

# **Report of Proceedings 2023**

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

**Friday 7 July 2023 – Tuesday 11 July 2023**

**University of York**

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## **Full Synod: First Day Friday 7 July 2023**

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* took the Chair at 2.01 pm

*The Chair:* Dear sisters and brothers, a very, very warm welcome to York University and this July group of sessions here in the beautiful Northern Province: the Promised Land of the Church of England.

If you are experiencing a July group of sessions for the very first time, I do hope you will soon find your way around the campus, though you probably will not, as it takes at least a few Julys to find your way round, but I am sure you will soon feel settled. As always, there are colleagues on hand to assist and help. While I do this could I extend a warm welcome to those joining us remotely; we also look forward to your contributions.

Those of you who were here last year will remember the Vice-Chancellor of the University Charlie Jeffery welcomed and addressed the Synod. On your behalf I want to thank him and the wider team here at the university who look after us so well.

As we gather, we begin in prayer and worship and I invite the Synod Chaplain, the Revd Dylan Turner to lead us.

### **WORSHIP**

*The Chaplain to the Synod (The Revd Dylan Turner)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

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

*The Chair:* Dylan, thank you very much indeed. Synod, I am about to read out the names of new members of the General Synod who have been elected since the last group of sessions. As I read your name, if you are able to, please stand and remain standing and we will give one hearty round of applause at the end.

The new members are: the Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell, Bishop of Stepney, Suffragan Bishops, replacing the Rt Revd John Perumbalath; the Rt Revd Julie Conalty, Bishop of Birkenhead, Suffragan Bishops, replacing the Rt Revd Helen-Ann Hartley; the Rt Revd Stephen Race, Suffragan Bishops, replacing the Rt Revd Philip North; the Very Revd Chris Dalliston, Deans, replacing the Very Revd Andrew Nunn; Mrs Christiana Olomolaiye, Diocese of Bristol, replacing Miss Abigail Scott; the Revd Simon Drew, Diocese of Chester, replacing the Revd Dr Rob Munro; Mr Peter Kelsey, Diocese of Derby, replacing Mrs Sian Kellogg; Dr Rosemary Gomes, Diocese of London, replacing Dr Liz Brutus; the Ven. Jonathan Chaffey, Diocese of Oxford, replacing the Revd Tim

Norwood; the Ven. Sally Gaze, Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich, replacing the Revd Leslie Siu; Sister Beverley CSF, Religious Communities, replacing Sister Anita Cook CSC; and Mr Nathan Obokoh, Diocese of Leicester, replacing Miss Venessa Pinto.

May we greet them all.

I am now going to read out the names of the Bishops who are attending this group of sessions under Standing Order 123 in place of their Diocesan Bishop. They do not need to stand and we will not be giving them applause. I do not know why, but they are very welcome. I beg your pardon, I think we will greet them in a little while.

They are: the Bishop of Aston, the Rt Revd Ann Hollinghurst for the Diocese of Birmingham; the Bishop of Grimsby, the Rt Revd David Court for the Diocese of Lincoln; the Bishop of Brixworth for the Rt Revd John Halbrook for the Diocese of Peterborough; the Bishop of Southampton, the Rt Revd Debbie Sellin for the Diocese of Winchester. Perhaps I will ask you to stand because we are going to applaud you in a minute, you will be encouraged to hear.

It also gives me great pleasure to welcome ecumenical guests and representatives from the Anglican Communion who are: the Most Revd Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith, Primate of the Church of the Province of West Africa, and Bishop of Asante Mampong. I know you are here, Bishop Cyril. Wait! The applause will go to his head. The Right Revd Daniel Gutiérrez, the Bishop of Pennsylvania and President of Compass Rose Society; the Rt Revd Anthony Poggo, Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion; the Very Revd Dr Sarah Rowland Jones from the Church in Wales; the Rt Revd Erik Eckerdahl, Bishop of Visby, and the Rt Revd Ralf Meister, Bishop of Hanover.

It is great that you are with us. Please let us show our appreciation. My dear brother Archbishop Cyril will be preaching in York Minster on Sunday morning. We look forward to it.

Finally, following the circulation of paper GS 1339 to members a few weeks ago I would like to congratulate Jenny Jacobs who has been appointed Clerk to the Synod, and assure her of our prayers and best wishes, because she knows and we know that looking after us is not an easy job. Jenny, thank you very much for taking this on.

Synod, that concludes this item of business.

## **ITEM 2**

### **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 2.17 pm

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, Synod. We come now to Item 2 on the agenda which is the Presidential Address. I invite the Archbishop of York to give his Presidential Address.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you. Dear friends, let me begin with some words from Pope Francis:

“In today’s world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalised indifference, born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realise that we are all in the same boat”. How wonderful would it be, even as we discover far away planets, to rediscover the needs of the brothers and sisters who orbit around us.

With these words in mind, I want to turn in this address to the prayer that Jesus taught his friends, the Lord’s Prayer as we call it. Just the opening word is a powerful and challenging declaration of solidarity; a defiant rebuke to all who would reduce us to isolation from each other and from God.

For if this God to whom we pray is “Father” - and yes, I know the word “father” is problematic for those whose experience of earthly fathers has been destructive and abusive, and for all of us who have laboured rather too much from an oppressively, patriarchal grip on life - then those of us who say this prayer together, whether we like it or not, whether we acknowledge it or not, even if we determinedly face away from each other, only turning around in order to put a knife in the back of the person standing behind us, are – are - sisters and brothers, family members, the household of God.

That little word “our” is a revolution, not “My God”. Not “Your God”. Our God. The God who Jesus shows us is the loving father God, the God of giving and self-giving reciprocity. The God who is Holy Trinity.

In and through Jesus Christ, this God has taken on our flesh, lived and died, and been raised to glory, so that the barriers of separation that did exist between us, and that still persist if we persist in our wayward selfishness (what the Church calls sin), are broken down.

It is all there in the very first word. God is our God, and, therefore, we who say this prayer belong to each other.

This, I concede, most obvious of insights into the prayer we say so regularly, came home powerfully to me earlier this year, when I visited the Anglican Centre in Rome and had an audience with the Pope. It was at the end of that, as Pope Francis invited me to say the Lord’s Prayer with him, that it dawned on me - yes, I know I’m a slow learner - that in doing this, saying this prayer together, we were declaring a unity that is already there through our baptism into Christ. Water is indeed thicker than blood.

“The unity of the Church”, wrote William Temple, “is a perpetual fact; our task is to not to create it but exhibit it.”

Therefore, what we call the pursuit of Christian unity is actually the making visible of what already exists. It is just that we have become so habituated to our separation, thinking it the normal state of affairs, that we imagine the obstacles to be bigger than they are. We live parallel ecclesial lives. We fail to be scandalised, as I believe God is scandalised. For, again, if we say this prayer, we are, in that one little opening word, declaring the unity that we ought then to bend every sinew and expend all efforts of creativity to make visible.

Why? For the more effective management of our resources? For a healthier bottom line? Well, these things would be nice. But no: in order that the world may believe. That was Jesus’ prayer on the night before he died, and at our peril do we underestimate the terrible damage our visible disunity does to our proclamation of the Gospel.

To the world, it does not look like “our God”, but “my God”. Entrusted with a ministry of reconciliation, we remain stubbornly unreconciled. We appear complacent about division and often also appear all too ready to divide again.

But that beautiful “our” runs through the whole of the prayer. Through everything. It is the scandalously beautiful Christian vision from a scandalously hospitable God.

Not my daily bread - but ours. Not my sins forgiven - but everyone’s. Not my will be done - but God’s.

But, friends, we have got used to disunity. We think it is normal when, in fact, it is a disgrace. It is an affront to Christ and all he came to give us.

But if we begin with the word “our” and let it change the way we see ourselves and see each other, then we will also see that our belonging to each other is not only non-negotiable, it is what we must prize and hold onto in all our discussions, all our decisions and all the issues we face. Moreover, we must always go the extra mile of finding those ways of widening the tent of our inclusion, but without letting anyone be lost. Disagreeing well really does matter.

As well as an audience with the Pope, on my visit to Rome, I also met with Cardinal Koch, the Head of the Dicastery for Christian Unity. He got straight to the point. When I sat down, he asked me, “Why are you in Rome talking about unity when the Anglican Communion is splitting?” I told him we are not splitting but, yes, we face enormous challenges, and that many of them are around the limits and requirements of unity and diversity. I acknowledged that within the Anglican Communion there are movements for change and movements that cherish unchanging practice. But I also said that our way of ecclesial belonging, as a federation of churches in communion, but not under a single rule, allowed us flexibility within the boundaries of our bonds of communion, enabling us, at our best, to walk together with our conscientiously held differences.

So, this is my conclusion. Ecumenism is something we do, not just something we talk about. It is too important to be left to bishops and theologians. We need a new springtime in ecumenism: new energy; new imagination; new determination. It may - may - even need to begin here in this Synod, in our Church of England.

As we say the Lord's Prayer, especially as we say it through these sessions, let that word "our" shape us, leading us in close collaboration with our churches, our deaneries, our dioceses but also with the other denominations, particularly those who are with present with us, those with whom share our baptism, and with whom we could share ministry and mission and with whom we must pray.

This more than anything we need, we must search out opportunities for prayer with each other and for each other and for the unity of the Church that the world may believe.

I have been Archbishop of York for almost three years now, but I still wonder whether the most significant thing I did was in the first five minutes, when I went to the Shrine of St Margaret Clitheroe in the Shambles and prayed in silence with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Middlesbrough. We said the Lord's Prayer together.

Oh, may this prayer lead us back to each other, for as it leads us closer to the heart of Jesus and his prayer for the world, then it also leads us closer to everyone else who prays it. Suddenly, we recognise each other as fellow disciples. We weep for our shortcomings and misunderstandings; ask forgiveness for our many mistakes.

Therefore, let this recognition of our belonging to each other also shape not just the conversations we have, but the way we have them. We are not talking to strangers, and certainly not opponents, but sisters and brothers to whom we are and should be deeply committed.

These sessions will deal with a number of crucially important matters on governance, the development of LLF and safeguarding. On a number of issues we find ourselves in a deeply challenging place. We will need to critique one another, and we will need to listen to one another. Let us do it as those who long to demonstrate the self-giving reciprocity of love that we see in Christ, as those who belong to each other. For how we do our business will affect its outcome.

Referring to political life and the growth of hyperbole and extremism, Pope Francis has also written powerfully on how ridicule, suspicion and relentless criticism of each other ends up in a debate that is little more than a "craven exchange of charges and counter-charges" leading to a "permanent state of confrontation."

Let us work hard to avoid this by listening well, by speaking clearly and by recognising the presence of Christ in each other.

I wonder whether admitting our mistakes would be a good place to start. For instance, there was a moment in the Questions at the last General Synod, when I fear my exuberance for a point I was making came over as being dismissive of the question. I am sorry. That was not my intention. I will carry on searching myself, seeking a path of truth and love and grace. And I dare to ask this of all of us.

Finally, that image of walking together, being in relationship and partnership, even if there is not complete agreement, even if it is impaired, is a deeply synodal image.

During my trip to Rome, I learned more about how Pope Francis and the Roman Catholic Church are opening themselves up to synodality. Perhaps we, who have had a synod for quite a long time, need to remember its meaning, particularly that of journey and dialogue. Moreover, we have much to learn. Most of all, I suspect, that working through the concerns that enable us to walk together, takes time. And there may need to be some degrees of separation between us, even as we walk. But all this is time well spent. It reveals the beautiful unity of the Church that is the Body of Christ, a place where every member is valued.

When I was with Pope Francis he said this: “We must walk together, we must work together, and we must pray together.” In a world of so much division, separation, shallow individualism, and an erosion of community, even an impaired unity among ourselves and a commitment, ecumenically, to keep on talking, praying and walking is very good news indeed. And it is so, so much better than the alternatives.

So, a note for the Liturgical Commission: in all future revisions of our liturgy could we please include the following rubric before each recitation of the Lord’s Prayer: “Be careful, this prayer is dangerous. It will change you. In saying it, you will lose yourself and you will find the heart of God and God’s heart for the world. And you will, to your very great shock and surprise, find that those who say it with you are your friends; that you belong to each other”.

As you know, I am a preacher not a speaker so I do not know how to end talks without saying “Amen”.

### **ITEM 3**

#### **ADDRESS FROM ANGLICAN COMMUNION REPRESENTATIVE AND ECUMENICAL GUESTS**

*The Chair.* Thank you, Archbishop. That concludes this item of business. We will now move on directly to Item 3 on the agenda, where, as you see, there are two speakers listed on Order Paper number I, but I understand that the Rt Revd Daniel Gutiérrez, Bishop of Pennsylvania is, unfortunately, not able to be present at this time, and so we will move directly on to the address by one of our ecumenical representatives, that is the

Rt Revd Erik Eckerdahl, the Bishop of Visby, and he will deliver an address to General Synod on behalf of the ecumenical guests.

*The Bishop of Visby (The Rt Revd Erik Eckerdahl):* Thank you, Archbishop Justin and Archbishop Stephen, I cannot see you right now. I still do not have eyes on my back, sorry; there is a reason for that.

Brothers and sisters of the General Synod, I am honoured to be here on behalf of the Archbishop of Uppsala and the Church of Sweden. I would also like on behalf of all ecumenical representatives present here today express our appreciation and gratitude for the possibility of being here. Together we express the unity and the communion, not yet perfect, of the wider Apostolic and Catholic Church.

Personally, it is my first visit and participation at your Synod and I must admit that I am both eager and curious to experience and understand more of how your synodical process works and functions; how we listen to the Spirit and together attentively as the people of God - bishops, clergy and lay together - discern the will of the Lord.

Of course, that is not easy, as we all know. It is hard work and there is also a need for great humility from all of us in relation to the Lord and in relation to each other.

It may be my first visit, it is however not the first visit of a representative of the Archbishop of Uppsala with the Church of Sweden here. That is rather standard procedure and an expression of the close connection between our Churches, the Church of Sweden and the Church of England, both before and after the Reformation. More recently, this close connection has been formally manifested, first in 1922, some time ago but not that far away considering our history, and later in 1996 it was confirmed more widely and deepened the Porvoo Communion through the Porvoo Common Statement, together with all the national Churches of the Nordic and Baltic region, as well as the Anglican Churches in Great Britain, Ireland, Portugal and Spain, 15 churches, or perhaps better described as provinces, manifest in a visible sacramental communion. We still have to work out how we will implement what we have signed, and I think my presence here could be a friendly reminder that we really have to work this out to find a deeper communion, both in a practical and a visible way.

Of course, I am aware that not everyone here is familiar with the Porvoo Communion or the Porvoo Common Statement. It is actually rather a strange name. It is a town in Finland and probably as part of the implementation we also need to find a new name that better expresses what we actually confess about our communion and the unity of the Church of Christ.

However, in contrast to most of our ecumenical agreements, bi and multilateral alike, the Porvoo Common Statement established the visible sacrament of unity and communion that we are looking for in the ecumenical movement, although we still have to work out how we work this out in a practical way and in a deeper sense.



The Porvoo Common Statement is based on a common understanding of faith, of sacrament, of ecclesiology, and a common reconciled episcopal ministry and office. With a deeper understanding of apostolicity, catholicity and apostolic succession, the 15 churches concerned re-established the visible and sacramental communion that was partly lost during the Reformation era. Through this reached communion all our members - clergy and lay alike - can move from one diocese to another all over the communion and be served by a reconciled episcopal college.

Thus, it is a great joy to be here together with you today. As an expression of this communion, I am looking forward to hearing and watching how your synodical process works.

Dear Archbishop Justin, Archbishop Stephen, dear brothers and sisters, my warm and heartfelt greetings from the Church of Sweden and the Archbishop of Uppsala. It is my hope and prayer that your deliberations here at Synod may bring your particular Church to a deeper understanding and to a deeper communion with each other, and with us, knowing that in the Church there is a new order where we are meant to be gifts to each other, not different parties, but rather helping each other. No matter what our positions are, this deeper understanding is fundamentally the gift of the Spirit.

So may the Lord, the giver of all good gifts, bless you and guide you in all your decisions that the unity of the Church may be manifested and deepened, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Bishop Erik. That concludes this item of business. Please remain in your seats. We come then directly to Item 4 which is the Business Committee Report.

## **ITEM 4**

### **REPORT BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (GS 2297)**

*The Chair:* We come now to Item 4, the Business Committee Report. Members will need GS 2297. This Report gives members of Synod the opportunity to make brief points about the agenda and other matters addressed in the Report by the Business Committee. The operative word there is "brief". Under Standing Order 105(3), amendments to this motion are not in order. Also, under Standing Order 105(10), nor are there any further motions arising out of the Report. I now call on Canon Robert Hammond, who chairs the Business Committee. You have up to ten minutes.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* First, I would like to thank all my Business Committee colleagues and especially Jenny Jacobs, sitting over there, the no longer acting Clerk to the Synod, who have done a great job on our collective behalf to set an agenda which covers so much business in the finite time that is available to us all at this group of sessions. We had a considerable amount of business brought forward from

February, because we were not able to complete everything on our agenda. There is a lot of business requiring legislation, and we are trying to schedule more than one Diocesan Synod Motion at each Synod to reduce the wait time for them to be debated.

We initially agreed the draft agenda at the Business Committee meeting in late April, and you were sent the outline of business in early May. The final agenda was not settled until the day before it was published on 22 June, as we had to make changes when we were told the developments around the Independent Safeguarding Board. Since then, there have been over 230 questions submitted, the largest number ever, I think, and I have to say, we probably will not get through them all. Items of deemed business have been called to be debated, and lots of you have put down amendments and there is a following motion.

Synod, it is your absolute right to ask questions, move amendments, present petitions, and so on, and I do understand how important these issues are, but our time is not elastic. The Business Committee tries to estimate how long is needed for all items and order our business accordingly. We knew time would be tight, which is why we have taken the decision to use two evening sessions this time, but adding more business on to an already pressed agenda can only mean one of two things: that time is reduced for some items and debates or more items will have to be dropped and taken at other groups of sessions.

