

JULY 2023 GROUP OF SESSIONS

Report of the General Synod Business Committee and Guide to the Group of Sessions

Introduction:

1. The Business Committee is an elected committee of the General Synod. It is charged under Standing Order 4 with settling the agenda for each group of sessions and determining the order in which business is to be taken. Subject to Standing Order 1, it is also responsible for all matters relating to the sessional arrangements of the Synod (Standing Order 125).
2. The Business Committee prepares a report for each group of sessions. This report sets out the business and practicalities for the July 2023 group of sessions and gives an overview of the work of the Committee since its last report in February 2023. It contains important information about the group of sessions which the Business Committee hopes members will find helpful.
3. The Business Committee confirms that there will be a group of sessions in November 2023, from 13th to 15th November. Members are also requested to hold the envelope of Friday 23rd February 2024 to Tuesday 27th February 2024.

Setting the Agenda for the July group of sessions

4. The Business Committee strives to set the agenda in a way that ensures that there is a balance of subjects, and a mix between items brought by dioceses through Diocesan Synod Motions (DSMs) or individual members through Private Members' Motions (PMMs) and those put forward by the Archbishops' Council or its sub-committees. It ensures that there is adequate time available for legislative business and sufficient time for standing items such as questions and farewells.
5. There were some items that were scheduled to be taken at the February 2023 group of sessions but due to a lack of time, they were deferred. The legislative business and the Standing Orders Committee report will be presented as in February. The Governance Review however will bring a new paper and motion to the July group of sessions.
6. The Business Committee is aware that there are a number of DSMs which were submitted in the last quinquennium and have not yet been scheduled for debate and is seeking to allocate time to these where possible. This would allow the debates for future DSMs to happen in a more timely fashion in future. The Blackburn DSM to Reduce Parochial Fees for Marriages was contingency business at the July 2022 group of sessions and the Worcester DSM on the contribution of faith to prisoner rehabilitation which was contingency business at the February 2023 group of sessions have both been tabled for this group of sessions.
7. There will be a presentation and opportunity for questions on progress on work following the debate at the February 2023 group of sessions on Living in Love

and Faith. This will be taking place on Saturday afternoon, outside of Standing Orders.

8. There are thirteen legislative items at this group of sessions. One item will have its first consideration stage, two will have final drafting and final approval stages at this group of sessions, and one will have its final approval stage. Five are for approval and three are for deemed approval. One item is for enactment. Further details can be found in paragraph 26 below.
9. As with recent groups of sessions, the Business Committee has decided to schedule two periods for 'question time' to allow more time for this important part of the Synod process. Following Synod feedback, these will take place on Friday evening and Saturday morning.
10. The Business Committee is delighted that this group of sessions will be attended by a number of guests from the Anglican Communion and Ecumenical guests. Details about those attending, including a brief biography can be found in Notice Paper 4.
11. As is usual for July groups of sessions, the 2024 Archbishops' Council Budget and proposals for Apportionment has been allocated time on the agenda, and there will be an opportunity for members to engage with the work of the Archbishops' Council through a presentation on their Annual Report.
12. The Elections Review Group, a sub-group of the Business Committee, will be presenting its Report on the 2021 General Synod Elections and proposing recommendations for changes in advance of the 2026 General Synod Elections.
13. There will be a Presidential Address from the Archbishop of York, an address by one of the Anglican Communion Representatives and there will be a presentation on developments concerning the Independent Safeguarding Board.
14. As 2023 is the 10th Anniversary of the Ministry Experience Scheme, members will be invited to attend a presentation and meet with those who have participated in the Scheme on Saturday lunchtime.

Practicalities for the July group of sessions

15. The group of sessions is being held at the University of York, and accommodation and catering on campus is arranged for all members by the Synod Support Team. The meetings will be held in the Central Hall. Details of how to find your accommodation, dining room and map of the campus will be sent to you by email from Synod Support. Members who have requested a car parking hanger will be able to collect this at check-in.
16. As with previous groups of sessions, we will be providing basic Zoom access to the meeting to those unable to attend in person due to illness or other reasons. The Synod Support Team will contact members regarding this, and will arrange access to the Zoom call and voting platform. Please ensure you let Synod Support know if you are joining a session by Zoom.

Evening Sessions

17. The Business Committee has decided to schedule two evening sessions in July.

Until relatively recently this was normal practice, but was ceased as an experiment when catering at Fringe Events became impossible and was never reviewed in the light of experience.

18. In view of the amount of business we have, Synod will sit on Sunday and Monday evenings. These sessions have been arranged to allow members to eat in their allocated dining rooms before going on to any Fringe event and returning to the Central Hall when business re-convenes.

