that the decision made today will impact different churches differently but we are in the dark. What is this impact? I am concerned that we are in danger of shutting our ears and ignoring the 75% of the Anglican Communion who look to the Church of England as their mother church.

The risk assessment in the LLF library which was answered in the Q&A said the lack of research is a glaring gap in our knowledge. If we have a recommendation for the Church it should have a robust assessment of the impact and negativity. It was inconclusive. They said we have a gap in knowledge. It needs to assess the profound impact which any decision will have on the churches in Africa and Asia.

Archbishop Justin Welby has said that collectively they will act if the recommendations to commend these blessings are affirmed. It is not wishy-washy. It is true. Let us not hide from it. There will be friction. The trouble is there is an arrogance, which I recognise may be unintended, of one-time colonialism which insists that Western culture is progressive while dissenting voices in Africa and everywhere else are silenced and ignored. Our DNA is different. Africa is different from the Caribbean, is different from the Windrush countries. The purpose of this amendment is let us do an audit, let us ask every single Province what is the impact. Let us be transparent in our processes so that as Synod we can make a rational decision in July.

We have welcomed today Bishops from the wider Anglican Church, so may I offer my suggestion, let us offer some reasonableness, and I ask Synod to please accept my motion and make a consultation before the prayers are commended.

*The Chair:* I call on the Bishop of London to reply to the amendment at 51 and to say whether or not she supports that amendment.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Since 2016 the Archbishop of Canterbury has been consulting extensively with the Primates of the Anglican Communion on this process. Eeva John has been to the Anglican Consultative Council in Hong Kong and has spoken to them about LLF. The House of Bishops was involved in the Lambeth Conference in 2022 where this was discussed, as was Eeva John in providing a presentation to them.

In terms of the role of the Secretary General of Synod, it is not his role to consult personally the Primate of each Province of the Anglican Communion, so I am going to resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* The Bishop resisting the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate they wish the debate to continue. Who is going to speak for the amendment first? Is anybody speaking against the amendment?

*The Revd Folli Olokose:* Like you, my bladder is going haywire, so I will be very, very quick.

*The Chair:* If you do not mind me saying so, my bladder is better than your bladder.

*The Revd Folli Olokose (Guildford):* Chair, we are here today because we are at a crossroads. I posed the question to the Archbishop of Canterbury in this group of sessions about the LLF and the Anglican Communion, and in his response he said this: "In relation to the Anglican Communion, its 42 provinces are independent, autonomous but interdependent", and if we are really interdependent on each other we must think of what the impact of what we do in one house will have on others. I have never seen a builder who will start building a house with the roof. All builders would think of the foundations before thinking of building the roof.

What LLF is doing is building the roof without thinking of the foundations. We are throwing a stone into the pond of the Anglican Communion without thinking of the ripple effect. I will tell you what, last November I was in Nigeria with my diocesan bishop on a mission trip. As you know, Nigeria is one of those places where sexuality is criminalised, and it has to be challenged as was mentioned here in the General Synod in my first session here in November, when we had protests about people in Ghana and the criminalisation of sexuality there, and rightly so. One of the challenges in Nigeria is, and I am sure Synod will have heard of the word, Boko Haram. Boko Haram means everything Western is forbidden and must be persecuted. Boko Haram sees churches and Christians as elements and agents of Westernisation.

Synod, if we go along without thinking of the repercussions of what we are doing, we are throwing our brothers and sisters not just in Nigeria but in other places around the world where they are in the minority under the bus.

Not just that, friends, Synod, we are putting a nail into the coffin of the Anglican Communion and not just a nail, we are burying it, burning its ashes and throwing them to the wind.

Synod, all this amendment asks of us is let us consider the cost, let us reflect, let us know where we are going, let us know what we are doing and the repercussions before we do it. Thank you, Mr Chair, I will use the gents now.

*The Revd Canon Andy Salmon (Manchester):* I stand here before you as someone who is admittedly privileged, I am white, heterosexual and male, but I speak as someone who within my congregation has many people who do not fall into those categories, and within our church we have people who have sought refuge in this country because in their home countries they were in genuine fear for their lives because of their sexuality. I feel that these people have longed for acceptance and they have found it in our church.

These draft prayers that we have before us would be for us a useful tool. They would be something that we might well want to make use of. And these people who have come into our community, to say to them, "I am sorry but we can't use these prayers yet because we have got to consult around the world" feels like a travesty to make them wait.

Peter had a vision that he shared with Cornelius and the image that occurs to me is of Peter saying, "Cornelius, can you just pause there and wait while we check out what the rest of the church feels." I believe that we in our situation need to be listening to what the Spirit is saying to us. We need to respond to what the Spirit is saying to us. Yes, I do care about what the rest of the world thinks but we have to do what is right for us. Please reject this amendment.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* I am genuinely torn by this. The differences we have here are small compared with many around the Communion. This is not just about listening to rest of the world; it is caring. Let us be clear on that. It is about people who will die, women who will be raped, children who will be tortured, so when we vote we need to think of that. This is not just about what people say; it is what they will suffer.

Yes, we have consulted. I have been Archbishop for just over ten years now this week. I have spent 30% or 40% of each year with the Communion at Lambeth Conference, umpteen Primates' Meetings, using whole holidays ringing Primates one by one and listening to them, picking up the phone when people are shelled and caught up in wars, going and visiting them. I have gone to places that the Government said you should not go because it is too dangerous. I have done that for the last 20 years or more. I have been held hostage in Nigeria and told I was going to be killed in the morning. This is not something I take lightly you know. It is the most painful thing I have ever known. And I agree in many ways with the motion, apart from it is in the wrong name, so I will put a solution forward. If this amendment is rejected I will go to – sorry. If this motion is rejected, I will go to Anthony Poggo, the Secretary General of

the ACC, and ask him to finish off his current round of calls which he has been on since the papers came out. It is not for William to do. It is not his job. He does not know them. Anthony knows them by first name. Anthony has been a refugee three times himself, maybe four, the first time at the age of two. He has been brought up in Sudan and in Kenya and in refugee camps in Uganda. He can talk to them as he should.

Please reject this because I beg you to believe there is nothing in my life or heart or prayers that comes as high as the safety and the flourishing of the people I love in the Anglican Communion. At the top of that list comes Nigeria, which I have visited over 80 times over nearly 40 years, Kenya, Malaysia and parts of India and Pakistan, Peshawar, where I was last February, needing 2,000 troops to protect us.

Please reject this amendment not because the spirit is the wrong, I entirely agree with it, but because it is wrongly structured and we must also do right here as part of the Church catholic, as I said in my opening speech.

*The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Point of order. Chair, after those extraordinary words from the Archbishop, may I ask for a motion for closure on this amendment?

*The Chair:* I had again got a script here so it must be true. I would wish to test the mind of Synod anyway as to whether this item has been sufficiently debated. Therefore I am going to put the motion for closure on this Item 51.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Revd Canon Julian Holywell (Derby):* Point of order. Can I also ask for a count by Houses, please?

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* Point of order.

*The Chair:* I can only deal with one point of order at once.

*The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Can we ask for a counted vote by Houses?

*The Chair:* I would need to see 25 people standing. But there was another point of order.

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* Point of order. Given that both Sarah and Justin have pointed out that this is not the job of the Secretary General can we even vote on this amendment since it is actually asking the Secretary General to do something that is not within his job description or remit?

*The Chair:* For my part I think we can ask him to do it. Whether it is right to ask him to do it is a completely different question. The amendment says what the amendment says. Do I see 25 people standing for a vote by Houses? Yes, I do see 25 people standing so we will have a vote.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Does the proposer of the amendment get an opportunity to respond to speeches?

*The Chair:* In legislation yes, but not on the floor of Synod in a general debate.

So, this is a counted vote by Houses on Item 51.

*A Speaker:* Point of order. I do apologise but the machines are not working.

*The Chair:* Well, I am not responsible for the voting system because I have enough to do, but somebody will tell me when they have something to tell me. I am told that the procedure is we have already recorded the vote but those who have not been able to vote can come up and tell Mr Dobson what their vote would be, and we will see whether it makes any difference in substance. And it will be recorded. Can those who were unable to vote speak to the Synod staff.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to announce the results. Then I am going to exercise my prerogative to go somewhere, I promise it will not be home, so do not worry, but this is the result so far, as it were, and we will explore extra votes in due course. I am told the numbers include the extra votes.

The vote on Item 51: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 2, against 38, with three recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 71 in favour, 121 against, with 8 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 75 in favour, 115 against, with 10 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

*The Chair:* I think it probably is convenient to break now. Hooray, I can hear you all saying. It is very ungallant of you. Can you please ensure that you come back with a fully charged handset so we try to avoid the problems that have been experienced so far. I am going to suspend the sitting for ten minutes. As I said, if you want more refreshment, so be it, but I will be back in ten minutes.

*(Short adjournment)*

*The Chair:* Ladies and gentlemen, in the unlikely event that anybody were to raise a point of order for the rest of this debate, can I remind you that you will need to speak from the microphone because otherwise the translators for those who cannot hear cannot translate and also those on Zoom cannot hear. As a matter of transparency we must do that.

## **ITEM 52**

*The Chair:* We are on to Item 52. Mr Margrave, this is for you to pursue, if you wish to, which I think you probably do, do you not?

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I am moving the motion and I would just like to say I am very concerned about rescinding the *Issues in Human Sexuality*, and, in particular,

ending the mechanism on checking the sexual behaviour and morals of those who become ordained and that the new *Pastoral Guidance* will not be used as a mechanism to check suitability for ordination or sponsorship, and importantly, we do not actually have a new *Pastoral Guidance*, and so it could be anything. If a committee is going to be formed by July and it is going to deliver a report by July, well, I believe in fairies. As far as I am concerned, I would like to delete that and then when the report is ready, I think it would be good for Synod to see and debate this issue properly not to slip it in as a side motion. I move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair:* The Bishop of London to respond to Item 52 and to tell us whether she supports it or not.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* It is interesting, is it not, I think we heard a lot of debate and difference not just in Synod but the difference in *Listening in Love and Faith*. However, I think the one thing we have heard consistently in *Living in Love and Faith* but also in this Synod in the past is a desire to replace *Issues in Human Sexuality*.

The Bishops' response outlined in our document make it very clear that we will not replace *Issues* until the *Pastoral Guidance* is complete. Yesterday there was an incredible response to us asking Synod around the type of information that needs to be in the *Pastoral Guidance*. We have listened to Synod and that work will be taken through and therefore it will address the questions around what is the guidance for those who are coming into ordination, issues around discipline for clergy, and also the question of whether it covers lay ministers as well as clergy.

I would resist very strongly this amendment and also the House of Bishops will, as we have already said in our documentation, bring back the *Pastoral Guidance* when we have done further work on it.

*The Chair:* Given that the Bishop does not support the amendment at 52, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. I did eventually see 25 members standing. The Standing Orders do not say when you have to stand but there we are. The debate continues. Those who wish to speak? Since I have no idea whether you are supporting the amendment or not, can you please tell me if you are supporting the amendment.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* I will be short on this because I have an amendment to it later. I think it would help if in her reply to this Bishop Sarah could perhaps let us know how many full-time equivalent members of staff will be allocated to this project because, like Sam, I think this is very ambitious, and I would like some reassurance if I am to vote in favour of this motion.

*The Very Revd Joe Hawes (The Dean of St Edmundsbury):* Thank you for calling me for a maiden speech. Synod, it is of course never right to burn a book whatever you think of its content. Book burning is a sign of extremism. Even if in a reverie during the less exhilarating moments of a Miscellaneous Provisions Measure the thought of a merrily crackling pile of thousands of copies of *Issues in Human Sexuality* burning

brightly in Dean's Yard, stoked by a rota of bishops, who apparently greeted the news of its suspension with a muted cheer, is an immensely appealing thought. No, it would be wrong to burn *Issues*. For what else would you stand your coffee mug on or use to prop open a door that has been left too long closed, or show to ordinands, clergy and students of the Church of England in years to come evidence of how the Church once treated LGBTI+ ministers; how clergy lived in genuine fear of the intrusive question asked at job interviews; how ordinands dreaded questions about their sleeping arrangements; how some of us lost jobs through the application of Byzantine mechanisms; or how some clergy endured years of exile from the exercise of their ministry having entered into same-sex marriages?

So, *Issues in Human Sexuality* should not be burned, but it must be consigned to history and something infinitely more equal, just, theologically consistent be put in its place, but, to be clear, not lacking in rigour, so there is a biblically faithful, traditionally rooted framework for the expectations which we would all have of those seeking ordained ministry. It should be within the joys and disciplines of marriage, but we are not quite there yet. But we can apply the same privileges and expectations with which people like me, in civil partnerships for many years, have sought to remain faithful, fidelity, monogamy, stability, trying to model our lives on the love of God who in Christ is faithful to us.

Think of ordinands watching this livestream longing for this cruel and unnecessary device to be removed, or clergy uncertain of what might be asked when they next apply for a job, or for the handful of brave priests who might now stand a chance of having their licences returned, and resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* I wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 52 has been sufficiently debated and I therefore put a motion of closure on Item 52 to the Synod.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried,

*The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Point of order. Chair, given the strength of the Bishop's comment on this, can I ask for a counted vote by Houses, please?

*The Chair:* We need 25 members to stand to have a counted vote by Houses. I am satisfied there are 25 standing, so there will be a counted vote by Houses. Can I remind members that although it is not wise to share needles, it is okay to share handsets. You can pass them round but make sure you vote.

The vote on Item 52: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 2, against 37, with 3 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 60 in favour, 136 against, with 5 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 69 in favour, 120 against, with 11 recorded abstentions. The motion was put and lost in all three Houses.

## **ITEM 53**



*The Chair.* We move to Item 53. We are still on a three-minute speech limit but I think we have probably all forgotten that.

*Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely):* This is a maiden speech. My proposed amendment that in paragraph (d) we replace the word “welcome” with the word “note” might at first sight appear pedantic, but in reality is about good progress and about walking together.

*Issues in Human Sexuality* was published in 1991 and it is, shall we say, past its “best before” date. Nonetheless, I want to suggest that none of us should here and now welcome the decision to replace *Issues* for a simple reason: we have been given almost no information about what its replacement will say.

We are told the *Pastoral Guidance* will address the necessary qualities for a relationship to be considered faithful and holy and the expectations of all who are exploring, training or serving in ministerial vocation. These are vital topics – vital for the people in our parishes and for the future leadership of the Church – yet at the present time we have almost no idea what the *Pastoral Guidance* will say. Since the Church continues to hold to the received understanding of the doctrine of Holy Matrimony, will this mean that a same-sex couple in a civil marriage, devoted to one another in every way, will be regarded as not as holy as an opposite-sex couple in Holy Matrimony? Maybe. Maybe not.

Will the distinctive calling and public role of the clergy mean, as *Issues* puts it, that certain possibilities are not open to the clergy by comparison with the laity. Will this principle of distinction between clergy and laity be maintained by the guidance, and, if so, how, or abandoned, and, if so, why?

We have heard over the last year or so a lot about walking together. I want to invite the House of Bishops to walk together with General Synod, with us, as the *Pastoral Guidance* is developed. My amendment is a modest one, but it allows us to register our concern that we should not be asked to welcome developments that have not yet been fully explained to us. I beg to move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair.* I call on the Bishop to respond to Item 53.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I acknowledge the concern around the lack of detail for the *Pastoral Guidance*. In the House of Bishops’ response on page 10 we have outlined, as you have rightly said, the types of areas that will be considered. I am also very grateful to Synod for having contributed yesterday afternoon in their groups to what they would like to see in the *Pastoral Guidance*. There is a sense already that we are walking with you in that process. We also made the commitment to bring it back.

I am going to resist the amendment because I do believe that the breadth of the Church of England welcomes, as has already been demonstrated, the replacement of *Issues in Human Sexuality*, so I will resist the amendment. Thank you.

*The Chair:* Because the Bishop does not support the amendment – you know the script already, don't you – 25 members have to stand or be willing to stand or indicate they want to stand and if I speak long enough they do stand. Yes, 25 members are standing, so we will take one for the amendment and one against, please.

*Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich):* I want to acknowledge, as we have heard already, that many people would welcome anything to replace *Issues in Human Sexuality*, but it is the second part of the motion around the original clause that troubles me. We can note, as the amendment says, but if we are welcoming something not only do we not really know what it will say but, in the Bishop of London's answer to my question on the second Questions' Paper, there are no members appointed to the Pastoral Consultative Group yet. We do not know how the consultants to that group will be appointed. There is likely to be a wider group consulted but we do not know who they will be or how they will be appointed. At the moment, we do not know when we might know any of these things.

There is no conspiracy of silence and the Bishop of London has committed to transparency in her answer to me, and I am grateful for that, but if the Bishop of London does not know these things and we do not know these things how can we welcome what this unknown group will produce? With the best will in the world, it is hard to welcome something when there are so many known unknowns let alone any unknown unknowns that might come along. So, please, Synod, let us note it rather than welcome it and look forward to seeing more and being involved further later on.

*Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester):* I think that is the first time I have heard Donald Rumsfeld quoted in Synod. When I think about *Issues in Human Sexuality* and the *Pastoral Guidance* that is going to replace it, I have two questions. Will it, like *Issues in Human Sexuality*, say that, as someone who is attracted to people of various genders and people who do not subscribe to gender binaries, I am inherently promiscuous? Because that is what it says.

I do not feel inherently promiscuous. I am happily married. Will it say that if science progresses to a point where we find a genetic component of homosexuality that we should investigate this further, which is what *Issues* currently says? In my mind, as long as whatever replaces it does not say those two things, it is a damn sight better than what we have got now. I will welcome it. I have questions. I am nervous about what it might be, but it cannot be worse.

*The Chair:* I want to test the mind of Synod as to whether this item has been sufficiently debated on the basis that there is a very subtle but important and clear difference between “welcome” and “noting”. I would like to move a motion for closure on Item 53.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Revd Canon Julian Holywell (Derby):* Point of order. Chair, given the importance, even though it is only one word, of this amendment, may I ask for a counted vote of Houses, please.

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do, and so we will have a counted vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 53.

The vote on Item 53: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 7, against 30, with 6 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 92 in favour, 107 against, with 1 recorded abstention. And in the House of Laity, 103 in favour, 95 against, with 2 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost.

## ITEM 54

*The Chair:* We move to Item 54.

*Ms Christina Baron (Bath & Wells):* You have already heard about this document, *Issues*, which has been bearing a burden it was never intended to bear. It was a take note. You have heard that there are clergy, some of them sitting in the gallery, who have lost their homes, livelihoods and jobs because of it. Therefore, I welcome its replacement. This amendment is seeking to be helpful to the House of Bishops, of course, by giving them a little bit of guidance about what we might wish to see in the replacement. Surely, if we can respect anybody's consciences, we should respect the consciences of our ordained clergy and those who are training for ministry. We do not micromanage the personal lives of the clergy in any other respect.

My vicar, a very excellent vicar in a same-sex partnership, pointed out to me that she drives quite a posh car and some clergy think that is a bit ostentatious and she should have a much smaller and more modest car. Some clergy send their children to independent schools and some people think, "Oh, I do not think clergy ought to be doing that, where have they got the money from?"

We do not micromanage the consciences of the clergy in their personal lives except in this, sex. When I say "sex", what I mean is what they are doing in bed or on the living room floor or somewhere because I regret to say that *Issues* has been used by some bishops, occasional archdeacons, occasional director of ordinands, to ask exactly that question: what exactly do you do? You are entitled to be in a civil partnership, you are living in the vicarage with your partner, but we want to know exactly what you are doing in bed. Now is that healthy? Is it something to be encouraged? I think we should remove that questioning. Even if it does not always happen, it is undesirable and it is prurient.

Finally, take a leaf out of the book of the Dean of Southwark and quote Queen Elizabeth I, "Windows into men's souls". Well, this is windows into men's bedrooms. Is that really where we think the Church of England should be going or can we trust in this very personal matter the consciences of our ordained clergy and our ordinands? Please support this amendment. This document was never fit for purpose, is not fit for purpose now and we must have something better.

*The Chair.* The Bishop to respond to Item 54.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I think that the House of Bishops are very aware of the concern around the lack of detail on the *Pastoral Guidance* and we recognise the need to be able to see more detail on it. I am going to resist this amendment because it holds us hostage to fortune. Potentially, it will have some unintentional consequences because you do not know what is in the Guidance, therefore where conscience is relevant or where it is not relevant.

For example, absolutely within the *Pastoral Guidance* we will contain the fact that for people undertaking the *Prayers of Love and Faith* you can do it or not regarding your conscience, whereas there may well be some areas that are unknown to you or I yet where you may want to question that. So I am going to resist this amendment.

*The Chair.* Given that the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate their wish the debate to continue. There are 25 members so the debate continues.

*The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich):* Come on you yellows. What is the good news? It was an evening in the college chapel, I was tired, my limbs ached from all the hard work of theological study – do not laugh – I was not looking for a miracle, but I had gone to be refreshed, to sit in God’s presence. A prayer activity began and I shut my eyes belligerently. We were invited to picture ourselves in the parish church at Cuddesdon and lay our burdens down in front of the altar. On this big bag that I laid was the word “gay”, emblazoned in capital letters. It pierced me. I had not faced up to this before.

Then, suddenly, I was transported somewhere else. I cannot describe it. I heard a voice. It was not the voice in my head, the one that says, “It is time for lunch, or I have got to do this later or is it really time for PCC again?” No, it was a different voice, not mine, it filled my being, it said, “You know that I love you, don’t you?” I replied, “Do you, Lord?” The voice replied, “I do, but if you are going to serve me you’ve got to stop lying to yourself and others. I love you so much. Be who you are”. That was the day I received my identity in Christ when I accepted God’s love for me.

Friends, if we reject these proposals it will damage people like me, prevent people from accepting Jesus into their hearts, people who want to give their lives in love and service to the Lord. This is not just an academic exercise in theology. It is whether we as a Church can cope with difference. All I want is equal dignity, to be judged with the same standards as my straight colleagues. Is that too much to ask? We are big enough, bold enough and beautiful enough to accept the differences among us which we already have done on many issues.

I hope to have a long ministry in the Church of England. IHS consigns me to a life of loneliness, unable to express my love for a partner fully and freely. Christ came to give us abundant life. All I want is equal dignity, not a half one where a huge part of me and what it means to be human is barred from me because God hates me and

who I am and who I love. If God hates me like that, he can hate you too. Where is the good news in that, friends? I love you or you love me back.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Just to remind Synod that this amendment is not about whether *Issues* should be replaced but about whether, as Mrs Baron said, the new *Pastoral Guidance* should give clergy, in her words, freedom of conscience in relation to how they order their personal lives. I, like the Bishop, am concerned about unintended consequences because, actually, I do not think that there are very many members of this Synod, if any, who think that there should be no constraints at all on how clergy and ordinands should order their personal lives. As worded, that is what this motion implies.

I am not going to insult Synod by coming up with all sorts of grizzly scenarios that we all would think were unacceptable because I am sure we can all imagine what those are. The job that the Bishops, therefore, have to do in drawing up the *Pastoral Guidance* is to determine what the constraints should be within which clergy and ordinands can order their personal lives. If this amendment were to be carried it would be, in fact, constraining the Bishops in making that determination. I do not think that that is what the Synod wants and so I would ask Synod, please, to resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* I want to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 54 has been sufficiently debated, and, therefore, I put the motion for closure on Item 54.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried and so we proceed to vote on item 54.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Point of Order. I am sorry, I am sure you could understand my reluctance to have to come back to the microphone. Mr Chairman, may we please have a vote by Houses on this amendment?

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 members standing? I do see 25 members standing, therefore we will have a vote by Houses. This is a counted voted by Houses on Item 54.

The vote on Item 54: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 3, against 134, with 7 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 75 in favour, 116 against, with 10 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 81 in favour, 118 against, with 2 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

## **ITEM 55**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 55.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* Many of us could only welcome the new *Pastoral Guidance* if it did not change the doctrine of the Church of England and if it did not change the responsibility of ministers to order their lives according to the Church of England's doctrine and teaching as inherited and as found in Scripture.

*Issues in Human Sexuality*, as we have heard, is maybe out of date or at least old and so I can understand the need for something better. But, as Bishop Sarah noted on Monday, there has been no Damascus Road experienced in the past few years through which we have received startling new revelations from God over what he wants. There has been no change in the underlying theology, doctrine and teaching of the Church. That has stood the test of time for over 20 centuries and has been recognised and rejoiced in worldwide, including in the majority of the Anglican Communion.

The Church of England has always taught that, in becoming followers of Jesus, we are called to live holy and Godly lives. That invariably means living in a way that is countercultural and looks odd to the secular world, including to our Members of Parliament over the road. God lovingly calls us to be in a restored relationship with Him. When we call Jesus Saviour and Lord we surrender to His loving rule. This brings huge benefits in this life and the one to come.

As a single lay person, I have experienced the goodness of the Church's teaching and I see that in our communities. So what for the clergy? We are all called to live within the ethical teaching of Christ and his apostles. That is costly. I do not claim that discipleship is easy. The *Pastoral Guidance* needs to help Christians, lay and ordained, to understand this. We take up our Cross and follow Christ. To God's people and to those who shepherd his sheep, i.e. the clergy, the call is to live self-controlled, upright and Godly lives as Paul instructed Titus, so let us follow that apostolic command in any new guidance.

*The Chair*. I call the Bishop of London to respond to Item 55.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)*: The House of Bishops in developing the *Pastoral Guidance* will absolutely develop the Guidance consistent with the doctrine of the Church of England. However, the word "minister" in this amendment is ambiguous relating both to lay and ordained ministers and, therefore, I think as we have already said in the introductory questions yesterday, this is an issue for the Pastoral Consultative Group when they are producing *Pastoral Guidance*. Therefore, because of the ambiguity of this I am resisting this amendment.

*The Chair*. The Bishop having resisted the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or indicate that they wish the debate to continue. I see 25 members standing. Again, those who wish to support the amendment please stand and those against.

*Mrs Anna De Castro (Sheffield)*: I am thrilled to see that the House of Bishops have declared their desire for the discernment process to be guided by Scripture, tradition, reason and theology as we have received it. For the sake of human flourishing in the context of today, I want this too, obviously. This is profoundly not what I see in this motion as a whole though.

I welcome the endorsement of the historical biblical doctrine of marriage and yet there is a deafening silence around the place of sex and sexual intimacy. We have been told that we will receive this information in the *Pastoral Guidance* which is yet to be drafted, but how can we vote in favour of a motion when we do not have clarity on these issues in the *Pastoral Guidance*? Nor do we have any assurance around the responsibility of our ministers to shape their lives around the Church of England's professed and preached doctrines? I am a minister to children and young people. They should expect me to live my life in accordance with the doctrine I preach and profess. This amendment provides the motion as a whole with more integrity.

My particular concern is with how this motion affects the Church's motion to grow younger. I want to speak against the idea that a motion like this will somehow entice young people into our churches. This is simply not true. Across the board, there is an enormous amount that needs to be invested into reaching young people, but the vast majority of our young people are worshipping in churches who are not seeking to revise the Church's doctrine of marriage.

The data is there for you to see. It is a myth that these churches are not teaching about God's design for sex in marriage and that somehow these young people do not know or do not agree with what they are a part of. I can personally testify that we are and that they do. The ambitious mission of the Church to double the number of young people worshipping in the Church of England by 2030 is totally wonderful. Yes, please, I am in, sign me up, but this motion is detrimental to this goal without amendments like the one Miss Buggs has provided us with. Children and young people prize and value authenticity and integrity and they need to be inspired by leaders who they can trust, not least in the issues of sexual ethics. They do not need a Church that is willing to be swayed by the world's constantly shifting and changing voice on these issues.

Children and young people are on the frontline in mission and evangelism and are regularly receiving pressure from outside the Church for that, counting the cost for following Christ. They do not now need to receive pressure from within the Church too. They need to feel inspired and supported by the most senior leaders of our Church, watching them display integrity when it comes to living out the Church's doctrine on sex and marriage. Please vote in favour of this amendment.

*Mrs Nicola Denyer (Newcastle):* I ask you to resist this amendment for a number of reasons. I am a Reader. I am a lay minister. Only one of my sons was born before I got married. My other children were born in marriage. As I understand some of the issues today, I am reminded time and time again from what we hear in Isaiah 43. I come from Newcastle Diocese where Bishop Christine left just before and we now have Bishop Helen-Ann, but in all of our diocesan and deanery planning and vision Bishop Christine was very clear in what she spoke to us about from Isaiah 43, particularly verses 18 and 19, "Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing. I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert".

God calls us as we are. Nobody in my discernment process asked before I was married and lived with my partner if I was in a sexual relationship with him. Nobody.

The fact that people who are going into a different ministry have to attest to that in a world where we need people to be loved more than ever is wrong.

If God is love and God comes in abundance, to put pressure on people who are called into a ministry that is difficult and into a ministry that is hard and make it more difficult for them, I do not understand whether Jesus would want us to do that. I am a mum of teenagers. I had to explain, not just to my teenage boys but to my husband as well before coming to this this week, that the Church operates outside equality and diversity law. They did not believe me. I had to show them.

My 17 year old bisexual son can get married in church if he chooses in the future to marry a woman. At present, he cannot if he chooses to marry a man. If he is called into any kind of ministry, why should he have to answer questions that I did not have to? So this is why for the ambiguity, as Bishop Sarah said, and for the reasons that we need to be living in love and faith, I strongly ask you to resist this amendment.

*The Chair.* Point of order, Dr Paul. Are you trying to achieve a closure?

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Mr Chairman, this is the second amendment where from the platform the person has said they accept the spirit of this amendment but reject it on a technicality. I wonder if there is a way that Synod could note this failure of preparatory process which I think is actually skewing our debate?