We will try and get through all the business on our agenda and no doubt there will be changes, but it is largely in your hands. I should say that the Business Committee has no influence over the chairing of each item on our agenda. The Panel of Chairs are not accountable to the Business Committee and I do not, and I would not dream of telling any of them what to do. The Business Committee's role is to set the agenda and the order of business, taking into account the priority of legislation and other items, a balance of business, the need for some standing items like finance, and to monitor this during Synod, proposing variations as necessary.

The Committee does not write the motions and does not operate on behalf of the Archbishops' Council, the Bishops, the clergy or the laity, it operates on behalf of us all, and sets the agenda we believe is needed for each group of sessions.

Although often described as the Church's Parliament, I am not convinced that is helpful. Synod is not a government and opposition, we are primarily a legislative body trying to find the way together. I receive many emails and social media comments telling me what I need or ought to do, or what must happen. I am always grateful for your comments, although I have to say not necessarily the hectoring tone of some of them, but the Committee will make its decision on the agenda it believes the Synod needs.

The Business Committee is pleased to have been able to schedule three Diocesan Synod Motions and an important Private Member's Motion on young people's representation in our Synod. Remembering that we are primarily a legislative body, we do have a lot of legislation this time, including Final Approval of the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure,

First Consideration of the long-awaited Draft Clergy Conduct Measure, and other important legislative items.

We have given most of Saturday afternoon for an update on Living in Love and Faith. Now, this will sit outside of Standing Orders and formal Synod business, which gives flexibility in how that time will be used, and that is why Saturday's formal session ends at 3.15, but please be aware the LLF update will start then and go on until dinner. We have scheduled a good chunk of time for the National Church Governance Report on Sunday evening, and the important review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure on Monday evening.

On Tuesday morning we will have the opportunity to look at a potential Synod complaints process, which the Business Committee has been exploring in the light of comments you have made to us, and by the way of shameless plugging, the Business Committee are hosting two fringe events, a drop-in on the complaints process on Saturday lunchtime, and a more general discussion session on Sunday evening. You are very welcome to both and we would love to hear what you have to say.

In the light of the level of interest Synod has in recent developments around safeguarding, the Business Committee has decided it would like to take most of the safeguarding related items on Sunday afternoon, the presentation and questions on developments relating to the Independent Safeguarding Board, the Archbishops' Council Audit Committee Report, the item on the Redress Scheme and the safeguarding code of practice. The Business Committee felt that this would allow us to consider all these items together rather than at various times in our agenda, and so, to give us more time on Sunday afternoon, we will propose that Oxford Diocesan Synod Motion on responding to the climate emergency be taken on Tuesday morning.

I will be asking Synod to agree to these variations in the order of business at suitable points, but I wanted to give you a heads up now, and, as always, please be aware of when I propose a variation in the order of business and when the agenda changes, and keep an eye on the relevant Notice Paper. It is extremely likely there will be other changes in our order of business. You have been warned.

Can I also remind members of our code of conduct, which sets out how we work together as a Synod, and particularly around the section on declaration of interests. You should declare relevant interests orally at the beginning of your contribution to any items of business on the agenda that might reasonably be thought of to influence what you say and do, and which is relevant to the issue under debate. That also includes the financial or personal non-financial interests of close family members.

You will notice some subtle changes to the layout of the chamber. We are taking the opportunity to trial some alternative options, particularly around making the chamber more accessible to those who find stairs difficult, ahead of a possible redesign next year. This is an experiment and we have used the furniture and safety equipment provided by the

university this time. As always, I would welcome your feedback on that, but ask you to bear with us as we experiment with this new layout. You may also note that sometimes there may be a shadow Chair on occasions. That is so that new members of the Panel of Chairs can get an understanding of what is involved before they chair their first session.

Talking of experiments, for the past few years we have been talking about introducing some form of Synod Select Committee. We had a well-attended fringe meeting last year, and, following a significant amount of work by the director of the Central Secretariat, we are experimenting with a Synod Deep Dive on Saturday evening.

Now, this is not a parliamentary-style Select Committee, which is why we have not called it a Select Committee, and I am afraid that parallels to a parliamentary Select Committee are unhelpful. It is a deep dive by a panel appointed by the Appointments Committee with conversation partners into the mixed ecology aspects of Vision and Strategy. It may be a fantastic success. It may be a complete and utter failure. It will probably be somewhere in the middle, and that is absolutely fine. The Business Committee wants to try something out rather than write papers and try to define things in the abstract. For those of you with project management experience, think agile rather than waterfall. It is a case of learning while doing and we have already learned loads, so please bear with us and realise it is a new way of doing things and it will not be perfect.

We hope the outputs will be two-fold. First, some observations and recommendations on the mixed ecology work, that although non-binding we hope will be useful going forward. Secondly, an analysis of whether the Deep Dive format is something that we should pursue in the future, and, if so, how we can do it better than this year. We will review it ourselves and of course welcome your feedback. The Business Committee is immensely grateful to staff, the Appointments Committee, panel members and those who have agreed to be conversation partners.

Finally, I am very aware that members have strong views at the moment on a number of issues we will be considering during our time together. That is a good thing. We should all be concerned about the issues we consider. But can I urge us to be careful what we say to each other here in York and, indeed, on social media. That includes what we say to and about Synod staff, laity, clergy, bishops and university staff. When feelings run high, our care for others sometimes run low, so let us remember who we are, not just what we are. We may be members of the General Synod, but we are all humans, individually made in the image of God, called to love one another despite all our sins and weaknesses.

I hope our actions will show that this weekend. Chair, I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Thank you very much. Just before I look to call members to speak, may I just say that it is in order for a member to refer to a matter which is not in the agenda but which, in their opinion, should be. Whether the matter referred to is in the agenda or not,

speakers should not get into the substance of the subject, but should confine themselves to its place in the agenda or otherwise.

I am now ready to have this debate open, so those who would like to speak, please stand, so I can get some idea of the numbers in terms of reducing timings. I would like to call on Emma Joy Gregory, followed by Jayne Ozanne. You have up to five minutes.

*Mrs Emma Joy Gregory (Bath & Wells):* My speech is just to thank the Business Committee for running evening sessions this year in York. Whilst it has been nice to spend recent evenings in York at extended fringe meetings or relaxing in the bar, it has not felt the most efficient use of our time. In previous quinquennia, I always admired how Synod has used time efficiently and effectively by including evening sessions. In recent years, I must admit to the sense of frustration on an evening in York, very far from home, knowing that we could be spending this time making progress with the work in hand.

As a teacher, for me every hour spent away is a class missed, a job to catch up, marking overdue, so I would like to encourage my fellow Synod members to take evening sessions seriously, to attend, to help re-establish this way of doing business, keeping in mind that it facilitates an effective use of time for busy working people.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Synod, we are in a mess. Dare I call it, even, I think, an unholy mess. I must say that never, in all my years on Synod, and I am thinking right back to my first early days on the Archbishops' Council in 1999, have I ever seen levels of trust so low and levels of anger and frustration so high. I am not just talking about our concerns regarding safeguarding, although that is a very significant part of the problem.

No, I am also talking about concerns around LLF, the way the Governance Review has been conducted, the concerns around our Mission and Pastoral Measure, there are many, and the record number of questions we have in this sessions is a clear reflection, I think, of a lack of trust and of our concerns.

We, Synod, know we are being managed. We are something to get round, an inconvenient body that gets in the way of those who want to get on with things. It is a problem we share with our colleagues in Westminster, I would suggest. The problem has been brewing for years, and yet somehow we have felt helpless to do anything about it, and now it has got to boiling point, and I, for one, believe that unless we stop, acknowledge and deal with it, it will keep showing its head in every single debate we have this week.

Maybe that is why we have a record number of presentations, which I believe is a complete waste of our corporate time together. We could just read the papers and use the time to reflect and debate the content. Chair, I believe the time has come for us to have an emergency debate on the broken state of our Church, or perhaps, put more bluntly, in our confidence in our national structures, namely in relation to Synod, the Archbishops' Council, for trust is broken, and please let us be honest about this.

I know that there are many in this chamber who might find it hard to agree with me on many things, but I do hope we might be united in this. I would therefore ask the Chair of the Business Committee whether he might find some time for us to be able to air our grievances and concerns about the way things are being handled during this group of sessions. I am loath to call it a no confidence debate, but I fear that that is what this will turn into unless we have the courage to be honest about this crisis.

The ironic thing is that in order for such a debate or slot in the agenda to be approved, we will need to get the go-ahead from the two people who are often the focus of our concerns - our Archbishops. It does rather highlight our governance peculiarities when we find ourselves having to ask the very people who lead the institutions that we have concerns about for permission to have time to debate those concerns.

But we must find the courage to do so, for I believe that if we can be honest about just how broken we are, then I believe that God will meet us in that holy, broken space and will enable us to start a new chapter where we can move forward. So, please, Chair, may we have an emergency debate about the broken state that we are sadly in.

*The Chair:* Before Helen King speaks, may I just say we do have folks joining us on Zoom, and I will be calling Robert Thompson on Zoom after Helen King.

*Professor Helen King (Oxford):* As it happens, I am one of the signatories to Robert Thompson's Private Member's Motion asking for an independent investigation into what happened at Soul Survivor. I know we cannot go into any details here so I will not, only to say that this is not just a question of those whose faith was formed in Soul Survivor, but also about how we do youth work in the Church today, since much of that is based on the Soul Survivor model, and I am surprised it has not been mentioned so far in this session. It was not mentioned in the Presidential Address, for example.

But I would also like to underline what Jayne has said, and I would see this as what I call the agenda underneath the agenda. So, I would like to ask the Chair of the Business Committee to talk about that. We have an agenda that has very serious issues on it, but they are symptoms of other things going on in our Church, which I think we should be honest about.

The agenda underneath the agenda, I think, is transparency. What is going on? I mean, I really would like to know what is going on, and I am hoping that during this Synod I am going to find out, but at the moment, what is going on? Who does what? What has happened? Transparency. Secondly, accountability. We have governance review on the agenda, but the agenda underneath the agenda is who is accountable to whom in the Church of England? So, accountability. And finally, trust, which has been mentioned very well by the Archbishop of York. That, again, is underneath so much of what we are discussing here.

So, I would call for, I do not know about an emergency debate, but a recognition that underneath our agenda lie questions of transparency, accountability and trust, and unless we address those directly, we will not be able to do God's work in this Church.

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* Thank you to Robert for introducing the Business Committee Report and I am sure all of us, as members of Synod, can acknowledge what difficult work it is finding times with so many things that we need to discuss at present, so thank you for all the work of all of the Business Committee in that.

I think I echo what both Jayne and Helen have said. I think we are in a complete governance mess in our Church at present. There is a complete lack of trust and there are emergency debates needed about the ways in which members of Synod feel very marginalised and their voices not represented, and the symptom of having more presentations rather than debates is simply one of those.

So, I want to raise a number of things in relation to, first of all, the Private Member's Motion which I have in my name in relation to the independent investigation into Soul Survivor. Here we have a Private Member's Motion which has nearly a quarter of Synod members signing up for it within one month, and I would ask the Business Committee whether they have given any consideration to supporting how many of us have asked for the Presidents of Synod for this to be added urgent and especially important business under Standing Order 4(3), because it seems to me that if we delay this any further, we are just putting things further down the track. So, that is the first issue.

The second issue is actually more technical, it is relation to actually how members are informed of Private Member's Motions. Under Standing Orders we are told that we should be informed as soon as a new motion is submitted. However, in my membership of this session of General Synod, I have never actually received an email about any particular Private Member's Motion being put up, so I would ask that the Business Committee look into the procedures in relation to this point.

The other issue that I want to raise is I am actually quite morally disturbed by the fact that we have before us a report in William Nye's name about the recent events around the ISB and the sacking of Jas and Steve. In relation to the Archbishops' Council themselves, they have used the language of a relationship breakdown and yet we are only going to hear from one side of that relationship, and I would therefore ask the Business Committee whether they have given consideration to calling both Jas and Steve to address Synod, as is within the rights of the Business Committee to do so, because if it is actually a relationship breakdown, which is the language of the Archbishops' Council themselves, we need to hear from both sides of that breakdown.

There is also a real difficulty, I think, in relation to the particular allegations that Jas and Steve have made in the submissions that they have made to members of General Synod in relation to data breaches around the Archbishops' Council, but most particularly in relation to William, and when those data breaches were similar in relation to Maggie

Atkinson she was suspended. I think there is something deeply inappropriate about having a civil servant speak towards us when these allegations are of a similar nature, which led to the suspension of Maggie Atkinson.

Then finally, and on a slightly lighter note, I suppose, as someone who probably gave the first republican speech in a General Synod last year, under the Loyal Debate Address, I am wondering why there is no Loyal Debate Address this year. So, I would like a clarification about when these do and do not happen, but also it is a recognition that actually in last year's Loyal Debate Address, or in the one in February as well, that there was a complete lack of time given to it and also a lack of proportionality in relation to the various views that members of Synod hold.

In February, we only had three speeches, which were all pretty much monarchist, and that does not reflect the breadth of views which are held within Synod and it is actually the debate which is most theologically un-nuanced that we have. The Business Committee really need to look at that.

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

*Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter)*: Hello, my friends. First, just to preface what I am about to say, a great level of thanks to all the hard work of the Business Committee whose preparation is greatly appreciated by the members. I do just want to raise one constructive criticism, though, of our agenda. The Holy Bible says "Six days thou shalt labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it, thou shalt not do any work".

Canon B 6 of our Canons says of Sundays and other special days of observance, "The Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday, is ever to be celebrated as a weekly memorial of the Lord's resurrection and kept according to God's holy will and pleasure, particularly by attendance at divine service by deeds of charity and by abstention from all unnecessary labour and business".

Was it necessary for us to interrupt the Lord's Day with items as controversial as safeguarding and governance? Surely other items could have been delayed on the other days to make room for these important matters? I would urge the Business Committee to respect the sanctity of the Lord's Day and the Canons of the Church in future scheduling decisions.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)*: I would like to echo some of the concerns raised, particularly by Jayne Ozanne and Helen King from the Oxford Diocese, which were shared by many of us across the diocese when we had our diocesan get-together across our General Synod group. I have been here a long time, since 2000, and, yes, things have always been a bit niggly in a group like General Synod, but the concerns that they expressed, things have changed. There definitely is more of a sense that Synod is being bypassed and managed more than was the case in the past.



But I particularly wanted to pick up on the point about the number of presentations. It is something that some of us have moaned about before, but I wanted to draw Synod's attention to the fact that when we have presentations we have to suspend Standing Orders, we vote to suspend Standing Orders to allow them to take place. Now, that in itself is an indication that perhaps that is not the normal way for Synod to work.

Of course, sometimes there are situations where a presentation may be necessary but if, like me, you think that some of the time that is devoted to presentations could be better spent on debate, then I would invite members of Synod, when we are asked to vote on the procedural motion that Standing Orders be suspended to allow a presentation to take place, that you may wish to vote against it. I think that would send a clear message.

*Mrs Sarah Finch (London):* I echo Luke's and others' appreciation of all the hard work the Business Committee have been doing and their agility in adapting to all the changing circumstances. I would like to focus on just one item that is coming up in our agenda and make a small suggestion for how it might be taken forward.

The Report on Revitalising our Parishes for Mission, GS 2314, is very impressive and is upbeat in tone, too. It points to the fact, which is very easy to recognise, that the six bold outcomes of the Vision and Strategy enterprise depend upon the missional vitality of our parishes. For example, if we hope to double the number of young disciples in our churches, we will, obviously, need revitalised parishes. The Report briefly describes what is being done to help this revitalisation: funding of various kinds, support for stipendiary clergy and attention to their wellbeing, and the tool of mission action planning, or MAP.

I have a suggestion to make. All this is so helpful, valuable and encouraging we could do with an annual update. If these databases were to be kept open, would it not be possible to review the situation next July?

*The Chair:* I see no one else standing so I am going to call on Canon Robert Hammond to respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* That is, I think, more than sufficient. Thank you. I will briefly run through some of those points. To Emma Joy Gregory, thank you very much for your support of evening sessions. As I said, our time is not elastic and we have reviewed the way evening sessions can work and how catering can be done. I think we are more used to the way catering is done, but thank you for that, I agree, it is an effective use of our time.

Jayne and Helen, you each commented on your desire to have some form of emergency debate. Jayne, you correctly said the rules for that are that the Business Committee cannot introduce that on its own. I think there are lots of opportunities for us to ask questions and debate various aspects of the elements you were talking about and when Helen was talking about transparency, accountability and trust, I think we have

opportunities to discuss those, but I also think it is also beholden on us, as Synod members, to be transparent, accountable and trustworthy and trusting ourselves as well.

Robert on Zoom, your Private Member's Motion had not reached the correct number, i.e. a hundred signatures, when we met to set the agenda in April and so that is why it was not considered for inclusion. I will look into the procedure for questions. I did not quite catch all of your points there but we will look into that. Again, I will look into the Loyal Address items points you raised there as well.

Luke, we always try to consider carefully the type of business that we have on a Sunday but, again, our time is not elastic. We have to fit things in and there are always other pressures on our agenda. Sometimes, they are to do with people's availability as to when we schedule items or not. We do try carefully. I am sorry if you did not feel we got it right on this occasion. We will continue to do our best.

Prudence Dailey, I think the Standing Orders changed way back in 2005 about extending Standing Orders for presentations, so we do not have to suspend Standing Orders, I believe, now. Sarah Finch, I do not think that is a Business Committee issue but we will refer that back to the Archbishops' Council.

*The Chair:* This is a take note debate and so we will be looking for a simple show of hands here in the chamber and I will be looking on Zoom for a green tick. I come now to put this item, Item 4, to the vote.