Living in Love and Faith / Prayers of Love and Faith

19. Synod is invited to hear an update from the bishops on the work to implement the decisions made in February 2023 following the debate on GS 2289.
20. To allow as much flexibility for this, the Business Committee has decided that it will not be part of the formal Group of Sessions (and therefore not form part of the Agenda), but it hopes and expects that members will want to engage fully with this. Details of this will be in a Notice Paper and explained at York.

Elections Review Group: Report from the Business Committee

21. At its meeting on 30 April 2023, the Committee received a Report from its Elections Review Group which is set out in GS 2312. The Committee agreed to the recommendations contained in the Report and commends them to Synod for approval.

Deep Dive

22. The Business Committee has decided to set up a one-off committee to undertake a deep dive at the General Synod in York. This builds on the ideas that have been discussed for some time for a 'Select Committee of Synod'. The Committee will meet for 2 hours on Saturday evening and will be focusing on the vision and strategy, specifically how it relates to mixed ecology. The proposal is that the Committee will be able to ask questions on this topic and will produce a short report which can include recommendations. The Business Committee will review how successful this has been in the light of feedback, with a view to having further deep dives in future.

Complaints Process

23. There will be a presentation on Tuesday morning setting out potential proposals for strengthening the code of conduct and/or a complaints process for Synod members. Members will be invited to engage with this in advance of any further next steps at a future group of sessions.

Private Members' Motions

24. It has been brought to the Business Committee's attention that there has been a technical issue with signatures for PMMs via the website not being received by staff between May 4th and 20th June. This has now been remedied and all signatures have been added to the individual records. However, as the period of

non-delivery was after the Business Committee met to set the Agenda, it does not affect which PMM's will be debated at this group of sessions. Synod Staff apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused and the Business Committee will be monitoring this in future.

Worship

25. Worship is arranged on behalf of Synod by the Synod Chaplain. Following an open recruitment process, The Revd Dylan Turner, was appointed as Synod Chaplain. He can be contacted on synodchaplain@churchofengland.org.
26. As this is a body of the Church of England, worship is integral to the Synod meetings. Each session starts with worship and concludes with worship. Holy Communion is celebrated in the Berrick Saul Building every day except Sunday, as Holy Communion will be celebrated in York Minister that morning. Transport is available for members to travel to the Minister on Sunday morning at a small cost. Tickets are available from the Information Desk in the foyer in the Central Hall during Synod.

Agenda items for the July group of sessions

27. The following sets out a brief summary of each of the papers being presented at the July group of sessions. It is hoped that members will find this useful, although the Business Committee strongly recommends that all papers read in full.
 - [GS 2296 Agenda](#): This is the key paper for the group of sessions as it sets out the business for the meeting. This should be read alongside the Order Papers which will be published about an hour before each session starts on the Synod App and website (and available printed on orange paper in the Central Hall). Please note that the agenda is subject to change during the group of sessions if business necessitates; the Chair of the Business Committee will explain any proposed changes to Synod.
 - [GS 2297 Report of the Business Committee](#): This report will be discussed as one of the first items on the agenda. Members will have the opportunity to comment on the agenda or on the content of the Report during the take note debate.
 - [GS 2298A](#) and [GS 2298B Church of England Youth Synod](#): This is a Private Members' Motion presented by Sam Wilson (Chester) on behalf of The Revd Tim Norwood (Oxford) who is no longer on Synod. It seeks to establish a Youth Synod which would provide co-opted members to General Synod and the Archbishops' Council.
 - [GS 2299 Legal Officers \(Annual Fees\) Order 2023](#) and [GS 2300 Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others \(Fees\) Order 2023](#). These are the usual annual fees orders providing for the annual retainers paid to diocesan registrars and for court fees in the ecclesiastical courts. GS 2300 is deemed to be approved and will not be debated unless there is a request to do so.