*The Chair.* Your point will be noted but I am reliant on people telling me what they are going to say in substance. Now it seems to me that I ---

*A Speaker.* Point of order. Can I request if Archbishop Justin Welby, out of technicality, would be prepared to swap his name for "The General Secretary". I would like to move an amendment at the end because as an issue ---

*The Chair.* This is not a legitimate point of order. If people raise points of order and they are not points of order, then they will be treated as having spoken and so there are consequences to what I might call imaginative points of order. But can I just say that it seems to me that I should test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 55 has been sufficiently debated and I am going to put a motion for closure on Item 55.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* The motion is clearly carried, so we proceed to a vote.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Chair, I appreciate your efforts to get us through the agenda quickly and that there are a lot of amendments, a lot of people want to speak, but can I ask that you vary also the order of speeches in favour and against because, so far, the ones in favour tend to have gone first and the ones against go last.

*The Chair.* There is no malevolence in this, you will understand. You will see that I have not voted at all in this debate and I do not intend to because I am the Chair. But when I call an amendment and I call the Bishop to tell us whether she resists it and



you decide to stand, then I have to call one or the other, somebody in favour or somebody against, and it is important there is a balance. I am doing my best. Obviously, it is difficult. Now you had a point of order which I thought was coming from over there, but I cannot imagine what it might be.

*The Revd Canon Julian Holywell (Derby):* I am not going to start apologising just yet but, a point of order, may we please have a counted vote by Houses, Chair?

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 people standing to support a vote by Houses? I do, so there will be a vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 55.

The vote on Item 55: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 7, against 29, with 7 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 85 in favour, 114 against, with 1 recorded abstention. And in the House of Laity, 95 in favour, 103 against, with 3 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

## ITEM 56

*The Chair:* We move to Item 56.

*The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich):* Dearly beloved brothers and sisters, a parable. I wrote a friendly email to Dame Sarah about my amendment. She sent blessings but I did not know what she was going to do. This I think is the situation with our *Pastoral Guidance*. I am sure it is going to be a blessing, but we do not know what is going to happen and so I am proposing that we get a vote when we get a draft. Why should we get a vote when we get a draft? Well, I suggest for reasons of unity, legality and rapidity. That would be speed, but as I run out of time I do not want you to think that I am on anything.

As we heard, unity is an important part of our Christian life together. We have heard from the Archbishop of Canterbury the danger of a self-created, coercive unity and I suggest that suggests that we as Synod together, on the road together, should have a vote about this Guidance, the draft, when it comes. I did *Living in Love and Faith* in my parish and it started off with someone telling about themselves to someone else listening and then they repeated back what they had heard and the person said whether that was correct or not. I am suggesting something similar might happen. I am so grateful to the Bishops for listening, can we as Synod get a chance to say whether they have heard us correctly? I think all of that will help our unity.

Secondly, for reasons of legality I think it would be helpful if Synod could approve the draft. If Synod will forgive me again for another bad joke, I wonder if all our legal ducks are in a row here?

I speak as a Chair of the House of Clergy and I think clergy of all opinions will be concerned about the legalities here. We do not want an Archbishop or a Dean to have to take a test case as they do these blessings. I do not want a member of the clergy to have to worry about legalities if they decide to accept some thanksgivings and blessings and dedications of services, as I already do, but have to say no to others

because that seems discriminatory. I think for reasons of legality, we should have a vote in Synod on the Guidance when it comes.

Finally, I thought I would be short of time, so rapidity very quickly. You know where I am going to go. More haste, marry in haste, if we go too fast we can get this wrong. This only slows things up if the Guidance comes back to us and they have not heard us right. *Private Eye* has described this as “surprisingly nutty fudge”. I do not think we yet know whether *Private Eye* is right because we do not know what they are going to do, but I would urge us for reasons of rapidity to take seriously what we have in the Guidance, in the paper that was offered to Synod and make provision to go as fast as is necessary given that not everyone is going to agree and make provision. Thank you, I move.

*The Chair.* I call the Bishop of London to respond to Item 56.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I think one of the things we have learnt through *Living in Love and Faith* is not necessarily the outcome but the process. We have made a commitment not quickly but over the last, well, six years to listen and that is what we have been doing. I again want to thank members of Synod for having taken part in the group work yesterday. We have listened to that and we will take your comments forward both about the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and also of the *Pastoral Guidance*.

I recognise the anxiety that is expressed within this Synod and the House of Bishops have heard that. From today on, we will continue to listen to the voices of those that support both the development of the *Pastoral Guidance* as well as the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. We will, as we have already said, bring back that Guidance to Synod. However, it is Guidance of the House of Bishops and one of my reflections is that probably bringing it back so that we can see whether we have got it right is probably better done in group work than it is on the floor of Synod, not least that the voices of all Synod are heard. We do take very seriously the role of Synod in the development of the Guidance, but I am going to resist this amendment.

*The Chair.* The Bishop having resisted the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate they wish the debate to continue. Yes, the debate continues. Heeding the remark earlier, I will ask for those who want to speak against the amendment first.

*The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham):* To quote Newcastle’s tagline, we want to be a growing Church bringing hope and I fear that this amendment and the next one are delaying tactics: cleverly worded but delaying tactics. How many LGBTQIA+ folk and young people have already left the Church over a lack of acceptance and welcome of same-sex attraction, losing faith in us and, worse, even in God? How many have lost their lives? Well, we cannot know because they leave quietly in fear, in pain and shame and we should grieve our loss, the factions that are threatening to leave over this issue.

To slightly misquote the greatest Prime Minister that we have never actually had, “A friend who bullies us is no longer a friend”, and, since bullies only respond to strength, from now onward I hope and pray the Church of England will be prepared to be much stronger. So let us be stronger, bolder and more honest. No-one is claiming that what is on the table is perfect, but if not now then when? For it is not too soon. If this has been your entire life, if all you have ever known is discrimination, prejudice and abuse, rejection and judgment over who you are, it is not too soon or a rushed job.

Those of you who are concerned there has not been enough time left for the Holy Spirit to act, be assured, guys, she is more than capable of acting very quickly and profoundly. Pentecost anyone? For love is love and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them. Not fear, not hatred, love. We do not and should not have caveats on who and how we will love. For love should be celebrated for it is of God. Marriage is supposed to be grounded in and a celebration of love, not a piece of paper rubber stamping your right to have sex.

Let me not even go into how harmful and hurtful the nature of our inherited teaching on sex is around infertility and disability. For too long the Church has forgotten this. Celebrating others and allowing them to flourish in their God given identity does not take away from who you are, it should only add to the world and there is plenty of space at the table or there will be if we can just move over a bit.

I will be voting against this amendment and the one following and I will, when it comes to it, if we ever get there, be voting for the proposal as it stands and ask you to do the same on the understanding that this is not enough and it is not where I want us to end up. But it is a step, a promise that I hope and pray the Church will honour and be faithful to so we may all live in love and faith and it is not too soon. It has already been too long.

When I was waiting for this speech, one of my friends messaged me and said, “We asked our five year old what she thought about same-sex marriage. She said we should ask God. Wait, we don’t need to do that because it says in my book what is God-like? That God doesn’t like it when things are not fair” And this just is not fair, is it? She is five.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* I am going to take a slightly different tack on this. It is not a theological one at all. It is matter of how Synod works. I have been unimpressed by the common theme that has run through a lot of discussions that I have been involved in in the last year. That common theme is a lack of trust. If that was not a theme, if trust was not an issue within Synod, I think we would find an awful lot of these discussions far easier – dare I say it, even the LLF ones. But the fact of the matter is, rather like Brighton rock, we have got this running through everything.

By and large, it is being avoided. It is a very difficult issue to deal with and most people, I have to say, are dealing with it by avoiding it and it just goes on and on. We have an opportunity here for the Bishops to trust Synod, to come to a decision that will be helpful on our way on a decision on LLF. Why not take the opportunity? What is

the risk? The benefit of dealing with it is that we will take a large step towards improving the state of trust within Synod. If we do not do this, what are we saying?

We are saying that we do not trust Synod and it is another bit of the Brighton rock. It just goes on and on and on and sometime or other someone is going to have to stand up and say, "This is enough, we have got to deal with this issue of trust". Now there are various activities going on at the minute that can contribute to it and I would suggest that here is another opportunity to do so. I would strongly suggest, if I may, Synod, you support this amendment.

*The Chair.* I would like to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 56 has been sufficiently debated and so I put a motion for closure on Item 56.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* That is clearly carried and so we move to the vote.

*The Revd Canon Julian Holywell (Derby):* Point of order. Chair, may I ask you to consider a counted vote by Houses, please.

*The Chair.* Do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do, so there will be a counted vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 56.

The vote on Item 56: House of Bishops, those in favour 4, against 39, 1 recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, 94 in favour, 106 against, no abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 104 in favour, 96 against, 2 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

## **ITEM 57**

*The Chair.* We move to Item 57.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Point of order. I wonder, Mr Chairman, whether you might consider fairly soon allowing us another short break because I for one am desperate for a cup of tea and I do not want to miss any of the votes.

*The Chair.* Miss Dailey, before you go – I was not insinuating anything there – I was minded to take Item 57 because in 57 you will see there are various rubrics which might determine how long we are going to be. That is no indication either way, of course not. I would like to hear Item 57, but I then do want a pause, not for a comfort break I might say or for tea, just to take stock.

## **ITEM 57**

*The Chair.* Let us move to Item 57 and I call the Prolocutor of the Province of York to move Item 57.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* In bringing this amendment, it is not my desire simply to end this whole conversation. I recognise that discussion is necessary and decisions are necessary. I am a fan of Bruné Brown, and one of my favourite quotes of hers is “Clear is kind”. So let us be clear, let us be kind, and let us have the conversations that need to be had, but let us not ruin things at this late stage. I suggest that this most recent part of the process has been unhelpfully rushed. You may say we started LLF six years ago, how can you call that rushed? But that is the point. We have spent six years carefully talking and listening. What a shame it would be now to squander all that we have learned and experienced together over that time by rushing through in a matter of weeks prayers that do not quite suit anyone and guidance that is as yet unwritten.

One of the Bishops’ meetings was cancelled due to the death of Her late Majesty. Other meetings were squeezed in and papers were hastily prepared and discussed so that the draft document could be produced in time for this Synod. Possibly a better course would have been to delay the release of that document until sufficient time could be spent on it. But Synod, we must recognise what we are like. If the Bishops had announced they needed longer to finalise their document there would have been outrage. Maybe now is the moment to offer them that additional time.

There has been much discussion about the legalities of this Guidance. The picture seems distinctly unclear. We would benefit from robust legal advice that could speak into the questions which remain. Is there a danger that some of the proposed prayers are contrary to, and, therefore, unwittingly represent a change to the doctrine of marriage? Is there a risk that clergy who use the prayers could find themselves subject to a CDM? Is there a risk that clergy who cannot use the prayers could find themselves subject to disciplinary proceedings on the grounds of discrimination? Surely it makes sense to pause while such legal advice is gathered and checked and then we can be sure that we are moving forward safely.

We have heard this week in answer to the many questions in the presentations and in the groups that there is much work still to be done. Much is unknown. Surely it makes sense to pause until more of this work has been done and there can be greater clarity about what is and is not involved.

My amendment calls for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the *Pastoral Guidance* to be further considered together. It only refers to (f) and (f) is contingent on (e). Of course an ongoing process of monitoring will be necessary once we reach the next stage and I hope that will be soon.

My amendment calls for further legal, theological and practical consideration. Each of those I believe is necessary before we can move on from this point. Thank you.

*The Chair:* Can the Bishop please respond to Item 57?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Since 2017, the House of Bishops and the College of Bishops have been involved in theological reflection. We have been involved in the deep study of Scripture. And we

have been involved in listening to God and to the wider Church. As a result of that, a whole suite of papers has been developed. There has been a rather large book. There have been resources made available and also a study course provided. And there are other people who have produced papers and books since 2017.

Our involvement as the College and as the House of Bishops has not just been since last year. Right across that period we have been involved ourselves in the *Living in Love and Faith* course as well as in other groups and works.

In coming to the response that the House of Bishops has proposed to you we have struggled with Scripture. We have theologically reflected. We have prayed and we have sought the guidance of God and the movement of His Spirit. We have also had proper legal advice and given proper theological consideration to both the *Prayers* and the *Pastoral Guidance*. In moving forward we will continue to do this. Over the period of probably up to July in further development of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and also the *Pastoral Guidance*, having listened to Synod and responded to your comments, we will continue to take proper legal advice and undertake proper theological consideration. We will continue to study the Scriptures and we will continue to pray for the movement of the Holy Spirit.

I am concerned that this amendment, in presenting it, although the *Prayers of Love and Faith* remain they are not welcomed. I am also concerned that we lose the five years of reception. If this amendment is passed, I am sure Synod realises that many of the following amendments will fall, apart from 58, 67 and 68.

As the House of Bishops, we have taken seriously our role and we will continue do that, ensuring that proper legal and theological consideration is given, and therefore, I am resisting this amendment.

*The Chair.* The Bishop having resisted the amendment the amendment lapses, unless I see 25 members standing, which I do, so the debate continues.

*The Ven. Luke Miller (London):* I wish to support the amendment being put forward by my northern colleague. In Questions yesterday at least 14 areas were mentioned which the proposed *Pastoral Guidance* will need to address. We have heard of many of them in the debate this afternoon. Given the particular way that the Guidance will affect the clergy whatever our views, I believe it must be come through the Convocations and not just the Synod or possibly the House. All the more since the Guidance is described more as a policy and as a process than as a book. Unclear positions will impact those who serve at the parochial and pastoral frontline, not least in terms of our own households, and as a result we need a detailed say and a continuing say, since the development of the Guidance is described as a “process”. I welcome the Bishops’ restatement of the traditional teaching about marriage, that the liturgical material should be considered by the Liturgical Commission and come to us as Article 7 business. There is because implicit in the purported distinction between Holy Matrimony and marriage, there is not merely a raft of legal ramifications but also a change to sacramental understanding. The one blessing not forfeited by original sin nor washed away by the flood, a gift of God in creation, marriage is dependent on the

public free commitment of the couple, who administer the sacrament each to the other, notwithstanding any blessing. It is not for us clericalize marriage nor to constrain it within the Church and ours is not the first time, nor jurisdiction, in which a secular state has had a wider conception of the same institution which is nevertheless not divided.

LLF has taught me to think more closely about identity than I had before. I am sorry that I have not previously properly taken into account the identity of others in articulating my position. I have been helped by a reconsideration of the necessity of the doctrine of original sin which makes impossible such formulations as “Love the sinner, hate the sin”, and emphasises that all are equally in need and all are equally offered the joyful and wonderful grace of God. This radical inclusion does not obviate the need to wrestle with what is and is not sin for which marriage is the remedy. Therefore, we need to do that deeper work on the issues of sin, knowing that we are all caught up in concupiscence and never have unmixed motives. This is not about simply outward sins but it is about all our sinful nature.

The prayers deliberately avoid the issue of sex. We need that clarity about what we are and are not teaching in this area. Complex areas, but not impossible for us if we give ourselves time and space properly to do the work which is needed.

For all these reasons we need more work, more scrutiny and substantive Synodical and Convocational agreement, and so I support the amendment being proposed by the Northern Prolocutor.

*The Chair:* I am going to call the Second Estates Commissioner. I am minded to have two more speeches, before somebody is a rushing to make a point of order. It will be helpful after this speaker to see who is for and who is against.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* Under Standing Order 26(4), with the permission of the Chair, may I move an amendment to an amendment, in that I should like to change “proper” to “comprehensive” in this amendment. That is a technicality which I understand the Bishop of London objects so to so I would like to propose an amendment to the amendment to make that more palatable to the Bishop.

*The Chair:* I am not quite sure where I find that. I am looking at 57.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* Standing Order 26(4)(c).

*The Chair:* I have it. And you are looking at replacing the word “proper” with?

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* With “comprehensive”.

*The Chair:* No, I am not going to us my discretion to amend on amendment, because I think it is going to make things rather more complicated than we need and they are complicated enough already. Let us go to Mr Selous, the Second Estates Commissioner.

*Mr Andrew Selous MP (ex officio):* As Second Church Estates Commissioner I was

called to answer an Urgent Question on this issue in the House of Commons on 24 January. I was amused to be told by the parliamentary authorities that the Urgent Question would not be repeated in the House of Lords as they usually are, because, apparently, there is no-one who speaks for the Church of England in the House of Lords.

I pledged to make the views of MPs known to Synod. Of the 12 who spoke that day, eight expressed a hope that the Synod would change doctrine to enable same-sex couples to be married by the Church. There were deep and heartfelt stories from a number of MPs of a personal sense of hurt they felt at what they considered to be ongoing discrimination against LGBTQI+ people. Others have contacted me in private for fear of retribution – a sorry commentary on our world – to support the traditional doctrine, and several said that it is for Synod not for Parliament to reach its own prayerful decision on this issue. Copies of the *Hansard* extract are available for members on the administration desk.

For nearly 50 years, since Parliament approved the 1974 Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure, it has been settled understanding that the Church and not Parliament has the decisive say on matters of doctrine. It is not the job of Parliament to decide what the doctrine of the Church of England should be, but I am conscious that Parliament's patience may not be infinite. Indeed, there have already been cross-party meetings of MPs to look at a Private Member's Bill to require the Church to go further.

Should Synod decide to change marriage doctrine at a future point, a Measure produced here going through Parliament will provide the necessary legal opt-in. There is no need, therefore, for Parliament to act independently to change the 2013 Marriage Act.

Those here and in Parliament who wish to enforce that or to remove the rights of conscience from equality law should be extremely careful what they wish for. It would infringe on the settled principles of religious freedom, overturn a century of measured devolution from Parliament to Synod and be likely to call into question the rights and protections of conscience for other denominations and faiths as well as the Church of England. The principle of religious freedom which we champion for our brothers and sisters in other countries needs to apply equally at home.

I was deeply moved by Archbishop Justin's passionate plea for unity on Monday, but I am struggling to see how we achieve that as the present position has managed to upset many on both sides of this debate, and a small number of MPs tell me they believe churches will leave the Church of England over this issue.

I hereby call us to allow freedom for both sides in terms of doctrine determined by Synod and I would dearly love for us to find a way to achieve that without fracturing the Church of England or obscuring our primary mission to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to a lost and hurting world.

*The Chair.* Can I see those who want to support the amendment first?



*Dr Rosalind Clarke (Lichfield):* As I read the statement of the Bishops' proposals as well as the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* when they were published a couple of weeks ago, Synod, I could not quite believe what I was looking at. Rereading them a number of times since then has only confirmed my first suspicion. This piece of work is, as it stands, an outrageous piece of formalised homophobia.

To be clear, I do not think that was Bishops' intention but, Synod, we are not here to vote on the Bishops' intentions. The motion before us asks us to vote on the actual written proposals.

Let me explain. The Bishops have deliberately chosen not to provide any theological rationale for this "radical" new inclusion, and so what we have in front of us is a report which calls us to celebrate, welcome and affirm same-sex relationships, just not as much as opposite-sex relationships. It says we will bless people in same-sex relationships but we will not marry them. Without any attempt at rationale or justification, this is quite simply discrimination. If same-sex relationships are to be treated differently from opposite sex-relationships, a clear theological rationale for this must be given by the Bishops to support this distinction. If same-sex relationships are to be treated in the same way as opposite-sex relationships, then a clear theological rationale must be given by the Bishops for what would of course become a change in the Church's doctrine and liturgy.

In our group work yesterday someone in my group suggested that it would have been more helpful to have had first a theological paper followed by some *Pastoral Guidance* arising from that and finally the prayers which reflected it. As it stands, these prayers have no context, no theological rationale and that leaves them exposed to rightful claims of homophobia in a way that I do not believe they were intended to be. And so I must urge Synod in the strongest possible terms to accept this amendment so that we can hear the Bishops' reasoning for their proposals.

*The Chair:* Rachel Mann, after which I am going to test the mind of Synod on this amendment.

*The Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester):* The Kingdom of God is not a press conference, or a resolution, or a short course in how to be eloquently indignant; it is a table laden with grace at which the social maps are all redrawn. As I was writing this speech, those words of the Jewish biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine kept coming back to me, and I want to draw on them now as I urge you to resist this amendment.

Friends, we are called to dwell on that table of grace to which we are called. We have been reflecting, discussing, interrogating, theologically unpicking these matters for as long as I can remember. And yet we are called back to that table of grace. I want to remind us that not only our episcopal colleagues but so many of us have undertaken and have been involved in an extraordinary work of discernment over very many years. I will not trouble you with the number initiatives and things I have been involved in as a consultant or a voice.

I want us to find a deepening clarity and precision about what is being brought forward, and we shall find it together in our wrestling, in our conversations but not on the bruising floor of a debating chamber, but in that covenantal wrestling and conversation to which we as the people of God are called. We do not do that in the airlessness of this chamber but amidst what George Elliot called the “dim lights and tangled circumstances” of the world.

So, I urge you to resist this amendment because we are called to that which is costly, not that which calls us to throw things into the long grass, because grass only grows longer. God is in the facts. That is the truth. We are not in fudge, we are in the facts, and God does seemingly impossible things in the midst of the facts. I want to stay close to the God who abides with us in the dust of our real lives and offers love and reconciliation, and, yes, blessing. Friends, resist this amendment.

*The Chair.* As I indicated earlier, I wish to test the mind of Synod on this item.

*The Revd Canon John Bavington (Leeds):* Point of order. Chair, with full respect for your position, I think there were a lot more people wanting to speak in favour of the motion than against and yet an equal number have spoken on both sides of the debate. I just wonder if that creates a different impression of the House.

*The Chair.* Well, I can assure you that is not the intention. If it happens it happens, but that is not the intention. The intention is to produce a balanced debate with both sides being able to argue. Having said that, I do want to move a motion for closure on Item 57.

I am going to order a counted vote. Members in the gallery will remember that they cannot vote by using their hands. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on the motion for closure.

*The motion was put and carried with 253 in favour, 191 against and 3 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* The motion was carried so we proceed to the vote.

*The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Point of order. Given the importance of this amendment, Chair, would you consider a counted vote by houses?

*The Chair.* Do I see 25 members standing? I am getting used to this. I do see 25 members standing so we will vote by Houses.

*The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham):* I believe according to Standing Order 19.2 that I can suggest – it was said that the speeches that were given were unevenly balanced and I believe the information that was given was wrong. So a point of fact, I believe it was four in favour and one against, which is not what we were told, so I would like to correct that, please.

*The Chair:* I am not going to criticise you, because I am not sure it is point of order. I think it matters not because I thought we had risen above that, and so we will vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 57.

The vote on Item 57: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 15, against 27, with 2 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 90 in favour, 108 against, with 2 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 97 in favour, 104 against, with 1 recorded abstention. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

*The Chair:* That amendment is lost. Now, bear with me. We are going to adjourn for ten minutes. You will see that the task in front of us is not enormous, but we will have to tell you in ten minutes whether it is doable in the next hour. We will tell you in ten minutes.

*(Short adjournment)*

*The Chair:* I thought you all wanted to know what we were going to do. Now come on, ladies and gentlemen, this is resembling a sort of a pub on a Saturday night not the General Synod of the Church of England. I am used to pubs on Saturday nights in Bolton – well, I am not, actually, at all but, there we are, at least it made some quiet. Item 57 having been lost, we are going to move to Item 58 and, of course, Ian Paul is going to move the first alternative of 58.

What we are all planning to do is to go as far as we can this evening with the amendments. If I thought for an instant that quarter of an hour might make a difference to finishing all the amendments, I would take it like a heartbeat, but we are going to carry on tomorrow at 9.15 and finish the debate.

*A Speaker:* I am sorry, you cannot be heard.

*The Chair:* Oh yes, I can. Now I have never been accused of not being heard before. I am deaf, but you will have to forgive that. I wear hearing aids, but I notice the Archbishop does too and so that is okay.

## **ITEM 58**

*The Chair:* So we are going to proceed with Item 58 and just see how far we get. We are going to do it in the same sort of way, hearing both sides because that is the only fair way of doing it. Now, Dr Paul, are you going to move the item which is in the first part of 58?

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* I am.

*The Chair:* Thank you. Three minutes.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Mr Chair, to love someone is, in Augustinian terms, to will the best for them. To do theology is to carefully reflect on

the will of God for our lives, to reflect on what that divine best is for ourselves and for each other. If we do not do that theological thinking, we are not truly showing love. Too often in this debate, we have introduced a false dichotomy between pastoral care and theological thinking. That which God has joined together, let us not divide.

In Jesus's high priestly prayer in John 17, he did not say that they be one. What he said was three things: father, sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth; then he says, as a result of that, they might be one; and he goes on to say that the world might know the Father. In other words, the whole desire for unity is rooted in theology, sanctification through the Word, and directed towards missional fruitfulness. There is no institutional unity apart from theological coherence and it is only this kind of unity rooted in truth which will be missionally effective.

Beyond that, it has been very clear from all the votes so far in this debate we are a House divided. Bishop Sarah has told us that the Bishops have done the theological work. Bishop Sarah, please, we plead with you, show us your working. You have said that you have done the work engaging with Scripture. Please show us. Demonstrate how that has been done. We are deeply divided on this and I think in many parts of the Church trust and confidence in episcopal leadership is at a catastrophic low.

We long to trust you; we long to follow your leadership; we long to be guided by you as our shepherds, but we cannot do that if you will not show us the theological working. You will not show us how now you are building on all the good work that has been done in the past. If you do not do this, I think we will find now and in July we are more deeply divided than ever. I, therefore, plead with you, Bishop Sarah, to receive this amendment. If you have done the work, how can it be difficult to show us? Please, give us confidence. Give us a cause to back you. I move my amendment.

*The Chair.* I call on Bishop Sarah to respond to Item 58.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* The work of the House of Bishops has throughout the *Living in Love and Faith* process provided a range of theological material and also reflections on Scripture which are available on the LLF Hub. The document that you have before you, as in the response from the House of Bishops, shows the way in which theology has been threaded through what we are proposing. In moving forward in doing the further work on the *Prayers of Love and Faith* but also the work on the *Pastoral Guidance*, we have been clear that we will use both theology and Scripture. In terms of if there is any work that we have not made available, I see no reason for why the House of Bishops cannot do that. I am minded to resist it because I think in the response that you have had we have said that we will do this and, therefore, putting it in the motion makes it just slightly clunky and so I will resist it.

*The Chair.* The Bishop having not supported the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. And they do, so the debate will continue.

*The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Point of order. Chair, Item 58 in essence is identical to Item 57, if not in wording, which has already been voted down by all three Houses of Synod. I suspect, given that reason, it is out of order.

*The Chair:* I am afraid, Mr Dotchin, if it was out of order then it would not be on the Notice Paper and so it is in order. I hear what you say but it is in order and so the debate continues. Can I have one person who is in favour and one against.

*The Revd Paul Chamberlain (Portsmouth):* Synod colleagues, I am a gay man who holds to the historic teaching of the Church on marriage and sex. Despite my desires for sexual intimacy with other men, I have sought to fashion my life and forge my relationships according to that teaching. This has not been easy. In my 20s I met a guy. I really wanted a relationship with him, but I believed and believe that the teaching of Scripture is clear. Not once have I regretted the decision not to pursue that relationship.

Until now, the teaching of the Church of England has been clear. As the House of Bishops said in 2005, "Sexual relationships outside marriage, whether heterosexual or between people of the same sex, are regarded as falling short of God's purposes for human beings". If that is the case, why are we now proposing to recognise in a service relationships that are falling short? I do not know the answer to that question because GS 2289 gives us no theology, no reflection on the Church's historic teaching and no critique of the sexual ethics of contemporary culture. All we are given is the vague statement that "we value and want to celebrate faithfulness in relationships".

I thank God for the grace found in lives every day: love, joy, happiness, peace and commitment. These are good things given to humanity by God who makes the sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. But when it comes to relationships and sex, what we have been given is marriage. I trained at Cuddesdon. If I had written GS 2289 as an essay during my ordination training, it would have received a very low mark. As Ian Paul just said, show us your working. This would have been written in large letters at the bottom. Until the Bishops tell us why, theologically and pastorally, they are making these recommendations, we should not change the historic teaching and practice of the Church.

As a gay man, I am for marriage as the Church has understood it and I am for the Bishops giving us deep and rich theology to explain their proposals. Right now, we do not have this but we desperately need it. I, therefore, urge you to vote for this amendment.

*The Revd Canon Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TEs):* Last Sunday, I stood on the pulpit and preached a sermon on Isaiah 58: what is the meaning of true fasting if not to address the yokes and systems of oppression right before our lives? Isaiah reminded his listeners then and now that we are people of Exodus and there is an ethical demand before us to practise liberation and justice. I did not tell my congregation I have not made my theological mind up yet, so, please wait, I will go

and prepare my theological statement, I will come back and preach a sermon to you on Isaiah 58.

Personal piety has a necessary public liberatory impulse. We as Christians living in that prophetic tradition are called to inhabit that intersection to proclaim new life, rooted in love, mercy and justice, to repair the breach and restore lives. People in the journey, while Exodus did not wait for theological rationale, encountered God where they were. I rarely agree with Dr Paul, but here I agree with Dr Paul that, yes, of course, there needs to be a lot more theological rationale. For instance, in the entire document the word “justice” is missing. Somehow, the fundamental Christian commitment to pursue equity, righteousness and mercy is missing. I understand that, but I appreciate the desire of the House of Bishops to actually get into action what is required right now. That is why, while that commitment has come from the House of Bishops to act now, we will be delayed if we go back again to thousands and thousands of years of theological writing on this matter.