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

## **PRESENTATION OF PETITION**

*The Chair:* I come now to the next item, which is the presentation of a petition. Mr Sam Margrave has given notice of his desire to present a petition in accordance with Standing Order 43. Mr Margrave, you have up to two minutes only. Members will not be able to speak or vote on this and, once the presentation has happened, the petition stands referred to the Business Committee.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* The NHS, universities, police, councils and other bodies who are established by Parliament are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. This is not the case for the Church of England which, despite being established and the nation's Church, is exempted from being a public body and the Act. The petitioners, therefore, wish to enable Synod members to have more information, to hold those in power to account and the Church to be accountable through scrutiny by the public and press.

We, therefore, ask the Business Committee to write to Mr Andrew Selous MP to ask His Majesty's Government to legislate for the Church of England to be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, as well as to write to all committees within the national Church or

synodical government to ask them to provide General Synod members with access in a central place to meeting dates, agendas, minutes and reports of all the committees, as well as to publish policy for public participation and to set aside time to allow questions or statements from the public or members of Synod at all committees and meetings of the national Church.

The petitioners believe it is time to get the truth about things that are too often hidden from us and in secrecy. That is the only way to resolve, trust and fix our governance for honesty, openness, accountability and transparency. We, therefore, commend this petition.

*The Chair:* In accordance with Standing Order 43(4), the petition will be available for inspection by members at the information desk. This item is now closed and we move to the next item.

THE CHAIR *The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 3.21 pm

**ITEM 5**  
**SPECIAL AGENDA III:**  
**PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS**  
**CHURCH OF ENGLAND YOUTH SYNOD (GS 2298A and GS 2298B)**

*The Chair:* We now come to Item 5 on your agenda. Members, you are going to need papers GS 2298A and GS 2298B for this item. You also need Notice Paper 4, the Financial Memo, as this item has financial impact. I will invite Sam Wilson to come and speak to Item 5. He has up to ten minutes.

*Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester):* Synod, firstly, let me thank those of you who signed Tim Norwood's Private Member's Motion that stands before you today. Tim deserves many thanks and it is a shame that, due to his new job, he is unable to present it himself.

Friends, this motion could not be better described than by the title of GS 2298A, "Welcoming Younger People into the Heart of Decision-Making?" As I look out into this chamber, I see people with a wide diversity of experiences of employment, different ways that we came to faith and different ways that we share faith.

But there remains a missing segment, a part of the society we serve that is not here. Young people are not here. We talk about them; we write strategies about them; we may sometimes talk to them, but they are not here - not really. I am aware that there may be some of you who are looking at me and saying, well, he looks pretty young so we cannot be doing that badly. Well, friends, I may be 25 but there are only 13 of us in this chamber who are under the age of 30. As a youth worker, I promise you that the teenagers I minister to do not look at me and see one of them - and each year that gap widens. What

does our age profile say to the young people about how the Church makes decisions, about how it deliberates and discerns?

Well, to many young people it is currently saying we do not need you. It is saying we will stick you on the front of our leaflets and our websites, but then we have got some grown-up stuff to be getting on with. I know that this is not how we really feel. It has been an absolute joy since being elected onto Synod to talk to so many of you about how passionately you feel about our young people and our children and about how important their views are to you. This motion is about changing that perception. It is about letting young people know that they are not the next generation of Church leaders but that they are this generation of Church leaders. This motion is about giving them space that is their own, not dictated to by us, a space where they can be treated as equal members of the Church from the local to the national. This motion is about putting our votes and possibly, yes, our money where our mouths are and showing young people that they really matter.

How does this motion achieve that? First, it recognises what great work has already been done. Our national strategy is already directed at reaching out to children and young people in different ways and research has shown how we can do that. There are some incredible and brilliant people working in our NCIs, our dioceses, in our parishes, in our schools and beyond. We would not have any children or young people to bring into the decision-making structures of the Church if it was not for them and I thank them for all that they do. Banging the drum about children and young people is often a tireless, thankless task, but if the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these then it is their work that ensures that we do not hinder those children and young people.

This motion also thanks those young people who have stepped up to the plate in years gone by and played an important role in previous Synods. We will need more brave, young people like them if this motion is going to succeed.

Secondly, the motion calls for the establishment of a Church of England Youth Synod or something similar that would provide a national space for young Anglicans to meet and discuss and debate the big issues facing our Church, somewhere that is not tied to any single diocese. In our country today, where over a third of 18 year olds go to university and less than a quarter of those go to universities described as "local", where young adults start careers and move over and over again, diocesan links are broken and remade, broken and remade.

A national space is not in the motion to take over from dioceses and the brilliant work that is happening in them, but it recognises that if we want to truly welcome all young people into the heart of decision-making we need somewhere that does not have the geographic requirements that our Synod currently has. As the recent report from the Elections Review Group makes clear, where younger candidates did stand they often stood a good chance of election. But they do not stand because they see a field of candidates who are diocesan lay chairs, who are Bishop's Council members and who have been churchwardens longer than they have been alive. They do not stand because they do

not know anyone in their diocese yet to encourage them and to help them navigate the process. They do not stand because they do not see themselves here.

A national youth gathering or a Synod of something similar would allow young people to have something to call their own, a national space where it feels okay to suggest ideas that might not be fully fleshed out, where there is not someone who is over three times your age interrupting your speech to reference a Standing Order that you have never heard of. That is not to say that young people cannot hack it on General Synod. This motion does not stop them from going through the normal election process. In fact, it calls for five of them to be co-opted and given the right to speak in this very chamber. But a separate space works alongside that, accompanying that, so that all young people with their varying strengths, talents and gifts can be involved.

Thirdly, this motion calls for the involvement of dioceses in this process. Much of our decision-making happens outside of this room. Young people need to be there too. Of course, we cannot outside of primary legislation mandate that dioceses do anything and many of them, as GS 2298B helpfully suggests, are doing much with youth representation. My own diocese has something called Youth Speak and I was really pleased to see a young member speak incredibly eloquently just last year at one of our diocesan synods all about the importance of reaching net zero carbon.

But it remains at the moment a varying diocesan picture. One General Synod member who does not work in youth ministry like me, helpfully, did have a bit of a Google to see how many of these youth councils they could come across. They were able to spot five dioceses that had them. I happen to know that there are more than that, but if a Synod member with all of their experience of navigating maze-like Church websites cannot find them how can young people? This motion is about encouragement to our dioceses. Take a look at what is working elsewhere and, if local context allows, nominate some young adults onto your diocesan synods and see where the experiment takes you.

This also gives a suggestion as to how a Youth Synod may begin to be populated. It is not prescriptive in saying that all Youth Synod members must be from dioceses especially given all that I have just said about the geographic difficulties, but we think it is a fair starting point.

Finally, the motion calls on the Archbishops' Council to provide the resources necessary for all this to happen. I am no expert in national budgets. My expenses claims usually feature items such as pizza, fluffy pom-poms and a weird amount of table tennis balls, but it is our view that for this to work it needs someone to champion it.

As I said earlier, I am well aware that there are brilliant people in our NCIs already working in this space who have a deep passion for our children and our young people, but it is our view that these things succeed when the person championing the projects is not also doing a thousand other important things. We have all seen those job descriptions that are looking to hire Jesus. We do not want to be in a situation where ten years down the

road we are here again talking about engaging young people in the heart of decision-making because the last idea failed to have any young people involved. Let us do this right.

As I have been speaking, I am aware that I have been using various terms that mean different things to different people: "children", "young people", "younger people", "young adults". That is partly a reflection of how broadly I think we need to go in encouraging all of these groups to get involved. But the motion is slightly more specific. It calls for the Youth Synod to be a meeting of young Anglicans between the ages of 18 to 25 and then refers to "young adults" throughout. This is a reflection of the safeguarding challenges we face in having those younger than 18 involved, but I personally - and I know many of you too - would like to see a younger age range and I hope to hear your views on that particular issue during this debate.

Synod, I am aware that there are other ways of welcoming younger people into the heart of decision-making. I hope to hear some of them in your speeches. The accompanying paper, GS 2298B, lays many of these out too. They are all good ways. I would like to see them happen as well. But this motion is purposely ambitious. It is purposely designed to describe a situation of what could be: a Church where young people are not limited by their age and the challenges that come with that; not limited by which diocese they reside in, nor school that they attend, but they are right here in the room being seen, being heard and being represented. Chair, I move the motion that stands in my name.

*The Chair:* As you will see, there are a number of amendments on this item and so I propose that we will take each amendment in turn. Some are consequential to others. It is a good warm-up for us and we will see how awake we all are this morning - afternoon. Oh dear.

I call, first of all, our first amendment, Item 52. Can I invite Mr Sam Margrave to speak to and move the amendment standing in his name. Sam, you have up to five minutes.

## **ITEM 52A**

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I have never had this before, but the Notice Paper that I have appears to be the wrong amendments and they are all moved en bloc. I just was not clear whether that was the correct Notice Paper or what to do and I wanted to make a proposal, if that might be okay. On Notice Paper 4, there are two proposals instead of the three but, if we just stick with the two, if we could take those separately because they are very different things. One of them has been agreed by other people moving amendments.

*The Chair:* Can you name the two that you are referring to, which numbers? 53 and 54. No. Are you referring to the amendment that was in the Seventh Notice Paper?

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I am, yes.

*The Chair:* That is in your name.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Yes.

*The Chair:* Bear with. Okay. Members, you are advised that you will need to have the Seventh Notice Paper in front of you and the two parts of that will be 52A and 52B.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Could I move 52A and 52B separately, Chair?

*The Chair:* Yes, please.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Thank you.

*The Chair:* It is the proposal that you take those separately. You have up to five minutes. We have already used all that by doing this. Thank you, Sam. No, hold fire, more legal advice. Helpfully, if you do not have the right paper in front of you, you should be aware that 52 as written in this one, 52A is what is printed under 52 and so 52B is what is missing. Thank you, Sam, go ahead.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I am in support of this motion and I believe in the importance of all voices being heard in decision-making. I used to be on the National Union of Students as student president and have been involved in setting up some of the first youth councils in the country as well as being involved with Youth Parliaments nationally and the British Youth Council and others. I welcome a new youth council being set up.

Today, I am putting forward amendments not to be difficult or stifle debates. Amendments are an important way in how we improve decisions at Synod. If Synod look at their Standing Orders and go to page 62, Standing Order 122 - I am sure you have all got it to hand - you will see that there is already provision to appoint three youth representatives to this Synod. I want us to just get on with it. We have already maxed out the number of co-options we can do under Standing Orders and other options would take lengthy rule changes. We need to hear the voices of young people now and I am just concerned that, if we keep the motion as co-opted, actually we have maxed out the co-options. The better solution is to look at future elections and how we can improve the number of young people and that other underrepresented groups are elected. There are a variety of mechanisms for this and they need to be considered holistically by the Elections Review Group or another body.

I would also like to see a report back - that has been supported by others who were proposing amendments that we combined - to Synod on the work that I very much support in the rest of this motion and to look at how we can get more representation not just on Archbishops' Council but all national committees in the Church of England. I hope these

amendments are helpful and I just wanted to give Synod a chance to tidy this up so that we can move forward.

I think it is really important to use the current Standing Orders because this particular motion would propose a profound change, we would end up co-opting more people to General Synod and in a time when we are going to make very controversial decisions that could bring into question our democratic legitimacy. I think the time to elect people to have a vote and to give them new powers is at the next election. The other motion in relation to the report back is something I hope we can all support and is not controversial.

*The Chair:* I now invite Sam Wilson to indicate whether he is supportive of Item 52A.

*Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester):* Yes, we are happy to support it.

*The Chair:* You are happy, okay. That means we will now open a debate on Item 52A. Please do indicate if you wish to speak either through raising your hand or using the green ticks on Zoom. This item is now open for debate.

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

*Canon Lucy Docherty (Portsmouth):* By coincidence, this issue of youth representation was a very hot topic at a meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in Geneva last week where I was representing the Church of England. At the World Assembly of the WCC held last September, there had been a passionate contribution from youth delegates which included the statement, "The voice and presence of the youth is crucial in the formation of the present and future Church. One solution to that is to take the youth into account and make them feel valued and heard in decision-making, by giving them space in decision-making bodies. When young people are acknowledged, appreciated and empowered by their leaders, they most likely will continue contributing to the life and work of the Church".

It continued by asking for additional seats on the Central Committee. Those seats are meant to represent the diversity of the World Council of Churches and should be used to actually achieve the targets for fair and adequate representation. I will not say all I was going to say because I have only got three minutes. I will just say that some of what they had to say struck me very forcibly having read these papers today.

Eventually, the World Council of Churches sorted this out in a space of about two weeks and agreed that 17 more young people should be appointed as youth advisers. I have spent time explaining this to you because I was struck by the difference of our own processes here.

Synod, our young people through this motion are asking for us to look favourably on any process that can grant them better access to our decision-making bodies and, in this case, General Synod as well. They are humble in what they ask for, recognising that they



may not have got their motion pitch perfect by some people's standards. What this motion does do is to allow us right at the start of our meeting here in York - before we get embroiled in other contentious debates which will not make for a good look in the outside world - to say something strong, inclusive and, above all, positive about how we want to engage with young people in our Church.

Please, can we not have any mealy-mouthed comments about the slots for co-options being all filled up already or even the quite terrible implication that young people would take the place of our UKME members. What is needed is imagination and the ability to think creatively about how we do this. It should not be beyond our capacity to come up with something that meets this urgent need. As for the thorny subject of money, do not tell me that we cannot find some money from somewhere. There is plenty of it if we have the will to go looking.

Most of all, can we be open and accepting in spirit and in deed for this motion and not get lost in nit-picking about legislation that says we cannot do something? Can we start from a premise that we actively want young people here with us in General Synod and make it work from there? Let us learn from the example of the WCC who overcame exactly the same issues as we are facing now but against a set of much more complicated denominational and global criteria and found a creative way to overcome their rulebook.

Please support this motion and remember that if we amend it too much so that it has no teeth and no bite, we will be haunted in the future by a reputation for not caring for our young people and their engagement with our governance processes and, then, when we go looking for people to serve the Church in the future, we really should not be surprised if we just cannot find any.

*The Chair:* Can I just remind members that the debate currently open is on 52A on the amendment. Can I just double check with our next speaker that you are speaking on the amendment rather than the main motion.

*A Speaker:* The main motion.

*The Chair:* The main motion. Then, can I respectfully ask you to hold your point until we do that. Are there any others wishing to speak on Item 52A? So I now put it to the vote.

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

## **ITEM 52B**

*The Chair:* I am now going to read to you, in case you do not have the right piece of paper, Amendment 52B. It reads as follows, "leave out paragraph (g) and insert, '( ) appoint three young adults to attend General Synod in accordance with Standing Orders.'" Can I invite Mr Sam Margrave to come and speak to and move item 52B.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I so move, Chair.

*The Chair:* Thank you. Sam, can I just check that you are in favour of this amendment or not?

*Mr Sam Wilson (Chester):* I think it is worth noting that, although I am really pleased that we found a way to use the Standing Orders and not require a lot of legislation and get round them, it does not come with the votes. I think we have got to acknowledge that as a Synod but I do support the amendment.

*The Chair:* This amendment is now open for debate.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Chair, I had submitted an amendment, which for some reason has not appeared on the Order Paper, but its effect would have been to suggest that we might seek to co-opt up to five people between the ages of 16 to 22 with speaking rights. Members with long teeth will remember that we used to benefit from the wisdom of three young people in that capacity who came and addressed us frequently, often very movingly. Yes, they did not have voting rights but they were able to influence the outcome of Synod's debates. I think we missed that and so I would warmly support Sam's amendment, even though it does not go quite as far as mine would have done.

If this motion is carried, I hope you will allow the Business Committee to think creatively and whether we might even be able to do better than the current Standing Orders provide for. At the very least, I think we ought to find a way to have at least three young people as participant observers. There is a decision to be taken as to how they get appointed because, of course, they used to be appointed by the Church of England Youth Council which no longer exists.

But, as others have observed, any question of co-options really would have to wait until the next quinquennium because the law would need to be amended to allow that if that is what Synod wanted to do. We can do this pretty quickly I would have thought, certainly by this time next year if not earlier, and so I urge Synod to support this amendment.

*The Chair:* Mr Scowen, I am advised that due notice was not given by two supporters on your amendment, by way of explanation.

*Professor Helen King (Oxford):* I am resisting this amendment because I am not sure what is going on with it. Is it replacing, and I am looking at Sam here, what is currently there in terms of (g) the co-option of five young adults elected by the Youth Synod, or is it in addition to it? If it is in addition, I would support it. If it is a replacement, I would not, because it is not organic.

What I like about the original motion is that it is an organic process whereby young people meet and from their number people go forward to General Synod. Who is going to do this

appointing? At the moment it seems to be the Archbishops' Council is going to appoint three young adults. How does it know where these people are? Who is going to ask?

I am biased here because I am a little bit weird. I was on PCC at 16 and ended up on General Synod as one of the youngest members in my 20s. That is because, and this goes to clause (b) of the original motion which I think is great, I was given that support by a leader. My vicar suggested he wanted more young people on the PCC. That is where it starts. He put me and a girl from the choir on. My first experience of being at a meeting when people were saying things like, "Oh, there's a comma missing in Item 6 of the minutes of the meeting", I was like, "Wow, this is amazing". Bizarrely, I quite liked it. I am not saying people like me are what you want on Synod because there is quite a range. Young people are not uniform. There are young people of different kinds. People like me are not the only ones you want.

In Andrew's supporting paper he says we do not need this because it is ridiculous, young people cannot possibly do it, they are far too busy in full-time education and it has got far worse than it was. But (a) not all young people are in education, and (b,) if they are, that is not a problem, and (c) we can encourage young people on to the Synod with proper reimbursement of lost wages with proper support to be here. That is what we need.

I am resisting the amendment because I do not think the Archbishops' Council appointing people is the way to go, I want something more organic. If we can have that as well then that is fine.