- [GS 2291 Electronic Register Book of Services Form and Conditions 2023:](#) This item allows a register of services to be kept in an electronic form approved by the General Synod as provided for in Canon F 12, as amended by Amending Canon No. 41.
- [GS 2301 Appointment of a member of the Archbishops' Council:](#) The Synod is asked formally to approve the appointment of Carl Hughes as a member of the Archbishops' Council and Chair of the Finance Committee. Under the provisions of paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 1 of the National Institutions Measure 1998, the approval of the General Synod is required for appointments to the Archbishops' Council.
- [GS 2272B Church of England \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Measure:](#) This Measure covers a wide range of provisions which would not merit free-standing legislation. Many of the provisions are of a technical nature.
- [GS 2273B Amending Canon No 43:](#) This Amending Canon covers a wide range of provisions in canons which would not merit free-standing legislation. Many of the provisions are of a technical nature.
- [GS 2269D Amending Canon No 42:](#) This is a formal item to make, promulge and execute Canon no 42.
- [GS 2302 National Investing Bodies Report on July 2018 Synod motion on Climate Change:](#) The 2018 Motion asked the National Investing Bodies (NIBs) to engage with high carbon-emitting companies and disinvest from fossil fuel companies not aligned with the Paris Agreement by July 2023. This presentation will report on the conclusion of the five-year engagement, progress companies have made and the approach to disinvestment the NIBs are undertaking.
- [GS 2294A](#) and [GS 2294B Contribution of Faith to the Rehabilitation of Prisoners:](#) This is a Diocesan Synod Motion from Worcester and discusses the ways in which faith can have a positive impact on an offender's behaviour.
- [GS 2303 Living in Love and Faith:](#) This provides an update on the work related to Living in Love and Faith since the February 2023 group of sessions
- [GS 2304 Independent Safeguarding Board:](#) This paper gives an update on work related to the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB).
- [GS 2305 Redress:](#) This gives an overview of progress of the work to develop a Safeguarding redress programme for the whole Church.
- [GS 2306A](#) and [GS 2306B Responding to the Climate Emergency:](#) This is a Diocesan Synod Motion from Oxford asking the Church to strengthen its work addressing climate change.
- [GS 2307 National Church Governance:](#) This presents the developed proposals for the implementation of Governance reform following the February 2023 group of sessions, and will request that legislation be introduced to give effect to the proposals.
- [GS 2308 Archbishops' Council Annual Report:](#) There will be a presentation on

- the Archbishops' Council's Annual Report and members will be given an opportunity to ask questions on the work of the Council in 2022.
- [GS 2309 Archbishops' Council Budget 2024 and Proposals for Apportionment](#): This is a regular item for the July group of sessions, as under its Standing Orders, General Synod must be invited to approve the Archbishops' Council's annual budget and its proposals for the diocesan apportionment. It ensures the requirement that proposals for the budget and apportionment must be sent to General Synod members by 30 June of the preceding year is met.
 - [GS 2292 Revised 61st Report of the Standing Orders Committee](#): This sets out a number of proposals to amend the Synod Standing Orders.
 - [GS 2264 Church of England Pensions \(Application of Capital Funds\) Measure](#): This Measure further extends the period during which the Church Commissioners are permitted to resort to capital to meet their obligations under the pre-1998 clergy pension scheme.
 - [GS 2310 Faculty Jurisdiction Rules](#): The scope of the proposed amendments to these Rules are limited and impact on Chancellors determining petitions for faculty that involve contested heritage.
 - [GS 2311 Clergy Conduct Measure](#): This legislation will set out the statutory framework and establish the jurisdiction for dealing with cases relating to clergy conduct, replacing the Clergy Discipline Measure.
 - [GS 2312 Report from the Elections Review Group](#): This gives an update on the work of the Elections Review Group which has been reviewing the elections to Synod in 2021 and preparing for the elections in 2026 and seek approval of the recommendations in the report.
 - [GS 2313 Church Representation Rules \(Amendment\) Resolution](#): This legislation gives effect to three of the recommendations of the Elections Review Group and sets out changes to the Church Representation Rules concerning the conduct of elections at APCMs and declarations to be made by PCC members following election.
 - [GS 2314 Revitalising the Parish for Mission](#): This item reaffirms Synod's support for the parish as a central component of the Church's mixed ecology. It aims to embed learning about growth and missional vitality in the life of each parish and diocese, while supporting the Vision and Strategy priorities of mixed ecology and younger and more diverse.
 - [GS 2315 Review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure](#): The review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure began in 2020 and this brings the draft proposals for new legislation for Synod to debate. Approval will be sought for the work to continue and legislation to be introduced in 2024.
 - [GS 2282A](#) and [GS 2282B Reduce Parochial Fees for Marriages](#): This is a Diocesan Synod Motion from Blackburn and seeks to set the fees relating to marriages at nil or a minimal amount.

- [GS 2316 Synod Complaints Process](#): This will set out the current situation for complaints and consider the different approaches that could be taken by Synod in advance of any further next steps at a future group of sessions.
- [GS 2317 Scheme of variation of membership of Deanery Synods](#): This is a deemed item setting out the scheme of variation from the Diocese of Lincoln.
- [GS 2318 Draft Scheme Amending the Diocese in Europe Constitution](#): This is a deemed item. The amendments relate to the date by which a chaplaincy annual meeting must be held, the admission to office of churchwardens, and holding meetings by electronic means.