We all know from this discussion surrounding this process it has been divisive but it has not been convivial. This brings me back to our focus, our justice. For too long in the name of doing theology, we have allowed misogyny, racism, slavery, patriarchy, because there was not a settled theological understanding while people suffered. We cannot do that and that is why I resist this amendment because we do need to act now and do theology as we pursue justice in our lives.

We cannot separate the pursuit of justice here and now and do theology later. The God who meets us in Jesus said the Sabbath was not made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Jesus standing in that prophetic tradition calls us to act now, not wait for a theological rationale. Therefore, I resist this amendment and accept the steps that are taken by the House of Bishops and move towards pursuing justice while doing theology because, as a theological educator, there are different ways of doing theology. As a practical theologian and as a political theologian you can do theology while doing what is required.

*The Chair.* I would wish to test the mind of the Synod as to whether this has been sufficiently debated. I am, therefore, going to put the motion for closure on Item 58.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* That is clearly carried.

*The Revd Dr Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Point of order. Can we please have a counted vote by Houses, Chair?

*The Chair.* Do I see 25 people standing? Yes, we do and so we have a vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 58.

The vote on Item 58: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 8, against 29, with 6 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 89 in favour, 108 against, with 3

recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 98 in favour, 99 against, with 1 recorded abstention. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

## ITEM 59

*The Chair.* We move to Item 59. Mr Margrave.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* In the press conference on LLF, it was said that the prayers would be used to celebrate, affirm and bless relationships, some of which would be sexual. The Pope was mentioned earlier. I am a huge fan. Do not get too excited, I am not leaving. The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is that neither same-sex couples or those living as married outside of the sacrament can receive God's blessing because the Church cannot bless a state of sin, as outlined by the Doctrine of the Faith. This change, introducing these prayers or these services or acts, would result in blessing what the Bible would call sin or the Roman Catholics would call sin and move us further away from the whole Church. As Father Ted would say, "This is an ecumenical matter", and I would like to, therefore, move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair.* I call upon the Bishop to reply to Item 59.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* In terms of admitting (e), which is, "Welcome the response from the College of Bishops and look forward to the House of Bishops further refining, commending and issuing the *Prayers of Love and Faith* described in GS 2289 and its Annexes", to amend that and, therefore, to omit (e) means that this Synod will reject the *Living in Love and Faith* response from the House of Bishops and also the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith*.

I clearly would want to resist that. In doing that, it would, in fact, not be honourable to the five years' work that we have undertaken and the way which we have listened to the breadth of the Church Scripture and also theology, but also it means that we will omit some of those other pieces of work that the House of Bishops have said that we want to attend to, for example, valuing singleness, friendship and commitment to community and those other areas that we have suggested that we need to pay attention to. Therefore, on the basis that omitting (e) means that this Synod will not welcome the Bishops' response or the prayers in either Annexes A or B, I clearly resist this amendment.

*The Chair.* The Bishop having not supported the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand or otherwise indicate they wish the debate to continue. Yes, there are that number of people standing. Again, can we have somebody who will speak for the amendment – embarrassment of riches – and somebody speaking against the amendment.

*Mr Benjamin John (St Albans):* What our world needs, whether they know it or not, is the Gospel. They need the Saviour Jesus Christ – don't we all – the Jesus who washes, sanctifies and justifies us. The hope, the Gospel for all of us whatever our struggles and sins and temptations, is that in Christ we are forgiven and that our sins

and desires no longer define us. As Paul says, such were some of you. We do not need to hold on to sinful identities and behaviours. We have not been given a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. We have been given a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by whom we cry: Abba, Father.

These proposals are wrong. They say that Jesus does not wash and sanctify you and that you do not need to take up your cross and follow him, that there is no call to holiness, that the truth does not set you free. But love rejoices in the truth. It does not rejoice in wrongdoing. Love calls people out of sin and to Christ, snatching them out of the fire with discipline so that their spirits might be saved.

Please, Bishops, I plead with you, withdraw the proposals and prayers. Turn from this path that you are on. Fear God, not man. Be the shepherds that God is calling you to be. Protect the sheep entrusted into your care by driving out this teaching that perverts the grace of God into a licence for immorality, this teaching that tickles our ears to suit our desires, a teaching that leads to the broad road and not the narrow one. It is not too late. Turn to the beautiful, wonderful, glorious Gospel. Why make ourselves like the world when we have the one thing that the world needs: the Gospel of Jesus Christ where we receive our true identities as precious daughters and treasured sons of God. Amen.

*The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich):* It pierced my heart the day I took my first wedding, a sudden overflowing realisation that I was excluded because of who I love, that I could not stand where the handsome groom and beautiful bride stood and publicly profess my love for God and for a partner. Imagine it, the total indignity that people who do not know or understand or even agree with our beliefs or ethics or in God can partake of that freely – they have a right to – that those who just want pretty pictures and a nice building can have whatever they like. My friends, where is the good news in that? I am a lifelong Anglican, a faithful, committed Christian who believes in the authority of the Bible, who has dedicated a significant part of my life to God. I love God and I try to love other people, yet this amendment and the Church tells me that my love is worth nothing, that I fall short and I am treated like a second class citizen, unable to profess a faithful, loving relationship before God and His people.

I am prevented from even the dignity of being married civilly because of my orders. Where is the good news in that? I urge Synod to reject this amendment so that, finally, people like me can have their voice recognised in church. We are not your enemy. We are just people who love in a different way. Give us a place at the table, I plead you.

I urge you to oppose this amendment. I love those who are called to celibacy. If that is your calling, bully for you, but the rest of us who are not called to that there is no biblical justification for it. I urge you, please, think of us who are suffering at the Church's hands.



*The Chair.* I am going to test the mind of Synod again as to whether this amendment has been sufficiently debated and so I am going to put a motion for closure on Item 59.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Point of order. May I request a vote counted by Houses, please, Chair?

*The Chair.* Well, I think you know what happens next now, do you not. If I see 25 people standing. I do see 25 standing and so we will have a vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 59.

The vote on Item 59: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 1, against 38, with 2 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 77 in favour, 118 against, with 4 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 82 in favour, 111 against, with 3 recorded abstention. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

## **ITEM 60**

*The Chair.* We move to Item 60 and I am hoping this is the last item of business we will do today. I call on Jayne Ozanne to move the motion. Three minutes, thank you.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Synod, I have tabled this amendment as I believe many of us in this chamber, for various reasons, have concerns about overtly welcoming the College's proposals even if some of us recognise, as I do, that the Prayers are a step forward in the right direction.

Personally, I recognise that we need something that will see us through to the time that we will eventually legislate for same-sex marriage, which I believe we will one day do. However, I am deeply concerned about being seen to welcome something that continues to embed a level of discrimination that I know causes deep pain and offence to many. What is more, we have talked a lot about the *Pastoral Principles* over the past few days and I would suggest that these proposals do not score terribly highly on any of them.

Silence. Well, there is a great deal that this document does not speak to and is purposely silent on, particularly the issue of whether a sexual union between two people in a marriage or civil partnership is something that can be celebrated and whether those of us who hold that it is are holding a Christian view or not.

Fear. It is obvious that so much of what is being proposed is, if we can be truly honest, because of a fear of what might or might not happen in this chamber rather than spiritual leadership on how we should deal with the deep disagreements we hold.

Hypocrisy. Please let us be open and honest about the fact these proposals have been written to be read by different groups in different ways.

Ignorance. I am deeply concerned that we still do not fully recognise the harm that our teaching continues to cause to so many in the LGBT community, particularly young LGBT people growing up in our churches who are told your love for another human being of the same sex is disordered and can never be consummated. We have been told repeatedly of the deep psychological damage this does but, yet, we do nothing to address it and so the harm continues.

Prejudice. I would offer that there is often an in-built yet unconscious hetero-normative bias in both our thinking and our processes which time does not allow me to go into.

Power. I could speak all evening on this, but let us just say that those with power have privilege and it is that privilege that can be all too apparent in these proposals – for instance, what we are choosing to bless or not bless.

I find it hard to welcome something I find so wanting. Furthermore, as a result of the these failings, I believe we must recognise that trust in the process is at an all-time low. We have been told for years that the Bishops are listening. That was the point of the Shared Conversations and the painfully long drawn out LLF process, but in both cases papers came from the Bishops which clearly showed they had not listened. So, please, will you vote for my amendment, thank you.

*The Chair.* I call on the Bishop of London to respond to Item 60.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I believe that the amendment is seeking not to welcome the response from the College of Bishops. However, if we turn to the amendment, if you look at item (e) of the motion, if you remove “welcome the response from the College of Bishops and” and purely move forward to “look forward to the House of Bishops” et cetera, by removing “the response from the College of Bishops” we will remove some of those other items in the House of Bishops’ response that we believe that we need to pay attention to.

*Living in Love and Faith* resources were always much more than same-sex marriage. They are about our Christian understanding of what it is to be human in the light of social, scientific, cultural and political change. The response talks about those things that we as a Church need to attend to. I have already mentioned some of those – for example, valuing singleness, friendship, commitment to community. We have also talked about the need to become better at offering pastoral support for families and households, that it reflects the unconditional love of God that is good for all people involved and good for society.

Therefore, because the amendment specifically omits the words “welcome the response from the College of Bishops”, those items that are nowhere else in the motion will be admitted and, therefore, we lose something at the heart of *Living in Love and Faith* and particularly those parts at the breadth of the Church and those people we listen to wanted to be represented in our response and to hear their voices. Therefore, I must resist this amendment.

*The Chair.* The Bishop having resisted this amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. It is a fairly movable feast this. Yes, there are 25 people standing and so the matter is open for debate.

*The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford):* I support this amendment and I was surprised to hear the Bishop of London say that this would take things off the table given that paragraph (c) of the motion commends “the continued learning together” – including by the Bishops – “enabled by the *Living in Love and Faith* process and resources in relation to identity sexuality, relationships and marriage”. That does not terminate any part of this at this point and I do not think Jayne’s amendment is intended to do that and I do not think it does. I think it is also important to register that the voices of this Synod, as others have mentioned in these debates, should be fed into the process and to put that onto the face of the motion. I, therefore, support the amendment.

*The Revd Steve Wilcox (York):* Chair, friends, I enjoy talking to people with whom I fundamentally disagree. That may be why I am abstaining. I enjoy trying to find common ground with them. It is amazing what common ground you can find. I have spoken to people with whom I fundamentally disagree about the proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the *Pastoral Guidance*.

Here is some common ground I have discovered, two things. First, there are those from all sides of the discussion who feel that we desperately need a safe space, a permanent and secure safe space, and yet under what is proposed we do not feel that there is adequate safe space. There is too much legal uncertainty, too much reliance on the *Pastoral Guidance* which cannot possibly bear the weight being placed on it. Second, many of us feel our deep disagreements have not been taken seriously enough. We do not feel the depth of our disagreement has been understood or the consequences which must result from that disagreement, that we are in danger of going beyond the bounds of unity.

We are grateful for all that the Bishops have done. We do not underestimate the toll it has taken on them and yet to me the level of stage management that has been required over the last few days shows the solution offered is not a real solution.

May I humbly invite the House of Bishops to consider another stream of work which truly recognises the need for permanent, secure safe spaces, which truly acknowledges the depth of the disagreements that we have heard about today which perhaps gives us, if I might use the term, episcopal protectors both now and into the future which provides a better way. I will be abstaining from this but I will be voting against the motion tomorrow and asking the Bishops to propose a better way for all of us.

*The Chair.* Given that it is 5 to 7, I would like to propose an extension of the sitting for no more than 15 minutes to allow us to complete this item of business. Does that have the approval of Synod?

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* The sitting is extended by 15 minutes. Now, Archbishop, it says here in the big book of words that, under Standing Order 121, Presidents may invite such persons as they think to address the Synod and I know that Archbishop Angaelos cannot be here tomorrow because he is conducting a funeral and I believe he would like to speak.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* On a point of order, Mr Chairman, under Standing Order 121, may I propose that – I have never done a point of order before, it is terribly exciting – His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, not being able to be with us tomorrow, you use your discretion to invite him to address the Synod.

*The Chair:* I will do. I will do because I know what is good for me. Archbishop Angaelos, thank you very much. I think you may speak for no more than five minutes.

*Archbishop Angaelos (Ecumenical Representative):* Thank you, Chair; thank you, your Grace, and I am always glad to provide excitement. I had intended to speak at the end because I wanted to give priority, fittingly, to voting members on such a pressing issue and I did not want to take up valuable time but, as his Grace has said, I have a funeral tomorrow morning and I am not able to be here. I do speak against my better judgment, but I feel called and prompted to speak as a faithful and, hopefully, a trusted friend of this chamber. I am a friend and a brother and certainly do not stand in any negative criticism or judgment.

A few things I am not going to do. I am not here to preach. I am not here to pretend that I have any kind of solution, simple or otherwise. I would not even try to tell you what to do in your own chamber, in your own Synod or in your own house. But as a friend and one who believes in the ecumenical relationships of the Church of England, I feel that I need to speak just to explain that this chamber and what is said here has implications far beyond it, both nationally across our four nations and around the world. I speak as Co-Chair of the Anglican Oriental Orthodox International Commission and as Co-Chair with my brother, Bishop Christopher Chessun, of the Anglican Oriental Orthodox Regional Forum that is here in Britain.

I know that we are all working to solidify relationships and to work towards the manifestation of the body of Christ in the Church of God in the world, which is becoming more and more challenging, but our world is in greater and greater need of it. I just wanted you to all know that decisions here will impact the life of the Church outside of this chamber. I would not dare to speak on behalf of my Anglican sisters and brothers across the Anglican Communion or in the global south – and my brother Archbishop Samy is here from the province of Alexandria – but, as we have heard, time and time again what is decided here will have implications. We have heard an emotional plea by his Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, about, quite literally, life and death issues and existential matters and impact.

What I say today and what I have presented to you may or may not impact or affect the decisions made but I felt a duty, as a brother who has been given the privilege of

sitting among you, to voice this, whatever the outcome. Having been here for almost 30 years and having been enriched by my experience, I am very aware of the difference between a blessing and Holy Matrimony. It is used here in this chamber and used in the Church of England, but that distinction will not be readily understood by many around the world. The distinction will sound like a mere technicality. The one observation I will make is that the current proposal certainly does not give overall rest to any party and so maybe time may be an option.

Three points in conclusion. One, I am fully aware of the pain felt across this chamber on every side of the argument and it causes me incredible heartache. Secondly, having been concerned over what I was going to see at the Lambeth Conference, I was greatly encouraged by seeing and experiencing the gracious and encompassing love of God overshadow the conversations and help to navigate a difficult situation and I am hopeful that here today we will see the same.

I think I can speak for my ecumenical sisters and brothers – although we do not have the same position on this matter – when I say that as we sit here we pray that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus.

*The Chair.* I want to now test the mind of the Synod as to whether Item 60 has been sufficiently debated and, therefore, I move the closure on Item 60.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* The motion is clearly carried and so we proceed to vote on Item 60.

*The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich):* Point of order. Come on you yellows. Please could I ask for a count by Houses?

*The Chair.* Do I see 25 people standing? Yes, I do see 25 people standing and so there will be a vote by Houses. For the last time tonight, I will say this is a counted vote by Houses on Item 60.

The vote on Item 60: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 2, against 38, with 1 recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, 66 in favour, 81 against, with 49 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 89 in favour, 67 against, with 39 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

*The Chair.* When we have had a good sleep and maybe the odd drink or two – I should speak for myself, shouldn't I – we are going to resume tomorrow at 9.15 on Item 61. I understand the Business Committee is making arrangements for us to be able to complete this item of business tomorrow and so thank you very much.

*The Revd Graham Hunter* led the Synod in an act of worship.

**Full Synod: Fourth Day  
Thursday 9 February 2023**

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 9.15 am

*The Chair:* It has been noted that there is no chocolate today. In fact, if you can keep a secret, I will tell you what my wife bought me for Christmas. I think the Archbishop is putting it on Twitter. She bought me three tickets to go and see *Mamma Mia*. All I can say with the song ringing in my head is Mamma Mia, here we go again. I gather that Robert wants to make a speech no doubt about our arrangements.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* I think before we can start, we need to change the order of business for today to allow that to happen. Because we still have LLF to complete, I propose that we resume that debate now, and when that debate is complete we will progress through the remainder of the business today's agenda so far as we are able to. However, as it is vital that we do not run out of time at the end of day and lose Items 13 and 14 on Safeguarding, I propose we insert the rubric "not later than 3.15" for Item 13 and that we remove the existing timed rubric of Item 15 which is the Lincoln Diocese Motion. Thank you, Chair.

*The Chair:* I think that Synod needs to give its general consent to that.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 61**

### **LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITHER (RESUMED DEBATE)**

*The Chair:* Yes, Mr Scowen, we were about to deal with Item 61, which is in your name.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* There is a long history of bishops commending liturgy for ministers to use at their discretion under Canon B 5. I want to submit that that is wholly inappropriate where the liturgy concerned is both controversial as to content and as to lawfulness. It is at the very least arguable that the use of these Prayers in certain contexts would be indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England, for example, where the couple are known to be in a sexually active relationship.

Commendation leave ministers completely exposed, because under Canon B 5 it is their responsibility to ensure that their use of the Prayers in any particular context is not indicative of a departure from doctrine, exposing them to complaints under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure. Those who decline to use them may on the other hand be sued for discrimination. It does not matter whether such proceedings are well founded, the mere fact of their being brought will be devastating.

Commendation by the Bishops has no legal effect. It provides no cover for ministers, although they might be misled into thinking that it did. A principal role of bishops is to pastor their clergy, to have their back, but the way the Bishops wish to commend these Prayers is, I want to suggest, profoundly unpastoral, although I am sure they do not intend that, because it hangs the clergy out to dry.

So, how can ministers be protected? If, as this amendment asks, we were to use the Canon B 2 procedure for authorizing liturgy, it would be for this Synod to assess and determine whether the Prayers are contrary to or indicative of a departure from the Church's doctrine. If we approve the Prayers, the Worship and Doctrine Measure says that that would be conclusive that the Prayers were consistent with the doctrine, protecting those who use them from legal challenge, something which no amount of commendation or *Pastoral Guidance* will be able to do. Protecting those who do not use the Prayers from litigation may require a Measure, and I would invite consideration to be given to that as well.

But please let us at least use the full authorization procedure for the Prayers so that, if they are approved, we can be certain, and clergy and lay ministers up and down the country can be certain of their status and that they can use them lawfully without risk of challenge. Chair, I beg to move.

*The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield):* Point of order. As I am fairly new to Synod, I hope the Chair might forgive me for this point of order. Under Standing Order 120(a), might the Chair use his power to call Archbishop Samy of Alexandria to speak into this debate seeing as he has travelled so far and we have not yet heard from him?

*The Chair:* I am not sure it is a point of order. I do not criticise you for that, but I do not think he would want to speak on an amendment, he would want to speak on the main motion, and I am well aware of his presence and his desire to speak. Subject to other constraints, I will call him during the main debate after the amendments. I call upon the Bishop of London to respond to Item 61.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I was very grateful yesterday for the contribution from the floor that spoke about trust; about trust of the House of Bishops to Synod and Synod's trust of the House Bishops. We have heard the concern about the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, both in terms of protection for those use to wish them and those who in conscience cannot, also the concerns at the shape of the Prayers.

As the House of Bishops we have wanted to hear from Synod views around the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, which is why in this set of Synod meetings we undertook to ask you to comment on those *Prayers of Love and Faith*. The response that we have received demonstrates your willingness to take part in that process. We, as the House of Bishops, will listen and review the comments that you have made. I cannot guarantee that every comment you will then see in that set of Prayers but they will be considered. And then we will, as the House of Bishops, commend those Prayers under Canon B 5. This means that they can be used by ministers in the exercise of their discretion.

We recognise also the concern of the protection that is required for those that either wish to use them or do not wish to use them. We will pay attention to that, bringing back very clear proposals that can be used consistently across the dioceses in the Church to protect though who wish to use them and who do not wish to use them.

The *Prayers of Love and Faith* are not intended to be liturgy authorized under Canon B 2, rather a set of resources which are commended and could be used in either a service of Holy Matrimony – Holy Communion. Thank you. Oh, that was a slip. You can tell I did not quite sleep all night, can you not? Focus. Holy Communion or of the Word.

You heard from Clive in his amendment that if this were to become liturgy authorized under Canon B 2, it would require further legislation to protect those who do not wish to use it. Therefore, it is the view of the House of Bishops that we would want to commend these by the House under Canon B 5 and we would recognise that there are those who wish to use them and those who do not, and we will bring back our proposals to this House to ensure that those are reflected whether they use them or not. Therefore, I am going to resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* The Bishop having resisted the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. There are 25 members. We will adopt the same process we did yesterday to try and get a fair balance. I should have said at the beginning we are three minutes all the time unless I tell you otherwise.

*Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford):* What I have witnessed regarding how the Bishops have handled this matter so far I am afraid to say is a fiasco. This is a false debate, as the key document which we should have been debating is missing. The Bishops say this is about people. It is about much more than that. It is about the Word of God and about Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith. In one John 5:3 it says, “This is love for God to obey his commands”. Where does the Church get its doctrine on marriage from? It comes directly from God. In Genesis 2 God the Father instituted marriage between a man and a woman. In Matthew 19:4-5 God the Son expressly endorsed that, and the bishops have affirmed that this is unchanged.

Draft Prayers were presented to us about two weeks or so ago. I have spoken to the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. He has told me that they were consulted on LLF but there has been insufficient time for them to be consulted on these draft Prayers. The Bishops seem to have forgotten that 60% of this chamber have not served before November 2021, so it is no good the Bishop of London saying to us there has been consultation since 2017. Not with this Synod. The Bishops cannot see, apparently, that the draft Prayers are out of sync with, inconsistent with and undermine the Doctrine of Marriage as in Canon B 30. They should have gone to Specsavers. Bless them.

The Bishop of London, in answering questions about these draft Prayers, kept referring to the *Pastoral Guidance*, I asked her a simple question as to whether the Bishops are commending these prayers for all same-sex couples, even those engaged in a sexual relationship, or only for those who are celibate, and she could not answer. She said, “I refer to the *Pastoral Guidance*”. A lot of her answers were, “I refer to the *Pastoral Guidance*.” But luckily I found a copy in my hotel lobby. Here it is. You can get it from any good stationer’s: it is a blank sheet paper. So, what we have is on the



one hand the existing doctrine of the Church based on the Holy Scriptures and on the other hand a blank piece of paper.

I suggest that the only way in which the Bishops can restore trust and credibility with General Synod is to do it properly under Canon B 2.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* Chair, I am an accountant. I like things to add up. I like things to make sense. And what we have here is something that does not really add up and does not make sense. What I am saying is that is okay. I think we need to be brave and we need to step into a space which is messy, which is difficult, and does not necessarily add up. We need to do that in order to love some people we have desperately hurt.

I have been keeping a note of votes and I do not think that we have at the moment, in any of the Houses, the two-thirds majority we would need to change doctrine. I think that is rather sad and I think we need to move some way, and if that takes a bit of mess and it not quite making sense, and it takes bravery, then we should do it. Therefore I urge you to vote against Mr Scowen's amendment.

*The Chair:* I wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether this matter has been sufficiently debated, therefore, I am going to put the motion for closure on Item 61.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Point of order. I am sat near the lectern this morning. Given the significance of Mr Scowen's amendment, may I ask you to consider a counted vote by Houses, please?

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 people standing? Yes I do, therefore, there will be a vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 61.

The vote on Item 61: In the House of Bishops, those in favour three, against 29, with six recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 85 in favour, 109 against, with 1 recorded abstention. And in the House of Laity, 90 in favour, 101 against, with no recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

## **ITEM 62**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 62. Dr Woolford, you have three minutes.

*The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* Welcome to my second soft and cuddly amendment. Imagine I were a progressive priest who wishes to use the Prayers once commended in public services to pray for God's blessing upon gay couples, but I am in a decidedly conservative church by tradition. If I were able to go ahead and exercise my discretion to use the Prayers, my PCC could turn against me and even encourage people to leave the church for another. Even if I choose not to but I could so use the Prayers in that way, there will be quite a lot of tension looming over my PCC, and over indeed my whole ministry until I felt perhaps forced to move on.

Imagine on the other hand I were a traditionally minded priest in a church where the PCC is split on whether the Prayers ought or ought not to be used. If it remains my decision alone to use the Prayers publicly in some way that gay parishioners might ask for, then the fall-out from my declining to do so would necessarily concentrate upon me alone personally, and there would be fall-out. Look at the packed press gallery particularly yesterday, and maybe they are still arriving today, the packed public gallery, the news leaks on the PCC. Any comparison with a minister's discretion on whether to marry divorcés or not is rather naïve. There is not the level and heat of public interest concerning remarriage compared to this issue.

If my amendment passes, then the church in the first scenario need not fall out with their vicar, nor be worried or suspicious about what he or she might choose to do, and the priest in the second scenario can share the burden of making that controversial decision with others, perhaps appealing for the time being for the need for unity and further discernment, in that context, to forestall and hopefully dissipate a local crisis moment, so destructive of the other good work going on in that parish.

My amendment still allows priests in churches who wish to use the commended Prayers to do so joyfully, but it provides just a modest protection against unnecessarily provoking unpleasant splits and tensions in mixed tradition churches and against the intolerable pressure concentrating on the priest's conscience alone.

As it is just an amendment to that part of the motion welcoming the draft Prayers, it does not commit the Bishops, if it is passed, to any particular way of enacting what it says, so please do not worry about known unknowns, about how this idea could legally be effected or about its silence on those serving in chaplaincy, which I have realised since I submitted it.

If Synod thinks the overall principle is good, please vote it through, and let us trust the Bishops, if necessary with legal counsel, to come up with a way of effecting it in their revised Prayers and accompanying Guidance.

I do so move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* I call on Bishop Sarah to reply to the amendment at 62.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I absolutely understand the intention of this amendment. I understand why clergy would want to involve their PCCs in considering whether they would want to use the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, and, in a sense, I would expect ministers to do that. That would be my expectation. I also recognise the reality that this may not be an easy conversation for some of the reasons mentioned, not least the PCC may have different views, as may the congregation have different views. I hope that one of the things we have learned through *Living in Love and Faith* is the use of the *Pastoral Principles*, which can equip us to have these types of difficult conversations, not just for issues around sexuality but a much broader set of conversations. I hope that we encourage our PCCs, our

deanery synods and our diocesan synods and bishop's councils to use them in some of the difficult areas that we have in front of us.

But the decision for the use of prayers do come under the Canons as a matter for clergy and not legally a matter for the PCC. This amendment cuts across that, so if Synod votes to suggest that the PCC should have a formal role in deciding whether these Prayers should be used, then we could only give legal effect to this by amending the relevant Canon to entrench the role of the PCC in law. That would require an amending of the Canon which would be a liturgical business taking some time. However, the House of Bishops is committed to giving greater reassurance along with the *Prayers of Love and Faith* to enable that conversation to happen with the PCC and wider Church that we would encourage and expect for the reasons that have already been raised.

Therefore, I am resisting this amendment.

*The Chair:* As the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or signify that they wish the debate to continue. There are 25 members so the debate will continue. Again, I want one person on each side, so those supporting the amendment and against the amendment.

*Mrs Claire Williams (Norwich):* I did not intend to speak on this motion or this amendment, but I am sure I cannot be the only person in this chamber feeling disheartened at the moment at the way our democracy seems to be at work. I see this amendment as speaking into the situation that we are in. We are in a decision-making process that is difficult and emotional. I support this amendment because I feel that it will give parishes an opportunity to have voices heard.

Imagine for a moment a situation that replicated the situation we are in now in a parish context, where there was a congregation with an opinion, a PCC with an opinion and an incumbent with an opinion, and the incumbent's opinion was able to override all other opinions in that community and in that family.

I strongly urge you to support this amendment for the opportunity for difficult and emotional conversations to be had, but for all voices to be heard, and for the rights of the laity and PCCs to have a contribution to that decision-making process.

*The Revd Dr Susan Lucas (Chelmsford):* Synod, I urge you to resist this amendment. I am the incumbent of a multi-church benefice in urban East London and my parish, a single-parish benefice with three churches, is in exactly that position. I have in the parish the breadth of opinion that is found in this very Synod, people at both ends of the spectrum of this debate and in the middle.

Nevertheless, I would not find this amendment in the least helpful. Liturgy under Canon, as Bishop Sarah has said, is the liturgical responsibility of the incumbent. In my parish, I have been very clear about where I stand and at the same time attempted to create a safe space where all voices can be heard. If the PCC were to have a more formal responsibility in this matter, certainly in my context and I think in many others,

far from actually enabling voices to be heard, far from enabling that conversation to be a good conversation, it would actually make that conversation far more difficult. Please give to incumbents their due under Canon, and to PCCs their role in having a representative role of all people in the parish by enabling those conversations to happen in a safe space, and resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* I would wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 62 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put a motion for closure on Item 62.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* We proceed to vote.

*The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Given the serious ramifications to process, as Bishop Sarah has outlined, can I ask you to consider a counted vote by Houses, please?

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 members standing? Yes I do, so I order a vote by Houses. This is to counted vote by Houses on item 62.

The vote on Item 62: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 5, against 27, with six recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 83 in favour, 107 against, with 7 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 95 in favour, 94 against, with 6 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

## **ITEM 63**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 63. I have not seen Mr Margrave this morning, I do not think. Well, I have not seen him this morning, I know that, but he has communicated with me and said that he does not want to move Item 63 and therefore that will not be moved, so we move to Item 64, Jayne Ozanne.