*The Revd Canon David Bruce Bryant-Scott (Europe):* As you may tell by my accent, I am not from the United Kingdom. I am currently a priest in Greece where we have no youth, or we are the youth, it seems, me and my wife. I spent 15 years on the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada and I am constantly encountering cognitive dissonance and cultural shock between the General Synod as I experienced it there and the General Synod as I experience it here. Many things are better here. Some things I wonder about.

In particular, when we talk about the representation of youth at General Synod, I am kind of let down and underwhelmed by the numbers that are here, in comparison to what I am used to. In Canada every diocese had a voting youth delegate, elected by the diocesan synod, usually nominated by that diocese's youth council, or equivalent. Three? Five? General Synod, if we are really serious, we need to be looking at something dramatically more. I do speak in favour of the amendment, but, my God, if we really want to have youth at the centre of our deliberations we need to do better.

*The Chair:* After our next speaker, I intend to test your mind for a motion for closure on this item and then move on.

*The Revd Carol Bates (Southwark):* I am just wondering if all these amendments are just prolonging getting younger people on to General Synod. I like Sam Wilson's original motion, I think it is fine. With all these amendments it has gone down to three co-options

of people and your original one said to co-opt five young adults. We need to be serious. Are we serious about having a younger and growing and more diverse Church? Because if we are serious, we need to get younger people on the governance of General Synod, which is the top governing body of our Church.

I have noticed on the PCC when I have tried to co-opt, even within my own my church, which has a very ageing congregation - my husband and I are the youngest people in our church - trying to co-opt younger and more diverse people, the excuses are they do not really have much experience or they do not really know how the Church works. If they are enthusiastic and they are willing to learn, they have experience, so why are we stopping people from being involved and feeling like they belong?

I want to give the example of my young son. He turned 21 yesterday and has just got a 2:1 in history at Lancaster University. He was asking me whether there are any young people on General Synod and how do they get involved. I was telling him how you get voted on. He would be very interested. He goes to the Chaplaincy at Lancaster University and he is going on to do a master's in war and diplomacy. I think what a useful subject for anyone wanting to be involved in the Church of England. I think we do need to take this seriously and really commit to welcoming people that really want to get involved who are young and diverse.

I vote in favour of the original motion and I am just asking the question are these amendments going to make it take a longer time to get young people on?

*The Chair:* Synod, I am going to test your mind for a motion for closure on Item 51B.

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

*The Chair:* We now vote on Item 52B. I will read it to you again although I am sure you already know: "leave out paragraph (g) and insert 'appoint three young adults to attend General Synod in accordance with Standing Orders'."

The result is not clear. Bear with me a moment. Synod, I order a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 52B. Point of order?

*A Speaker:* Point of order. The voting machines are not working.

*The Chair:* It is not coming through on the voting machines. We are getting it all ON this one, are we not?

*The Revd Mark Miller (Durham):* Point of order. Sorry, Chair, I do not know if anyone else has this but it just says, sending, sending. The vote was not registered. It was done in time but it never confirmed. I wonder if the vote has been ---

*The Chair:* We are going to rerun that in an moment. Are we having fun yet? This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 52B.

*The Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam (York):* Point of order. Apologies, my vote went through last time but this time it just said sending. I am so sorry.

*The Chair:* Could you please come and record your vote here with our Registrar? There is one other member indicating that they also wish to record their vote. How many? We have got a few. All of you, please could come down and record your vote with our Registrar, I am advised.

The vote on Item 51B: those in favour 164, against 130, with recorded 20 abstentions.

*The Chair:* Item 52B is carried.

## **ITEM 53**

*The Chair:* We now move on to Item 53. May I invite Mrs Clare Williams to come and speak to and move her amendment? Thank you. You have up to five minutes. You are on Zoom.

*Mrs Clare Williams (Norwich):* First, let me begin by saying in response to Lucy Docherty that I am one of those who wants young people here with us in General Synod. My simple amendment seeks to do three simple things which I believe are in the spirit of collaboration and the spirit of the original motion. Indeed collaboration has been sought with Sam Wilson and Tim Norwood as part of my process.

First, my amendment seeks to set the original motion in the context of both looking back and looking forward. The original motion looks at what has already happened and rightly acknowledges the work undertaken by CEYC. My amendment adds to that by recognising explicitly what is being done now in the work with children and young people through the development of the strategy and in the Growing Faith Foundation.

The second thing my amendment does is just that: widen the motion which focuses on young adults to ensure that when we talk about voices being heard these are not just the voices of young adults but of children and young people as well.

We have heard various terminology used already in this debate about youth, young people, children, young adults. It is my firm belief that we need to be clear that it is all these voices we wish to be heard: children, young people and young adults. This is vital as we look to a future of growing younger and more diverse. I am passionate about all the opportunities of voices not already present in this chamber to be heard.

Finally, this amendment seeks to work in tandem with the following amendment which I hope will build on and strengthen the sense of looking back as well as looking forward and also reiterates the need for voices of children, young people and young adults to be heard. I urge you to consider supporting this amendment standing in my name

*The Chair:* May I ask Sam Wilson whether he supports this amendment?

*Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester):* I am happy to support the amendment.

*The Chair:* Thank you. Item 53 is now open for debate on just this amendment.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I speak I think in favour of this amendment, certainly not against it, and certainly in favour of the whole thrust of this debate and what we are trying to do here. I suppose I do want to express a little bit of concern that this motion is getting really, really long, and I fear we may lose the clarity of its original purpose. I cannot speak against the amendment, but I am not awfully sure whether it is really going to help us.

I want to take this opportunity to say I am really proud that growing younger and more diverse is now the stated aim of the Church of England. I am really proud of that. I think we should all be really proud of that. I do not believe we would be saying that as clearly as we are if it was not for the fact, as this amendment reminds us, that children and young people were involved in a large, large iterative process of discussion which led to the three priorities that we have for our Church.

Also, just like in most bodies in the Church, be it at a PCC or Archbishops' Council, things like finance and safeguarding, rightly so, are standing items. In the Archbishops' Council now we have growing younger as a standing item. We discuss it at every meeting.

I do support all of this. I kind of hope we could have had a simpler motion in front of us, but I am going to vote for it whatever what happens because we need to hear the voice of young people because their voice is a prophetically uncomfortable voice and when their voice is in the room, actually, things start to happen.

*The Chair:* After the next speaker, I will test the mind of Synod on a motion for closure on this item.

*The Revd Barry Hill (Leicester):* Perhaps I should declare an interest as only being 44 years old. If you are part of the Church of England, you are three times more likely to die this year than if you are not. That, friends, is the consequence of the average age of an Anglican worshipper rising from 39 in 1980 to 67 today. When we think of the much more modest increase and the difference it has made to, say, the NHS, we start to see the challenges before us. Whilst very few people leave the Church of England, seeing faith pass on across and between the generations is perhaps the greatest factor as to what kind of Church of England we will see in 10 or 20 or 50 years.

But this cannot be about the survival of the Church. It is about something far, far more important: the difference, the life and hope God offers to Gen Z and Gen A and beyond. That is why as a Synod we have made a commitment to see the Synod grow younger and more diverse. It is why dioceses and parishes are putting it front and centre in all we do. And for many of us it is why we feel called to lead and serve in God's church.

Here, as key decisions are made about mission and priorities and resourcing and culture, where and how are they shaped by young people?

I support the amendment because it has been deeply encouraging in the formation of the Vision and Strategy to see the views of young people heard in new and creative ways, and it is important we honour that and those who have made it so.

However we do this there remain two challenges before us. First, do we seek to mould those God calls to be more like us, or are we truly open to being shaped by those God sends. For Jesus to see a child's lunch multiplied to feed thousands, it first had to be broken. Synod, are we prepared to be broken? Our instinct might be yes, but an easy yes not followed through just makes things worse.

Secondly, on the one hand, it is perverse to ask those who have been marginalised to be solely the architects of change and, on the other hand, nothing about us, without us. So the question must surely be not if, but how.

I want to echo, as others have, Lucy Docherty's point earlier that there are great creative minds in Synod and the Business Committee, and however we do this, however we polish here or there, the instinct is important. We must not lose in the technicalities what is at the heart, because this cannot be just a technical change.

We are all here because at some point we have heard, seen or experienced the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for nearly all of us that was before we were 18 years old. May we not deny others the wonderful privilege that we have received.

*The Chair:* After the next speaker, I will put a motion for closure on Item 53 before you.

*Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark):* Synod, I want to strongly support this amendment, to support listening in particular to children's voices as well as to young adults. Yes through the Growing Faith Foundation, but if we are to really recognise the role of our children and our young people across our Vision and Strategy, then we can all take steps to play our part in this. Clare mentioned collaboration and I want to encourage members to also join in this work and to engage themselves directly with children and young people - safely - themselves too. Listening to them is something we can and all should take the initiative to do.

Maybe there are no children in your church, I hear you say, but were I a betting woman (and I am not for the record) I would wager that many of us on Synod have godchildren, maybe even several. Whatever their age, what about taking them for coffee, or hot chocolate if they are bit younger, with parental consent, and have a chat about how they see the world and how they see church.

You may find they see church very differently from you, and have much to say about it. I know my kids do. When I asked them what they thought of church, “boring” came out strongest, sadly. When I asked for more detail trying to unpick it, the word I got - wait for it - was “bums”. All my children are boys, they are quite small and they giggled fervently and this was a little bit tongue in cheek. When I asked them more questions, they had a good point. At church the three of them spend a lot of time looking at people’s backs and people’s bums, partly because of their size. When you are small that fills much of your view and what you can see informs your perspective, how you feel about church and what you think about church.

So as well as coffee chat, genuinely with younger people that you might know, and with children, Synod, can I encourage you to go home, go back to your churches and put yourselves at the height of a ten-year-old or five-year-old, and think about what it might be being a bit smaller, maybe not able to read or see what is going on at the front all the time; put yourselves in their small shoes and try to see things from their perspective.

We might not only learn something about them but about what we want our Church to look like, how we want it to change and what we want the culture to look like. This is about our structures and hearing their voices, yes, but we can all play our part in the Vision and Strategy, and bring young people’s voices not just to Synod but to every single church meeting or church committee that we are all part of. Let us take the initiative and do that, thank you.

*The Chair:* I put before you a motion for closure on Item 53.

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

*The Chair:* We now move to vote on Item 53.

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

## **ITEM 54**

*The Chair:* We now move to Item 54. I invite Mr Matt Orr to come and speak to and not your amendment at this point, because there are consequential ones which will follow, so if you can speak to your amendment. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Matt Orr (Bath & Wells):* This is my maiden speech and I am delighted to be talking about younger generations in our Church, but I am a bit disappointed that at this particular



cultural moment, at this time, the conversation is not framed around mission, evangelism or discipleship, for the Lord is doing incredible things in and through the next generations, and we have got so much to learn from them.

In fact, I believe there is something spiritually significant happening right now. For this past year alone, working with young people across the country at gatherings of all different shapes and sizes, we have seen God move in powerful ways. We have seen healings and the miraculous, signs and wonders of the Kingdom breaking into ordinary lives, the Spirit poured out on all who are hungry for Him. We have seen spiritual gifts in abundance, and young people cultivating spiritual disciplines, good rhythms, routines, committing their time to intimacy with God through prayer, worship, getting to know the Word of God found in their Bibles, stepping up and stepping out in faith to share the Gospel that this world so desperately needs. And so many young people are turning away from the ways of the world and choosing to follow Jesus.

So, it is a shame we are not talking about things like Amplify Academy, where multiple national organisations, including the Church of England, are working together to help equip the next generation of evangelists. I served on team this year and can wholeheartedly say it is one of the best opportunities for young people I have ever been involved with. It is a shame we are not talking about the wider trends we are seeing in this generation, where young people are desperate for the real thing, Jesus, his presence and not just programmes. At Wildfires we saw 500 teenagers sack off the silent disco and afterhours programme to press into His presence through prayer and worship.

Like Joshua in Exodus 33:11 not wanting to leave the tent of meeting, continuing spontaneously for over two hours until eventually a site-wide noise curfew brought things to a close, only for a whole load of them to rock up the next morning at 7 am for an hour to press into prayer and intimacy with the Lord.

It is shame we are not talking about the disastrous state of youth ministry in this country, its destructive lack of investment, poor strategic approach, poor pay and prospects of progression. All of this to say, I am very grateful we are having this discussion, this specific debate, grounded in governance. But, Synod, this is not the only conversation that needs to be had surrounding children, youth and young adults in our Church. Please do not see this as a box ticked or a problem solved.

For context, this amendment has been a collaborative effort. I have worked directly with Sam and with Tim Norwood and those who he first drafted the motion with, alongside a small working group that was formed after I fired a shot at Bishop Paul back in February 2022 during Questions where I asked why have we not done something better since the CEYC. Today I believe we have the opportunity to do exactly that with the addition of this amendment.

I believe this is a friendly amendment, and I believe that it is good for both General Synod and young people in our churches, for if we want to see lasting change, we have got to

shift culture, and that has to begin locally, because it requires both context and proximity. What works well in my church in the Diocese of Bath & Wells is not guaranteed to work well in your own, and vice versa.

You know, it is amazing that a handful of us have drastically skewed the average age of General Synod, but we do not feel like youth. I am the best part of ten years older than most of the young people that I work with. I care deeply about them, and I cannot claim to represent their voice, but I can guarantee that we would benefit from hearing them in our decision-making processes. Therefore, we need these proposals to be explored and brought forward by the Business Committee, we need the commitment of the Archbishops' Council, and we all need to play our part as individuals. I move the amendment in my name.

*The Chair:* Before inviting you to formally move that amendment, I invite Canon Shayne Ardron to come and speak to but not formally move either, his amendment, amendment 55.

*Canon Shayne Ardron (Leicester):* I am standing here because of some of the work that I do, alongside Matt Long, who is Leicester's Youth Engagement and Intergenerational Communities Enabler. We are good on titles, are we not? He is passionate about getting children and youth voices heard but on their terms and on their turf. So, that is often through schools and through the youth groups in churches. To do that we need to work creatively with children, youth and family practitioners, as well as the children.

And why do we need to work through them? Because they are the ones who are known and trusted by children, and they make space to listen and to have honest conversations so that things can happen. In Leicester, we have discovered that if you want to have genuine representation, diversity in all its forms, age, socio-economic, ethnicity, et cetera, then you have to have a dispersed network to work from.

Forming a group of half a dozen youth in the centre does not bring that broad representation. Encouraging and building relationships takes time, and when you give that time the work and results from that can be amazing, and we can learn so much more than just the reflections of a few youth who come on Bishop's Council. We have found this ourselves. Bishop's Council have looked at the responses that we have had from youth groups, and we have gone from having the voices of half a dozen white middle class children, half of which are children of clergy, to having voices of 95 plus children in the diocese, a third of which come from global majority heritage, 50% were male, 50% were female. It gave us a much wider diversity when we listened to them.

We need a role nationally that can draw on all those representations, not just having a few people here. That is really good and brilliant to have, but we have to build up those relationships. Children love and work on relationships. Our deputy director of education went into a school to look at some of these things just this last week, and the children

said if Church was more like this, and gestured to the discussions, they would be interested.

They do not just want to just sit there, as we have heard, they want to talk to us about faith, talk to us about things that really matter, and to do that we need time. That is why I think we need a national role, full time, to work with the roots that we have got, with the Growing Faith and the other brilliant organisations and things that are happening. We need to work from that and then bubble up and encourage and enable people to engage, because then we will find out the results of what we decide here, the effects of it on the ground with families, where they are living, and what they are doing.

*The Chair:* I call Matt Orr to now formally move the motion in his name.

*Mr Matt Orr (Bath & Wells):* I move the amendment in my name.

*The Chair:* I now invite Sam Wilson to indicate whether he supports this amendment.

*Mr Sam Wilson (Chester):* I want to thank Matt and all those who have put a lot of work into this amendment. We do recognise it as being friendly and we are really appreciative of someone thinking about the technicalities, although I do want to echo what both the Archbishop of York and Barry have said, that we need to not lose the passion behind what the motion seeks to achieve. I support the amendment.

*The Chair:* Item 54 is now open for debate.

*The Revd Canon Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS):* In the last five years, the recent survey of UK society shows that young people belonging to the age group of 18 to 25 have repeatedly expressed that they do not belong to any religion. They are the majority group that identifies itself as non-religious or “nons”. But this is the group that I spend my day job on, which is the majority group I teach at Lancaster University. A wonderful testimony from Carol that Lancaster University is the best university to think critically.

What I find among young people of this age group is a sense of adventure, a desire to take risk for change, a genuine desire to enquire and examine and also a deep commitment to reimagine the world and not confine to it and not taking no as an answer. Just to put this in perspective: what the Church can do if you have those people in our midst, right at the heart of decision-making. These are the people who have a sense of impatience for justice, equality and inclusion.

I have worked with several people, be it on concerns for the environment, justice or economic inequality, or bringing in gender, race, sexuality and equity in those aspects. The challenge for us is not to be patronising, but genuinely trust them and give them the space to be leaders.

If we look at history, at which I often look, most of the missionaries who went and left these shores were people in that age group, who transformed the world. Of course, the very person that we are all talking about, Jesus, he started working very young in his age, in the temple, when he was a young boy.

What I am supporting in this amendment is that it goes beyond what was suggested and it gives an ambition and an intention to commit that we are not simply based on slogans, but we are actually meaning to include these people in our midst, so that our Church can be really and truly young and diverse.

*The Chair:* After Bishop Paul Butler, I will test your mind for a motion for closure on Item 54.

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler):* I declare an interest as the Chair of the National Society and a member of the Archbishops' Council. It has been a joy to work with a group of people across Synod since I was challenged in February 2022 about what should happen, and in fact we discovered that there were two such groups, one that I was meeting with regularly and then Tim and Sam and others and then behind them on this we have then collaborated.