Contingency Business

28. Some or all of these items will only be debated if changes to the agenda during the group of sessions means additional time is available.

- [GS 2319 Land and Nature](#): This item builds on the developing net zero work that has already been agreed by Synod and which dioceses are beginning to implement.
- [GS 2320A](#) and [GS 2320B Future of Work](#): this is Diocesan Synod Motion from Oxford and addresses the issue of fair work.
- [GS 2321 Report on Archbishops' Commission on Families and Households](#): this item invites Synod to engage with the work of the Archbishops' Commissions.

Work of the Committee

29. The Business Committee has met twice since the February 2023 group of sessions.

30. The Committee considered the petition submitted at the February 2023 group of sessions by Mr Luke Appleton. They noted that the content of the petition had been brought to the attention of Synod and concluded that there was no further action that they could take.

31. The Committee has taken forward a number of suggestions from Synod members' feedback after the February 2023 group of sessions, including the following:

- Ensuring that the Synod App is updated in a timely manner. This includes updating the Standing Orders and ensuring that papers are available as soon as possible.
- To address the issue of battery life for the voting handsets, charging stations will be available in the Central Hall. Staff will ensure that handsets are charged during lunchbreaks and at the end of each day.
- Noting that members welcomed the additional pastoral support provided at the February 2023 group of sessions, which will be continued for July 2023.
- Continuing with two sessions of Questions.
- Holding the Synod Deep Dive experiment.

32. The Business Committee would welcome feedback from members on any aspect of Synod. This can be done formally through the post-Synod feedback questionnaire or more informally by email to synod@churchofengland.org.

Accessibility

33. The Business Committee's statement on Accessibility ([GS Misc 1201](#)) was last reviewed in December 2020 but the Committee regularly engages with the Accessible Synod Group to bring improvements to each group of sessions. Feedback from members on how to improve this would be welcomed.

Synod App

34. Members are encouraged to download the Synod App. This gives you access to all papers, supporting documents; and the ability to submit requests to speak and amendments. If you have any issues accessing this, the Synod Support team are always happy to advise.

Record of Business Done

35. The transcript from the February 2023 group of sessions is now available on the website [here](#).

Business Committee Policies

36. The Business Committee has a number of policies covering various aspects of Synod's activities which are reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. These and other guidance may be viewed on the Members' [resources section](#) on the Church of England website.
37. The [Guide to the General Synod](#) and the [Synod Members' Survival Guide](#) may be especially helpful as members prepare for the group of sessions.
38. Synod members are encouraged to be proactive in publicising the work of Synod, and social media is a great platform for this. The hashtag used on Twitter is #Synod. There are several social media channels which members have used in the past. However, members are reminded of the importance of being respectful to each other and that social media comments are seen by many both within and outside the Church.
39. Synod business is recorded and livestreamed on the Church of England YouTube channel, and occasionally broadcast on the BBC Parliament Channel as well. Members should consider this when participating in the chamber.

On behalf of the Business Committee,
Canon Robert Hammond, Chair
June 2023

Membership of the Business Committee June 2023

Chair (elected by General Synod)

Canon Robert Hammond

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd Martin Gorick, Bishop of Dudley

Elected by the House of Clergy

Fr Paul Cartwright (Vice-Chair)

The Ven Mark Ireland

The Revd Jody Stowell

Elected by the House of Laity

Mr Clive Scowen

Mrs Michelle Obende

Mr Nic Tall

Appointed by the Archbishops' Council

Mrs Alison Coulter

The Revd Canon Tim Goode

The Secretary to the Committee is the Acting Clerk to the Synod, Jenny Jacobs.

Forecast of future General Synod business

This contains potential items that are likely to come to a future group of sessions, it is not an exhaustive list as other items may be added and does not guarantee that an item will be scheduled.

13th – 15th November 2023

Legislative business

- Chancel Repair Liability Measure – First Consideration Stage
- Safeguarding Redress Measure – First Consideration Stage
- Churches Conservation Trust Order 2023 – For Approval
- Vacancy in See Regulations (Amendment) Resolution – For Approval

Non-legislative business

- Living in Love and Faith
- Appointment of the Chair of the Pensions Board

February 2024 group of sessions

The dates for the February 2024 group of sessions are still to be finalised but members are requested to hold the date envelope of Friday 23 February to Tuesday 27 February 2024 for Synod.

For and on behalf of the General Synod Business Committee
Canon Robert Hammond, Chair
June 2023