## **ITEM 64**

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* I would like to get married one day. It has been a long journey. Twenty years of conversion therapy do leave their mark and, like many survivors, I can still find intimacy challenging. But I yearn to love and be loved. And there is a wonderful woman I long to ask, a dear friend who I fear is blissfully unaware. However, if she is watching, I am free on Tuesday, Valentine's Day. If I do finally find the courage to ask her and if she does say yes, then it would be inconceivable for me not to marry in church, to make our vows before God, each other and, who knows, maybe even some of you. Hopes and dreams, we all have them, which is why I have tabled this amendment.

Synod, we know we are divided. We have always been divided and we always will be divided. We also know that there is a significantly larger group of Anglicans in England, 46% according to YouGov, who want to be able to celebrate same-sex marriages in their churches than those who do not, 36%, but both groups exist, and

the fundamental question is whether we will recognise both these groups and make room for one another, respecting the Anglican moral tradition of conscience.

It seems to me deeply inconsistent that whilst the Archbishop of Canterbury has recognised at Lambeth that there is a plurality of views on sexuality, held with deep theological integrity across the Communion, the Church of England does not. So why is this? I believe it is because we have not settled the crucial question as to whether people like me, who by our nature and birth are just like the Gentiles were in Acts, different, can have sex. Are our sexual relationships sinful or do we, like Peter, accept God's command not to call anything impure that God has made clean.

Refusing to answer this has led to an unholy fudge, one where LGB people are left again to carry the load. We must settle how we accommodate our differences, and that is why I am asking for proposals to be brought in July so that we can decide as a Synod on a process for bringing forward equal marriage, because for many of us here and those in the churches we represent we believe gay marriage is something to be celebrated. We must decide whether the Church of England will extend its tent to embrace this view or whether this Synod will continue to hold us to ransom and condemn us as un-Christian.

To those who have told me they need more time, I would say who pays the price for your delay? We have had years looking at this and we deserve an answer. Goodness, even if we do agree to equal marriage in the summer, it will take at least another five years for equal marriage to become a reality so, sadly, probably not in time for me to be married in church. However, I will hold tight to the hope that it might, for with God all things are possible, including the fact that the woman I love might just – I hope – say yes.

*The Chair.* I call on the Bishop to respond to Item 64.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE)* Thank you, Chair. The House of Bishops in these proposals has decided not to bring forward proposals for equal marriage. The House of Bishops is committed to the publication and the commendation of Prayers and to a period of reception. The period of reception is important because it allows us, as the House of Bishops, to take seriously the concerns and anxieties that we have heard about the *Prayers for Love and Faith*, and particularly the need for reassurance and protection, and the period of reception of five years allows us to respond accordingly. Therefore, I resist this amendment.

*The Chair.* The Bishop having not supported the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. And I do so the debate will continue. I am going to try to take two speakers for and two speakers against.

*Mr Simon Friend (Exeter):* Perfect love casts out all fear. Perfect love. Two simple words that are so easy to say and so hard to live. I lived in fear for much of my early Christian life. If I am honest, I think I gave my life to Jesus as a young boy mostly because I was terrified at the prospect of going to hell if I did not. I am grateful for so

much of my Bible-based upbringing, but penal substitutionary atonement has a lot to answer for.

As a young man I found myself in London in the 1980s and was terrified about the AIDS/HIV epidemic, not because I was gay but because I seriously thought I could catch AIDS if I went swimming at Clapham Common Pool. Imagine then being asked by my pastor at Holy Trinity Brompton if I would help look after a man dying of AIDS. I am ashamed to admit that my fear was visceral. Would I catch AIDS shaking his hand or sharing his food or breathing the same air? It is hard to articulate now the sense of fear then.

At the end of John's life, I had the immense privilege to be at his bedside with one or two others. We sang hymns and read Scripture and at his actual passing I had this incredible sense of the presence of angels ushering him into heaven. I had never been so aware of God's presence by his Spirit. It was the most beautiful and revelatory moment. And for many years that troubled me. How could God's spirit be so powerfully present? It is a sin, was my understanding. None of this added up.

After that experience, and I am not ashamed to say yes, it was that revelatory experience at John's death, like Paul's on the Damascus Road and Peter's vision on the way to Joppa, that led me to years of prayerful study of Scripture, and I began to recognise my fear-based understanding of God, that I had no need to fear the sexual other as I recognised that we are all made in the image of God. That I had no fear that the basis of my faith and salvation would unravel if I changed my sincerely held views, but gloriously, redemptive love not redemptive violence leads us to an unfolding generosity towards others and myself.

Nearly 40 years later and here we are struggling to answer the same question: is it a sin? I believe fear is holding us back. I do recognise the very real fear for larger charismatic evangelical churches that congregations may divide when leaders are forced to break their silence, but we must name that that silence is itself fear based. I welcome the proposals of the Bishops. Surely the honest way forward is to affirm clearly that marriage is the proper place for sexual intimacy and that Holy Matrimony should be extended to same-sex couples. This is why I am supporting this amendment.

*The Bishop of Chichester (The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner):* In seeking to understand how to set love in order – a phrase coined by St Augustine – we are handling lives and sacred issues that demand of us wisdom, compassion and courage, reminding us of what is said to a bishop at ordination: use your authority to heal not to hurt.

We heard yesterday from one Bishop about the seriousness with which we do take this injunction. The consequences of this amendment would open a wide and deep hurt in the household of faith that as Bishops we are duty bound to care for. The amendment would be a devastating blow for the Church's work of revitalisation across this land, especially in areas of acute deprivation. It will undermine trust within the Anglican Communion, and be seen in some of the poorest countries of the world as a new imperialism. And it would distance us distinctively, definitively, from the historic

churches of East and West and their lived experience of contemporary martyrdom. And we have heard of the implications of all of this in the lives of individual people in those contexts. It is not merely about preserving an institution.

In short, this amendment would do hurt to that very household of faith that is the spiritual home of so many LGBTQI+ Christians. Learning how to set love in order is costly and it does commit us to deconstructing a culture where homophobia is nurtured and can go and has gone unchallenged, while enabling us at the same time to celebrate the doctrine of Holy Matrimony, defined in Canon B 30 as an abiding enrichment to the radical inclusion that we seek.

In the echo chambers of lobbying and social media, we have sometimes heard judgments, human judgments, about sin, that properly belong to God and could only be made with awe and trembling. We have heard social commentators, even politicians, telling us in the Church to get with the programme of modern life. This is not our calling. Our contribution must be based on more, the more solid foundations of Scripture, and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit as the inspiration for how we love all the people of this present age in all its amazing complexity. It is on the basis of that that I urge Synod to resist this amendment.

*Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough):* This is my maiden speech. We need to accept and acknowledge that there are a diversity of views on equal marriage, views that are held sincerely, theologically and passionately. We need to find a way to live together in disagreement. We need to be humble that our view, no matter how sincerely held, is still like looking in a mirror dimly. Romans 14 tells us how to handle contentious matters, things that we disagree about, we should welcome fellow believers with open arms, even fellow believers who do not see things the way we do.

For instance, one person is convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another assumes he should be a vegetarian. But since both are guests at Christ's table, would it not be terribly rude to criticise what the person next to you is eating. God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome. What is important in all this is if you eat meat, eat it to the Glory of God and thank God for prime rib. If you are a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the Glory of God and thank God for Brussel sprouts.

If you a straight man and you want to get married, do it, and thank God for your wife. If you are a gay man and you want to get married, do it and thank God for your husband. Do not insist on your own way, it is God we are answerable to, not each other. Do not permit an argument over what is served or not served at supper. Who wants to get married and wreck God's work among us. All food is good, everything God created is good.

Paul says in verse 14 he is convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself, but if you consider anything to be unclean, it is unclean for you. If you think same-sex marriage is wrong, do not marry someone of the same sex as you. Do not perform a marriage for a same-sex couple, and do that for God. If you are gay and you think intimacy is wrong, stay celibate for the Glory of God. If you think same-sex

marriage is good, then be free to marry someone of the same sex as you, be free to perform a marriage for a same-sex couple and do it for God.

Cultivate your own relationship with God, but do not impose it on others. To thine own self be true, as Shakespeare says, quoting Romans. In Revelations it says: "After this I looked, and behold a great multitude that no-one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages", and I will add genders and sexualities, "standing before the throne and before the lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands". If people are not in the same tribe as you, they are still in God's tribe and we pray on earth as it is in heaven. Thank you. I commend you to support this amendment.

*Mr Ed Shaw (Bristol):* Before I turn to this amendment, can I just put on the record, because I think it probably needs to be at this stage, that singleness does not equal loneliness. That is a comment that have been made a number of times, and I think it is really important.

Turning to this amendment. I am one of a number of people who are opposed to equal marriage, who are wanting to sit down and draw up uniting proposals that will allow for its introduction alongside imaginative new structures that will permanently protect our different consciences. And I think it is now, at this stage of the Synod debate, that we need to start that conversation, soon. As one of the team behind the *Pastoral Principles*, as part of the Pastoral Advisory Group, I think that conversation would be a better way of embedding the *Pastoral Principles* in our life together, locally and nationally, than the proposals the House of Bishops have brought us.

I supported Jayne's two other amendments. I wish I could support this, but this motion does not include a call for the negotiated settlement that we do need now to protect the consciences and rights of people who believe fundamentally irreconcilable things. Jayne, I look forward to the day when you can get married in your local Anglican Church, according to your conscience. But according to my conscience, I am afraid that will have to be in a different part of the Church of England to me.

I am looking forward to the day when we can discuss, we can debate equal marriage in this chamber, recognising our irreconcilable differences and thinking through and building the structures that will allow us somehow to stay united while preserving people's individual, precious consciences. So, although I would love to support this amendment, until it goes further I cannot.

*The Chair:* I see no-one standing. I must test the mind of Synod on whether Item 64 has been sufficiently debated. I am going to put a motion for closure on Item 64.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Point of order. Chairman, I wonder if we could have a vote of the whole House, please.



*A Speaker:* I think we called at the same moment, and I would like to have a vote by Houses.

*The Chair:* I am advised, Ms Ozanne, that a procedural motion to call for a vote by Houses takes preference over a counted vote of the Synod, and therefore I am going to ask whether 25 members stand. I am getting used to looking at 25 people now. Yes, I do see 25 people standing, so there will be a vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 64.

The vote on Item 64: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 1, against 33, with 7 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 79 in favour, 105 against, with 12 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 89 in favour, 102 against, with 7 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

*The Chair:* So, we move ---

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* Point of order. Mr Chair, is a vote by Houses an appropriate course to adopt on amendments to a proposal by the House of Bishops? It seems to me that it gives the House of Bishops an inbuilt power to block each and every amendment and I remind myself of the *Pastoral Principles*: pay attention to power. Alternatively, it seems to me that if I am wrong in the way in which I read the Standing Orders ---

*The Chair:* Is this a speech of a point of order, Mr Hofmeyr?

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* This is a request to be given guidance on a procedure.

*The Chair:* Is it a point of order? I am asking.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* It is a point of order, yes.

The Chair: Right. Well say what the point of order is, succinctly, please.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* It is whether this course is appropriate, and if it is not, given the conflict of interest that the House of Bishops faces, should they not, appropriately, abstain?

*The Chair:* Well, Mr Hofmeyr, we are governed by the Standing Orders. The Standing Orders are what I have to apply. The Standing Orders in relation to votes by Houses apply here. You may not like it, but I am afraid that is the situation. I am sure that the people behind me have heard what you have said.

## **ITEM 65**

*The Chair:* Item 65. Mrs Vicky Brett

*Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough):* I would like to accept the commended resources and have the opportunity to test the mind of Synod on the principle of equal marriage within the next two years. I would like to accept the apology as a small step in the right direction. An apology without a change of behaviour is hollow, but the resources and the promise of future work show a willingness to change and do better in tackling discrimination and inequality.

When I got married, I was worshipping at an evangelical church plant that was not registered for weddings, so we had a civil ceremony followed by a blessing. We gave to Caesar and we gave to God. To our mind, we were legally married and had entered the state of Holy Matrimony. The legal advice on today's change seems to imply that my marriage is not actually holy, so in calling for marriage equality, instead of lifting up same-sex marriages, you seem to have brought mine and others down.

Why? Because some people believe that same-sex intimacy is a sin and you cannot bless sin. But that is not what a wedding about. For same-sex and heterosexual couples alike, it is their shared love and commitment that is being celebrated. And surely, most assuredly, God is eager to bless love.

But what about the sex? Well, quite frankly, it is none of your business. You do not know what happens or does not happen in their bedroom any more than you know what happens in mine. God is not obsessed with sex; God is obsessed with love. The other thing that God is infatuated with is covenants and promises and commitments. He made around 7,487 promises himself in the Bible. At a wedding service, the couple makes a lifelong commitment or promise to each other and to God, so surely if God is obsessed with love and promises, then it does not seem altogether wrong to be blessing that love and that promise.

Finally, we have heard a lot about these blessings being voluntary. So, if this goes against your conscience you are free to say "No, I won't do that", just as Archbishop Justin has done. But what about my conscience? What about the conscience of every same-sex couple who longs for the blessing of Holy Matrimony. What about the conscience of priests who long to marry the loving couple they see before them, what about our consciences?

As St Paul teaches us in Romans 14, we do it in honour of the Lord. They refuse to do it in honour of the Lord. We may need to do some work to take the time to meet a same-sex couple who wants to get married and see the love and commitment for ourselves to firmly make up our minds, and let us come back within two years.

*The Chair:* I call on the Bishop of London to speak to Item 65.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I am grateful that the amendment continues to have "invite the House of Bishops to monitor the Church's use of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*". However, I think as we have heard today, part of our role is to build trust with this Synod and therefore it is important for us to not only monitor but to report back to this Synod, to be able to reassure them, particularly around the provision and reassurance that is put in place around the use

of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. The House of Bishops have decided not to bring proposals forward around same-sex marriage. Therefore, I am going to resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* Given that the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. Yes, there are 25 members. We have a number of people who are attending this meeting on Zoom, and I think Gini Williams would like to speak. Now, since I do not know which way she wants to speak, I will ask somebody to speak in the other direction. Now, Mrs Williams, can you tell us first of all are you speaking in favour or against?

*The Revd Gini Williams (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* In favour.

The Chair: In favour, right, so can you speak now?

*The Revd Gini Williams (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* This is my maiden speech. As an ordinand, which was not too long ago, grappling with issues of gender and human sexuality, I was blessed with a vision of a glorious future when all are one in Christ. This was, after all, Jesus's own prayer for us. My vision did feel like a Damascene Moment because it changed me in a fundamental way, and I simply cannot go back.

And like at other times in my life, I get the message and then have to try and work out how and why and if I really got it. I put out my fleece, as it were. The problem with our insistence on cleaving to Scripture, tradition and reason is that it does not leave much space for the Holy Spirit. What about the mystical? Yes, we do talk about watching for signs of the Holy Spirit, and some people have shared their experiences, which I greatly value, but we seem to be more shy of expressing what these might be than we are about debating in worldly, academic terms.

Could it be that we are diminishing the workings of the Holy Trinity in all its fullness and promise? We know from the experience of the resurrection that what is to come will cast a whole new light on what has been. Everything changed when Jesus's light came into the world. Who knows what lies ahead of us to shed a new light on what we are grappling with today?

Yes, it feels like we are in a bit of a mess at the moment, but creation is messy. We are pregnant with possibility, and childbirth is messy. We have a strong Church tradition, upheld in current Canon law, but times are changing as they always have. Jesus himself broke Canon law at the time by healing on the Sabbath. What was Jesus's response: "Is it better to do good or to do harm?"

Our current situation is doing harm, serious harm, and anything we do to each other we are doing to Christ himself as we are all made in his image. It is hard, it is risky, it is painful, and it will have repercussions, but these are not reasons to falter. We need to keep going, to keep pushing and trust our awesome God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; source, light, truth.

I dream of a time when the only identity is human, and relationships are celebrated equally for commitment, love and faithfulness. As Paul wrote to the Galatian church: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ".

I support this amendment as I believe it is a more concrete, honest and transparent way forward and I urge you to do the same. We cannot afford to let this get kicked down the road. It will take so much time, even if we are seeking opinion of the Synod. Whether this amendment passes or not, I will be supporting the motion because we need to continue our labour even while we are uncertain what we would be giving birth to.

*The Chair:* In the interests of balance, I need somebody to speak against the amendment. Mr Whitworth?

*The Revd Vincent Whitworth (Manchester):* I wish to speak against the motion. I believe that Scripture, tradition and reason all point us to God's ideal that marriage is between a man and a woman because God wants the best for us. That is why I believe as Christians we have a distinctive and better story to tell our nation about the joy and wonder of marriage as God intended it.

In my own life I have tried to live up to God's ideal view of marriage. It has not always been easy; it has been costly and sacrificial. When I lived apart from my girlfriend, we were in different homes and we did not share a bed until we got married. But looking back, both my wife and I are so grateful that we stuck to God's plan for our lives. There are thousands of people in our churches up and down the land who, like me, try to be faithful to God's teaching on marriage, celibacy and singleness. What message would it give if we suddenly turned away from this message?

God's ideal that marriage is exclusively between a man and woman is at the core of the Gospel, the good news that we proclaim. To drift away from this would create huge issues, not least in mission and evangelism. How can we, as churches, work together in mission and evangelism when we have increasingly different understandings of the good news of Jesus? As Bishop Angaelos helpfully reminded us yesterday, the decisions that we make today have far-reaching implications well beyond this chamber for a shared mission and evangelism.

Yes, we need to love one another, but we need to remain faithful to the good news of Christ, and we always need to affirm God's perfect plan that marriage is solely between a man and a woman.

*The Chair:* I wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 65 has been sufficiently debated and therefore I put a motion for closure on Item 65.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

The Chair: We move to a vote on Item 65.

*The Revd Tim Edwards (Rochester):* Point of order, Mr Chairman. Since it is clearly the fashionable thing to do, could we possibly have a vote by Houses?

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 people standing or minded to stand or whatever the words are? Yes, I do see 25 people standing so we will proceed to vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 65.

The vote on Item 65: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 6, against 30, with 4 recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, 95 in favour, 97 against, with 5 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 96 in favour, 100 against, with 2 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

## **ITEM 66**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 66. Mr Scowen.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Chair, I do not think the message reached you that this was always intended to be consequential on 61. 61 having been defeated, this amendment, as I understand it, lapses.

*The Chair:* Yes, the message had not got through to me but I can well understand why the amendment is not pursued and lapses.

## **ITEM 67**

*The Chair:* We move on to Item 67. Now, Mr Cornes, I have a choice for you. There are two amendments in your name. They seem to have some commonality and you can either speak to them separately, three minutes each time, or, if you prefer to, you can speak to them both for five minutes and then formally move them individually. Which would you prefer to do?

*The Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester):* I was not expecting the question.

*The Chair:* It is meant to be helpful. If you had planned to make two three-minute speeches, then by all means do that.

*The Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester):* I will take your second option, thank you very much.

*The Chair:* The second option is to speak for five minutes, is it not?

*The Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester):* Correct.

*The Chair:* So speak for five minutes but then move Item 67.

*The Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester):* Bishop Sarah, Synod, thank you for your patience. I am really speaking more to the second amendment. In my ministry, I have walked and wept with many gay men and I know this second amendment will

be painful for some to hear. I have no desire to hurt anybody. Please forgive me if I do. One question has been persistently asked: is the Church of England changing its teaching about sex? It is a question every couple asking for the Church's blessing need to be clear about. It is a question the congregation at any public service needs to be clear about.

This second amendment simply says, "The Church is not changing its teaching". Christ is the Lord of the Church, so the key issue is what did Jesus teach? Jesus taught a lot about marriage and sex. He often met those who did not follow sexual norms and he reveals himself as radically inclusive and radically conservative. When what Luke calls "a woman of the city" kissed and anointed his feet, Jesus's host thought he should have known she is a sinner and spurned her. He knew exactly who she was and said she had poured her love on him. When he met a woman, married five times and now cohabiting, she was astonished that he talked to her, but he did and transformed her life. He was radically inclusive.

He was also radically conservative. He confirmed Jewish teaching on sex and marriage and made it more demanding. His teaching on remarriage surprised his disciples by its difficult demands. He called lustful thoughts sinful and urged action to avoid sexual sin. Inclusive and conservative. Both were seen when they brought a woman committing adultery. He refused to humiliate or condemn her and then he said, "Go and leave your life of sin". It was sin, he said, and she must leave that now.

The Jews knew they were different in two ways. They did not worship idols and sex was reserved for marriage. There is a general word for sex outside marriage in Greek – *porneia* – which Jesus said wells up from the human heart. For seven years, I have been researching a book on Greek and Roman homosexuality, including many loving, committed, generous homosexual relationships. I have studied every extant Jewish writing on the subject between 200 BC and 200 AD. They are absolutely univocal. They say that any homosexual sex is sin. When Jesus used the word translated as *porneia*, all Jesus's hearers would have assumed that he included homosexual sex. If he did not regard that as sinful, he grossly misled his listeners.

As followers of Jesus, the Church is Lord. We must lovingly welcome all who enter our doors. We can joyfully offer prayers to those who want to live sexually celibate lives but, surely, painful as this will be to some of us, we cannot bless a relationship which in its sexual aspect Jesus calls sinful. This has always been the Church of England's teaching and we owe it to all and, above all, to Christ to say that this teaching has not changed. I beg to move the first amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair.* I call on the Bishop of London to respond to Item 67.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullaly DBE):* I am responding to Item 67, whilst I recognise that Andrew spoke mainly on his second amendment and we will wait until we get to that one. In terms of Item 67, the House of Bishops have been clear in our response that we are not proposing to change the doctrine of marriage and that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* will not be contrary to the

document of marriage. The House of Bishops would be interested in the debate and, therefore, I am not resisting this amendment for that reason.

*The Chair.* Therefore, the debate can continue. I want to get a balance again and it is difficult to know from the request to speak who is in favour of particular amendments.

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs):* Synod, I have been committed to the LLF process from the start. I voted in good faith for the Bishops' proposals that we have in front of us. I hoped they could provide a framework for our moving forward together, but a lot has happened since then and huge weight is now being placed on work still to be done around the *Pastoral Guidance*. Synod, looking at the numbers yesterday and this morning, this amendment could well be lost.

Looking again at the numbers, many of those amendments, over the last however many hours it is, were supported by a very significant minority. Passing this amendment, which is essentially reaffirming what is implicit in the existing motion, would offer some reassurance to that minority that their concerns are being heard and taken seriously. For the sake of taking as many people as possible with us on this next stage, I would gently ask Synod to support this amendment. Without this, I know a great many will feel unable to support the main motion.

For the sake of seeking to hold together this Synod and, in particular, the Church in my diocese, I would find it very difficult without this amendment to support the final motion. Synod, to enable us to move forward more fully together, please support this amendment.

*The Revd Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Liverpool):* I could speak as the pastor of a Church that is longing to see change, but I want to resist this amendment as a historian because as a historian I want to challenge this idea that the Church has always had one fixed doctrine of marriage. Our debates today are part of a very long, thousand year old tradition of debating our relationship to sex, sexuality and different patterns of relationship and family.

In the Scriptures themselves, we see three not two genders being discussed: male, female and eunuch. There is much scholarly debate about how that last category might map onto the categories that we speak of today. In the early Church debates, marriage did not mean sex. Marriage meant the socioeconomic status of being a householder. Slaves could not get married. There were serious debates about whether Christians should marry at all, primarily on the basis that it involved participating in civil society.

For most of Christian history, we had no marriage liturgy. For elite families, marriage was primarily concerned with property, inheritance and alliances. There were centuries of debate in the medieval period when the Church began a programme of reform around marriage which greatly angered the aristocracy by insisting on the radical notion that both parties, male and female, should consent at the heart of these political alliances, hence the "I will" and "I do" in our marriage liturgies. "Man" and "woman" were misnomers. Child marriages were common at the elite level as political

alliances were cemented. At the popular level, practices such as betrothal, handfasting ceremonies and bundling were commonplace, all traditions which specifically sanctioned and had liturgies around pre-marital sexual intercourse, only very rarely condemned by the Church.

In the 19th century, there were protracted legal debates about whether women counted legally as persons. Until the Married Women's Property Act, married women could not own property in their own right. In fact, my mother-in-law still tells me indignantly that she could not buy a sofa on HP in the 1970s without her husband's signature. Theologians and Church dignitaries, including bishops, weighed in on both sides of each of these debates. Legally, the view that we are all primarily people rather than men and women won the day.

The 1938 first Report of the Doctrine Commission speaks of marriage as between two Christian persons. As a historian, no, the Church has not taught consistently for 2,000 years that sex outside marriage is a sin. One of our *Pastoral Principles* is to pay attention to power and so let us be honest that for much of our history discussions about marriage have not been about sex primarily but about power. We keep hearing these delaying tactics saying that we need more theology, to which I say how much theology would be enough for you? Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth", and so do not be surprised or afraid that our doctrine develops. I oppose this amendment and support the main motion.

*The Chair:* The trouble is the longer you clap the less time we have.

*Miss Sophie Clarke (London):* This is the first time I have spoken at Synod. I want to speak in favour of this amendment. I am 27 and I am engaged. I am due to get married in two months' time and I am absolutely delighted. He is actually currently up in the gallery and has been for the last two days and so if that is not true love I do not know what is. I and my fiancé have never had sex. We are convinced in accordance with Scripture that the doctrine of this Church is that God's calling for us and for everyone seeking to follow Jesus is to live this way, that sex is to happen only within lifelong union of Holy Matrimony.

I am devastated at the possibility that my leaders and shepherds of this Church might now be telling me that our decision to wait, to deny ourselves in order to follow Christ, is unnecessary and is unimportant and is a matter on which we can simply agree to disagree. I am disappointed that people I trust to disciple me do not endorse this amendment and by doing so are not encouraging me to follow Jesus and his distinct countercultural call to holiness. The Bishops write on page 8 of the response, "... for many years the Church has taught that the only rightful place for sexual activity is marriage ... the reality within which the Church now lives is that couples inhabit their relationships differently". I find these words so depressing and distressing. The Bishops have made it clear in their response to LLF that the reality of couples having sex outside of marriage is now a given rather than one they challenge with Jesus's call to the world to repent and believe.



I am so concerned that, in seeking to change one thing, the Bishops are actually changing a second thing as well. Sex is for marriage. Some here, myself included, believe that marriage is between a man and a woman. Others believe in the possibility of same-sex marriage, but surely what most of us do agree on in this room is that sex is and should be within marriage. I believe that Jesus tells the world a better story about sexuality, relationships and marriage, a story which is for our good and flourishing. We need to make a choice, Synod. Does the Church still have a better story to tell? Does it believe in its doctrine?

The world says that I am strange, that I am not living life to the full, that I am less human because I am not yet sexually active. Do you think the same? I am one of the youngest members here and I am trying to live out Jesus's better story. I am living in accordance with the Church's doctrine. There are hundreds at my church, gay, straight, single and in relationships, striving faithfully to do the same. Please, please, do not make life harder for us. I urge Synod to tell a better story for our Church. I urge Synod to not allow these unintended consequences. Sex is for marriage and I urge Synod to support this amendment.

*Mr Kenson Li (UKME co-opted):* The eternal Word assumed our human flesh so that, through the life, passion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the same humanity may be redeemed and taken up into that life of the Triune Godhead. The whole story of creation, incarnation and ultimately our incorporation into fellowship of Christ's body, which we chiefly do so through the Holy Eucharist, tells us that we believe and worship a God who desires us unconditionally, unlimitedly, unreservedly.

We are created precisely so that we can be caught up in this glorious vision so that we may grow into the wholehearted love of God through a life of learning, through experience and divine inspiration that God loves us all just as God loves God's self within the relational being that is the most Holy Trinity. That is why we cannot possibly love sin because that is an oxymoron. Sin lures us. That is a temptation, but when it wins us over we are theirs. Even in a state of sin and sinfulness, we cannot be said to be loving in sin for sin knows nothing of love. To love is to resist and expel sin and suffering with our whole being.

In this whole matter, we have approached so much of it grudgingly as a matter of divine grace and only admitting the experience of the other as possibly a matter of grace when we fence their lives with conditions under religious pretext. Christian theology needs to decide truth against safety even when that safety is consecrated and supported by the Church's tradition. Truth and law are only fulfilled when they are fulfilled with joy not with resentment and hate. Joy cannot be commanded.

We are called to be God's blessing, to embody that sanctity which is God, to love with our hearts and bodies. That true light, which is holy and wonderful, which lends radiance to us to endure it in the heat of conflict, from Christ, promises that we will inherit a home of unfading splendour wherein we all will rejoice with gladness evermore. I beg Synod to resist the amendment strongly and support the motion.

*The Chair.* I wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 67 has been sufficiently debated and, therefore, I move a motion for closure on Item 67.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* The motion is carried and so we proceed to a vote on Item 67.

*The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Not because it is fashionable, Chair, but because of the gravity of what we are doing here, can I ask you to consider a counted vote by Houses, please?

*The Chair.* Do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do and so we will vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 67.

The vote on Item 67: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 22, against 14, with 4 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 100 in favour, 94 against, with 3 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 98 in favour, 96 against, with 4 recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

## **ITEM 68**

*The Chair.* We move to Item 68.

*The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford):* Point of order. I have been full of admiration for your chairing of this debate but, once again, it always seems to be the opponent of the amendment who gets to speak last. I wonder if we might put that right for this particular motion.

*The Chair.* I am trying my best in somewhat difficult circumstances. I have tried to alternate them, but I have obviously forgotten. That is *Anno Domini* I suspect. But, there we are, I have heard what you said. Let us move to Item 68. Mr Cornes, you formally move Item 68 because you have already spoken to it.