So, just to be very clear why we propose this amendment is we absolutely believe there needs to be national space for young adults to gather and in the long term young people and children, but we agree with starting with young adults for exactly the reasons that Sam started, but we are slightly fearful that calling it a National Synod and being quite so structured might put some of those young adults off, hence a national gathering to start with, but to deal with the very business that is required.

But we did not want to leave the dioceses out, hence the first bit, and we did not want to leave this further work in this Synod. Indeed, as a group we did put some suggestions to the Business Committee as to ways that we could hear the voice of young people during the February sessions that we quite understand the Business Committee at that time did not feel able to follow through. And we do believe they want to do so. There is lots of creative things that young people themselves would like to suggest. They do not even have to be here for you to hear their voice and for you to engage with them, although we long that they will be here.

But we did not want to let any of you off, and so encourage each General Synod member to work with children, youth and family and practitioners, to listen to the voice of children. We believe that it is essential that every one of us engage with children and young people on a regular basis, to listen to what they are saying, so that we bring those voices with us here.

Of course, being slightly on the inside, I will confess that the bits about the Archbishops' Council were partly down to me. Yes, Archbishop Stephen, we do have it on, but now

this will be Synod telling us that we cannot take it off the top of our agendas and there are things that we can do as the Archbishops' Council as well.

This really is a friendly amendment, it is trying to deepen it and strengthen it. Sorry it makes the motion slightly long but if we are going to cover everybody that is what we had to do.

*The Chair:* I now would like to test the mind of Synod on a motion for closure on Item 54.

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

*Mrs Vivienne Goddard (Blackburn):* Point of order. Could you please clarify what happens to 52B if, as I understood it, that is attached to (g), which we are about to strike out? Could you please clarify the situation?

*The Chair:* I will just seek some advice. I now wish to invite the Registrar to address Synod on a point of explanation.

*The Registrar:* Because of the inadvertent omission of 52B from the Order Paper, there had not been the usual marshalling of amendments with rubrics and so on saying what happened and how they interacted with each other. The Standing Orders prohibit Synod from taking decisions inconsistent with decisions it has already taken within the previous 11 months. Therefore, if Item 54 is carried I think the "leave out", everything from "and therefore call" to the end must be read as being subject to the inclusion of the new (g) which was inserted by 52B. So, the 52B paragraph (g) will remain in the motion, if 54 is carried.

*The Revd Timothy Bateman (Birmingham):* Point of order. Does that mean that that (g) will then get removed after 11 months?

*The Registrar:* No.

*The Revd Timothy Bateman (Birmingham):* No, great. Thank you.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 54 to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* Item 54 is carried which means Item 55 falls. So, we now return to the main motion as amended, and we will begin that debate. If you wish to speak, please do indicate now. Can I invite Kenson Li, please, followed by Bishop Rose. You have up to three minutes.

*Mr Kenson Li (UKME co-opted):* A declaration of interest. Apparently, I am young, so let us begin with that. Anyways, has anyone seen that internet meme where there is a

posting of a job description saying must be 18 years old with 20 years' experience. You may laugh at that, but certainly it is not far from what the youth in the Church feel like when they try to participate in Church affairs. Many of us stood for election two years ago to the General Synod and we did not get elected because perhaps we were seen as inexperienced, and we were not invited to participate in other parochial or diocesan decision-making processes either.

The reality is - sorry Archbishops - that many young people see the church as a self-preserving institution. They see the Church is an unsafe space for them, because time and again the Church has proved to be an utter failure when it comes to safeguarding procedures. They see a Church that is unwelcoming and hostile to them should they belong to the LGBTQIA+ community and an institution where homophobia and misogyny goes unchecked. They see all the trappings of a great and powerful organisation, but nothing of the lonely figure of Jesus of Nazareth, who spreads his arms out on a cross for love and forgiveness, the encountering of whom is the turning point in everyone's life.

Today's motion will be the first step to ensure better youth representation in this chamber. I cannot stress more the importance of allowing young people to lead this process. Young people are tired of being offered crumbs from the big table that is Church leadership and governance, when in fact we are the ones who have been bringing gifts and talents and energy to the Church.

Let us not forget how young people stepped up and helped the Church to transform itself during Covid times, bringing services online, ensuring worship and pastoral cares continued in extraordinary circumstances. We want agency and means to shape the Church's future because we are the Church's future.

The items proposed, especially co-option or appointment of the youth, are vital to the fulfilment of the Church of England's Vision and Strategy, and it will be a positive step to make sure there will still be a Church of England in 30 years' time, and that there will still be people, young and old, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, which we are all so passionate about, afresh in every age. I hope Synod will support this motion enthusiastically.

*The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin):* I come from a province, the Province of the West Indies, where having young people gathering at a diocesan level and also at a provincial level is quite normal. As a matter of fact, I took a group of my young people from Hackney to attend and participate in a provincial youth conference, an Anglican conference in the Caribbean, and that was quite an eye-opener for them to see that.

Of the 200 plus that I have confirmed since becoming a Bishop, I am sure that nearly 200 of those would have been young people. A significant amount of my time is spent in schools, colleges and with sixth formers. Young people are interested in faith matters. They really are. When I am asked in the diocese by older members, "Bishop, what are

you going to do to enable us to have more young people?”, I look them in the eye and I say “Where are your children and your grandchildren?”, because it seems to me that young people and children are not an alien group that we cast our nets somewhere else to find; they are there within the community.

Thank you, Sam, for bringing this to the Synod. My soul is singing, although it nearly stopped with such long amendments. Did we really need so many? Can we not just get on with it? Can we not just say to ourselves, some of us, who have been inhabiting this space, this arena for years and years and years, can we not just show some generosity, and say, actually, maybe we will step back and allow some room for others, in particular for young people to take their place in the decision-making process. They have something to say, please let us not just put it to doing reports after reports. Let us just get on with it.

*The Chair:* After Bishop Joanne, I call the Archbishop of Canterbury but I am afraid I am going to reduce the speech limit to two minutes at that point.

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Dr Joanne Grenfell):* I am the new lead safeguarding Bishop, and this is my first Synod, so please bear with me if I am a bit green on the technicalities, but I want to assure you of my commitment to the strategic work around safeguarding across the whole Church, which is why I wanted to speak today about young people.

Since I took up the role in April, I have been trying to understand the concerns and challenges of safeguarding in the Church, including through the voices of survivors and victims and also through conversations with young people and Church leaders in the Stepney area.

One young person told me how he had been interviewed for a role abroad on a mission placement and when he had been asked if he had any questions, he said he asked about safeguarding, because it matters, he said, and I need to know how to keep others safe, and look carefully at how I am working and be alert to power being misused.

A leader of a church where there are large numbers of young people told me how they have changed their practice around prayer ministry, thinking about how and where this is done in a service, who leads it, how young people can have choice and agency about how they receive it.

Children and young people are an integral part of our Church, and if they are an integral part they also need to be at the heart of its leadership and its governance. We have a national strategy to grow younger and more diverse, but that does not mean being ministered to, it means having agency and authority now, and that is why I applaud this motion from Sam Wilson about the importance of young people in the life of the Church.

Yes, they need to have a safe space to ask questions and grow, yes, they need to be affirmed in discerning where the balance of power in relationships lies and whether it is a healthy one, particularly with their mentors and leaders. Those decisions run through the governance of the whole Church. The relationship between governance and healthy cultures is fundamental, and I acknowledge that there are situations where we are not getting that right at the moment, and Sunday's debates on the Independent Safeguarding Board will be an opportunity to reflect on one aspect where we need to do better.

Our young people are passionate about these issues. We need to hear their voices in governance now. We also need to encourage them to see the value of contributing to governance beyond the Church: in schools, charities and public bodies. Creating a forum for young people to contribute can only strengthen this work, both to bring to the foreground issues such as safeguarding, which directly affect their wellbeing, and to give them space to shape the wider culture of the Church.

So, in this role that is new for me, as lead Bishop for safeguarding, I hope to work together with you, Synod, to address questions of leadership, culture and governance that underpin good safeguarding. We all know that there is plenty to do. In relation to this proposal, I simply urge us to seize the opportunity to enable our young people to say both what about safeguarding and what about governance? Both will underpin our ministry and mission, promoting a safer culture and the welfare of every child, young person and adult.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* If the debate so far has been very much about what young people can do in the Church, the impact of properly welcoming young people into the Church is not going to simply be to help us make our decisions, as it has been expressed, it will shape what decisions we make and why, it will transform the mission of the Church in the world, which is rather more significant.

Kofi Annan said, "Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies". If that is going to happen in the Church, it will make a huge difference to our witness in the world.

In Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique, we have set up with the local bishops youth clubs which have young people leading them with the help of the UN. Those youth clubs are transforming the culture of ISIS inspired violence in that area. Having younger people involved in leadership and choosing what decisions we make will shape, transform and render our vision useful and extraordinarily powerful in the society in which we live.

*The Ven. Luke Miller (London):* I was once the future. I was a rector at 29. The reason I am not with you is that I am preaching for the first mass of my son who is in his mid-20s.



I want to speak though about the proper engagement of young people in decision-making from an experience as I have as the London Area Chaplain to the Sea Cadets. We have a thing in Sea Cadets called the Cadet Voice, which lies at the centre of everything that the organisation does. At unit and at area and at national level, Sea Cadets themselves make contributions which, as the Archbishop of Canterbury has just noted, change the direction of the organisation.

It is all very well having participation, but there also needs to be proper listening and proper response and in a way that honours both adults and young people by giving them spaces to be what they are, adults and young people, but continues to make use of properly directed experience and also engages the zeal, the vision and the commitment and the different insights into the world which young people bring enabling us to do better than otherwise we would. It enables us to reach out and to be a flourishing and growing organisation. That is the Church, but so also it is Sea Cadets. It seems to me that if we can properly structure things - and these motions are much to be welcomed but more work will be needed to get it right - then we will be able to do something which is really of considerable and fundamental importance to our life together in the Church.

Above all, we need though properly to learn to listen, to engage, to correct where necessary, but also to be changed by those young people who come to be part of the structures, the mechanisms and organisations which we are proposing. I very much welcome this motion and hope that we can take it forward in a way that will change us and extend the Kingdom of God in this land.

*Mrs Susan Howdle (Ecumenical Representatives):* I thought it would just be helpful to have a word of ecumenical encouragement to some of the exciting things that we have been hearing this afternoon and I offer this from your covenant partner. We have had a youth conference, a national space, for about 30 years sending resolutions to the Methodist Conference for debate. But it is not an either/or. It has also evolved gradually into a celebratory event: an annual weekend in autumn, 3Generate. It is now growing: somewhere around about 1,300 children and young people from primary school age through to the age of 25.

You can envisage the amount of financial, paid and volunteer support we have invested in it, not least the great safeguarding challenges. But in the testimony of those who have often come from a place where they are the only Christian young person, to go to an event like that is a life-changing experience. Alongside it - we are Methodists - there is the constitutional side of it. An annual youth president is elected and people are elected as full voting members of our Methodist Conference. They are gradually being joined, of course, by other young people elected by the district synods. They are not delegates. They speak for themselves. As we have been reminded, there is not a youth voice. They express their own views.

Finally, without wishing to sound patronising, compared with their older conference colleagues their contributions tend to be pointed, relevant and short - at which point I sit down.

*The Chair:* I now put a motion for closure before you on Item 5.

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

*The Chair:* I now invite Sam Wilson to respond to the debate. You have five minutes.

*Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester):* Synod, thank you so much for all of your contributions. It has been so lovely to hear the variety of ways that we are all so passionate about reaching our children and our young people. I am so grateful for those who have helped us to account in various different ways and I am grateful for those who have spoken about the lessons that we can learn from other churches and our ecumenical partners in what they have been doing.

I am also really grateful for those that have spoken about the prophetic voice and the transformative power of our young people. I do not want this motion to be something that we pass and then we sort of dust hands off with it and say, well, that is done. This is step one of a billion, in my view. I really hope that we take on board everything that everyone has said today and go back to our contexts and we think about how we might be currently ignoring those who are already there and how we might reach those who are not there at all. Synod, I really hope that we can pass this motion and, to quote Bishop Rose, "Let us just get on with it".

*The Chair:* I now put Item 5, as amended, to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* Item 5 is clearly carried. That concludes item, and mine is a double.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 4.55 pm

## **ITEM 500**

### **SPECIAL AGENDA I:**

#### **LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

#### **LEGAL OFFICERS (ANNUAL FEES) ORDER 2023 (GS 2299)**

*The Chair:* Synod, we come to Item 500, the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2023. Members will need copies of the Order, GS 2299, and the Explanatory Notes GS 2299X. I call on the Ven. Bob Cooper to move the motion that the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2023 be approved. He may speak for not more than ten minutes.

*The Ven. Robert Cooper (Durham):* Members of Synod, having heard the calls for debate on the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order last July, the Order is before Synod for debate and I move the motion to that effect standing in my name. As this subject is rather technical, it may help if I perhaps summarise the approach which Synod has endorsed previously. I am grateful for this opportunity to debate it, which allows me to explain the Commission's thinking whilst everybody is still fresh on the first day.

The main purpose of orders of this kind is to prescribe the annual fee or retainer payable annually to each diocesan registrar for the professional services specified in Schedule 2 to the Order. The Commission's objective, agreed by Synod in 2014, is to redress the substantial, longstanding and potentially damaging underpayment of registrars. We started from a low base. In 2012, registrars were, on average, being paid for only about 50% of the true cost of the work actually done by them.

Following Synod's approval, the retainers of individual diocesan registrars are calculated by reference to a formula. This formula takes into account the cost of the work actually carried out in previous years and also the size of the registrar's diocese, assessed by reference to the number of open churches and clergy of incumbent status. Annual movements in the national cost of the retainer are driven both by changes in reported hours worked and average charge-out rates as required by that new basic formula.

Having heard Synod last year, we have published for the first time an aggregated summary of the data supplied to us. Prior to 2019, the formula expressly included a 30% so-called charitable discount. In 2019, the Commission concluded that a charitable discount as high as 30% was continuing to cause undue financial penalties for registrars and was not justified in today's circumstances. Persuaded by the reasoning in GS 2147X, Synod approved a reduction in the discount from 30% to 10% with the understanding that the reduction to 10% would be spread over a five year period between 2021 and 2025. The reduction now stands at 14%.

A 30% charitable discount implies a target that the retainer should on average cover 70% of the work done nationally. As the discount falls, the retainer should cover a greater average of work done. In 2022, in fact, the data shows that the retainers still only covered approximately 70% of work done, which was up from 66% the previous year. This figure alone shows that the reductions in the charitable discount already approved are not moving the dial to the extent required.

The Commission wishes to listen and, as promised last year, has undertaken an informal consultation with dioceses before bringing this Order to Synod. We are very grateful for the diocesan respondents from across the Church. Responses to the consultation are summarised in the Explanatory Notes. The Commission has debated and considered those responses along with other relevant material carefully and, it has to be said, at great length.

The Commission recognises that there are strongly held views about the affordability of any further reduction in the discount. The consultation responses, however, reflected some misconception about the extent of the charitable discount, which I am grateful for the opportunity to correct. It is not the case that the application of the formula means that in each diocese the charitable discount, which is currently offered against the firm's usual rate, is only 14%. The agreed formula applies the mean recorded rate for solicitors outside London, £236 an hour in 2022, before a further discount is applied under the formula. In other words, the formula applies a further discount to rates which will, in many cases, already be substantially reduced.

Synod must also remember that the retainer covers the cost of a registry and not just a single lawyer. Synod must look at the bottom line. The total retainer in 2022 divided by the total recorded number of hours worked gives an average hourly rate of only £134. To meet the objections raised in the consultation, the Commission is satisfied that this is a very substantial reduction on the rates for legal services which are usually charged in the third sector. As previously, the Commission also notes that the burden of any increase would not fall entirely on diocesan boards of finance. An average of 42% nationally would be payable by the Church Commissioners. This reflects the broad range of duties performed by diocesan registrars, including giving legal advice to the bishop as well as to the diocese. It follows that the statutory annual fee imposed by the Fees Order is of considerable financial advantage to DBFs and to the Church Commissioners.

Equally, the imposition of a fee limited by statute is acceptable only if the fee is a fair one, especially where that fee is below market rates. Accordingly, the Commission's starting point is consistency of approach and fairness. It recognises the call for greater transparency in the funding formula but considers that any wholesale change would require thorough consultation with stakeholders. For the present, it unanimously remains of the view that the broad principles underlying the formula which Synod approved in 2014 are well-accepted and provide the most suitable basis for the calculation of the annual retainer.

It also considers that the factors which justified the phased reduction of the charitable discount agreed in 2019 remain valid. Omitting any phased uplift at this time would simply postpone the problem and result in higher uplifts later. Accordingly, the Commission considers it right to maintain some momentum in the reduction of the charitable discount from 14% in 2023 to 12% in 2024. This meets the aspiration set out last year and in previous years. The average national increase of 4.9% is significantly below the headline rate of inflation.

The Commission, of course, recognises the financial difficulties across the Church but also the range and difficulty of legal work which is required. What was true in 2014 is true now. The Church rightly values the providers of its legal services and should recognise that they ought to be remunerated fairly and reasonably for the work they do. Annual retainers are a good way of achieving that end whilst putting in place a clear limit on fees. Without a retainer, dioceses would probably be required to agree fees for each piece of

work at the prevailing hourly rate and registrars would need to undertake full-time recording. Synod needs to be aware that this could lead to an increase in recorded hours and, therefore, fees. This is a real possibility which the Church may face in 2024 if General Synod does not approve a Fees Order.

Members of Synod, the Commission takes its role seriously and recommends this Order unanimously. The Order attempts to balance, first, the needs of diocesan registrars who deserve fair reward for their work; and, secondly, those of dioceses which we realise are facing tighter budgets year on year; and, thirdly, the present and future needs of the Church and the need to keep in view the long-term objective of making sure the specialism of ecclesiastical law remains attractive for law firms as part of their succession planning.