*The Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester):* I want, first, to thank you for your chairmanship and then I beg to move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair.* I call the Bishop of London to respond to Item 68.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Synod will have read in documents that the House of Bishops have put forward as our response to *Living in Love and Faith* that on page 7 there is a discussion around marriage, the State and the marriage and the Church of England and also discussion around the Equal Marriage Act of 2013. Over the last four days, you will have heard discussions around, because of the 2013 Equal Marriage Act, the distinction between Holy Matrimony and civil marriage. You will also have heard that the House of Bishops believes that there is more work to do on this. Therefore, the use of the term “Holy Matrimony” in this amendment is ambiguous. It could mean that we are no longer blessing a man and a woman who enter a civil marriage. This would be a change of

our existing practice. The unintended consequences of this amendment are unhelpful and, whilst I recognise that more work needs to be done on the distinction between Holy Matrimony and civil marriage, because of the unintended consequences I am resisting this amendment.

*The Chair:* As the Bishop has not accepted this amendment, I had need to see 25 members standing for the debate to continue. I do see 25 members standing, so can I have one person to speak in favour of the amendment?

*Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester):* You have been very fortunate to have had input from a number of learned people this morning. You have had lawyers, you have had an accountant, and you are now going to get a general practitioner. I am coming to you with a health warning. You will be pleased to know that it is not this Synod that is the patient, despite chocolate and bladders and other problems. The patient is the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Synod, we need to give very careful consideration to the effect our decisions is going to have on the health of that institution. We risk causing a serious heart attack if we continue with the Prayers as they are stated. I wonder if we have given attention and are ready for the feedback that our brothers and sisters in Christ in the worldwide communion will give. I cannot pretend to have had the travelog that the Archbishop of Canterbury has had, but I have lived in Kenya and Uganda for a considerable proportion of my life, and I think I do understand how the people in those places will consider these proposals. Are we really ready for the feedback from those people in much, much larger Anglican churches than we have ourselves?

Their attitude to same-sex relationships is sometimes framed as a legacy of their colonial past. In my experience, that just is not true, and I think it really stems from cultural differences between us. We also frame this debate at the moment as a domestic issue. It is not. It will have huge ramifications throughout the Anglican Communion.

At the start of the General Synod in 2021, the Anglican Church in Ghana was asked to listen. They did and they modified their position, rightly, on same-sex relationships. Will we now be willing to listen as attentively to them when they feed back about their own deeply held convictions, particularly about these Prayers?

I am actually travelling to Uganda next week. What am I to say to my friends and colleagues there if the issue of same-sex relationships is raised? Your theology is wrong? Your cultural understanding is wrong? I really do not think so. If we fail to listen to our brothers and sisters in Africa and Asia particularly, we risk once again renewing a paternalistic and neo-colonial attitude toward them.

I urge that we look very carefully at these Prayers. In their current form, I do not believe that our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the Anglican Communion will find them acceptable. I support the motion that these be modified accordingly. If this amendment fails I would urge us to vote against the motion. The risk if this all passes

through, and particularly if we proceed to Holy Matrimony, the patient will have a fatal arrhythmia.

*Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark):* I am an evangelical who attends a church that is hurting. There has been great pain caused to our vicar, who is more conservative than the PCC and much of the membership. Most importantly, there has been hurt caused to the LGBTQIA community in our congregation and in our parish. They are the ones who have suffered. They are the ones who have walked away from our congregation, have given up on church.

I will tell you my experience. I did not grow up in a church family and my experience of Holy Matrimony, married in church but not going to church, was divorced parents, a mother who was physically abusive and a deteriorating relationship with my father. Aged 17 I was to be made without a home, but someone from this new church where I had just started going took me in and gave me somewhere to live. That was him being Jesus to me. Nobody else did that. That man was a gay Christian who had to choose between celibacy and his ministry, and he chose his ministry. That was good fruit, like Bishop Stephen was talking about yesterday. I have met so many LGBT Christians who are committed to Christ. Their relationships bear good fruit. I think of a couple who are brilliantly raising their daughter to know about Jesus.

There is an apocryphal story about military aircraft that were sent off to perform operations. The ones that did come back were analysed to see which bits were shot at and then those bits were reinforced. I would argue that this is the wrong decision and it is a wrong decision in our Church when we do not realise which bits of our aircraft need to be reinforced. We need to be reinforcing the bits of all those people who do not come to our churches; all the people who are torn between choosing between an accepting community and one that does not accept them; those people who need to know Jesus. This is deeply missional.

We give ourselves the opportunity with this bit of extra wiggle room to be able to fundamentally perform mission to our entire communities and not just those who will agree with a very prescriptive set of Rules. Compromise is important and this compromise will pour balm on the wounds at my church, and I am sure many others. I would ask you to resist this amendment and support the motion to allow us all to mutually flourish.

*The Chair:* I am going to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 68 has been sufficiently debated.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* The motion for closure is clearly carried. We proceed to a vote on Item 68.

*The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby):* Point of order. Given the importance of this matter, would you consider a counted vote by Houses? Also, I was wondering

would you be minded to remind Synod of your previous request at the start of this debate that we receive voting results in silence?

*The Chair:* Yes, I am sure I do not have to tell intelligent people anything twice, or so I thought. Do I see 25 people standing? Yes, I do, so we will have a vote by Houses. I am becoming used to this form of words. I think I might end up saying it in my sleep, which will be a bit distressing to my wife, but there it is. I am not sure which house she wants to be in – probably not mine, but there we go.

The vote on Item 68: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 3, against 28, with 8 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 82 in favour, 111 against, with 6 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 90 in favour, 107 against, with 2 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

*The Chair:* We are now going to adjourn for ten minutes. When we come back we are going to resume debate on the motion as amended by Item 67. We are not going to print new sheets because that would just destroy forests, and we are perfectly capable of doing that without seeing the amended text in one document. We will resume the debate for a little while and then we will conclude this item of business.

*(Short adjournment)*

## **ITEM 11**

*The Chair:* I have eaten the Archbishop's kindly donated chocolates. I have to tell you that the ones yesterday were appropriated by the Registrar and I never ever saw them again. Things never change!

We are now on to the debate on the main motion, which is of course Item 11 as amended by Item 67. I was asked whether this could be produced in a composite document and I said we do not need it because we can all do that. It is not complicated. It is not rocket science, is it? We are back on to the main motion. There is a five-minute speech limit. I am going to call first of all His Grace Archbishop Samy, who is the Bishop of Egypt – Archbishop of Egypt, I am very sorry – Archbishop of the Province of Alexandria. The trouble is I never listen. Archbishop, I am sorry I got your title wrong, but I have been corrected. You are very welcome.

*The Archbishop of the Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria (The Most Revd Dr Samy Fawzy Shehata):* I am the Archbishop of Egypt and Province of Alexandria. Thank you so much for inviting me to the Synod. I am so grateful to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his invitation, and for all the support we have received for many years from the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion Office has been very supportive in dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox churches.

I praise God for our friendship with the Coptic Orthodox Church through dialogue with his Holiness Pope Tawadros and Archbishop Angaelos.

The dialogue with Al Azhar through an interface dialogue started in 2021 with Archbishop Rowan Williams and continued through a close friendship of Archbishop Justin and Sheikh Al-Zafzaf, His Eminence Dr Ahmad Al-Tayeb. This held us to an agreed Muslim/Christian partnership and understanding, centred at All Saints' Cathedral in Cairo.

I was witness to a very close friendship and relationship between Archbishop Justin and Dr Al-Tayeb. When Archbishop Justin visited Cairo, Sheikh Al-Azhar was going to France for a medical operation. He cancelled his trip and came back to meet with the Archbishop.

I speak as a Global South Primate. We in the Global South signed the Declaration of Faith, which contains the following: "In our day, we thank God for those who have stood firm against teachings and practices that depart from the orthodox and historic Anglican heritage from our forebears. We affirm Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference as the teaching on marriage and sexuality of the Anglican Communion."

One of the clauses of the Resolution states, "This Conference cannot advise legitimising or blessing of same-sex unions, nor ordaining those involved in same-gender unions". This is our clear view of the GSFA. This is how we understand the Scripture, tradition and reason of the Anglican Church.

Jesus said, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you".

The Holy Spirit reminds us of Jesus's teaching. I cannot imagine that today we can understand Jesus's teaching better than the apostles or the early Church.

In our understanding of marriage and sexuality, there is a red line we will never cross. Crossing this line of blessing same sex-unions will alienate 75% of the Anglican Communion and endanger the ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue. This shift in practice will lead eventually to an impaired and broken Communion.

We inherited the traditional orthodox faith of the Church of England, so please, please, do not surrender your unique position as the mother church of the Anglican Communion. It is your choice. Thank you for listening to me.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you so much, Archbishop Samy, for being with us and speaking with us, and perhaps I could also say how moving it has been to listen to the graciousness and the courtesy with which, in my estimation, everybody has spoken in this debate. What the Bishops are proposing here, now we get to the main debate, are four things, and they need to be understood together, so I want to speak about them very briefly as a totality.

First, no change to the doctrine of Holy Matrimony. Secondly, acknowledging the legal and pastoral reality of two forms of marriage in British society and observing the evident good in the lives of those who have entered into same-sex civil partnerships

and civil marriages these couples could now come to church and have that relationship acknowledged, celebrated and the couple receive a blessing.

Thirdly, and this is what I really want to talk about, because we have not really spoken about this yet. Thirdly, no-one has to offer these services, and no-one will be disadvantaged if they choose not to, it is an option. And if, as I hope, we do approve these proposals, it is really, really important that this reassurance is made abundantly clear. I care, as I think all my sister and brother Bishops do, we care so much for the unity of God's Church, but for that unity to be maintained there has to be reassurance, the reassurance that I am as much a part of the body of Christ as you.

If all were a single member, said St Paul, where would the Body be? So, this seems to me to be the missing bit of our conversation, with the exception of three speeches which I have found profoundly moving and helpful. If you can remember back to yesterday afternoon, I do not know where he is, but the speech Vaughan Roberts made, I found really helpful in beginning to open up this area of debate. Then Steve Wilcox at some point, half way through the afternoon, on an amendment, and then this morning Ed Shaw.

All of them spoke about their desire that we would live together with our disagreements but there needed to be some settled way of assuring that we did have our place within the Church. And it seems to me that what we are doing is putting way too much weight on the *Pastoral Guidance*. The *Pastoral Guidance* will be issued and will settle some of those questions that will then replace *Issues in Human Sexuality*. That will happen. But I think we need something in addition to that.

I think we need to get together some of us from Synod, this is not just for the House of Bishops to do on its own, we need to get together and sit down and start talking about what kind of reassurance could there be that I know that I have my place, I am not even going to say "at the table". I have a very high doctrine of the Eucharist and I would love to say "a place at the table", but I am already living, as all of us are, with impaired Eucharistic Communion within our Church, and I tell you that breaks my heart that I cannot share Communion, fully, with everybody.

But I live with it for the greater good of the unity of the Church. I live with it for the greater good that we could tell the world a better story. We have a lot of talk about better stories. Sisters and brothers, the better story I want to tell is that disagreement does not have to lead to division, that division does not have to lead to conflict. We see that all across our world. Archbishop Samy, I want us to live together in one Anglican Communion.

But as was said at the Lambeth Conference very movingly by Archbishop Justin, in order to do that we need that reassurance, and we have not had a chance to talk about it and we are not going to, I do not think, for the rest of this debate. But I want to give you this pledge that I will not be able to support commending these Prayers. As I say, I hope we vote this through today, but I will not be able to support commending these Prayers until we the *Pastoral Guidance* and pastoral provision.

And a final thing, because I know I am running out of time now, so I am going to ask Bishop Sarah, and Bishop Sarah knows I am going to ask her this, could you on behalf of the House of Bishops give that reassurance to all of us that we will have those discussions about some kind of settlement.

Finally, I want to make a point about identity, which is what *Living in Love and Faith* has all been about, but our identity, surely, first of all, is our baptismal identity. That is what unites us as the body of Christ. I want to say that water is thicker than blood and because we belong to one another in Christ we have to have these conversations which can and will hold us together.

*The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TEs):* I should declare that I was a member of one of the *LLF* working parties and I speak to support the motion but I want to make a connection between what we have been discussion for the last two days and the safeguarding presentation this afternoon.

Now, why do I want to do that? Well, Synod, review after review after review of our safeguarding failures as a Church have connected our discriminatory attitudes towards LGBT people with making the Church less safe. Now, do not just take my word for it, take, for example, Dame Moira Gibb's review on Peter Ball, 2017. She wrote: "We believe that the Church's attitude to homosexuality at the time played a part in the failure to act appropriately."

Or take the review by Chris Robson of the Fr Alan Griffin tragedy, which is less than a year old, Synod. He wrote: "There is clear evidence that the way Father Alan was treated was in part influenced by the Church and individuals' conscious and unconscious bias around his sexual orientation."

And then, of course, IICSA. IICSA is full of references of this kind. DI Wayne Murdoch, who investigated the criminality side of the Peter Ball case, said at IICSA in 2018: "I believe that the issue of homosexuality had a detrimental effect in encouraging witnesses and potential complainants within the Church to come forward".

And then a final example, also from IICSA, Fiona Scolding, the lead counsel on that, asked the Bishop of Chichester in 2018, this: "Do you not think that the Church's difficulty in coming to terms with the complexity of self-identity when it comes to sexual orientation may have contributed to the misapprehension you have identified, because you know among conservative evangelicals, homosexuality is seen as sinful?" Bishop Martin simply replied "Yes" to that.

So, those are a few examples. I think that it is clear what independent, outside assessors of our safeguarding context are making to us, so let us make the Church a safer place, a slightly better, safer place, and support the motion.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* Friends, I am proud that we have been able to have this debate and the way that we have worked together through nearly eight hours now. It is a privilege to be part of this Synod. The right to freedom of thought and speech is foundational to our Christian faith and foundational to the work of this Synod. This



freedom means that we are able to hold and express different views on the issue before us.

Because of strongly held views and convictions, our interactions are costly. Many of us and many of those in the wider Church are hurt and upset about this issue for different reasons. This is the cost of free speech. Personally, this is painful for me, as it leaves me outside my tribe. I have always been an evangelical, but on this issue through reading and praying and discussing I have reached a different position from many of my brothers and sisters. I am not doing this to be difficult, I genuinely believe that the Church needs to be more inclusive of everyone, whatever their sexuality and gender, and that prayers of blessing are an important and helpful step towards this. I know this is painful for many of you too, on all sides of this debate.

At the heart of this is that on each side there are those who think they are right and the others are wrong. Some of you think I am wrong and some of you think I am right. The way that some of you have spoken in this debate, I have found offensive, and some of you may be finding what I am saying offensive now. But if we are going to move forwards together, as Archbishop Stephen has suggested, then I suggest we need to accept and respect that we have different views and that we must not judge each other for those views.

Accepting that we differ allows this conversation to move forward with love and grace and I believe that this motion will allow us to do this. So, I want to thank Bishop Sarah and Eeva, particularly, and all involved in the work of *Living in Love and Faith* for their work, and the cost this has been to them. I want to thank the Bishops for their discussions which I am sure have been costly, and for bringing this motion, which offers us the opportunity to stay together and to show love and respect for one another. And to those who express criticism of the bishops voting earlier, I say that the way they voted has not changed anything in this debate so far.

If you disagree with the prayers of blessing, I respect that view, but there is no obligation to use them. I sincerely hope that we can continue to work together for this, our Church of England, and the Kingdom of God, and that, Synod, you will vote in favour of this motion.

*Mr Temitope Taiwo (London):* The poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou once wrote that “There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of you”. And this a truth that unfortunately the LGBTQI+ people know all too well – the agony of being silenced in their story, unwelcome to speak of feelings and experiences that live in and through them in body, mind and soul.

Too often the Church has been a place where we have perpetuated this hostility to their story. This is why I am deeply grateful for the work of the Bishops and all those involved in the process of LLF, for it has made room for those in such communities to share, to speak and to sing of their story. And, brothers and sisters, is this not the work of Jesus? Even from aged 12 we learn of him sitting in temple courts listening to religious leaders, and the deeds of the knights, listening to the words of Nicodemus

and the publicity of the day, making space for the words of Zacchaeus. This all reminds us that our God is a god of welcome.

And yet there remains still another work of Jesus, contained within His radical welcome, His unrelenting witness, contained within His complete grace remains compelling authority and held by His all-encompassing love is an eternal and unshakeable truth. Jesus is not divided; he came full of grace and truth. Or, as mentioned earlier, radically inclusive but also radically conservative.

It is for this reason I must strongly oppose this motion as amended, for I am deeply concerned that the direction of travel is one that is leading to an abandonment of confidence in the witness, the authority and the truth of God's Word, in essence moving the Church of England away from historic formularies. As Archbishop Angaelos helpfully noted yesterday, the distinction between blessing and Holy Matrimony will sound like a mere technicality.

For Primates and provinces in the Global Anglican Communion, places like Nigeria, where my mother is from, this is a technicality that may prove too costly. Not because it will lead to three-minute speeches and debates, but it will lead to division and perhaps even deaths. At the very least, the *Prayers of Love and Faith* force a false dichotomy that to welcome people is to diminish witness, to show grace is to the silence the conscience of truth and to uphold love is to demote faithfulness, and as a young person who has related and will relate with hundreds and thousands of young people through and in ministry, this false dichotomy implied by this original motion and subsequent speeches baffles us. It does not point us to the cornerstone of Christ but a wobbly stone of culture. We say we want to grow younger but as one of the youngest members of this General Synod, I am only growing more confused.

As I close, Synod I must oppose this motion and ask that you search your hearts to do the same, for I fear that in hearing the stories of one group, a precious, loved group, we are silencing the stories of others. The laity, who have four or five times voted for amendments that have been rejected and not listened to by power; ordinands, of which I am one, many of whom are not in this chamber, I believe I am the only ordinand in my college of 236 ordinands here today. The young, who need clarity, conviction and courage and the Primates and provinces, who I hope will still be here after what we have decided today. Well, that remains to be seen. Please oppose this motion.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* One of the real benefits of this debate and the group work that preceded it is that all our cards are now on the table, if they had not been quite so before, and have generally been placed there in a passionate but respectful way. The House of Bishops has inevitably come under attack from all sides, as we have sought to chart a path through our own profound disagreements. But as this debate has shown, those disagreements run right through the middle of the body of Christ, our beloved Church of England and across all three Houses.

During the past few months, I, like many of us, I suspect, have shed tears as we have sought to square this apparently impossible circle. Tears for those I know and love,

who have felt excluded from the Church on the grounds of their sexuality, including some who have chosen the courageous path of Christian celibacy.

And tears, too, for others, myself included, who remain committed to a traditional doctrine of marriage as the Church has received it, and of the gift of sex as belonging properly within it, whatever our recognition that none of us has the right to throw any stones here, and who feel that the Church that we love and serve is somehow in danger of leaving us behind, and all our strenuous efforts to pass on the faith to younger generations, to revitalise dying congregations and to raise up a generation of godly young leaders.

And not just us. In danger too, as we have been periodically reminded, and movingly so, during the course of this debate, of aligning ourselves with invariably small, rich, declining churches in the West, while distancing ourselves from largely poor, persecuted growing churches in the south and east, and therefore from us sometimes moderating influence within them, too, including many of the diaspora in our Church of England churches today.

The problem is that despite our genuine compassion for our LGBTI sisters and brothers, and respect too for their heterosexual champions, and recognition of the homophobia that exists out there, and maybe unconsciously in here too, and despite the internal battles between our heads and our hearts, which many of us can identify with and speak of, some of us simply cannot join in what sometimes seems an inevitable journey, eventually, towards equal marriage.

Our reasons are set out in a paper recently added to the LLF website, entitled *The Church of England's Doctrine of Marriage*, a paper co-authored by a group of evangelical and Catholic bishops, and I would commend it to you if you have not read it yet. The paper sets out the biblical vision of how marriage between a man and a woman was given in the beginning, as Jesus put it, and as an institution through which the goodness of creation is affirmed, the interdependence of humanity is celebrated, the story of salvation is depicted and life is generated.

It also traces some of the philosophical roots behind the modern idea of equal marriage, and especially the revolutionary values of *liberté, égalité and fraternité*, which have led us to what the great Charles Taylor describes as a secular culture of expressive individualism. There is no glamorisation of marriage in our paper or indeed in the Scriptures. Part of the problem, it argues, is that marriage has often been idealised and idolised as the pinnacle of human relating to which all should aspire, whereas Scripture never portrays it in that light.

And here is where the paper explores the idea behind the Prayers that the House has brought to the Synod in this group of sessions, that there are undoubted goods to be found in long-term, same-sex, covenanted friendships, and that some form of commended prayers might help to recognise those goods without changing the doctrine explicitly, though the implicit questions are much harder to settle and will prove still more so when it comes to drawing up the *Pastoral Guidance*.

That is probably the best compromise we can come up with, if we are honest. But if we are not prepared to settle there, there seem to be three alternatives. One is a war of attrition, another is an ugly split, which could blow all of the visionary aspirations that we share as a Church out of the water, and the third is what the Archbishop of York has just been talking about, and which I would very much wish to second, as a reluctant convert, as some know.

And whether or not our motion this morning is passed in all three Houses, I believe we now do have to have those settlement discussions forthwith, otherwise I fear that the evils of silence, fear, hypocrisy and a misuse of power which a messy muddle is in danger of perpetuating further.

*The Chair:* Zoe Heming followed by Laura Oliver for a maiden speech.

*The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield):* It has been a bit of week, has it not, let us be honest, and more of a week for some than for others, we might suggest. I have learned a lot, I do not know about you. I have learned about Church history, so I want to thank Miranda for that particularly helpful interjection, for me. Addressing ignorance is one of those *Pastoral Principles* that we have been drawing back to, repeatedly. The one that has just kept bringing me back again and again has been paying attention to power. Where does the power reside?

Those who wish to maintain the status quo in terms of doctrine and action would have us believe that they are the oppressed minority, perhaps we have heard that a little bit this week, and certainly over the last eight hours, that feels more like 24. Are they, though? Are those of us who can have heterosexual marriages, who hold on to the power that we have to resist change, whose model of power are we seeking to follow here? We just heard Archbishop Stephen mention a table, I would argue that perhaps even this proposal that we are looking at together today can feel a little bit like crumbs from it. So, I certainly would like us to go further for equal marriage.

But where is the power in this room? Where do those watching us from afar, at home, think the power lies? And whose model of power do we want to follow? I think it is worth going back through the whole text of Scripture, however it is that we read it. What happens with power? What does God do with power in the one we follow – Christ? He gives it away. So where, Synod, is the power and what will we do with it?

*Dr Laura Oliver (Blackburn):* As a gay Christian, I implore you, Synod, to reject this motion. GS 2289 recognises that there will be some among us who will be perturbed because they believe that these developments do not reflect the way of Christ as they understand it. I am not perturbed by these developments, I am utterly devastated by them. I acknowledge the recognition from the Bishops that LGBT people, like myself, have been failed by the Church in the way that we have been treated. But these Prayers do not change that and, in fact, I would say that these prayers amount to an even greater failing.

Jesus says that he has come that we may have life and have it to the full. There is no caveat to this; it is not life to the full if we have Jesus and a relationship, or Jesus and

a great job or Jesus and children, it is full life in Jesus alone. My life is full, because I am in Jesus, that is the message that LGBT people need to hear, it is the message that all people need to hear, it is the message that I need to hear, full life, contented life, satisfied life is found in Jesus and him alone.

We are failing people like me because we are not telling them the better story that God has for us, and we are leading them away from the life-saving truth of Jesus. God's people are called to be different, to stand out from those around them. The Bishops' statement says that there is disagreement in the Church about how the Church's teaching that the only rightful place for sexual activity is in marriage applies in our culture today.

I cannot rationalise this statement with what I know of God's calling on my life. At no point am I commanded to bow to culture, or to fit in with the world around me, instead I am called to be salt and light, so that God might be glorified. I am called to be different, to live a life that others may see my good deeds and glorify God. The glory of God is my end goal in all that I do, and as a gay Christian, that means rejecting the secular view that to be happy I should give in to my desires and have a relationship with a woman. It means living a single, celibate, joy-filled, content, full life in Christ.

The Bishops' statement and draft Prayers make me feel completely invisible. Where is the pastoral consideration for me and people like me. My efforts to live a life that is in line with the Church's teaching, doing so in good conscience that this is what God calls me to do, have been utterly undermined. It is my view that these prayers as they stand will do harm, far more harm than has already been done. We need people to see and hear Jesus, our wonderful Saviour, and the full, better life he calls them to. These Prayers will lead people further away from him, and how can we do that in good conscience. Synod, I urge you, reject this motion.

*The Chair:* The Bishop of Truro and then I am going to test the mind of Synod.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mountstephen):* I said the other night that I value deeply the unity of the Church and it is a unity that we value very deeply in the Diocese of Truro. Being small, culturally and geographically distinct, and in every other sense superior, helps us in that, but it is not just accidental, it is a unity we share and value, above all, in Christ. And I do believe that LLF has helped us as a Church to grow in unity. It has helped us to study, to reflect, to share, to grow together in Christ, and I believe it has been a model of how to attend to such profound questions about our humanity, as we have addressed.

As a consequence of that, I have to say, I have been rather shocked by the strength of reaction to our proposals at both ends of the spectrum. As we continue this debate, I do think we would do well to pause and to recognise the very difficult position that we are in. We should be honest and accept that we are caught geographically between the West and the rest. We need to hear Archbishop Samy and many others too, and I hope, by the way, that we all feel very disturbed by what Andrew Selous was saying about how Members of Parliament have to come to him privately to express their confidence in the traditional view of marriage.

We are caught chronologically between the teaching we have inherited and contemporary society. We are caught ecclesialogically between wanting to walk closely together but not at any price. We would do well to recognise how this puts us all together in a difficult position. I feel caught personally. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that finding the way forward easy or simple or self-evident is not an acceptable position for us as disciples of Jesus Christ.

But I do find myself in a difficult position personally so that, to quote someone else, I feel pastorally drawn but doctrinally tethered. I feel pastorally drawn because I value deeply the unity that we enjoy in Truro and I value deeply the LGBTI people within our diocese whose passion and commitment to mission and ministry often puts me to shame. But I do feel doctrinally tethered and, more than that, I believe passionately in the doctrine of marriage as we have received it.

I do not think it is antediluvian or obscurantist or intentionally excluding. Rather, as we proclaim, it enriches society to say nothing of its deep sacramental significance. As a consequence, I welcome the passing of the amendment at Item 67. As the Bishop of Rochester said, I do believe that this amendment gives welcome reassurance and, as a consequence, I will support this motion as I believe it enables me to hold on not always comfortably but both to my twin commitments to the doctrine of marriage and to the unity of the Church. But it is, as it were, a discomfort with which I am comfortable.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* St Paul writes to the Ephesians of the need for unity and maturity. He says this: “Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head. That is Christ”. Not long ago, Archbishop Justin met Sandi Toksvig for a cup of tea. She posted a video on Twitter about their meeting ending with a rallying cry. She invited everyone to “come out for love”. It makes a great hashtag but what does it actually mean?

As I reflect on St Paul’s words and Sandi’s words, I am pondering the love that sets aside its status, the love that sets us free, the love that counts the cost, the love that gives up its life for the world. I brought my amendment yesterday in the hope that we could come to a place where I felt able to vote for this motion. It did not pass and I am afraid, therefore, that even with Andrew Cornes’s welcome amendment, I find myself unable to support the motion. Please, hear my heart on this. I am not a classic conservative – I am an ordained woman, for goodness sake – but I hold to the traditional teaching of the Church on matters of sexuality.

I am 44, a single, celibate virgin and, incidentally, not lonely. I love the Church both in its wider universal sense and in the form of it which we represent here, its great breadth, its missional reach and its beautiful messiness. I long for us to continue to walk together. Many amendments have been brought in this debate which have sought to enable us to do that. I fear that the impact of this motion is not to draw us together but to push us apart. We have heard many times that the House of Bishops is listening. I believe you, but I fear that you are not always hearing us. This makes the concept of trust feel frail and fragile. Those of us who hold orthodox views but

dearly hope to continue walking together with our sisters and brothers who seek change, long for you to hear our hearts.

*The Chair.* Now I want to test the mind of the Synod on whether Item 11, as amended by Item 67, has been sufficiently debated. I remind you we have been here for almost eight hours. I, therefore, put the motion for closure on Item 11 as amended by Item 67. We will have a counted vote of the Synod. This is a counted vote on the closure on this item.

*The motion was put and carried, 287 voting in favour, 140 against, with 11 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair.* I have to tell you that I voted for the only occasion on that motion. Since I proposed it I thought I was only being consistent in so doing, but it made no difference.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Point of order. I am afraid I do not know the Standing Order, Mr Chair, but I wonder if I could ask for legal clarification on what we are voting for in the amended motion which is amended with 67. Is it my understanding or is it the legal adviser's understanding that this relates purely to the decision that has been made and is not binding on decisions that might be made in the future? The Bishop of London might address that in her speech perhaps.

*The Chair.* I think it is not appropriate. The Chair has to remain neutral. That is why I have not voted. That is why I did not go to group work and that is why I only voted on one item. It is not, I do not think, for the Chair to express a view about that. I hope that the Bishop when she replies will give an indication on that.

*Mr Jacob Vince (Chichester):* Can I ask for a vote by Houses on this motion due to its gravity.

*The Chair.* We are not there yet.

*Mr Jacob Vince (Chichester):* I have done that before, I am sorry about that.

*The Chair.* I call on the Bishop to respond.

*Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford):* Point of order.

*The Chair.* No, I am calling the Bishop to respond. What is the point of order, please?

*Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford):* Regarding the clarification of the amendment, Item 67, I think, Chair, you have indicated that the Bishop would clarify that whereas the person who moved that, Mr Cornes, should be the one who should clarify.