In short, Synod, we have looked at the actual rate which was being paid hourly, we have looked at the range of work which is being done and we have looked at the current inflationary environment. We feel that the remuneration rates proposed in the Order are fair and go some way to ensuring that the Church will continue to be able to draw upon that very precious resource of specialist ecclesiastical legal knowledge years into the future. Members of Synod, I, accordingly, invite you to approve the Order.

*The Chair:* The motion to approve the Order is now open for debate.

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

*Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln):* I am grateful for the more detailed information provided to us in GS 2299X than has been the case in previous years, although I have to express disappointment that the many concerns raised during the course of the consultation referred to in the paper have been entirely set aside in bringing forward the Order. There is one area in which I would ask for more information than provided in the paper. The paper states that the numbers of open churches and the numbers of clergy of incumbent status and above are the factors that are used in determining the basis of the apportionment of annual fees between dioceses. But the paper does not set out the relative weighting of those two factors.

Examination of the relative amounts payable by DBS, which is set out in Table 1 of Schedule 1 in the paper, suggests that a higher weighting is placed on the number of open churches than on the numbers of clergy. In the interests of transparency, can both the actual data used and the detailed workings of the apportionment calculations be shared with Synod members, not today but at some point following this group of sessions.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* I got some laughs, I think it was this time last year, when I said, "I have got nothing against bishops, well not all of them". I was going to make the same joke with lawyers, but you will not get the same laugh twice. I am not going to vote against this Fees Order but I do have some concerns that I would just like to express. They are similar to the concerns that Nigel just said. The background paper

gives a lot of details of the consultation that took place. A lot of concerns were raised and they have not really been addressed and it has not been properly dealt with.

I am aware that in February when we gathered, the Central Stipends Authority put forward an increase for clergy of 5% for the next financial year but clergy only had 1% in the current financial year. The clergy are the backbone of the Church and if we cannot reward clergy and talk about clergy stipends and benefits in the same way that we can talk about lawyers, the value of the work they do, their hourly rate and so on and so forth, then I think we have got something wrong.

A question. There is a 10% uplift for the Diocese of London and the Diocese of Southwark because of the increased costs, are they to do with the cost of the diocese or the cost of being based in London? Because the Diocese of London registrar works for a firm of solicitors who has an office in London but he is based in Norwich and so there are not any increased costs for him for being in London because he is in Norwich. There is no requirement for dioceses to use a local firm of solicitors. Many do not. If we are going to uplift on the basis of work that is involved and the complexity of the work, I am suggesting that the Diocese of Canterbury probably has far more complex issues than London because of the international work.

There are concerns that I have and I would just ask that in future we maybe bring together the CSA and the Fees Commission so that the remuneration of both these core groups that are essential to the Church go in step rather than lawyers moving ahead far faster than that of clergy.

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* I have to declare some interest as a former member of the Fees Advisory Commission and a former solicitor - although a very long time ago - although I have never been an ecclesiastical lawyer. The Church of England, as a consequence of its history going back to the medieval Church and its position as the established Church, has a body of law unlike many other churches and subject to those laws as well as the law of the land.

In Synod, we add to that body of law every time we pass a new Measure or Canon and when we amend them. It does not form part of the regular law school curriculum and, therefore, needs specialist lawyers to give advice about it and to administer it and we have to pay them for doing that or no one else is going to. The consequences of acting without proper advice are often far more costly than taking advice in the first place. Our ecclesiastical legal advice needs are serviced by a dedicated body of registrars who are paid a retainer to cover routine work to enable them to be contacted by clergy and Church officers as well as members of the public without charge.

As you have seen, they record that work and the retainer does not cover it particularly where a charitable discount is applied. We have to remember that most registrars are working in law firms with others who do not necessarily share their faith. Whereas at one time there might have been some prestige attached to being a registrar, that is much less

so now, if at all, as partners might see it as a category of work which does not pay at the rate expected for running the business. As a consequence, those who practise it are less likely to be promoted to partnership or to progress to higher levels in a partnership.

Of course, it should be remembered, as we have heard, that the fees paid do not go to the individual but to pay the costs of running a business: offices, staff, professional indemnity insurance and so many other things. A charitable discount, in effect, means that other clients are subsidising the Church because the money is found from somewhere. Whereas in the past most would have been happy to do so, this is less likely to be the case now. All of this makes it difficult to recruit young lawyers to be the registrars of the future. They may feel a vocation to serve in this way - many do - but it may mean taking a decision which would damage their long-term career prospects. It is not an easy decision to make. Even if the fees are as in the Order, they are often not going to be up to what would normally be the rate for other work.

I would urge members of Synod to support this Order, with reducing the charitable discount, to do what we can to ensure that we have the ecclesiastical lawyers we need for the future.

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

*The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich)*: I think what we are talking about here, Synod, is about fairness and I do not oppose this motion whatsoever. In fact, I understand that we need to pay the going rate. However, when people say things like, "Only earning £130 an hour", that makes me think I did not become a clergyperson to become a millionaire, that is for sure. However, since 2017 when I was ordained I have received, in real terms, a pay cut each year. This is something we really need to talk about as a Church: are we being fair and are we doing justice to our clergy?

I know of many clergy in my diocese and other dioceses around the country who are really struggling with the burden of large vicarages, with the burden of childcare and, particularly if they are single-income households, really struggling on the stipend that they have. So, I support this, but I would like us to think about justice and fairness to our clergy as well.

*The Chair*: I see no one else standing so I call on Bob Cooper to reply, please. You have up to three minutes.

*The Ven. Robert Cooper (Durham)*: Thank you, Synod, for those comments. To Nigel, I am glad you are grateful for the extra information. Information on churches and incumbents and weighting - I honestly cannot answer that question. However, we will make sure that the formula can be shared with all, and I will take that back to the next meeting of the Fees Advisory Commission to clarify that. Thank you for that point.

Gavin, the remuneration for clergy, I have to declare an interest in that, clearly. I think it is a good point. It is not actually for us today, but I am sure that those involved in the remuneration of clergy and the CSA will have taken notes of those comments.

Costs in London - I cannot answer something on a very specific question, but if you would like write to us then we can work that out.

To my illustrious former member, to Joyce, the body of law of the Church of England is unusual, you said. I think it could also be said to be strange and impenetrable would be another adjective. I think you are right that we need to encourage young lawyers to look into ecclesiastical law, and if you do know any good young lawyers, I am sure that the legal team will be very happy to speak to them here at Synod.

To Graham - £130 an hour, yes, that sounds like a huge amount to those of us wearing dog collars, but I would also suggest that is not just going to one solicitor, that is to run the entire registry, so that amount is spread over quite a number of people and offices. We want to be fair and give justice to clergy. I would also again note that the Clergy Stipends Authority will have noted those comments.

May I also finish by saying something tangential which is to commend to all clergy the work of the Clergy Support Trust, which are excellent in their support of clergy. Please access their excellent website if you know of anybody in distress.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 500 to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* That is carried. This Order, having been approved by the Synod, will now be laid before both Houses of Parliament. This concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 5.18 pm

*The Chair:* Before we proceed on the agenda, I call upon the Chair of the Business Committee to propose a variation of business.

## **VARIATION OF BUSINESS**

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Synod, I did warn you. Chair, under Standing Order 9, I would like to propose a variation in the order of business that we move straight now to Item 6, which is the Appointment of a Member of the Archbishops' Council, and that we take Item 501, the Electronic Register Book of Services Form and Conditions, at a time to be agreed. This will ensure that we are able to hopefully appoint Carl to the Archbishops' Council, and it is also Carl's birthday today, I believe. so it means that we can give him a synodical birthday present as well. Thank you, Chair.



*The Chair:* Thank you. I invite Synod to show with a show of hands whether they approve the variation of business that has just been proposed.

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

## **ITEM 6**

### **APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF THE ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL (GS 2301)**

*The Chair:* That motion is clearly carried so, as we heard, we move directly to Item 6, the appointment of a member of the Archbishops' Council. You will need GS 2301 for this Item. I invite the Archbishop of Canterbury to speak to this item. You have, Archbishop, up to 10 minutes but bearing in mind that we have a hard time stop for Questions at quarter to, I hope everybody contributing to this debate will be circumspect in terms of timing.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* Thank you very much. It gives me great pleasure to move this motion to appoint Carl Hughes as a member of the Archbishops' Council and Chair of the Finance Committee. Carl was appointed following an open recruitment process and consultation with the Archbishops' Council and with the Appointments Committee. He will replace Canon John Spence whose term comes to an end on 30 September. There will be a proper thank you to John on Monday.

GS 2301 offers more information about the appointment and the roles that Carl has held in the past. I do not intend to spend time reading out what you have already digested. However, it is worth noting that Carl has great experience of industrial resources and energy sectors, as well as considerable experience as a non-executive director and, very importantly, as a charitable trustee. He has also given of his time and his energy in a wide variety of roles, from work on the Archbishops' Council to a churchwarden in his local parish.

His experience and insights mean that I suggest to the Synod that he is well-qualified and we are confident that he will serve the Council and the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board and the Finance Committee in a thoughtful and considered way, listening to the Spirit and contributing to the mission of the Church. He understands the issues facing the Church and has the confidence and experience to take responsibility for the very difficult decisions and recommendations that seem to be coming more and more frequently.

In doing this, Carl is offering his many talents in the service of Christ and of Christ's church, both nationally and locally, for the furthering of the Kingdom of God and of bringing people to living faith in Jesus Christ.

Thank you very much to the Chair of the Business Committee for spoiling my final line by already informing you that it is Carl's birthday today. So, just in case you did not hear it the first time, it is Carl's birthday today. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Archbishop. The motion is now open for debate. The speech limit, bearing in mind the hard time stop we have, will be three minutes from the outset. I call upon John Spence.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* You will probably think I am standing here to give some formal words of support for Carl's nomination. You could not be more wrong. Frankly, I speak to you encouraging you with all I can to appoint Carl. He is so good it is scary.

Robust in his challenge, persistent in his questioning, thorough in his analysis; the ability to see the wood among the trees and innovative in his approach, always bringing that left field thinking that enriches the Finance Committee. I have been able to entrust to him and delegate to him the chairmanship of the Investment Committee which looks after our meagre investments, but, very importantly to Synod, looks for the optimal chances to take forward social impact investment.

Frankly, ladies and gentlemen, having a bundle of such talent as just one of your numerous members of the Finance Committee has been an onerous task, and I beg you to appoint him so that I can have a rest.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I have three things to say, in increasing seriousness. First, to warmly support this proposal from the other Synod member from the London Borough of Wandsworth. I am delighted that Carl is joining. I first came across Carl's work, apart from the time we had together when Carl was working for the Archbishops' Council on issues at Peterborough Cathedral and the report he produced was exemplary for our work, so we are well served.

Secondly, I want to say, and as I say increasingly seriously, whenever these appointments are announced, there is always this thing: is he one of us, does he belong to our tribe? I am not sure what that means except that on some issues Carl and I disagree very profoundly, but taking to heart the Archbishop of York's words a few minutes ago, it seems to me that in a Church where we are committed to working together, we need to set aside those differences of opinion to work for the good of all and for the common good in the Church. Even though Carl and I will probably vote opposite each other should we vote again on Synod stuff in February, I will warmly support his work.

The third thing I want to say is, Carl, why on earth are you joining the Archbishops' Council at the moment? This is a difficult time and it has been shocking to me to see the way in which social media has spoken about the Archbishops' Council as a body and as individuals as well. We talk about "othering" in the social media world and I have experienced that in some ways myself as well. But I have watched, and we saw it in the Business Committee debate, the Archbishops' Council othered comprehensively as

though they were somehow evil and wicked and against the common good of the Church and that we are moral and upright and full of grace. This is simply unfair.

We need to realise that we are all in this together. And if we are going to be serious about our sinfulness and the gracious gift of God to us, we need to recognise that, yes, the Archbishops' Council will make mistakes, yes, Carl will make mistakes, but everyone is trying their best, and in my experience of six years on Archbishops' Council, the area where we took the most care, the most seriousness and the most time and effort was in safeguarding. And I hope that when we come to the serious matters later in this Synod, we will recognise that the people who have been doing the work for us in Archbishops' Council have been doing a remarkable job. They do not get it right all the time but I am absolutely convinced that they are committed to the best possible standards in the Church. That goes too for William Nye.

*The Chair:* The speech limit is still three minutes.

*Dr Catharine Rhodes (Sheffield):* I do not know if this is a conflict of interest but I am Chair of the General Synod Environment Group and the Environmental Office of the Sheffield Diocese and I have campaigned for divestment from fossil fuels.

I am just asking for clarification really on GS 2301 and Carl's biography which states he is now a non-executive director and chair of the audit committee of EnQuest, which is an independent oil and gas company. However, in April 2013 online it was announced by EnQuest that he was leaving the board on 5 June after the AGM. Given the recent and very welcome divestment announcement by the NIBs, I just seek clarification on that to make sure the record is straight.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Carl, happy birthday. I am sure we might even sing it to you, but I am not going to start that. I do however want to explain why I will abstain from voting on your appointment. I was not going to speak but I am afraid one of the previous speakers, for reasons most in this chamber will understand, has angered a lot of us. I speak as someone who has been a member of the Archbishops' Council for six years.

I saw it working well and I saw it working, frankly, abysmally where I, in numerous meetings, had to call out the fact that we as a Council had agreed something, we had minuted it and yet the Church of England institutions had gone on and done the exact opposite. If you want cases I can do that. It is not beyond reproach and part of our role in Synod is to look at how our governance structures work. That impacts with Carl.

You and I have very different views on a number of things, but the fact that you put your name to a letter to the Secretary of State saying that you would continue to conduct conversion therapy and that you would instruct young people in a way that I personally believe will damage their wellbeing and health means that I have grave concerns about your ability to be independent in these areas.

We do, Synod, have very deep divisions and we cannot just gloss over them, but for me the core value has to be on safeguarding and how it impacts the most vulnerable in our midst. When I see people putting their names to letters that speak against the need for a conversion therapy ban, I get very concerned. I am not going to vote against you being appointed but I do want to register my concern. I did spend some time wondering whether I would stand and speak, but to sit silently through this to me would acquiesce in an appointment process that I think is rubber-stamping. The point of Synod being asked to endorse these people is for us to air our concerns and that is what I am trying to do now. I am sure not all will agree with me but if you do maybe you too would want to abstain.

*The Chair:* I have a request from Zoom to speak, Robert Thompson, so I am going to invite him and then after that Carl himself. I might have to test the mind of Synod then given the hard time stop we have.

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* I myself will be following Jayne's example and abstaining in this, precisely for the issues Jayne points out. The Archbishops' Council is responsible for safeguarding within the Church as a whole and putting your name to the letter which Carl did in relation to conversion therapy raises real issues for me in relation to the safeguarding of LGBTQIA+ people within our Church.

Secondly, could I also say that I really find Simon's contribution here extremely unhelpful. I do not think it is fair to characterise some of the contributions to the Business Committee debate as "othering" of the Archbishops' Council, or of William Nye in particular. The reality is that unless we are able to name these things in a robust and a transparent manner what is the point of being at Synod at all?

The issue that I raised in relation to William is when the General Secretary of both Archbishops' Council and of Synod becomes the news item, which is very much the case at present, there is a real issue about our governance and it must be looked at.

*The Chair:* I think you will be the last one, at least I will test the mind of Synod on that, simply because of the time factor.

*Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark):* I just wanted to answer the factual question that was asked before which the Archbishop will not know the answer to off the top of his head. I have completed two terms of three years as a non-executive director and audit committee chairman of EnQuest plc, and, having done those two terms, I stood down at the AGM at the beginning of June just in the normal course of corporate practice.

*The Chair:* Since I see no one else standing, and I have rechecked Zoom and nobody else is signalling from there, I beg your pardon - we will have one. I am going to make you two minutes, I am afraid, because of the time factor.

*Mr Gabriel Chui (Liverpool):* I am a relatively new person to Synod. This is my first quinquennium. Most of what I have heard is from people who have been on Synod for

ages and I do not know if you have noticed but they seem to hijack it for all sorts of different reasons. They are important issues but this is an appointment which is to do with competency, and from what I have seen from the paperwork, Carl is obviously competent for the job.

More than that, and as a newbie to Synod, the other characteristic that I want to highlight is how generous Carl has been to me whenever I asked him a finance question and that is the sort of person that you want in the role so that as a Synod we can ask the questions not just from the front but also around the dining table and that sort of stuff. May I commend Carl, to the extent that I know him, and ask that you vote for him.

*The Chair:* I must put a motion for closure to Synod now. We have timed business at quarter to.

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

*The Chair:* I call on the Archbishop of Canterbury to respond to the debate. He has up to five minutes.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* First of all, I am very grateful to those who have spoken in this debate. I am particularly grateful to Gabriel Chui who, in his enthusiastic support for Carl Hughes, made up for John Spence's very half-hearted comments.

Secondly, thank you to Simon Butler. I think social media abuse is something that we are suffering from particularly at the moment, and I am glad he echoed what most of us felt about the Archbishop of York's very remarkable Presidential Address. He spoke strongly of Carl's generosity of spirit, and I think that is what we need.

We have had the question answered that Cathy asked about whether Carl was still on the EnQuest board. I trust that was clearly answered.

I think there were a number of comments from two people about the issue of Carl's approach to conversion therapy, Jayne Ozanne and Robert Thompson. The position of the Church England on that is very clear following a very large majority some time ago and I think we are aware of that. Personal opinions do not override the stated policy of the Church of England -- of the General Synod, sorry. No one speaks for the Church of England. It does not exist technically, but that is a separate question.

And Carl Hughes, thank you for your eloquent lengthy speech which explained everything we ever needed to know.

And having said all that, I beg to move the motion.