*The Chair.* With great respect, the mover of Item 67 moved it in the form it was. Insofar as Ms Ozanne raised a point of order about it, the Bishop can reply in her speech in relation to Item 11 amended by 67. That is my ruling, I am afraid.

*Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford):* So be it, but I do not think it is clear.

*The Chair:* I call upon the Bishop of London to reply. It would be helpful if you could be no more than ten minutes.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Synod, I would like to start by thanking you on behalf of the House of Bishops for the nature of our engagement and deliberation over the last four days. We know that this has been difficult and costly and we hope that, as we go out from Synod, we will continue to look out for each other, we will speak well of each other and we will build on the relationships that we have formed here.

I hope that you will forgive me for not attempting to answer the individual points that have been raised over the last 24 hours of our debate. Instead, I will try and respond to some of the key themes which have emerged and, as I do so, I want to assure Synod that the House of Bishops have been listening and that we have heard what has been said. I recognise that to test whether we have heard is how we will respond. What I can promise you is that we will respond and you will see whether we have heard or not. I also recognise that not everyone has had an opportunity to speak and I am sorry that I have not heard your voice.

One of the gifts of the *Living and Love Faith* process has been the emergence of the *Pastoral Principles*. It had never really been the aim of the Pastoral Advisory Group to produce these. They simply came as the members of the Pastoral Advisory Group wrestled with the deep differences among themselves seeking to love one another and to help the Church to do so. They were, it seems to me, a work of the Holy Spirit, a fruit of abiding in Christ together and I would commend them to you. On Tuesday, in our groups, we reflected on which one of the prevailing evils was at work in ourselves when it came to talking about *Living in Love and Faith*.

I suspect that fear was one which many identified. Fear that stops us from relating to one another is, of course, deeply unhelpful and we know that God's perfect love casts out this kind of fear. But there is also holy fear, the fear of the Lord, that is so often referred to in Scripture. I sense that entwined within our human fears there is also that deep holy fear, a fear of not walking in God's way, of losing our way as a Church, of failing to be faithful, obedient in our calling to be a holy people, whether that is by supporting this motion or by not supporting it.

We have heard that there are some who believe that the difference between us about same-sex relationships are too great for us to walk together in the way that we propose. We have heard that for some these matters are so core to their understanding of what it means to follow Christ faithfully that there is no option but to separate visibly from one another. We have also heard that for some not to oppose sexual marriage is tantamount to discrimination, continuing to inflict pain on LGBTI people and a betrayal of their understanding of what it means to follow Christ faithfully.

This motion and this debate is not about winning or losing. If it were, we are lost. It is about us trying to be able to say to those that we profoundly disagree with: I need



you. And to seek to find a space in which we can together to witness to Christ's love in a fractured and polarised world. We acknowledge that we do not agree about whether there is a biblical, theological ground for extending marriage to same-sex couples. That is the reality within the House of Bishops and so we have responded by producing draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* and in planning to create new *Pastoral Guidance* as a matter of pastoral urgency.

We have heard the concerns of some in Synod that these will result in the change of the Church's doctrine and teaching, despite the Bishops' commitment to maintaining the doctrine of marriage. The passing of the amendment – which I believe is the right number, 67 – is to the present motion and to the present proposals. Whilst not changing the Church's doctrine of marriage, we have heard the pastoral need to be able to enable same-sex couples to come to Church before God, to be able to give thanks for and to celebrate their lifelong, faithful commitment and for prayers to be offered for God's blessing.

We have heard the calls for more biblical and theological understanding for the way forward and we have heard the anxiety among some that such work will not be sufficiently thoroughly done in the timescale of these plans. Again, I would like to point out that on the *Living in Love and Faith* website there are theological, legal and scriptural documents which we have used in the House of Bishops, but we have heard that we need to do better. We have heard the concerns about whether the freedom of conscience will work out in practice for clergy who choose to use the prayers and for those who choose not to use them.

We know that we need to provide a pastoral reassurance and protection that will enable others to either use the prayers or not to use them. This is future work and we will bring these back. We will also take seriously the support that is required for those churches and clergy and congregations and PCCs who have divergently different views and, in doing so, we recognise that the role of clergy and bishops is involved in the muddle and mess of the real lives of people.

We have also heard that, for some, those reassurances may not be enough and, as Archbishop Stephen has spoken about, we know that we need to work together to provide and to understand what pastoral reassurance really looks like. We have heard the concerns of Synod about their involvement and the involvement of lay people in the development of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and *Pastoral Guidance*.

I am grateful for all those who have taken part in the *Living in Love and Faith* process and for the over 6,000 people who provided information and responses to us. We are also grateful for the involvement of Synod this week and we have made a commitment to hear what you have said and to bring that back to Synod. We have heard your call for greater clarity about what the *Pastoral Guidance* will contain and your anxiety about the matters that are still to be decided in this context.

The House of Bishops, like all clergy and Christians, need to reflect on our own lives and, as those who are ordained, we know that in the Ordination Service we are asked: will you endeavour to fashion your own life and that of your household according to

the way of Christ, that you may be the pattern and example to Christ's people? And we reply: by the help of God, I will. We will bring back the *Pastoral Guidance* to Synod. We recognise that this will not be an easy discussion as it will continue to touch on those things that we feel deeply and passionately about and on which we continue to disagree.

We have heard the concerns expressed about the impact of this motion on the Anglican Communion and I would call on Synod to continue to pray for the Archbishop of Canterbury and the members of the Anglican Consultative Council as they meet this weekend. I would also call upon Synod to continue to pray for Bishop Anthony Poggio as the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion and for all the Primates.

The motion, Synod, you have before you commits the Church to a journey, a journey of repentance for the failure to welcome and love LGBTQI+ people among us and for the way in which we have harmed them and continue to harm them. Repentance does require change, change in the way we behave in our life together. This will not be easy. We will get it wrong but we need to be committed to this journey together.

The House of Bishops believes that we need to continue to listen to one another and to God and, in doing this, to continue to grow in our understanding of how we create braver and safer spaces in which we are open to the wisdom of the spirit in the life of this Church. This needs to occur not just in our Church but in this Synod. The House of Bishops believes that every one of us, with the different perspectives and convictions that we represent and bring, is an essential member of the body of Christ of which the Church of England is part.

We believe that God is calling us to work together, to embody the good news of the reconciling love of Jesus Christ in this divided, fractured and hurting world. Members of Synod, on behalf of the House of Bishops, I ask you to support this motion as amended by Item 67.

*The Revd Tim Edwards (Rochester):* Point of order. Two things. One, given the very strong feelings about this and the concerns, it would seem right to have a vote by Houses and, after, if it would be possible to have a break for a cup of tea I think a number of us might appreciate it.

*The Chair:* Well, I am not sure about the break for the cup of tea, but if I see 25 people standing then there will be a vote by Houses, which I do. There is a vote by Houses.

*The Revd Canon David Bruce Bryant-Scott (Europe):* Point of order. Given the gravity of what we are finally going to vote on, given so much speech, might we have a moment of prayer inviting everyone to put down their cell phones and computers and perhaps conclude that moment of prayer with a collect for the Holy Spirit from an individual you so choose.

*The Chair:* Well, I think that is a good idea, so why do we not just keep an appearance of silence and maybe one of the Archbishops could just conclude that.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* I will leave a full minute.

(Prayer)

*The Chair:* This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 11 as amended by Item 67. We have received this vote in silence.

The vote on Item 11, as amended by Item 67: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 36, against 4, with 2 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 111 in favour, 85 against, with 3 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 103 in favour, 92 against, with 5 recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

*The Chair:* The Archbishops have given permission to the Bishop of London under Standing Order 121 for her to address the Synod as the Chair of the Next Steps Group.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Synod, can I first begin by thanking Geoffrey for his excellent chairing of our debate. Your chairing has been grace-filled, light-touched and enabled us to understand what we have been doing, thank you. I am mindful of the cost of this debate to all of us and I want to thank all of you who have spoken so powerfully and with such dignity.

Synod has now reached an outcome. I recognise that there are those who are deeply thankful for this and there are those who are hurting. The House and the College of Bishops will now begin the various tasks set before us. As we do this, we will continue to be mindful of the deep divisions that continue to exist within our Church. Of course, these divisions on these questions go to the heart of our human identity.

We have promised to listen carefully to this Synod. Over the next few months, we will reflect on everything which has been said as we go to our task and I hope that you will judge whether we have heard when we come back to Synod in July. Chief among these concerns will be how we continue to guard the conscience of those for whom these proposals go too far.

I and the Archbishops hope that today's thoughtful, prayerful debate marks a new beginning for the Church as we seek to go forward listening to each other and, most of all, to God. I hope now that members will remain in this chamber to pray together now, bringing all that we are holding and feeling the grace and love of God in Jesus Christ. Let us pray.

(Prayer)

*The Chair:* That concludes this item of business and I think we have lunch.

THE CHAIR *The Revd Zoe Hemming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 1.49 pm

*The Chair:* Synod, before we begin our next item I will invite the Chair of the Business Committee to come and address you.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Thank you, Chair. I thought it would just be helpful if I explain what is going to happen this afternoon. We will progress through Order Paper VI, that was this morning's Order Paper, and then seamlessly progress through Order Paper VII, that was this afternoon's Order Paper. However, because we have timed business at 3.15 I think it is pretty unlikely – I do not know – that we will take the Pensions items, the Electronic Register of Services and the Standing Orders items today. They will be deferred to another group of sessions. At 3.15 we will pick up the Safeguarding item on Order Paper VII and then progress through the business following that. Thank you, Chair.

*Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield):* Point of order. I just wanted to draw Synod's attention to the appearance of the Pride flag on two occasions in the livestream of the Church of England just after the vote and at the end of the livestream. I have already spoken to Mr William Nye about it and I understand an investigation is going to be going on. I would like a public statement about that to be provided after the investigation has been concluded, please.

*The Chair:* Thank you. I invite the Archbishop of Canterbury.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* Thank you. I am very grateful for that comment and for attention being drawn to that. Obviously that was not planned or ordered by anyone that I know of that that should happen. To those who are offended by that, I would like to apologise most sincerely on behalf of the Church for what should not have happened. I certainly look forward to seeing the outcome of inquiry, but I do apologise.

## **ITEM 505**

*The Chair:* We now come to Item 505 and Item 506 for which you will need Order Paper VI and GS 2255A. We have now reached the Final Approval Stage for the draft Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure. I draw the attention of members to the entry in Notice Paper 15 that the Steering Committee has authorized the Clerk to inform Synod that following the Revision Stage there are no amendments or other matters to report.

I now call on the Bishop of Sheffield to move Item 506, "That the Measure entitled Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure be finally approved". He may speak for up to ten minutes.

*The Bishop of Sheffield (The Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox):* Dear friends, after a deeply challenging 24 hours we now turn to something which will, please God, be less controversial but which is not without its own significance.

When we first considered this issue together in November 2021, I pointed out that the legislation we were proposing would merely remove an existing restriction on how particular historic endowments in dioceses can be used, giving dioceses more latitude (but no obligation) to be generous. I noted that this Measure was not in itself capable

of fixing the whole problem, but could be, would be a first step capable of opening up for us an urgently necessary conversation about the full extent of the problem which is this: the inequalities in financial resources which exist between dioceses result in inequalities in missionary and pastoral freedom, in options for resourcing the cure of souls, for maintaining a vigorous stipendiary ordained ministry in the most deprived communities in the land, so that in every place we can bring the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and make Him known to those in our care.

I am grateful to the Synod for bringing this Measure to this point and grateful to note that that larger urgent conversation is now underway, as the new triennium funding arrangements amply demonstrate.

Then when this Measure came to Synod for First Consideration last July, I told you about Lucy, a young priest in the Diocese of Sheffield, ordained deacon in 2019 and priest in 2020. During her curacy she pioneered a new worshipping and missionary community in one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in our deanery of Attercliffe. I told you the sad truth that the Diocesan Board of Finance in Sheffield had no budget to sustain that work. Left to ourselves we could not afford to place a stipendiary incumbent in Abourthorne. I was able to explain that through another diocese the possibility of inviting Lucy to lead a BMO in that community had emerged. You will be glad to know that since our July Synod I have indeed licensed Lucy there. As it happens, I was with her last week and I can confirm that her ministry is thriving. That other diocese was of course the Diocese of Oxford which took a decision in 2021 to give away £1 million of its wealth over four years to allow five of the least wealthy dioceses in the country to invest in additional missionary capacity. In Sheffield we have allocated those funds to sustain Lucy's ministry.

But what about elsewhere? Well, in Liverpool it has enabled the appointment of a first racial justice officer in that diocese. The diocesan secretary tells me this is proving transformational. In Canterbury, the funding from Oxford has enabled the ministry of a refugee support officer. Again the diocesan secretary tells me this has been a fantastic good news story. He tells me, "Without this support from Oxford our frontline work with refugees would be very difficult to achieve".

Friends, in the least wealthy dioceses, a little extra funding goes a long way and makes significant gospel impact. Inter-diocesan mutuality and generosity really does make a substantial difference. But do not forget that glorious act of generosity from Oxford was not made out of its diocesan stipends fund which at this moment is restricted. What this Measure seeks to do is loosen that restriction. It does not make any diocese give generously to others but it will enable more dioceses to follow in Oxford's generous footsteps.

For that reason, with good hope, I gladly commend this Measure to the Synod for Final Approval.

*The Chair.* The motion at Item 506 is now open for debate. I would remind members that motions for the closure, the speech limit or next business are not in order for this debate. I call Julie Dziegiel. You have up to five minutes.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* I am a member of the Steering Committee for this Measure. I am a member of the Neutrality and Transparency and Finances Group and I am Vice Chair of the Oxford Diocesan Board of finance.

I am delighted to support this short permissive Measure, the purpose of which is to enable dioceses to be generous with the income earned from their historic assets. It is a simple fact that some dioceses have far more income-earning historic assets than others, mostly for reasons rooted deep in history.

In Oxford we are very aware of our relative wealth and it was that awareness, coupled with a sense of fairness and generosity, based on the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, which led us to make a donation via the Archbishops' Council to other dioceses less well-endowed than ourselves. We deliberately decided to do it via the Archbishops' Council because we did not want to make an imbalanced relationship with other dioceses. I apologise if I cost the Bishop of Oxford some lunches.

We decided to donate £250,000 a year for four years, so a total of £1 million. I very much hope and pray we will be able to make further donations, which will be easier after the passing of this Measure. Please, please encourage us in Oxford by giving this Measure your wholehearted support.

However, it would be really sad if the only diocese to use this Measure was Oxford. Actually, if you look at the historic wealth by head of population, Oxford is not the wealthiest diocese. We are pipped to the post by both Lincoln and Coventry. So, I would like to challenge the dioceses at the top quarter of this list to take a good look at their finances and see if there is any way they might be able to make use of this Measure to donate some of the income of their diocesan stipends funds to the dioceses in the bottom quarter of the list. Lincoln, Coventry, Ely, Gloucester, Norwich, Peterborough and Worcester are all in the top quarter. At the end of 2020, which are the figures that we have, all of those dioceses had diocesan stipends funds (DSF) assets of over £50 per person per diocese. The bottom four had less than £5. Just saying.

This Measure is a small step towards fairer finance in our Church. Please give it your enthusiastic support and please use it.

*The Chair:* I call Robert McNeill-Wilson for his maiden speech. You still have up to five minutes.

*Mr Robert McNeil-Wilson (Gloucester):* This Measure highlights the inadequacy of many dioceses stipendiary funds. Also it recognises that rebalancing of Church funding is needed to address this. Bishop Pete is certainly right that this needs addressing urgently.

However, the Measure has serious shortcomings, in my opinion. First, I do not see how any diocese that continues to gather Parish Share payments could be justified in

deciding that it had money in its stipendiary fund that it did not need to be applied for a purpose specified in section 5(1). That is all of them.

Second, this Measure fails completely to address the root causes and the scale of the problem. Of the 40 dioceses with DSFs, three-quarters of them fail to manage these funds effectively. A similar number fail to even make any use of them at all. We must address those management deficiencies. Too many dioceses certainly have stipendiary funds that are wholly inadequate. Isolated well-meaning gestures by dioceses, which presumably have to have stopped gathering Parish Share, would make negligible impact on this. We need radical rebalancing of Church funds in favour of parishes.

At the bottom of the DSF league table we have diocese with a stipendiary fund of only £500,000, which would not even generate enough to support a single parish priest. There are many more dioceses with wholly inadequate stipendiary funds. Simplistically, the top ten dioceses – the premier league – of stipendiary fund holders have between £50 million and £96 million each. As an example, transfers of just 7% or 8% of the Church Commissioners' funds to the DSFs of the remaining 30 dioceses would lift them to an average of that lower figure of £50 million, promoting them all to the premier league at a stroke, remembering of course that the Church Commissioners' funds were established for this purpose, the provision of parish priests.

On Tuesday, Archbishop Stephen looked forward to working with General Synod to formulate the plan to revitalise our parish system. If we took this opportunity to rebalance the Church's funding radically to address the inadequacies of all diocesan stipendiary funds in one decisive action, it can help us to arrest and reverse the relentless decline in parish priest numbers, it can help us to ensure parish priests do not have to do the equivalent of taking a vow of poverty, and it could bring an end to parishes being told that they do not justify a priest or that on the grounds of lack of funding they need to be absorbed into a mega-parish, a super ministry or some dial-a-vicar scheme. It would lay the foundation for the revitalisation of parishes of which Archbishop Stephen spoke on Tuesday.

I am pleased this amendment has highlighted the unnecessary deficiencies of our dioceses stipendiary funds and the need for the radical rebalancing of our Church funding. However, it does not go far enough but I hope that it is a first step towards the radical rebalancing that I believe we need. I shall vote in favour of this Measure.

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

*The Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield)*: Just to say that I really warmly welcome this and will be voting in favour of this, and that is not because my Bishop has paid me before I came here.

Two things I want to say. First of all, one of the things that really frustrates me about the Church of England is its ability to do things 42 different ways. If we can find a way

where we can start to work together and share things that will be a step – a wonderful step – in the right direction to see us working together for Christ as a whole.

Secondly, and not entirely relevant to this, but something I feel I need to say to this Synod, this morning our chamber was packed; where are people this afternoon? We are not a one-issue Synod.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* There is an old adage about presentations that you tell the audience what you are going to tell them, you tell it and then you tell them that you told it. I gave my maiden speech on this subject, as you will no doubt remember, in York. Then I gave a further speech a couple of days ago during the Revision Stage. So if there is repetition here, it is just to hammer the points in. And I take the point absolutely in the maiden speech just given.

That this is very generous there is no doubt, but it is tinkering around the edges of a much, much larger problem. It is a sticking plaster. It is avoidance activity. It is doing something we can do and what we are not doing is sorting out the fundamental problems in our dioceses which means that things like this have to be done. It salves consciences.

There is the LInC programme. This gets in the way of it, I suggest. It breaks the ring-fence established when the money was appropriated from the parishes in the first place, and people seem to just ignore that. Importantly, it removes any incentive to correct any problems that we have. We need a fundamental revision of our dioceses. It is not just a matter of throwing money at them. There is a lot of money at the centre and there is a lot of money in our various dioceses. Apparently, it is excessive, but that is not the solution. All that will do is to kick the can down the road. We need a fundamental relook to you are our dioceses work within them and between them. That is what it is necessary. I do not have any idea that this motion is going to be lost but I just want to remind Synod of the points that were made.

*The Chair:* I will call the next two speakers and then I will be testing your mind on a motion for closure.

*Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester):* Members of Synod, you will remember, if you can remember back to Monday – it seems like a very long time ago – there was an amendment to this Measure which I proposed and which was not successful. I wish to explain that as a matter of integrity I feel we have a bit of a leaky bucket Measure here and as a matter of integrity I feel I need to oppose it because it is a leaky bucket. At the same time I absolutely recognise the possibilities for dioceses to be generous to each other and it is therefore with some sadness that I will be opposing it.

The thing is dioceses think the money they have is theirs. It is not. It is the accumulation of money from parishes either paid directly in the current year through the Parish Share or paid historically in the transfer of glebe. This risks being a case of dioceses being generous with other people's money, not their own. But the possibility for good and sensible giving does exist, of course it does, and that is why I wanted to diocesan synod approve it each time it happen. Anyway there it is. I have



been opposing a Bishop, which is obviously an extremely dangerous and unwise thing to have done. Now I invite Synod to consider either you like this Measure because of its overall provisions, or you do not like it, as I am afraid I have to say, because of its wording and incompleteness.

*The Chair.* I am told I cannot order a motion for closure on this item, so I will call Canon John Spence after Andrew Dotchin.

*The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* A story. When, like a prodigal child, I returned from a land far away called Rainbow Nation to my home diocese in Suffolk, a newly ordained minister and I wanted to run a summer holiday club. We went to the PCC to say we were going to do this and they said, “How much are you going to charge for people to come?” We said, “Nothing”. They said, “You can’t do this because you haven’t got budget”. My friend Tim and I said, “Just watch”. So we paid for it out of our own stipends and we asked people to give donations. Synod, by the end of that holiday club we had recovered everything that we had spent and had sufficient funds to hand back to the PCC so that they now had budget for the next holiday club. Tim and I developed a hashtag “When you give, let go”. When you give, let go.

Thank you, Oxford, for being a living parable. Thank you for following the parable of our Lord and the tenants in the vineyard who at the end of the day when those who had worked hard and long thought they should get a little bit more, our Lord said, “Are you envious because I am generous?” Synod, I wholeheartedly support this Measure.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I just wanted to recognise the frustrations I have heard from one or two people in this afternoon’s debate. No, we cannot afford 42 separate head offices all operating independently. It is not a model that can be seen in any other organisation in the country, and nine and a half years into my ten as your Finance Chairman, the frustrations have been there throughout. Let me just reassure you, however, that there are initiatives under way. I could name at least three difficult ones where groups of regional bishops are coming together to work out how they can create shared service models where they can share instead of duplicating every service. How much better it seems to me to have a property function covering five dioceses with a specialist team appropriately staffed than have five separate single people working on their own. We continue to work with those groups of dioceses.

Andrew, I am afraid that one of the challenges is that every diocese is a charity and the origin of the funds does not remove the legal responsibilities on the trustees of that fund. That is where we have a challenge. I will certainly offer you evidence that in some places the historic wealth of the diocese can compound their ability, apparently, to collect Parish Share. That is not universal. The message is understood. There is nothing to stop us passing this motion which, as Pete knows, I entirely endorse. I just want to give the reassurance the issue is understood. We will do what we can to further incentivise and accelerate the thinking on this. Meanwhile let us celebrate what Oxford are doing. I listened to Julie’s message with great clarity.

*The Chair.* After the Bishop of Leeds, I will invite the Bishop of Sheffield to respond to the debate.

*The Bishop of Leeds (The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines):* I endorse what John Spence has just said with one exception. For 50 years we have been mucking about trying to get dioceses to share services and do all of that and it does not work in the end. If you want a long-term solution, do a Leeds. As a Church we have had the courage to have a different way of doing it. It was hard and it was challenging, but we have proven we can do it and if you want fewer dioceses, if you want more coherence, start with what we have already done and review it and look at it and learn from it, which the Dioceses Commission expect to do in the middle of the year.

*The Chair.* I see no-one else indicating that they wish to speak and so I invite you now to respond.

*The Bishop of Sheffield (The Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox):* I am very grateful indeed to members of the Synod for those contributions to the debate. Thank you, Julie, for your encouragement to dioceses to make use of this new provision. It would, indeed, be a dreadful shame if Oxford was the only example. Thank you, Robert McNeil-Wilson and Ian Johnston, for your absolutely correct assessment that this Measure cannot in itself correct the enormous inequalities that exist. Thank you for reminding us of the very radical solutions that are going to be necessary if we are going to achieve a proper rebalancing.

Thank you, John Spence and Bishop Nick, for your suggestions about ways in which that radical rebalancing might already be underway and might be followed through. Thank you, Eleanor, for your encouragement to us to take pleasure in the greater mutuality between dioceses that a Measure like this can promote. You are right that I did not pay you before your speech, but I am willing to buy you a coffee after it. Thank you, Andrew Orange. I am not sure I entirely followed the analogy of the leaky bucket, but I assure you that on this occasion the Bishop in question is no danger to you at all. Thank you, Andrew Dotchin, for that excellent parable and wonderful strapline: when you give, let go. Synod, I hope we can give this measure its Final Approval.

*The Chair.* I now put the question on the Final Approval of this motion. The question is, "That the Measure entitled 'Diocesan Stipend Funds (Amendment) Measure' be finally approved". In accordance with Standing Order 37, I order a counted vote by Houses. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 506:

The vote on Item 506: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 26, against none, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 97 in favour, 1 against, with 3 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 115 in favour, 11 against, with 5 recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

*The Chair.* The Diocesan Stipends Fund (Amendment) Measure now stands committed to the Legislative Committee. That concludes this item.

THE CHAIR. *The Archbishop of York (The Most Hon & Right Revd Stephen Cottrell)* took the Chair at 2.25 pm.

## **DRAFT AMENDING CANON NO. 42 (GS 2269A)**

### **Draft Amending Canon for Final Approval**

*The Chair.* Dear friends, we come to our next item, Items 501 to 503, draft Amending Canon No. 42 (GS 2269A). This is the draft Canon for final drafting and final approving. Who knows how much debate we are going to need. This is a really important piece of work but I hope we may get through it reasonably quickly.

We have reached the Final Approval stage for this draft Amending Canon and I would like to call upon the Chair of the Steering Committee, Mr Stephen Hofmeyr KC, who is going to move Item 502 that Amending Canon No. 42 be finally approved. Mr Hofmeyr, welcome. You may speak for up to ten minutes.

## **ITEM 502**

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* You have already heard far too much from me in this Synod and so I will be swift. Amending Canon No. 42 is a particularly important piece of legislation. You are now familiar with it. On Monday afternoon, we considered it at the third and fourth stages of the legislative process, the Revision Stage, Standing Order 59; and the Final Drafting Stage, Standing Order 61. You will recall that no amendments were tabled and the motion, “That paragraphs 1 to 4 stand part of the Canon”, was carried.

In this session we are at the fifth and final stage of the legislative process, Final Approval, Standing Order 64, and, if Final Approval is carried, a petition for His Majesty’s Royal Assent and Licence to make, promulgate and execute the Canon, Standing Order 64(3). I, therefore, move that Amending Canon No. 42 be finally approved.

*The Chair.* Thank you very much. Item 502 is now open for debate. If I could remind members, if there is anyone who wishes to speak, that motions for closure or speech limit or next business are not in order in this debate. Is there anybody wishing to stand or speak? No. There is, therefore, no need to ask Mr Hofmeyr to reply and so we put Item 502 to the vote. I need to say that this is a vote on Final Approval and it must be counted by Houses and we are going to do it by electronic voting, please. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 502.

The vote on Item 502: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 26, against none, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 92 in favour, none against, with 4 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 112 in favour, 1 against, with 5 recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

## ITEM 503

*The Chair.* With Amending Canon No. 42, Safeguarding, now having received Final Approval, I call upon Mr Hofmeyr to move Item 503, “That the petition for His Majesty’s Royal Assent and Licence (GS 2269C) be adopted”.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* It is my privilege and pleasure to move Item 503, “That the petition for His Majesty’s Royal Assent and Licence (GS 2269C) be adopted”.

*The Chair.* Is there anybody wishing to speak? In which case, I put Item 503 to the vote and, in these circumstances, a show of hands will be sufficient.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* I am happy to say that the petition will now be presented to the Crown. I would also like to thank Stephen Hofmeyr and the Steering Committee for their work on this. It is really important work in our ongoing response to IICSA. So, thank you, Stephen. That concludes the business for Amending Canon No. 42.

THE CHAIR. *The Very Revd Andrew Nunn (The Dean of Southwark)* took the Chair at 2.37 pm

## ITEM 12 GOVERNANCE REVIEW (GS 2290)

*The Chair.* Good afternoon, Synod. We now move to Item 12, which is the Governance Review.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Point of order. Under Standing Order 34, I should like to propose that this item be adjourned until July.

*The Chair.* Thank you. I will just take some advice here. Prudence, I am advised that you cannot adjourn it until it has been opened, so keep your powder dry for the moment then. For this item, members will need GS 2290 and also Notice Paper 5, which is the financial memo as this item has a financial impact. Remember that we are on Order Paper VI, the one that applies to this morning and I am going to invite the Bishop of Guildford to speak to Item 12. Bishop, you have up to ten minutes to do so.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I am not sure whether Miss Dailey would like to adjourn us now. We have started the debate, but I do totally take the point that we have a very short time.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Point of order. Under Standing Order 34, I should like to propose the adjournment of this debate until July.

*The Chair.* That is the second time of asking, but he needs actually to have moved it and so he needs to get to the end.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Okay, fair enough.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* We will get there.

*The Chair:* Sit down, Prudence, for a moment, please.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I will briefly speak to that. We are very aware that, obviously, the time has been hugely squeezed. The problem with adjourning it now is that we do have a lot of staff in this building and outside of it on whom this Governance Review does have a potential impact and I think it is really important that we do not keep them waiting for yet more uncertainty over many months, but I totally understand the point.

Synod, I did have an elegant ten minute speech prepared for this debate, including naming all kinds of elephants in the room. A friend of mine taught me to bring elephants along with them and I was going to do that and so I will leave them there. But obviously the time, as we have heard, for the debate is very constrained and we really do want to hear as much as we can from you during this time.

Directly to the question of trust, which is a question that we have often debated in this chamber, lying behind some of the complexities of our work and contributing too to its urgency has been a serious trust deficit which is endemic in our structures with regular talk of centre versus local and diocese versus parish and bishops versus the rest and them and us and we have had a bit of that over the last few days too.