*The Chair:* Thank you

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

*The Chair:* The motion is clearly carried. As you know, we have the first of our two question sessions starting immediately after this so please remain in your seats for what I am sure the Chair will try and cope with.

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 4.42 pm

## **ITEM 7 QUESTIONS**

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, Synod. We come to Item 7, Questions. As members will be able to see, we have a large amount of questions to get through. For this reason I am planning to only allow supplementaries two per question. I would like to draw your attention to the notes for members on the front of the Notice Paper, which say your supplementary must not contain argument or imputation. In other words, a question must not be used as a debating point and also must not accuse a person of wrongdoing. It must not ask for an expression of opinion, including on a question of law, or for the solutions to a hypothetical question. Questions of that nature will be out of order. And can I request no speeches, Synod.

I do recognise that Questions are an important part of Synod business. I hope you will help us have a good session by keeping the tone of your supplementaries appropriate. I plan to move through the questions by number and will continue with the second session of Questions tomorrow after we run out of time this evening. Can I also ask members if you know that you wish to ask a supplementary that you position yourself near a podium; that would be helpful.

## **LITURGICAL COMMISSION**

1. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: The Church offers a range of national resources to help individuals and churches celebrate Mothering Sunday/"Mother's Day". What is the equivalent range of resources to help celebrate Father's Day each year?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied as Chair of the Liturgical Commission: A sample service to mark Father's Day, including prayers of intercession and a Collect which could be used in other forms of service, can be found in *New Patterns for Worship* (p.424ff). There are also suggestions for some creative ways to pray with and for fathers on the Church of England website.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Given some of the complexities and issues and uncertainties around the question of fatherhood which were alluded to in the

Presidential Address, are there really no plans to do something more proactive to mark Father's Day and to actually engage our culture on all questions around fatherhood?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* Thank you for the question. I think that the Father's Day resources and Father's Day more generally has been marked by the digital team through our website, which is one response to that, and of course it is open to local churches, and we would encourage them to use the resources we have and to speak about fatherhood.

2. The *Revd Canon Alice Kemp (Bristol)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Following the motion which accompanied the paper affirming and including disabled people in the whole life of the Church (GS 2270) which received unanimous support last July, could the Liturgical Commission offer a progress update on work to enhance the accessibility of language in authorized material, and estimate an approximate timetable?

*The Revd Canon Alice Kemp:* I am speaking as a member of the Disability Task Group. We are very keen to get on with this piece of work. Are you able to give us a sense of when the Liturgical Commission might be able to engage with us? We asked for a timetable in the question but there was not one in response to that

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* We very much hope we can engage with that during the coming year. It is not a matter of the Liturgical Commission's lack of interest or unwillingness to engage, it is purely a capacity issue and this past year has seen a particular number of issues with the death of the late Queen, the Coronation and the Liturgical Commission's involvement in LLF. We are a very excellently but thinly resourced Commission but we are keen to work in partnership with the Disability Task Group.

3. The *Revd Canon Alice Kemp* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Noting the very useful guidance in Patterns for Baptism "Making Baptism Services Accessible for all" pp259-265, does the Liturgical Commission have a plan to produce similar guidance for other published liturgies?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied as Chair of the Liturgical Commission:* With permission, I will answer questions 2 and 3 together. The Liturgical Commission anticipates producing a resource provisionally titled Patterns for Funerals which will include similar guidance. More generally, it is committed to celebrating and encouraging best practice in the conduct of all services. I regret that other pressures on the Commission and its staff have meant a slower start to this work than we might have hoped. The Commission was very grateful for the debate last July and the unanimous support for the motion. We look forward to working with the Disability Task Group to produce a resource which will reflect many people's experiences, and which will be useful in different styles of worship and a range of local contexts.

## **NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL**

4. *The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: What research has been undertaken on whether children who have attended Church of England schools are more or less likely to become adult disciples and active members of the Church, with what findings, and if none has been conducted, what plans are there to take such research forward?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society: The Growing Faith Foundation is focusing research on the way partnership between church, school and household impacts the development of faith and discipleship amongst children and young people in a variety of different ways. The Faith in the Nexus research by the National Institute of Christian Education Research has demonstrated the way Church primary schools facilitate the exploration of children's faith in the home. The only recent longitudinal study that looks at the 10–15-year impact of Christian schooling on adults aged 25-30 is the international Cardus Education Study which shows the positive impact. With all of the developments being brought forward to focus on doubling the number of children and young people as active disciples, research is an important element, and we will be keen to explore how such research can be shaped in the light of this question.

*The Revd Graham Hamilton:* Bishop, thank you for your full answer and your openness to further research. The Cardus Education Study explored schooling in America, Canada Australia and so appears to have little bearing on the contribution of Church of England schools. Is the Bishop aware of the research published in 2021 by Leslie Francis and David Lancashire of Warwick University that focused on Church secondary schools in Southwark and showed that attendance at a Church school had not positive impact on attitudes to Christian faith? How might the Growing Faith Foundation explore more carefully the reasons that our significant investment in Church schools appears to be having little impact on young people coming to faith?

*The Bishop of Durham:* Yes, I am aware of the research. That answers that question. It was very limited. It was only on secondary schools. We need to keep working away at this. It was also on a period before all the massive investment we have put into the Growing Faith Foundation and the linking of home, school and church, which we recognise was lacking in the past and we believe that will make a major difference in the future.

5. *Mr Guy Hordern (Birmingham)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: What are the goals of the National Society in relation to the leadership and management of Church schools, and how do they relate to each of the Five Marks of Mission in turn?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd David Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society: The National Society serves the Church's ministry with children and young people in schools, colleges and universities by:

i Developing leaders who are called, connected and committed to a vision for education which is deeply Christian, serving the common good.



ii Shaping policy to promote high quality education for all, particularly the poorest and most disadvantaged.

iii Growing faith amongst children and young people through churches, schools/colleges and households.

These strategic aims are shaped and underpinned by the Church of England vision for education. We have not specifically mapped that to the Five Marks of Mission but are confident that each of the marks are covered through this vision and the leadership development resources we provide.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* In light of the answer to the previous question, and the fact there has been so much investment, is it possible to undertake this mapping exercise as part of the research looking at the impact the changes were making?

*The Bishop of Durham:* That is a question about the previous question, is it not?

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* It was mentioned in the answer to this about the possibility of this mapping, and I am saying in the light of that previous question should we not undertake this mapping exercise?

*The Bishop of Durham:* We could undertake it. Whether or not it is the most effective use of time and energy of the staff is something we would have to explore.

6. *Dr Julie Maxwell (Winchester)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: There have been recent media reports of organisations that continue to promote material for use in primary schools which is inappropriately sexual - including discussing anal sex as a normal practice, encouraging masturbation, and claiming that children can choose their sex. What assessment has the National Society done in order to allow it to make any public comments and advise schools?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society: A Diocesan Boards of Education provide advice and guidance to their schools in this area and Directors of Education are not reporting that inappropriate material is being used in primary schools. So whilst we treat the media reports with concern we are sceptical that the use of inappropriate material is widespread and have no evidence of it being used in Church schools. However, the Ofsted and DfE review that has been announced will give us much more data to make informed judgements or comments with. Our guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education and the particular need to be mindful of faith perspectives in this (for all schools, not simply Church of England schools) is here Relationships, Sex and Health Education | The Church of England.

*Dr Julie Maxwell:* As you say, the RSE review and Ofsted will give us valuable information regarding the content of RSE. How will you as the National Society assess the review of RSE materials and lessons specifically in C of E schools, including listening to the concerns of parents?

*The Bishop of Durham:* We do not plan to do anything separate from the national review that is being undertaken by DfE. Whether or not it will be possible to aggregate out the Church school stuff from that, we simply do not know. I am meeting with the Secretary of State next week so I could ask her directly, because this is one of the subjects on our agenda.

7. *Dr Julie Maxwell (Winchester)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: Which stakeholders will be consulted as part of the review of the C of E Relationships & Sex Educations guidance and Valuing All God's Children once the DfE has published its guidance on transgender and the results of the RSE review?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied as Chair of the National Society: As with all our guidance, we will consult widely with diocesan education teams, schools leaders and children and young people. In these particular cases we will also pay close attention to the connection with any guidance being developed by the House of Bishops as part of the response to *Prayers of Love and Faith*, as well as the wider debate in society and the views of parents about the issues.

*Dr Julie Maxwell:* Given the future medical and psychological implications of what is taught in RSE around sexual intimacy and gender, will you also be consulting with medical and mental health professionals as stakeholders in your reviews?

*The Bishop of Durham:* I would imagine we would.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Members of Synod have a wealth of experience. What opportunity is there for members of this Synod to contribute to the consultation?

*The Bishop of Durham:* It is a good question, Sam, and when we come to it -- we are in a slight catch, to be honest, at the moment about doing the review because we know that the Government are doing it. We do not have their transgender guidance yet and we do not want to do something until that is out, because otherwise we might have to withdraw and reissue. Likewise, with the RSE review, we want that to have been done and to come back. We could certainly put a questionnaire or something out.

## **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL**

8. *Mr Sam Wilson (Chester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Following the Statement from Archbishops' Council on the Independent Safeguarding Board on 21st June 2023, where the Archbishops referred to the dispute with ISB members as having "damaged confidence" and the Council described the decision as "concerning and unsettling to victims, survivors and others". Can you confirm that the Archbishops' Council have reported this dispute and decision as a Serious Incident to the Charity Commission under their obligation as charity trustees to report, in a prompt and timely manner, adverse events whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant

harm to a charity's reputation or to those who come into contact with a charity through its work?

9. *Ms Rebecca Mynett (St Albans)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Before the February Synod, the ISB issued a public statement on its blog recording grievance about the way the ISB work had been undermined by decisions for which Archbishops' Council hold ultimate responsibility. Subsequently, it has been reported that a Dispute Resolution Notice under the terms of members' contracts was delivered. Can you confirm the dates upon which Archbishops' Council, having received these pieces of information, filed Serious Incident Reports with the Charity Commission?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Chelmsford)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: With permission I will answer questions 8 and 9 together. The Archbishops' Council submitted a Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission in relation to the Independent Safeguarding Board on Monday 26 June.

*Ms Rebecca Mynett:* Thank you for your very reassuring answer. Please could the Archbishops' Council publish the Serious Incident Report and in due course annex it to the report of proceedings of Synod?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* I am afraid I do not know the answer to that question because I cannot answer for the whole Council, but I think the Council has heard it and I hope we can respond positively.

10. *Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Mindful of the vital importance of this matter, how long does the Archbishops' Council envisage taking to appoint a new Independent Safeguarding Board? Do they accept that this must be done by the end of 2023?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as Joint President of the Archbishops' Council: Thank you for your question. The Archbishops' Council wishes to put the independent scrutiny of its safeguarding on a firm footing as soon as possible. It recognises the urgent need for a re-set. However, it wishes to do so in partnership with victims and survivors and in a way that learns the lessons of the last 18 months. It also recognises that there are a range of options a number of which may require the constitution of a new body corporate and may require legislation. If the organisational design were to require legislation then that obviously could not be introduced overnight but in those circumstances the Council would want to understand what could be introduced sooner. Nevertheless, I can assure you that the collective view of the Archbishops Council recognises the importance of making progress as swiftly as possible.

*Mr Robin Lunn:* Thank you, Archbishop, for your answer. If the chosen organisational design does require legislation, would the Archbishops' Council introduce an interim option rather than leave a void?

*The Archbishop of York:* Clearly, our main objective is to take things forward and I am sure we will want to look at all options to do that as effectively as possible, of which that is clearly one. Certainly in terms of individual case reviews, that is already being looked at.

11. *Dr Alan Downen (Chester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: How can any "independent" panel or board claim to be truly independent if the Archbishops' Council retains the ability to meddle, or censure and disband its membership? Given their terms of reference is it not up to any "independent" body to appoint their own membership, develop their own ways of working, resolve their own disagreements and, to an extent, define their own boundaries?

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: As set out in GS Misc 1341, the Independent Safeguarding Board under phase 1 has not been a separate legal entity. Instead the members operated under contract to the Archbishops' Council. Although it had operational independence as regards its scrutiny, data and recommendations, the Archbishops' Council retained accountability for its expenditure and activities, which meant the Archbishops' Council was necessarily required to satisfy itself that the ISB was meeting its objectives. As part of the contracts members were required to develop proposals for phase 2 where the Board would have more clearly established independence.

*Dr Alan Downen:* The word "independent" is defined as "free from outside influence or control; not subject to another's authority; being free to make one's own decisions". Is that word being used frequently in safeguarding situations in ways which could be potentially inappropriate or misleading? Is the impression of independence simply being used as a mask for internal control? For example, should the ISB actually have been called the SB and is the National Safeguarding Panel truly independent if its terms of reference and its composition are determined by the Archbishops' Council?

*The Chair:* That is more than one question

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode:* Alan, thank you very much for your question and your supplementary. The ISB, when it was set up, was set up very specifically as phase 1 and phase 2, with phase 1 very much the core. The Board was to put before the Archbishops' Council plans for ISB 2, i.e. fully independent and fully governed, so that was very clear at the very outset. I recognise the point that you are making and I am sure the Archbishops' Council has heard that as well, but thank you for your supplementary.

12. *Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Could the Presidents explain why they have disbanded the ISB and the extent to which the likely impact on the Church's reputation in the area of safeguarding was taken into account in making that decision?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Joint President of the Archbishops' Council:* The decisions with regard to the ISB were taken by the Archbishops' Council and not by the two Archbishops personally. The reasons are set out in the statement from the Archbishops' Council of 22 June and GS Misc 1341. We and the Council bitterly regret that it has been necessary to take these steps and I can assure that the impact on the Church of England's reputation and practice on safeguarding were important parts of this decision.

*Mr Peter Barrett:* I would just like to know what the rationale was for giving the ISB an hour to tell the survivors groups about the announcement that they were being disbanded. What was the rationale behind that decision?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* Thank you very much, Peter. The time pressures because of needing to make sure that the Synod was informed about what was happening left us with a very short period in which to both inform and then publish what had been happening. It came down to a large extent to the need to get Synod papers out on time and for Synod to be aware of what was going on.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* The response says that it was the decision of the Archbishops' Council and not the two Archbishops personally. As a statement of fact, how did the Presidents vote on this issue at Archbishops' Council?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* Chair, I am not sure. I would like advice. I know the answer. Am I allowed to give an answer to that or not, because obviously the voting was within the Archbishops' Council and I am not sure if that is confidential or not. I am perfectly happy to give an answer but I just do not know if I am permitted to.

*The Chair:* I will just take advice. The advice I have been given is for you to respond in writing after taking advice.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* I respond in writing after taking advice or you respond in writing after taking advice?

*The Chair:* You respond in writing after taking advice.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* Could you advise me as to who advises me? And do I publish the written response if that is the advice?

*The Chair:* Yes.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* I am quite happy to. I am asking for the legal opinion.

*The Chair:* Yes.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* So why can't I just tell him?

*The Chair:* If you wish to, you may.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* Both Archbishops wished to wait a bit.

13. *Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Why did the ISB recently issue a formal dispute resolution notice to the Archbishops' Council?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: It is a matter for the relevant members of the Independent Safeguarding Board to explain why they did so, but it is a matter of public record that their principal complaint was about the appointment of the Acting Chair and the Council not respecting their independence.

14. *Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Given that the disbandment of the Independent Safeguarding Board will most likely put additional calls on the National Safeguarding Team by and for anxious and frustrated survivors, added to the magnitude of the Soul Survivor inquiry if retained in-house, has NST resource provision been reviewed and increased to avoid unacceptable stress being laid upon staff?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: We are grateful for the concern of Synod for the wellbeing of the National Safeguarding Team. The Independent Safeguarding Board was established to scrutinise the work of the Church, including the National Safeguarding Team, and there are therefore no direct consequences for them. However the Archbishops' Council keeps the resourcing of the team, and organisations such as Safe Spaces, under review to ensure that resources are appropriate.

*Mrs Kat Alldread:* Just for clarification, in this time of particular frustration and distress on the part of survivors after the loss of trusted advocates, is it correct that there has been no additional resource added to the NST nor is there a current plan to add additional resource?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* I cannot completely answer for the NST itself. All I can say is that we are in very close collaboration with Alex who leads the team. We are very conscious of the pressures on the team and we are very conscious of the need to make sure that the budget is appropriate for the team. We do see him regularly at the Archbishops' Council and I am in regular contact with him as one of the Archbishops' Council members particularly associated with safeguarding. I would say we do keep in close contact. Thank you for your concern and for your question.

15. *Dr Diana Tremayne (Leeds)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What risk assessments were undertaken by the Archbishops' Council in advance of the implementation of the dismissal of the Independent Members to minimise the risks of

adverse effects and dangerous reaction in those vulnerable survivors whose primary trust was invested in the Independent ISB members who had been promoted by the Church as competent and committed to protecting their welfare through sound safeguarding process?

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The Archbishops' Council took into account all factors, including the impact on survivors, in making its decisions. The decision was not taken lightly, but after a period of consideration and discussion when the Council considered all the factors involved and in particular the impact on survivors. This is the reason for the priority attached to securing continuity, in particular for those survivors who have case reviews with the ISB and providing support through Safe Spaces.

*Dr Diana Tremayne:* If a full assessment was undertaken before making the decision to remove the support of the independent survivor advocates from highly vulnerable survivors, what was the worst case scenario that was planned for?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* Diana, thank you. I want you to know as a Synod we talked around the risks around this over a number of different meetings really from the autumn when we had concerns. Tim has explained to you about the purpose of the ISB and as trustees we have to ensure that we are meeting our charitable objective. We had concerns about whether we were doing that. We talked about the risks of changing versus the risks of staying and I can assure you that we explored many different aspects of the risk, including the impact on victims and survivors. It was not a decision that was easy to make and it is very painful for all of us still.