These issues of trust are undoubtedly compounded by a national Church governance structure where it really is not clear to you or me. Even as a longstanding Bishop, it certainly has not been clear to me just how decisions are made or who is accountable for them.

Bringing greater simplicity to anything in the Church of England though is always a complex business – this is one of the problems with any simplification agenda – so that the interim Report before you, GS 2290, includes many detailed recommendations including plenty of uncrossed t's and undotted i's where we would value help either this afternoon or, please, do write in to the [governancereviewchurchofengland.org](http://governancereviewchurchofengland.org) for those speeches that are not able to be taken now.

Here, I need to publicly thank the Synod Reference Group who have been working with us – we have met once a month or once every six weeks or so by Zoom – for their work in challenging our thinking and helping us hone the recommendations before you today. If anyone would like to be part of that group and is not as yet, then please do let us know via that website. This is, indeed, a new way of working and one that we are better for as a result of it.

Rather than focusing on the details, the big question here is just why are we undertaking this work in the first place. The simple answer is that the convoluted governance structures that currently exist within our national Church are frequently

confusing, time wasting, lacking in transparency, not inclusive, unaccountable and sluggish and are, therefore, liable to be bypassed just to get something done.

If we were to define the role of the national Church structures as being to support, serve, encourage and enable the work and mission on the ground of parishes, dioceses, schools chaplaincies and cathedrals, then being much clearer about our governance, where decisions are made and who is accountable, will help us all.

Reducing the number of National Church Institutions from seven to four is one step along that path, alongside ensuring that each has a clearly defined role and purpose. There would be very little change to the roles of both the Church of England Pensions Board and National Society in these proposals. There would be a more significant change in the work of the Church Commissioners whose work would be focused purely on nurturing and growing the Church's historic endowment and ensuring the sustainability of distributions for today and tomorrow.

Most significant of all, the so-called Church of England National Services (or CENS), the new trustee body – we would love a new name, please, if anyone comes up with one – would look to enable the work and mission of the Church in all of its facets through the services provided to parishes, dioceses, cathedrals and chaplaincies. Simply, “we are aware” is not always better or more effective but clarity must be a positive aim if we are to be confident about the transparency of our decision-making and who is accountable for what.

Structural changes alone though are not enough. A well-designed house might help to promote good relationships among those who live in it but certainly does not guarantee those relationships in and of itself, so without a significant commitment to change, the way we do our business and our culture, the best governance structure in the world will fail. Better communication and more diverse representation are two particular areas which the Project Board has been determined to tackle here, both of which should go a long way in fostering a higher culture of trust.

It is these considerations that have led us to propose the creation of a CENS Nominations and Governance Committee in line with the practice of very many other charitable organisations. This is not an attempt to take the power away from Synod or to prevent elected members from sitting on the board and its committees, but it is to recognise the need to build a truly effective and diverse trustee body which is able to navigate the many opportunities and challenges that lie our way.

More work needs to be done before we can bring a legislative framework and a plan for how this vision for better governance can be implemented and that will happen if General Synod is in a position to support the general direction we have set out today. With your backing, we could then get to work on a process of transition and give detailed considerations as to the financial implications of the recommendations. We would then bring proposals to July's Synod, properly supported with a full financial overview that we are not able to provide today.

So, Synod, I commend this work to you and look forward to benefitting from your wisdom in the rather short time that we have available, but especially please do continue to feed into this process through the email address and as part of the Governance Reference Group if you would like to be a part of the synodical group there. On behalf of the Project Board, I am happy to move the motion standing in my name.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Point of order. I think you know what I am going to say, Mr Chairman.

*The Chair:* Yes, but you have to say it again.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Under Standing Order 34, please may I move the adjournment of this matter until July.

*The Chair:* Prudence Dailey has moved the motion that the debate be now adjourned and resumed at the next group of sessions. If the motion for the adjournment of 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 debate may not be moved again except with the Chair's permission.

I call on Prudence as the mover of the motion for the adjournment of debate to speak to it followed by the mover of the main motion, the Bishop of Guildford, to reply. I will then consider whether to allow any further debate. You have two minutes, Prudence, to make your case.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* There are two main reasons why I believe this ought to be adjourned. This is a matter of exceptional significance and importance for the governance of this Church. First of all, we have timed business at 3.15 which gives us slightly less than half an hour to discuss a matter on which there are two amendments on the Order Paper. It just simply does not give us time for a proper discussion. I understand that this is by no means the end of the process and it is coming back in July, but the fact is if it was not deemed necessary to discuss it at this stage and in this way it would not be on our agenda at all and, therefore, we do need enough time.

My second concern is that, obviously, through no fault of those involved with proposing this, it has had to be shoved in at the tag end of Synod. A lot of people have had to go home because they have got long journeys. I know people who were intending to speak on this who are no longer here. I understand that it is going to cause inconvenience but I think we do need proper scrutiny. I, therefore, would like us to be able to do it when we have got proper time in July.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Prudence. I call on the Bishop of Guildford to respond and you also have two minutes.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* As I said at the beginning, I fully understand the thinking behind the motion to adjourn. We would love to be able

to spend this time just hearing some perspectives, not least to feed our work in preparation for July's Synod. I would resist the request to adjourn the debate. If we could press on that would be very good, recognising that this will go off at half-cock but it will be useful to us to continue.

*The Chair.* I do not consider that the motion for the adjournment of debate needs to be debated further. I, therefore, put the motion to the Synod.

*The motion was put and lost on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* Therefore, we continue with the debate on the main motion.

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

*Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark):* Synod, I am grateful for many things in this Report both as a member of this Synod and as someone who worked for one of the NCIs for almost a decade. I am hugely grateful for the hard work of staff here at Church House on this and for their openness to having conversations about this work and I am grateful that Synod will be seeing a further report prior to legislation. I am also very grateful for the Synod Reference Group. Thank you, all.

Nonetheless, there are a few aspects of the Report I would like to draw Synod's attention to as this moves forward. Synod, we have heard a lot of talk in these sessions about the *Pastoral Principles* and I think there is a real opportunity for us here to embed these *Principles* into the life of our Church governance too. Let us consider how this work structurally can bring openness and transparency to our Church processes, to the deliberations and work that those in governance will be doing. How can we cast out any fear of things being done in the shadows and, instead, bring confidence and trust to our processes again? What can be done to structurally embed the ability of staff at all levels to expose hypocrisy, to acknowledge prejudice and to bring integrity and respect?

I was thrilled to see in this Report the intention to create a culture where people are willing to speak up, to speak into silence and to know that decisive action will be taken. It is really needed and really important. As has been mentioned multiple times this session, let us pay attention to power in these new structures. The make-up of the powerful Nominations Committee here remains unclear. Let us remember that power can be direct and indirect. It is not just about who is there but how they got to be there and to whom they are ultimately responsible and accountable. There are already huge time pressures on our bishops and I am very aware this proposes four members of our House of Bishops, including both our Archbishops, with what would likely be a huge governance remit and yet more meetings.

The Report is clear that it is a work in progress and time pressures today mean there is so much more that we could discuss from this and likely will not on the important role of bishops, on the role of ourselves as a Synod and lots more. Please, Synod, have a look at this Report for yourself – maybe not on the train home, we will have had enough, but later – and feed into this vital and ongoing work.



*Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln):* With a background in business governance and now closely involved in diocesan governance, I very much welcome this Review and agree with much of its direction which should lead, properly implemented, to a far more effective, efficient operation and with better governance. Having said that, there are three areas which I would suggest require some further attention.

Firstly, with the Review having looked at the status quo and proposed structural changes, estimates should be made of the cost of change, the time that will be required to put the changes into effect and the quantifiable benefits that will emerge. Only by doing so will we be able to confirm, as I fully expect it will, that it is worth pursuing the changes and also secure some measures against which we can evaluate the change management programme as it progresses. You may be able to tell that I am also an experienced project manager.

The second area is the structure of CENS where the balance of two *ex officio*, six elected and seven nominated positions strikes me from a governance accountability perspective as being too weighted towards the nominated positions. I fully agree that the overall membership size should be limited and so personally would advocate cutting the number of nominated positions to five. To allow the CENS Board to have access to the full range of expertise, I would suggest allowing subject matter experts to attend meetings as necessary though without voting rights. Finally, and at a far more detailed level, I think it is generally unhelpful and inefficient that the bishop's office in diocese is run entirely separately from the diocesan office and would encourage the Governance Review Group to look at this aspect.

*The Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool):* I am also speaking as Chair of the Appointments Committee which you elected me to last year. You will notice that there has been some discussion in this document – I am looking at paragraph 96 in particular – between the overlap of the Appointments Committee and the Nominations and Governance Committee. We had a very constructive meeting back in November with Stephanie Harrison, I think it was, discussing with us how we could work together. It was a useful exchange of views.

I just want to say, first of all, that we continue to happily engage in that particular process. I would draw your attention to the fact that, as far as I know, the Appointments Committee were not asked to appoint members to the Synodical Reference Group and so they seem to have been a group of volunteers. I am not necessarily against that, but that seems to perhaps point out the confusion that can sometimes happen in these processes.

My other general point is that we still have vacancy on the Appointments Committee for a bishop and we would love to have one of you serve on this really important Committee where we make our decisions about who would be good representatives. You could have a word with me at the end of this debate.

## **ITEM 69**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 69, the amendment standing in the name of Robert Zampetti. I invite Robert to speak to and move his amendment. Should you need it, you have up to five minutes, Robert.

*Mr Robert Zampetti (London):* With your permission, I would like to actually speak to both this amendment and Item 71, I believe it is, together.

*The Chair:* Well, you can do but we might not get to that one.

*Mr Robert Zampetti (London):* I will move them separately. Let me start by declaring an interest. I was a member and am a member of the Reference Group for this work. Let me also begin by expressing my deep appreciation for the staff who are managing the project very well for all their hard work and especially for their patience. We are not an easy group to deal with. We have very strong opinions. The fact that I propose in this first amendment replacing “welcome” with “take note” is not meant in any way to disparage their work.

It is a recognition that we are not yet at the stage in what I consider the proposed timeline where a welcome is actually needed and that word “welcome” is a hot button issue for many. I am new to this Synod – well, I am a year old – but I have already heard from many Synod members that in the past they feel that that word “welcome” has been used to lay claim to a fuller endorsement of the contents of a preliminary report that, in fact, did not really exist. I think it gets back to the matter of trust that was alluded to earlier and so I am recommending we just remove that. It is not meant to be negative or positive. We will take note and we will get the work done.

I was tempted to give a long speech and talk about all three paragraphs, but we are already hearing from many of you the same concerns that my amendments attempt to address. By “address”, I mean simply say: as you continue your work, Project Board, please make sure that you are looking at these things. I understand that many of the members of the Synod have not had time to read carefully the 47 pages and, like Rebecca, I highly recommend that you do so because the vast majority of those recommendations I think are sensible and sorely needed and we probably needed to do them sooner rather than later for the fairness of the people working in those institutions who are living with a lot of uncertainty. I just wanted to point all of that out.

The second amendment, 71, makes three additions. I have alluded to those. They are only there to highlight concerns that the Report itself already acknowledges and so those concerns are already there. It lists various options and makes a recommendation of particular options in some cases.

These are my three. Why am I calling them out if they are already there? It is just so that the Synod can have that communication back to the Project Board officially about having them look at the restructuring of the group of NCIs and what that then means for the role of Synod; look at the composition of the CENS Board and, frankly, the Nominations Committee and other committees of which we have already heard people speaking; and, then, thirdly, on the appellate function that is now exercised by the

Mission Pastoral and Church Property Committee, which is of such concern to so many, including many of our parishes.

I think, with or without the adoption of these amendments, the Project Board will continue to be open, I hope, to working with the Reference Group and others to explore the best ways of addressing these concerns, but I do not want them to be limited only to the options that they have in the Report. There are other options and we heard a few just moments ago.

This is also a chance, frankly, for the Project Board and for Bishop Andrew to demonstrate that trust of Synod, that you trust us that we are not here to undermine or derail what is a needed reform measure and, at the same time, by doing so, you will make it clear that there is not a nefarious deep state strategy involved. I will let others speak to the rest of it.

*The Chair.* Could you confirm, sorry, that you are moving?

*Mr Robert Zampetti (London):* And, for those reasons, I move the amendment.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Is this just the amendment at 69?

*The Chair.* Yes, just 69 and you have up to five minutes but please do not use it.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Robert, thank you very much. We do really value your presence on the Synod Reference Group and have been listening very hard to what you and others have had to say. I think we are not going to quibble about “welcome” and “take note”. I am not too bothered. I do not think I will lose sleep about that and so I would not really want to take up a great length of time, so I am very happy to leave that up to Synod to decide whether you want to welcome or take note and we would like to hear more contributions, please.

*The Chair.* This item is now open for debate.

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

*The Ven. Luke Miller (London):* Just to say very quickly, a thank you to Bishop Andrew, Stephanie and the team for all the work that they have done. I support this amendment because it will enable the work to continue with a lot of support from those who may have hesitations about welcoming, as Robert said.

In paragraph 14 of the Report, the Church is described as to be not so much an organisation as an organism. I have used a phrase that we are less a charity than a polity and it seems to me that, therefore, our governance ends up being slightly different. That can be very frustrating but it also opens opportunity. It needs more work but the work is well worth doing.

We do have a clear charitable aim on one level but it is rich and full and contains many areas about which we have many and all kinds of debates. Pete Spiers has already mentioned I am a member of the Appointments Committee, but that is sort of by mistake. The relationship specifically between the Nominations Committee and the Appointments Committee, the proposed Nominations Committee, will be important, but I would support this amendment for those reasons.

*Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester):* I am emotionally hungover after the LLF debate, so apologies. I am sure we are all feeling pretty similar. Synod, I wonder, what is the point of Synod, to be blunt? Why are we elected? Why are we here? Why do we have these debates? Are we here to debate what words we use, every single word every single time? I realise both times I have risen to speak this week it has been about whether or not we welcome a report or take note of it. We seem to keep doing this. Does it matter, honestly? I think what really matters is the detail of the Report. I would much rather we were spending time talking about that Report.

There is a lot of interesting stuff in it. I have definitely got concerns about it, but I would much, much rather that we encourage each other to go and speak to the people who are Bishop Andrew and the staff who are helping to make this work work rather than what often seems like playing politics with words. Trust works both ways and, if we are going to trust those who bring things to us, they need to trust that we are going to treat them respectfully and not waste their time. Can we reject this because it is a waste of time, personally .

*Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter):* I support the amendment – I promise, Sam, I do not just disagree with everything that you say – because I think governance is something that when I talk to people back home there is not a great amount of familiarity. They just tend to think about either LLF or things like that. But when I go into detail with them they then raise concerns, and I think the problem with “welcome” rather than “take note” is it implies a direction of travel and so, hopefully, “take note” is a bit more balanced. I hope it is not quibbling over words. It is just a bit more sober minded.

*The Chair:* I see no-one standing and so I put Item 69 to the Synod. I think we are going to have an electronic count of that one but we know how to do it, folks.

*The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter):* Point of order. Chair, we were not quite clear at the back whether we were voting on a motion for closure or actually on the item, could you clarify, please?

*The Chair:* We are voting on the item because nobody was standing to speak. We are voting on Item 69. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on the amendment at Item 69.

*This motion was put and lost, 107 voting in favour 107, against 124, with 27 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* Now, Synod, as we have timed business at 3.15, this debate will now stand adjourned under the ---

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* This point of order you will probably say is not entirely a point of order.

*The Chair:* Try me.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* It is true, I believe, that this is the last time that you will chair a – don't you dare touch that button.

*The Chair:* It is just you are not speaking the truth because I am doing Safeguarding after this.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* Oh, I was told you were doing this as your last.

*The Chair:* No. Please resume your seat. This is what the Elizabethan Settlement is all about. Anyway, as I was saying, it is up to the Business Committee then to bring this item of business back to a future group of sessions.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Point of order. We have got this very important timed business now. I do not know how long it is going to take but, if it finishes within a reasonable amount of time, I wonder if we might then resume this debate rather than proceeding with whatever was next, which I think was the Diocesan Synod Motion.

*The Chair:* Thank you for the suggestion, Mr Scowen. That is up to the Business Committee and not up to me.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* It is a matter for Synod, surely.

*The Chair:* But I am sure they have heard it.

## **SAFEGUARDING (GS 2293)**

*The Chair:* Thank you, Synod. We now move to Item 13 and Item 14 on Safeguarding. Members will need GS 2293 and GS Misc 1335 for these items, please. We are going to begin with a presentation before we then move on to the take note debate. I invite the Bishop of Rochester to introduce the presentation.

### **ITEM 13**

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs):* I will say no more than I am delighted to welcome our new National Director of Safeguarding Alex Kubeyinje. I would like Synod to give him a warm welcome as he is settling into his new role. This will be his first presentation to Synod. Alex, thank you.

*Mr Alex Kubeyinje:* Good afternoon and thank you for such a warm welcome.

Many of you will have seen my Report to General Synod on my observations from being the National Director of Safeguarding for almost six months.

I would like to start by apologising and clearing up any misunderstanding or confusion. My Report refers to issues around safety, relationships and miscommunication. I want to say that my intention was not to upset or cause harm by the comments I made in the Report, and I have since been in contact with lots of people and apologised since then. My intention was to highlight an issue.

I would like to go on the record by saying there are many victims, survivors and advocates who have campaigned tirelessly and have worked with the Church to change safeguarding. Without their input and dedication, the changes we have seen in safeguarding would not have been possible – and for this they must be commended.

The Church has failed in its safeguarding responsibilities, leaving many people feeling a sense of betrayal, loss, trauma and injustice. I have had the opportunity to meet with many survivors, victims and advocates on several occasions and I will continue to do so, as I made a promise to victims and survivors in November of last year within the first open forum we held. Hearing their stories and experiences was saddening. I did however leave with a sense of hope that they truly want to help the Church to change and that we could work in partnership to achieve our common goals. For this I am grateful and want to say thank you to all individual victims and survivors as well as survivor groups and organisations who are engaging with us on this path to improvement.

We would also like to hear from young people and families and understand their current experiences of feeling safe within the Church.

As a social worker who has worked in child protection for many years and has had to make life-changing decisions, I understand the trauma these decisions may have on children and families. Trauma can manifest itself in many ways and as a Church we have a responsibility to survivors and victims, as caring for vulnerable people is at the heart of the Christian message. I know this personally from my own involvement in my local church, and from being a member of the PCC for many years.

The Church also has a responsibility to protect staff in order for them to continue to offer support to survivors and victims.

As the National Director the point I was trying to make was that I believe the Church needs to be safer for all and we need to find a way to address and prevent issues that cause harm to people.

As a Church we do have the best intentions with regards to putting things in place; however, we do not always take into consideration the complexity and length of time it may take to implement. These delays will understandably cause frustration to victims and survivors and this needs to be handled with care and compassion.

My plea today to everyone is that we need to find a better way to build relationships and improve our communication. Otherwise, this trauma cycle will continue and cause further damage to all involved.

Using a trauma-informed restorative practice approach may be beneficial if we follow the following set of principles: empowerment, honesty and transparency, respect, engagement, healing, personal accountability, inclusiveness, collaboration, and problem solving. Everyone should be treated with empathy, compassion and respect at all times.

I have seen a lot of good work within the Church and safeguarding is improving. However, we have to remember this work started from a low base. In the last few years we have started to see the fruits of this work.

But it must be noted that we still have a lot more work to do. We want more victims and survivors to join us to help shape the changes that are very much needed to make the Church a safer place for all. We are certainly not there yet and still have some way to go. This is why it is imperative that we get the independent scrutiny right, to assist in raising safeguarding practices and policies. This sense of scrutiny will also give confidence. Remember we were criticised by IICSA and told we should not be marking our own homework.

There has been some discussion on the issue of independence in safeguarding in the past week and I would like to underline the point I made in the paper.

The Church has a vision that safeguarding should have independent scrutiny, which in itself is a good concept and one that I endorse and, if it is done properly, will help to raise the standards in safeguarding. That is very much wanted and can also highlight areas of strength that can be built on.

Policies and processes are not always clear and there is a need for a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities, through training, for instance, and better communication. As a National Safeguarding Team we are working on this with our diocesan colleagues.

As you can see in the NST update Report, there are a number of workstreams that highlight the ongoing work. I know Bishop Jonathan will touch on this later. However, I would be willing to answer any questions you may have on the safeguarding programme if that is seen as helpful.

Synod, I look forward to working with you as our safeguarding work develops, always remembering that the voice of survivors and victims is core to what we do.

*The Chair.* Thank you, as Alex just said, we are now open for questions. We are going to take them in groups of three, and remember, they need to be questions rather than speeches.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* Alex, first of all, welcome and from the heart thank you for that apology for a misstep. If the Church had only had so much integrity and been so gracious in the past, we would not be in the place that we are now.

From the conversations you and I have had I believe we are very much on the same page because we come from the same secular safeguarding culture which is well established, free from controversy over conflicts of interest, fully functional and totally Human Rights Act compliant, so I wonder if I could invite you to share with Synod your initial observations on what it has been like for you moving from that world and encountering the world of church safeguarding.

*The Chair:* Thank you. Are there any more questions at the moment?

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* I feel quite concerned about the national redress scheme that was proposed by IICSA to cope with redress, I am looking at 1414. Is there any indication from the Government about the timing of this when it will be ready because I feel this is an IICSA recommendation which we would be well advised to look at if the timing is suitable for implementation. It concerns me to see that there is no indication from the Government. If it is going to happen in the next few months, it might be well worth our while engaging with it.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* I have got three very quick questions if I may. You seem to be taking them in three.

*The Chair:* I meant three people, not each three.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* Before the questions may I welcome Alexander to his new role and echo Martin's thanks for that apology. I also want to thank Bishop Jonathan for his work as he prepares to step down as Lead Bishop. Members of Synod will know from not clashes but engagements and exchanges between us, that we do not agree on the journey and the route, but I am convinced we both want the same destination, and I want to thank Bishop Jonathan for the work he has done as Lead Bishop.

The first question to Alexander, and you have part answered this, is I was disturbed to read about the death threats received by staff, and it would be useful to have a reassurance that they have been reported to the police to ensure that staff are protected. I am concerned about talk of abuse, bullying and harassment. If that has happened that should also be condemned. I just think we need some reassurance that all the robust criticism of ongoing safeguarding failures is not cast as abuse as a way of avoiding dealing with those.

The second question is a quick one. Amending Canon 42 received Final Approval and will go for Royal Assent and your Report details the work by the NST around this. Do you have an idea when we can expect to see the draft regulations that will give the new DSOs power and authority rather than just a new job title?

Finally, we heard from the ISB that they wanted to report to us this week and were



only offered a fringe meeting. It would be helpful if we could find out if the NST Lead Bishop or NSSG made any representations to the Business Committee about this.

*The Chair:* Alex, over to you.

*Mr Alex Kubeyinje:* Thank you. My first response is to Martin. Local authorities have been doing safeguarding for quite some time and it is governed by the Children Act, Working Together. There are lots of judicial processes that we follow if needed to safeguard and protect children. I think the difference here is about consistency in practice and the independent scrutiny element. In a local authority we have Ofsted which will come in and review standards and practice. I think we are very much on journey. The regional model that we are piloting at the moment should hopefully give an element of consistency. I think the other bit that is really important is the independent scrutiny element of it. I guess the final bit is around when we are working in particular areas it is about having the right expertise or being able to commission that expertise, to be able to have that.

The last point for me is obviously the Church – I heard it from a colleague – has features of an organisation but it is more like a community in that sense. It is very complex at times to be able to navigate areas but it is a big thing. There are churches all over the country and it is a very big, I am in going to say it in that way, but it is a very complicated thing to navigate around if you are new. I hope that addresses that question.

The second question I believe was from Penny. No, we have not heard anything back from the Government yet. But one good thing about the Church is that we have decided to go ahead with our own redress scheme in any event. We have not heard from the Government but we are pressing ahead with our own redress.

The next one was from Gavin. When we are talking about abuse and bullying, I just want to be clear that is not acceptable and it will not be acceptable. I understand there is a difference when someone is going through trauma and they have heard something that potentially makes them upset. They might be going through a process and I get that and I accept that. Trauma manifests in many different ways, but the bullying and harassment element of it is not something that anyone should be tolerating.

When we talk about threats in the sense Gavin was saying, we have dealt with the issues that we need to deal with, and if any threats of any nature like that happen again, we will do what we feel is appropriate to do. It would be inappropriate for me to go into individual cases or situations.

The other point I think was around the DSOs to DSAs element. That element of work is still going on. I think we are literally almost there, so hopefully in the near future those changes will happen. I think I have answered that first set of questions, unless I have missed something.

*The Chair:* Any more questions?

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* In this morning's LLF debate Judith Maltby's contribution drew a connection between sexuality and safeguarding, and certainly in my own experience of the way in which that is dealt with in the Diocese of London which I serve, it has not been up to the same standards as in the other contexts I previously worked in NHS and in a local authority and as a school governor.

I would like to ask Alex therefore in what way is he going to get his team to look at those issues? The first area I would raise is about training. The training which we do in the Diocese of London does not in any way address any protected characteristics in equalities legislation and yet research shows that all of those protected characteristics have greater safeguarding risks. The second is in relation to support and advocacy. For example, I supported someone in my deanery who came out in another parish in the deanery as a lesbian ---

*The Chair:* Can you make it a bit quicker, please.

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* Absolutely. It is about support and advocacy and also about the whole issue of prayer ministry and what is and is not appropriate in prayer ministry.

*Mrs Michaela Suckling (Sheffield):* Alex, thank you for the work you have already done. I am sure lots in this chamber have received Martin Sewell's email expressing the concerns from one of the survivor groups. I am not sure if this is the right place to ask the question. Alex, I am really, really encouraged that you understand trauma and I thank you that when you see bullying and intimidation and that kind of thing, you call it out but you also recognise that may be part of the process of someone working through their own trauma.

My question is in relation to Martin's email. He says that the redress scheme is now only looking at making that better with money. I wonder why there is no therapy in there when we know that that can work in terms of helping people work through their trauma. I would be really interested to hear your answer around that.

*The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS):* Thank you and welcome, Alex, to this very difficult role and coming into the lions' den here a bit.

My question follows on from Robert's question and the point I made in the LLF debate this morning. When we have these major Reports like Robson on Griffin and material from IICSA, what is the process for learning and absorbing from those Reports by the NST?

*Mr Alex Kubeyinje:* My first response is to Rob. Rob, thank you for what you have said. I am not trying to get a cop-out here but what I will do is go back with the team and look at what you have just said to me. If I have your information then I can respond to you with what it is we are going to be doing about some of the things that you have just raised, if that is okay.

The other one is to Michaela and is around redress and the elements around therapy, et cetera. We are going to have non-financial redress which looks at therapy so we are going to have therapeutic offers. It is part of the plan, so perhaps there is a miscommunication somewhere with that.

Judith, with regards to your question, we have plans, we have a lot of meetings with other people. We are starting to do audit activity. We are trying to triangulate and close the loop. We know we still need to work on our quality assurance element, but we do take those recommendations seriously, and some of those recommendations have actually moved along quite well.

*The Chair:* Thank you for responding to the questions like that. I hope I can speak on behalf of Synod and say that you and your team are in our prayers as you continue that work.

## **ITEM 14**

*The Chair:* Synod, we are now going to move forward to Item 14 on the Order Paper, "That this Synod do take note of this Report". I invite the Bishop of Rochester to speak to Item 14. You have to up to 10 minutes in order to do so.

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs):* Once again good afternoon, Synod. As you may be aware from some of the contributions made already, I will shortly be stepping down as Lead Bishop for Safeguarding, and I hope you will allow me a few moments to reflect on my three years in this role as well as to address the issues covered in the NST Reports before you.

I would also like to begin by thanking Alex Kubeyinje for his presentation and answers to questions and to express my support for him and the work he and the team are doing. More about that in a few moments.

I accepted this role three years ago because I felt a deep sense of call to play my part in strengthening the Church's safeguarding work and especially our response to victims and survivors. That sense of call arose out of my own experience of coming to terms with childhood trauma and of working with vulnerable families as chair of the family support charity Home Start, in Wirral in Merseyside.

I came into post a few months before the publication of IICSA's Report into the Anglican Church published in October 2020. That Report has set much of the agenda for our work over the following years. The Report and the inquiry leading up to it was a powerful reminder of the Church's failures, especially in our response to victims and survivors, and the workstreams outlined in the NST update give details of how we are seeking to address the recommendations of the IICSA Report.

The first section of GS 2293 outlines the safeguarding programme which comprises five key elements of our response to IICSA. They relate to the national redress scheme, the change from DSA to DSO and the introduction of professional supervision

and quality assurance of diocesan safeguarding teams, information sharing with other partner organisations, a national safeguarding case work management system and a second past cases review scheme.

Other items in the update refer to the interim support scheme, the learning and development programme, the safeguarding code of practice Measure and our initial response to IICSA's final Report on religious institutions, along with engagement with survivors, the Safe Spaces service and learning lessons reviews.

Synod, I think you will agree that all this constitutes a huge programme of work, and I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who is working so hard to deliver this programme, including staff, colleagues in the NST and dioceses, as well as countless clergy and lay people up and down the country and, most importantly, those victims and survivors who have helped to shape this work and who continue in various ways to challenge us to do things better.

Most of this work goes on behind the scenes and below the radar. What we hear about most often, quite understandably, are the things that go wrong, or where someone is not satisfied with what the Church has done, or with our response to them. It goes without saying that we have to be committed to resolving these issues as far and as quickly as we can for the sake of all concerned. That is in everyone's interests.

But one of the things I would like to reflect on for a moment is why this sometimes proves so difficult, particularly for the Church, and I believe this is precisely because we are the Church of Jesus Christ. The essence of the church is that we are meant to be a sacred space that is safe for all. When that goes wrong especially when people do awful things to children and vulnerable people, then there is a deep sense of betrayal as well as of pain and trauma. There is a breach of trust which it is very hard and sometimes impossible to repair. That explains in part why even what we do to try to address what has happened can itself be met with suspicion and even hostility. I think what Alex has been seeking to do is to highlight and name that context, not to blame individuals, and that context is something we all need to reflect on.

Of course, when you look at how the Church has often responded to victims and survivors, as reported, for instance, by IICSA and other reviews, then that sense of suspicion and hostility is hardly surprising, but that does not mean we should not go on trying to do things better and to get things right in the future.

We are currently living through the aftershocks of IICSA and other harrowing reports into abuse perpetrated within the Church, and our failure to respond as we should have done, and our response to this situation has to be many sided. It has to include redress and support for victims and survivors, including but not limited to financial compensation through the redress scheme which is under development.

Now Synod, it is a matter of deep regret to me that this is taking far longer than I had hoped and anticipated when I spoke about it in this very chamber three years ago. I now understand much more about the complexity of what is involved and I believe that

all those working on this are doing everything they can to get this done and to get it right.

But I would also urge Synod to keep putting to bring the scheme into operation as soon as possible, even if it that means, dare I say, that some of the elements such as how exactly the principle of subsidiarity mentioned in the Report is enacted, even if those things may have to come a little later.

At the same time, as we all know, there remain challenges around how the Church can best ensure effective external scrutiny of its safeguarding work. The Archbishops' Council set up the Independent Safeguarding Board to begin this work, and to help us to think through what would be required in the longer term. As you will be aware, we are currently seeking to address some issues about which it would not be appropriate to say more at this stage, but we look forward to working with the ISB to find a way forward as soon as possible.

Having said that, and acknowledging the difficulties, I would encourage Synod not to lose sight of the crucial work that is outlined in the Report that you have in front of you. This represents a sea change in the Church's safeguarding work over the last few years and it is mirrored in the fantastic work being done in our dioceses, our cathedrals, parishes and other church settings up and down the country. I want to record my thanks to everyone who is working so hard to make our churches safe, healthy and nurturing places for all.

In closing I would just like to say two more things very briefly. Firstly, I want to acknowledge that the changes we have made over the last few years have undoubtedly placed greater expectations on clergy and parishes at a time when we are all facing the impact of the pandemic and now the cost of living crisis. We understand that, and the NST and the NSSG are committed to working with you to help address your concerns. Keep talking with us.

Finally, I want to end with a plea; a plea for us to keep working together in the Church of England towards creating an ever healthier and safer culture for all; understanding the impact of abuse and trauma; learning from victims and survivors; seeking to find ways of responding with greater insight and care; honouring and protecting one another, and recognising that for all our failings we are committed to enabling our churches to embody the justice, compassion, mercy and grace of the Kingdom of God.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of undertaking this role over the last three years. Please give your support to my successor – she is quietly sitting up in the gallery over there – and to all my colleagues in the years to come. I am pleased to commend to you this update from the National Safeguarding Team. Thank you.

*The Chair:* As we begin the debate on Item 14, can I remind you that amendments to the motion are not in order in this debate. I call first of all on the Archbishop of Canterbury and then I will come to the rest. You have up to five minutes.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* I want to raise two things which, in a sense, I think speak to the object of this debate. They are

both thank yous and the first one is to thank Jonathan Gibbs. It is an extraordinarily painful and difficult task to be the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding. For obvious and fully understandable reasons, the Bishops and Archbishops, especially Canterbury but the Bishop in charge of safeguarding starts invariably with a deficit of trust. It is just the way it works. Those who have held that position, which they hold for a maximum of three years because the strain is so huge, have to face that deficit of trust which comes from trauma, as Alex said earlier, and deal with it in themselves and address it with those who express it, and that is not a criticism of those who express it at all. They usually come with very, very good reasons for not trusting the Church. So to take on that role is a huge, huge thing, and I am hugely grateful to Jonathan for doing so, and I hope that at the end of what I say Synod will express that very clearly.

The second thing is to say thank you to Alex for his presentation and for his transparency. It was very good that he apologised for what he classed as a mistake, an error. I do think we also need to bear in mind that staff in the NST, particularly junior and clerical staff, do need our protection. There is no reason why they should have death threats or be screamed at. It is wrong. Two wrongs do not make a right. Alex has come in. He has again a deficit of trust to deal with, he has to get to know this very strange institution, and he also has to move forward on critical areas around independent oversight, as IICSA required, quite rightly. So I want to thank him for taking that on and being very honest with us. Alex, it is hugely appreciated, and just confirms how glad we are to have you in post.

Then completely off subject, which the Chair will not interrupt because if he does I will simply ignore him, I can confirm this time that it is in fact your last session as Chair. You are sure, you are not going to change your mind?

Andrew has been chairing Synod for as long as I can remember, which is only 11 years but it feels like eternity. He has always been one of the best and most reliable, sensitive, insightful and wonderful Chairs, as well as an extraordinary Dean of Southwark and a million other things. I am not going to do a farewell speech, but I just wanted say to you for this role of often chairing the most difficult sessions and the most sensitive sessions in Synod which we always know we can trust you with absolutely and totally – pastorally, theologically, politically, in every possible way – may I say thank                      you                      very                      much                      indeed.

*The Chair.* Thank you, that is very kind. Anyway we have a debate to have.

*The Chair* imposed a three-minute speech limit.

*The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford):* In my life before ordination I was a chartered accountant working for a leading firm of lawyers on personal injury damages claims, many of which took years to settle. I know what that does to people's lives, including the constant need to retell their past stories over years of delay to the detriment of their futures. I became something of an expert on the subject. That was now 25 years ago but the experience still informs my ministry today.

The fact that we have moved so slowly on redress should shock and shame us. What

I read about the complexity of the redress scheme now proposed and its delivery looks under-resourced, under-staffed, under-financed, under supported by institutional will, and therefore almost inevitably further delayed. We need to do better. We cannot afford to inflict a complex system on survivors. They need a simple interface with our complex organisation.

The proposals for where redress lands, close to the source of damage – that apparently empowering word of subsidiarity also concerns me. As a parish priest I had to deal with two major safeguarding issues in my first year in my current post. I observe that you are asking people and communities, who are themselves feeling shocked and betrayed, who are partly in denial and may be deeply divided, to have effective agency, dynamics highlighted by the Bishop on the national scale. Sorry, it simply will not do. Though I am grateful for all and any progress on safeguarding, I cannot vote therefore to take note of this Report, and I urge you to vote against it to signal your concern about this lack of progress. Thank you, Synod.

*Canon Peter Adams (St Albans):* Thank you, Bishop Jonathan, for your words and thank you for your service in this role. Thank you, Alex, for your Report. I was making my way to a consecration of our new suffragan bishop last Thursday in Canterbury and took the time to meet with one of our survivors of one of the large cases that we deal with. I had a gruelling three hours as I experienced once again the pain and the trauma that he had encountered over many years.

It was quite a strong counterpoint to go and sit and hear new bishops making the vows they make, vows which include, as we heard this morning, a commitment to use their authority to heal and not to hurt. I believe those things – and I work closely with a number of bishops – and bishops are good people, but something has gone wrong in our midst. We now have one new opportunity particularly. As we bring new diocesan safeguarding officers into place, there is obviously a strong accountability up to the national level of work. Can we try and create at every diocesan level a very close working relationship which avoids ideas of deference and so on that have been there in the past and over which IICSA has challenged us. Can we try to create good dynamic working relationships at a diocesan level with those officers as well as at the national, so that we really hear, we really get, we really experience; we can create a new culture. Alex's team can help us create new cultures at our diocesan level.

Alex highlighted the need for us not to mark our own homework. I was talking to somebody who is publishing a book in six weeks' time, just a few days ago, based on the interviews of 400 people who have left the Church. Extensive surveys and then interviews of 100. Some 12.5% left the Church – and not just the Church of England I hasten to add – because of abuse experienced. A further 11.2% left because of abuse of a friend or colleague. I leave you with that.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* I want to start by also thanking Bishop Jonathan and I hope your next job will be less stressful – perhaps something like lion taming or crocodile wrestling or something of a less stressful nature than safeguarding. Also, to say to Alex, thank you and welcome. I also want to thank you for recognising that bullying is a major issue in the role of safeguarding. I would ask you to look at the

Private Member's Motion being put forward by the Archbishop of Blackburn to bring in legislation to prevent the bullying of clergy by lay officers.

My item for the Bishop this afternoon, it is a small item and it is with the regional model and the quality assurance framework that has been put in. You are going to have it externally audited. I would just like to be certain that you are going to have the actual framework before you put it out to contract externally validated, because auditors work from an issues versus investigations framework and they will require to have that framework established before they can tender to do it. I would like just to be assured that it is going to be looked at externally before it is put out to tender.

*Mr James Cary (Bath & Wells):* Full disclosure, I am one of the two representatives of the House of Laity on the Archbishops' Council and one of the two representatives of the Archbishops' Council on the National Safeguarding and Steering Group – ask for a diagram at the help desk if you would like. All of the above means that I have a front row seat to see the incredible work being done at speed by the Safeguarding Team. It is hard work. It is never done. The meetings, the ones I am in at least, are long. The papers are excellent – thank you, staff. Mistakes are made, have been made, cannot be unmade and that has been acknowledged.

But, for me, it is a joy to engage with the safeguarding work because our first objective as the Archbishops' Council is the doubling of the number of children and young people in our churches. Would that not be amazing? We can do that under God. In fact, the highlight of this Synod for me was 20 minutes spent in prayer at lunchtime on Tuesday. There were some bishops there, Archbishop Stephen was there and some members of the laity. It was brilliant. We were praying together for the work of the children and young people who are not just Church future but Church now.

It is vital that our churches are places where children can enjoy the safety so lacking in the world around them. I recently saw a video about some youth work going on and a young boy said – and it is hard not to cry as I say this – that he loved church because it was the only place where he was not bullied. Praise God for that church and many like it commending the love of Christ in such a practical and safe way. That is why we do this.

This means a few things. One is do the training and do it with joy, not because you have to but because you might be instrumental in preventing the abuse of a child. That would be good, would it not? Do the training with joy. Secondly, if we are serious about unity and walking together, insisting that a particular view of human sexuality is in itself a safeguarding issue is really unhelpful. Can we not do that, please? And, thirdly, please take note of this Report.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mountstephen):* I was not planning to speak but I want to because I chair the Redress Board and I am honoured to do it. I have done so for around a year now. We have a very clear commitment to produce a thorough, robust scheme in as timely a manner as we can. We have no desire to short circuit the very necessary complex work that needs to go on, but we have absolutely no desire to take any more time in establishing the redress scheme than it evidently



needs. We are committed to co-create the scheme with survivors. As such, I meet regularly with members of the Survivor Working Group and that Group is very well represented on the Board and their voice is clearly heard.

The staff who are working for us do a thorough job, amongst other things, rehearsing in-depth redress schemes not just nationally but globally, learning lessons, giving us as a Board clear recommendations for us to discuss and decide whether or not we will follow. One of the features of the scheme is that we have discussed subsidiarity. We are very clear that responsibility needs to be taken by appropriate bodies. Saying that the Church Commissioners will be the payers of first resort when other bodies may be legally responsible is not in itself responsible, but it is simply not the case that in any way are we designing a scheme which will delay people receiving redress. Just as insurance companies behind the scenes work out how payments will be made, so this scheme will do likewise. We will not pass survivors from pillar to post. I simply want to say to this Synod that we are doing all that we can to produce as robust a scheme as we can in as timely a manner as we can.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* As a retired teacher and someone who has been disclosed to – children aged nine to 13 who have been stabbed, beaten with brooms, thrown through a glass front door, suffered sexual abuse – I am very conscious that the Church is not always good at looking for damage in young people and it needs to be more vigilant and I hope the training will really help with that.

I am looking as well at the anxiety being expressed by the survivors about the all faith group which they would like to have as an agency for looking after them. I am looking at 1.4.3.2.2 on page 5. The survivors are expressing their lack of confidence in the Church of England and the Church of Wales in this Report and the absence of this overarching national Government body is certainly going to delay the way in which we can cope with this anxiety. I am hoping that the liaison that is appropriate with the other faith bodies is active and taking place at the moment.

I think it is very critical to the confidence of the survivors that this becomes active as soon as possible. I would really welcome a comment about this in the sense that if there is an update in timings, in the way in which we are organising as faith bodies together and the way in which that improves the confidence of the survivors in the Church of England, we shall be seriously concerned to see this expedited.

*The Chair:* I am going to propose that we now end this debate.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. I, therefore, call on the Bishop of Rochester to respond to the debate. Bishop, you have up to five minutes.

*The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs):* Chair, thank you very much indeed and thank you to everybody who has contributed to the debate. I will do my best to respond. Thank you to his Grace, the Archbishop, for his kind words to me and to Alex in support of our work. I take those as thanks to everybody involved in the

team, members of the NST and the NSSG. Thank you to Mark for his questions and challenges. Bishop Philip has responded to some of those questions. I think there is a little bit of a misunderstanding going on here.

With regard to the timescale, Philip has spoken to that. The timescale for the production of the scheme since Philip took over and since the Board was set up has not slipped. We are sticking to that. I was making a point in my speech, I would urge Synod to push to get the scheme operational while we work out some of those other issues around subsidiarity. That is about bodies taking responsibility at the appropriate level. Just to be clear, the scheme will be a one-stop shop for survivors. They will not be passed from pillar to post, as Philip said, and so I think there is a little bit of misunderstanding going on there. It is, going forward, about different bodies taking responsibility, taking seriously the safeguarding work that needs to go on and that needs to apply in parishes. But do, Mark, come and talk to Philip if you want to know a little bit more. I think there is a little bit of a misunderstanding going on there.

Thank you to Peter Adams. Yes, indeed, we passed Amending Canon No. 42 today, DSAs to DSOs, a process to bring that in, creating at the diocesan level a new culture and good dynamic working relationships. Absolutely, that is at the heart of the recommendation of introducing quality assurance and professional supervision of diocesan safeguarding teams to ensure that there is the same quality of work going across our 42 dioceses and cathedrals, so thank you for that. That is at the heart of the recommendation. Thank you to Clive Billenness for that very specific suggestion with regard to the external validation of the regional model. I had a brief word with William who was next to me at that point and we think that is a suggestion we would like to explore further and so do come back to us.

James Cary, thank you very much indeed for your endorsement, in particular the one of “do the training”. I am still dealing at the moment – I will not go into details – with a certain retired priest who thinks it is not necessary for them to undertake safeguarding training in order to carry on with their valued PTO ministry – no. Thank you for that endorsement. Bishop Philip, I will not refer to what you have said. I already done that. Penny, thank you very much indeed. I am not quite sure I got exactly what you were talking about and so please do come back and talk to us. What I can say – I referred to this in Questions the other day – is the NST’s commitment to developing a national strategy for survivor engagement is multifaceted. It is a hugely important part of the work. Again, do come and bring your particular questions and concerns back to us. It might be helpful for you to talk to those who are particularly involved in survivor engagement.

Thank you, everybody, for your contributions. Thank you for your kind words as well. I do appreciate that. Again, I would continue to urge your full support for my esteemed colleague, Bishop Joanne, who is going to be taking over from me in just a few weeks’ time and for the whole team. I would urge you warmly, please, to take note of this Report and; most importantly, take note of it, take it away and make sure we are acting on it out in our parishes and dioceses. Thank you very much indeed.

*The Chair.* I therefore put Item 14, “That this Synod do take note of this Report”, to the vote.

*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* That is clearly carried. We now move to the next item of business, Insurance Premium Tax.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 4.16 pm

*The Chair.* Before we start this item, the Secretary General has a word to say.

*Mr William Nye (Secretary General):* Thank you, Debbie. Members of Synod, I want to say a brief word in reply to the point of order made earlier by Amanda Robbie about the appearance of a rainbow flag image on the live stream of the Synod on YouTube at the end of Item 11 on *Living in Love and Faith*. Thank you to Amanda and others who have raised this with me. As Archbishop Justin said earlier, an investigation is underway into how this happened but a full investigation will take a little while.

I am assured by the excellent audio-visual team from the Corporation of Church House who run the live stream that this was not a deliberate act by any member of staff. However, the only way to investigate fully what might have happened requires that the system be switched off and analysed and you will appreciate that we cannot switch the system off this afternoon. Staff in the AV team and the Corporation are horrified that this has happened. They join me in apologising for this incident. I commit to publishing the results of this investigation as soon as possible.

## **ITEM 15**

### **INSURANCE PREMIUM TAX (GS 2265A AND GS 2265B)**

*The Chair.* We now come to Item 15, Insurance Premium Tax. For this item, members will need GS 2265A and GS 2265B and Notice Paper 5, the financial memo, as this item has a financial impact. I invite Gavin Kirk to speak to Item 15. He has up to ten minutes.

*The Ven. Gavin Kirk (Lincoln):* Members of Synod, it is my privilege to introduce this Diocesan Synod Motion which began life in the Deanery of Lafford in the Diocese of Lincoln in 2018. Lafford Deanery is concerned that some parishes do not insure their church buildings adequately due to the ever-increasing cost of premiums. The Diocese of Lincoln is unusually blessed with 615 church buildings. Those who are active in the Twittersphere may know that 41% of these are Grade I listed. Indeed, only 8% of our churches are unlisted. Many of these wonderful, historic buildings are in remote, rural villages where they may be the only community asset left – the pub, the village shop and the post office having disappeared years ago.

Some enterprising churches have partnered with local charities and amenities in the service of their communities with these bodies operating out of part of the church

building. We even have one church where the incumbent is vicar and licensee. Is that, I wonder, a fresh expression? The upkeep of these mainly listed buildings places huge financial burdens on PCCs who struggle to maintain the ministry and mission of the Church as well as the fabric and the grounds of these amazing public treasures.

Like many dioceses, a disturbing number of our church buildings have been subject to lead thefts, vandalism and arson, all of which result in insurance premiums increasing often quite substantially. One of the churches in Lafford Deanery had the lead of its north aisle roof stolen by one of the roving gangs of thieves whose efficiency is matched only by their seeming ability to disappear into thin air once their crime is committed. The PCC was fully insured and was able to recoup all the costs involved in the repair and restoration.

A church in the neighbouring Horncastle Deanery was not so fortunate. Its tower collapsed in January 2020 causing catastrophic damage to the building, though nobody was injured. It did not have appropriate insurance cover and the PCC was only able to claim the cost of the scaffolding to hold the rest of the building up. Our PCCs are trustees and custodians of these often ancient and always deeply significant public buildings. They are governed not just by ecclesiastical but also by charity law and so they are required to use their best efforts to fulfil the responsibilities of their office and that includes taking out appropriate insurance.

Between them, the PCCs of this country are responsible for no less than 45% of our nation's Grade I listed buildings. We would all want to affirm that the Church is the body of those who belong to Christ rather than the building in which that body meets. Many of our PCCs are faced with the wretched choice, for example, between whether to pay their latest insurance premium, often their largest annual expense, or to contribute to the common fund or Parish Share. They are often tempted to select a lower premium and only insure for making a site safe.

If the awful day comes and their church building is significantly damaged but not destroyed, they are left responsible for the remains of a building which has survived but now requires huge amounts of money to make it usable. Lincoln Diocese is not seeking to benefit simply the parish churches of the land by this motion. Rather, we hope that the Government might be lobbied to exempt all charities from IPT. Insurance Premium Tax, as the Secretary General has helpfully reminded us, has been around for nearly 30 years, having been introduced in 1994. Over the last few years, it has doubled to 12% and has been estimated to cost the Church of England £5 million per year. If the Government were to relieve all those in the charitable sector from the burden of this tax it would be acting consistently with its long-stated understanding that commercial organisations and charities ought to be treated differently in such matters, as is already the case with Income and Corporation Taxes and Gift Aid provision.

Members of Synod, this motion will not be a significant step forward in the evangelization of our nation, nor will it aid the plight of the oppressed and the refugee in our world. But if we pass this, as I hope we shall, it will give encouragement and relief to the many charities who seek in a time of uncertainty and financial difficulty to

direct all their available resources to the objects for which they exist without the added burden of attacks on their much needed insurance. I beg to move this motion from the Diocese of Lincoln standing in my name.

*The Chair.* This item is now open for debate.

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

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* I support this motion because Gavins must stand together. I had concerns when I first read the motion because of its reference to churches and I appreciate from the notes that were provided that discussions and negotiations took place within the dioceses to widen it from listed places of worship to charities in general. I had the same concern that the Chief Executive William Nye expressed in the final paragraph of his notes on the motion that we have to be careful that we do not seem to be doing special pleading for churches.

We are here to speak for the churches, that is why we are here, but we are also here to speak for society. I want to widen this to the impact on other charities. I am in contact with a number of rape and sexual assault referral centres and rape crisis type organisations and they scabble around for funds and it has almost become a full-time job.

A few years ago, the Government changed the funding model that they provided to make it a three year model instead of a one year model, so they could spend more time caring for victims than trying to find money to do the work. But, since then, it has gone to the police and crime commissioners, police authorities, some of them sent it to the police forces and they are all under contract and it is a lot of work.

Insurance Premium Tax is only a small part of the expenditure of some of these charities, but when you are a small charity a very small part is actually a very large part. I support the motion. I ask the Synod to support the motion, but in taking this forward please talk about the impact it would have on all charities not just churches and listed places of worship.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark):* I too want to share with you the experience of being a trustee of a non-Church charity. For a number of years now – in fact, it is 50 since I arrived in Bermondsey – I have been associated with what is called the Cambridge University Mission, now the Salmon Youth Centre, in Bermondsey. In 2010, it was rebuilt to become at the time the largest purpose built Christian youth centre in the country – something for which I can take no credit whatsoever – and we have carried on providing youth work during the years of austerity.

In 2020, it became clear that the second phase of our brand new building, which had been procured for us by a housing association partner developer – a housing association, I hasten to add, which from its public website has liquid assets of £800 million – was covered in combustible cladding. Our insurance premium as a charity rose from £12,000 per annum to £180,000 per annum and in the following year, the year we are currently in, it has gone up to over £200,000. We are responsible for

raising that amount of money and the partner housing association, so far – I live in hope and pray in hope – has declined to increase the proportion which it feels required to pay. It is paying the proportion under the lease it believes it is required to pay, but it still leaves us with a very large gap.

We are a small charity. Our turnover is £800,000 a year. We still have to raise all of that every year. But you can imagine it has just been awful, absolutely awful. This motion for me is not just about Insurance Premium Tax. It is also about the insurance industry and what they are doing about these massive increases for charities like my own. Our insurer – or our principal insurer, they have split it – is the Ecclesiastical Insurance Office and I am very, very grateful indeed to the support that Bishop Christopher has given in person to meeting with them to try and alleviate the position that we have been in.

Yes, it is much more than church buildings. There are loads of charities and I suspect there are quite a few churches who are involved in these partnership arrangements with housing associations and other developers where this situation has occurred. Yes, let us support this motion but let us understand that it is a far wider issue. It is an issue which affects the insurance company business, the insurance world and, frankly, the health and wellbeing of trustees like myself who have had to live through this for two and a half years.

There is a silver lining. Last November, after two and a quarter years of working through this issue, thanks to His Majesty's Government we did receive the offer of a grant of £5.8 million for the removal and replacement of the cladding – fantastic. I am hoping we will be on site in April and I might be in a slightly more cheerful disposition this time next year when it is mostly removed, but that has not relieved us of the obligation to find £200,000 a year insurance premium. It is a mega issue. So please let us do what we can to approach not only the specific issue of Insurance Premium Tax but also the wider issue of how these completely unforeseeable events covered through insurance are addressed in our common society. Thank you very much indeed for bearing with me.

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

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* Thank you very much indeed, Gavin, for bringing this to us. I was not planning to speak. I was not even very interested in this, I did not really see why it was important, but I have really had my eyes opened. Thank you so much to Lafford Deanery because it must seem a bit disheartening – it must take ages and ages to get through diocesan synod, the whole process, and here we are eventually. I really hope we will accept this motion, although the wording does need to be changed to “His Majesty's Government”, as Adrian pointed out.

It just caused me to reflect that, actually, you said this might not make much difference and I just would like to contest that. One of my favourite little verses in the Bible is hidden away in Zechariah, it says, “Do not despise the day of the small thing”. I think this might make a really big difference to churches and church communities trying to do this. In Winchester, we have had a fire in one of our parishes in Ropley. I know

that many of you will have experienced that and we saw the horrific pictures recently of the church in London Diocese. It can be a really traumatic event and we do need to make sure our churches are properly insured.

Sadly, Ropley Church was not properly insured and that has come back to us as a diocesan board of finance to try and work out the best thing to do. This is a really important thing to be doing as our very last piece of business and I just want to say a big thank you and I hope that we will all vote in favour of this.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I am very grateful to Lincoln Diocese for bringing this issue forward. I would just say – and this may sound harsh to Gavin number one – any PCC that thinks that they should not have the appropriate insurance to save 12% Insurance Premium Tax needs to think very hard. We must never ever compromise on what is the right amount of insurance. There are cases where churches quite deliberately do not insure at rebuilding cost because they recognise that, if something catastrophic was to happen, they might need a different solution. That is a big decision and I would never commend it. I merely note that it happens.

I have no intention, Chair, of speaking against this motion. I note it. I think the first thing that I might be saying to the officers and MPA is we may be able to reach out to ACEVO (Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations) to see what appetite they would have. I do not think we can assume that charities would put this on the top of their lobbying list, so let us check what the sector-wide appetite is. But I think from me what it reminds us is of that elephant in the room of which we have heard several elephants this afternoon. The whole question of the fact, Gavin, what marks us out from other charities is that we have 45% of the Grade I listed buildings in this country and at some point we need to think long and hard about how we engage together as to what we think the long-term solution should be for those buildings for which we may no longer have a need over time.

As Gavin number two maybe reminds us – or maybe it was number one, I get confused – the Church is not the building, the Church is the human worshipping organisation. It may well be that we have wonderful Grade I churches which are no longer the most appropriate place or can no longer serve the best interests of taking forward the Kingdom of God. In accepting this motion, could I urge Synod to keep in mind the need at some point to think about what is the outcome we would like to insure or achieve in terms of the upkeep of that wonderful heritage that we own for this country.

*Canon Lucy Docherty (Portsmouth):* Thank you very much for bringing this motion, Gavin. I will be very pleased to support it. I am responding just to John Spence. I would like to add not just Grade I listed buildings but if you have a church which is Grade II style, or even only Grade II, you are still subject to all sorts of extra penalties and I will be very glad to be able to take back to my PCC treasurer some good news about finances for her. But I have a simple question to ask and it may be very naive and I may have missed something. We are talking about churches but I just wondered are our cathedrals included in that? I know there are some cathedrals which may have a lot of money but some do not and it is always an extra burden trying to find tax for anything. I just want to ask the question: does this include our cathedrals or are they

exempt because they come under all sorts of different legal provisions which more informed people than me could answer?

*Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford):* Could I add to the list of real concerns for PCCs the issue of subsidence which is not covered by most insurance schemes, EIG. Particularly in my part of the world, which is built on Essex clay, we have had an exponential rise in claims but they are not covered. I know we sing hymns about shifting sands but we cannot see these lovely Grade I buildings affected with no help at all, so anything that you could do to help would be hugely appreciated.

*The Chair:* I see no-one else standing and so I call on Gavin Kirk to respond, please. He has up to five minutes.

*The Ven. Gavin Kirk (Lincoln):* Thank you, sisters and brothers in the Synod. It is marvellous to be standing here not having to reply to anyone who has been negative. Thank you to Mr Drake. Yes, we are, indeed, wanting all charities to be exempted and that was a change that was introduced at a very early stage in this process. You are right, IPT is small but it is significant – as it will be nice to be able to say of your present interlocutor, but I am not so sure.

Mr Greenwood, thank you for sharing your experience from the youth centre in Bermondsey. I am afraid that sort of rise in insurance premium is sadly not unique and we take your questions about the insurance industry as being very pertinent. They do lie outside the scope of this Diocesan Synod Motion but perhaps, members of Synod, as individuals we could undertake to do what we can about challenging these.

To the Vice Chair of the House of Laity, do not despise the day of the small thing. Thank you very much indeed for that. We think it is small but could be significant. You are quite right about the fact that it is now “His Majesty”, but when the Diocesan Synod passed it it was “Her Majesty” and I do not think you can read that backwards, can you?

Canon Spence, as always, offers very sound advice and I would want to echo what he says about adequate levels of insurance, but as I tried to point out some parishes face the choice between that and whether or not to pay for the mission and ministry they receive. This motion is designed to help them out of that impasse. What outcome do we want is something that perhaps could form a debate in this Synod later on in this quinquennium.

To Lucy Docherty we would want to say that we would most certainly want to include cathedrals in that. We do not believe they are currently exempt and we think they should be. I am afraid, Mrs Durlacher, I did not catch everything you said. I am getting old and my hearing is not what it was. If you would care to catch me or send me an email, I will make sure to include that in what I report back to Lincoln Diocesan Synod. It is thrilling for us that our Diocesan Synod Motion has received such positive support here and I commend it to you with our thanks.

*The Chair:* We now put Item 15 to the vote.



*The motion was put and carried on a show of hands.*

*The Chair.* That is clearly carried and that concludes this item of business. We move to the Prorogation.

## **ITEM 16 PROROGATION**

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* Sorry not to be a bit quicker, I was just preparing myself for the counted vote by Houses. Just before I read this, I have to say I do think providence is a very strange thing and we need more theology on it.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury prorogued the Synod and dismissed it with a blessing.*