16. *Dr Diana Tremayne (Leeds)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: At what time on or before the official announcement on 21 June 2023 at 1pm were Diocesan Safeguarding Officers notified of the dismissal of ISB members, so that they might make suitable provision for the pastoral support of those survivors who might see themselves as having been abandoned by the Church?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* Based on the sensitivities around this issue and the fact that the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB) members needed to be told first, DSAs and survivors were informed approximately an hour after the ISB members had been told.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* In your answer you say that DSAs and survivors were informed approximately an hour after the ISB members had been told. May I ask how were survivors informed, please?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* There are a number of mechanisms. I am not entirely sure of the processes. As a trustee, we have to delegate those responsibilities to our NST colleagues. I think to be fair, all survivors could not have been informed because we know that many, many survivors do not make themselves known to us and so we are not

necessarily in contact with them. I think it is a fair question about who was informed. Certain groups of survivors would have been informed and also Safe Spaces, the organisation that cares on the telephone system for survivors and victims, was also briefed beforehand. I do not know exactly the mechanism. All I know is it was delegated by the Council to the NST.

17. *Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Survivors gave their personal property/data to the ISB on the basis that it was a "fully independent" Independent Safeguarding Board. 76 Survivors have specifically notified the Church that they did not consent to their data being shared with the Church in general and Meg Munn in particular. What precisely has happened to that data to ensure it is lawfully managed?

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Members of the Independent Safeguarding Board are each data controllers who determine the purposes and means of processing personal data which they have collected from survivors.

Following the termination of the ISB members' contracts, the Council is not proposing to pass any person's personal data to a person of its choice, including to the Council itself. It is a matter for the ISB members to ensure there they comply with their obligations in data protection law, and that there are appropriate controls over the data that is held. I can assure you that we have been clear on that point in bringing their contracts to an end. The termination letters to members of the ISB required them to set in place arrangements to ensure their compliance with data protection law.

18. *Mrs Abigail Ogier (Manchester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: On 26th June 2023, following the termination on 21st June by the Archbishops' Council of the contracts of the independent members of the Independent Safeguarding Board, the following notice appeared on the ISB website: "We will continue to honour any reviews or complaints that are underway or are due to start. We will be in contact as soon as possible with survivors and complainants and reviewers to ensure these are completed."

Who authorized the posting of this notice and, given that 76 survivors had notified the ISB that they did not authorize disclosure of their data to the Archbishops' Council nominee as acting ISB chair, Meg Munn, by what mechanisms is it possible for that aspiration to be delivered while respecting the notified prohibition on the passing on of survivor identity data?

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The text was inserted by the Independent Safeguarding Board. The Archbishops' Council has no control over the ISB website.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe)*: May I please ask that, given we know that the Independent Safeguarding Board was not independent and we know that it is answerable, rather, by



Archbishops' Council to Synod, may we please know how we can discover who authorized the publication of the statement on the Independent Safeguarding Board's website since it is clearly within the purview of both the Archbishops' Council and Synod?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* Thank you for your question which, I am very sorry, I cannot answer. The Independent Safeguarding Board is responsible for their website and they put that statement up, which is what the question and answer says and I am sorry but I cannot give you more information than that.

*Mr Clive Billenness:* I am surprised.

19. *The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Given that there was a two weeks' notice period for terminating the contracts of the ISB members, did you consider permitting, or were you specifically asked to permit them to assist Archbishops' Council to phase their withdrawal of survivor support in an appropriately sensitive and safe manner?

20. *Mr Simon Friend (Exeter)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Given that the contracts of the ISB members provided for two weeks' notice, what were the minuted reasons of Archbishops Council (if any) for not permitting them to wind down their work and transition those survivors to new pastoral provision in a planned and orderly manner?

21. *The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Recommendation 29 of the 2016 Elliott Review stated:

*"The withdrawal of pastoral support to a survivor to avoid financial liability, is unacceptable practice from a safeguarding perspective and contrasts sharply with the stated principles upon which all Church actions are meant to be based. It is not in keeping with "Responding Well" and carries with it significant potential risk to vulnerable survivors of abuse".*

The independent members of the ISB have publicly expressed disquiet that the speed and manner of their dismissal risked leaving survivors vulnerable to anxiety and distress given the supportive character of their relationships with that constituency; there are also a number of promised Reviews outstanding and impacted . Was the Council aware of this Elliott Review recommendation and did it consider that it might have relevant application in implementing the termination decision?

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: With permission I will answer Questions 19-21 together.

The Archbishops' Council recognises that, notwithstanding that the principal function of the Independent Safeguarding Board was to provide scrutiny and oversight of the Church's safeguarding functions, many survivors valued the support and contact that the

role of the Survivor Advocate performed. The Council was aware of the report of the Elliot Review and its recommendations. The Board members remained under contract through the notice period. We have been endeavouring to work with the Board members to wind down their work and transition those survivors to new pastoral provision over that period. Other services are available to provide survivor support including through Safe Spaces.

*The Revd Canon Mark Bennet:* I am very concerned about the treatment of survivors. I have worked with survivors in the past. What advice did the Council seek or receive and from whom in relation to the likely impact of this decision on survivors to inform its processing going forward e.g. from survivors themselves, legal and HR advice, comms advice, advice on representations from insurers? In the interests of transparency and accountability, could we have a list of the advice received to inform this decision and a digest provided to members of Synod in due course, please?

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode:* I do not have that information to hand, but I know we have got a record of your supplementary and we will seek to get that information to you.

*Mr Simon Friend:* Was survivors hearing of the sudden halting of their reviews on the 1 o'clock news, 55 minutes after the publication of the decision, part of the orderly pastoral transition planned by the Archbishops' Council? If not, was the sudden announcement a decision of the whole Council?

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode:* The Archbishops' Council do recognise that we had a duty of care to survivors but also to the people in the pews who use our churches and those who also work within the Church at national, diocesan and parish levels. We were very, very aware of the importance that that information was not received on social media or something like that. We were very much aware of the need to share that directly with all of those parties. That was the reason for the way the information was shared.

*The Revd Canon Mark Bennet:* Obviously, the Elliott Review tells us that continuity of care for survivors is really important. How many survivors have you actually now transitioned with their agreement to satisfactory alternative pastoral support now that the ISB has ceased to exist?

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode:* That is a piece of work that we are urgently working on at this very moment and I hope that we will be able to report more during this Synod to you on that.

22. *Professor Helen King (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: At the point at which it was disbanded, the Independent Safeguarding Board had published one individual case review. Six more independent reviews were in progress, and a further two were about to be commissioned. What arrangements have been made for:

- (a) a response to be made to the Spindler Report;
- (b) the completion of the other independent reviews; and

(c) the pastoral care of the subjects?

23. *Mr Simon Friend (Exeter)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Did the Archbishops' Council discuss and reach minuted decisions about what would happen to all ISB Reviews current or promised, in advance of finalising the decision to dismiss the ISB members?

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: With permission I will answer Questions 22 and 23 together.

The Archbishops' Council discussed and agreed the importance of continuity for ongoing case reviews. The Archbishops' Council asked the three ISB members to agree and publish clear interim arrangements for handling case reviews, in consultation with the relevant survivors. We expect this to be published very shortly.

*Professor Helen King:* I have been asking for a response about the Spindler Report and the other reports, the reviews that are being done. I notice that the response to this supplementary differs from the response to supplementary Question 108, which is specifically on Mr X and the Spindler Report and its recommendations. The written answer from the Bishop of Stepney is that, for that case, the NST is progressing some recommendations and they will go to the National Safeguarding Steering Group in July and then to the Archbishops' Council, which is a very different order of events from what is being suggested here. I would just like to ask why the mismatch?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* Helen, I do not know any details about the Spindler case so I cannot answer any questions on that. What I can tell you is that this is currently a piece of work that the Bishop of Stepney is involved with and we are talking to her. I hope that we will be able to share more when we have got more time on Sunday about what we are doing. We do recognise that it is really important and we are in discussion with survivors so that whatever the interim steps that we take that those are agreed with the people who are involved. I am sorry I cannot answer your question more fully than that but I do hope, Synod, that when we come back on Sunday we will be able to give you more detail.

*Mr Simon Friend:* I think there is a typo and it is actually Questions 22 and 23 being answered together.

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* I think you are right, yes.

*Mr Simon Friend:* If that is the case, my original question has not been answered. I specifically asked what would happen to all ISB reviews in advance of the decision to disband the Board. I do not believe that question has been answered. My supplementary is: I understand that the ISB members were not asked to agree and publish clear interim arrangements prior to the decision. If that is the case, can the answer be corrected and clarified for the record?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* We did discuss what would happen to cases that were in progress as we made that decision and we agreed that that was a priority that there should be continuity. We have also realised since then that we cannot make decisions about what happens to other people, we need to consult with survivors, and so that is the work that is happening at the moment. I think you were asking about what we asked the three ISB members to do. My understanding is as written here and so I think we need to go away and clarify that, and thank you for raising that Simon. I do not want to disagree with what you are saying if that is what you have heard, but this is my understanding as written here. We will clarify.

24. *Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The former Chair of the ISB was "stood back" for several months leaving it with reduced resource whilst it was charged with re-conceptualising the second phase of the project as regulator/ ACAS/ ombudsman or newly devised hybrid. Given the urgency of that work, why did the Archbishops' Council not exercise its power under the ISB Terms of Reference to appoint suitable additional member/s so this important aspect of the ISB first phase should not be delayed?

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: At the time when the Chair, Maggie Atkinson, was asked to step aside while the accusations of data breaches were investigated, it was unclear to the Council how long the investigations into the former Chair's case would take and accordingly it did not seem appropriate or reasonable to immediately replace her, especially given her right to receive a due and fair process. With the benefit of hindsight I fully recognise that it might well have been appropriate for the Archbishops' Council to have moved more swiftly to fill the vacuum created by the Chair's absence and appoint suitable additional members.

*Mrs Tina Nay:* Please could you expand further as to why additional members for ISB were not appointed?

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode:* There was a real sense of a tension that we had between offering good and rigorous governance - because that was the role that the Archbishops' Council had with the ISB as we were providing the governance for it - and, of course, our desire for them to have operational independence. It was a tightrope that the Archbishops' Council were very aware throughout the time of the ISB that we were having to walk. Maybe actually in this issue it could be argued that the Archbishops' Council actually weighed more on the idea of operational independence than on good governance in that regard. Of course, the difficulty we had was when we were engaging in governance there was also the danger that could be understood as interference. There was always a real tension, but in this regard I think we erred on the side of operational independence in our decision-making.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Tim, I am not sure if you can answer this now but perhaps in the remarks you make on Sunday you might address this question.

When we set up the ISB, and I was a member of the Archbishops' Council when we did that, we had three members of the Board and I wonder if, with the benefit of hindsight, that was too small a number of members because when two operate in lockstep and one is not there, it makes life very difficult in terms of the operational working of the Board and I am aware that that was part of the problem. I wonder if you could just expand on that either now or on Sunday.

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode:* My intention, because I am going to be on the panel on Sunday, will be to expand more than because, hopefully, I will have more time to be able to expand on it than just the very short time we have for questions, but thank you for raising that.

25. *Professor Muriel Robinson (Lincoln)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Please publish the full costs of the ISB from its inception to date and in particular a breakdown showing:

- \* Fees paid to each separate board member
- \* Costs of providing legal Advice for ISB members
- \* Separate costs of additional consultancy support provided for things such as communications, caseworkers, researchers, investigators, IT or anything else
- \* Termination costs
- \* Any other significant expenditure incurred.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The information available is set out in the table below.

<b>Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB)</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>			
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Jan-Jun 2023</b>	<b>TOTAL to Jun'23</b>
Board Members	30,480	249,405	83,490	363,375
Staff costs	27,062	55,232	51,909	134,203
Legal costs	5,260	151,546	31,405	188,210
Recruitment costs	25,347	2,025	1,795	29,166
Website + IT equipment	-	12,703	4,728	17,430
Other	47	674	1,925	2,646
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88,196</b>	<b>471,584</b>	<b>175,251</b>	<b>735,030</b>

*Professor Muriel Robinson:* Because this is a finance question, just in case it is relevant, I am Chair of the Lincoln Diocesan Trust and Board of Finance. Thank you very much for the very helpful figures, albeit not quite in the form that I had asked for, showing that we had spent nearly three-quarters of a million. I wonder if I can ask what internal controls

were in place to ensure that such big costs were appropriately incurred and, thus, capable of audit?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* As you say, the figures are quite substantial. They relate to the work of the Board which, as we have just heard now, had this difficulty within the Council of how much we allowed the Board to have its independence in its workings and so on and how much we took a governance view. As Tim has just explained, this was a system that we all often fell perhaps short of. We perhaps did not have enough direct control over it in terms of monitoring the spend and the scope of the work, but that I think was because we were trying to bend over to allow an independence of the Board in its functions and in its activities. With hindsight, we have to learn from this and we have to understand - and I think again that will come up when we review the work of the Audit Committee – that possibly our auditing was not strong enough and that is a thing for the debate on Sunday or Monday. It is a very helpful question and one we need to take quite a deep breath about and try and understand better.

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* Can you confirm that no professional fees were paid to the Chair of the ISB after she stepped back from her position as Chair last autumn?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* I am afraid I do not know the answer to that question, Robert.

26. *The Ven. Sally Gaze (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Bishop Julie Conalty, a deputy lead bishop for safeguarding "with a focus on survivor engagement" tweeted in response to the termination by the Archbishops' Council of the contracts of Independent Safeguarding Board members Jasvinder Sanghera and Steve Reeves: *"Today the church is less accountable. To remove, at short notice. the strongest independent voices holding the C of E to account for its safeguarding failings makes us look resistant to robust scrutiny and challenge – which, of course, we are."* (June 21, 2023)

What consultation took place with Bishop Julie and the other lead bishops for safeguarding, prior to the decision to terminate the ISB members' contract and what notice was given to them of the decision prior to its public announcement?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Bishop for Safeguarding (the Bishop of Stepney) attends meetings of the Archbishops' Council and, together with the other episcopal members of the Archbishops' Council, has been able to feed the views of bishops into the consideration of the Independent Safeguarding Board. This was a decision of the Archbishops' Council not the House of Bishops and all bishops were informed in parallel with the public communication.

*The Bishop of Birkenhead (The Rt Revd Julie Conalty):* I am also deputy lead Bishop for safeguarding. It is a question for clarification. Was any advice purporting to come from me provided to Archbishops' Council regarding this decision, its implementation or the

impact on survivors and victims? I ask because the printed answer is ambiguous and, to the best of my knowledge, I was not asked to provide any advice.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* I do not know if you would call it a conflict, but we are both trustees together of Safe Spaces and it is great to work with you there. Obviously, I am trying to think back to the conversations we had in the Archbishops' Council meetings. I cannot say strongly one way or the other whether you were quoted. I do not recollect that. I do know that Bishop Joanne was there and a number of other Bishops were. I am very sorry if this has suggested something that is not true in your case and certainly we deeply respect the work you are doing.

27. *Mr Matt Orr (Bath & Wells)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In light of the recent statement from the Archbishop's Council about the termination of the contracts of members of the Independent Safeguarding Board, what assurances can you give that all material in relation to the John Smyth abuse case has been submitted to the Makin review, including all correspondence to and from Diocesan Bishops?

28. *Mr Matt Orr (Bath & Wells)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In light of the recent statement from the Archbishop's Council about the termination of the contracts of members of the Independent Safeguarding Board, can you give an assurance that no information of safeguarding importance has been excluded as a result of falling outside the Makin review's terms of reference?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* With permission I will answer Questions 27 and 28 together. The Learning Lesson Review in relation to John Smyth is being conducted by an independent reviewer Keith Makin. The Independent Safeguarding Board did not have any oversight of this review. The reviewer has completed the collection of material in line with the terms of reference for the review and is in the process of consulting with victims and survivors on the draft report.

The terms of reference for the review of the Church's handling of allegations of abuse carried out by the late John Smyth were published in August 2019. The termination of the contracts of members of the ISB do not have an impact on the terms of reference for the review and how material has been gathered.

*Mr Matt Orr:* With respect, paragraph 17 of GS 2263 established that the ISB had oversight of the NST. As such, I ask whether all relevant email communications received by the NST from diocesan bishops relevant to the John Smyth Review were forwarded by the NST to the Makin Review in a timely manner?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* I do not know, I am afraid. I can try and find out. When you say "oversight", I think the ISB had general oversight. I do not think it had specific case oversight in cases relating to the Smyth Inquiry. I would be very surprised if it did. I think

the whole point was it was trying to have an oversight of the workings of the work of the NST not the specific case analysis.

29. *Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In the Archbishops' Council Audit Committee Report (GS Misc 1340) it is reported (3.5.5) that some members of the Committee submitted a request to the Archbishops' Council to audit the formation and governance of the ISB, but that Archbishops' Council did not agree to this request. Please could you list the specific reasons why this request was refused, and confirm if this refusal was a unanimous decision, and if it was an item of business on which there was a recorded vote.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Archbishops' Council considered the question of whether an internal audit of the Independent Safeguarding Board should be added to the internal audit programme at its meeting in September 2022 with members of the Independent Safeguarding Board present. There was no recorded vote. The Council considered that its priority was to move towards what it refers to as ISB phase 2 and therefore that notwithstanding its legal right to insist on an audit, the benefits of demonstrating independence outweighed the benefits of including within the audit programme at that time.

30. *Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In the February 2022 Group of Sessions, I asked the Archbishops' Council (q 46) to publish a list of all the recommendations made in safeguarding Lessons Learnt Reviews commissioned nationally or by dioceses over the previous 10 years; and all recommendations contained in external safeguarding audits and inquiries (such as IICSA) over the same time period; and indicate next to each recommendation whether it has been accepted or rejected; and if accepted the progress made in implementing it; and if rejected, the reason it was rejected and the body that made the decision?

In the response, Jamie Harrison for the Archbishops' Council said that the recommendations from Lessons Learnt Reviews are published on the safeguarding section of the Church of England website. In response to a supplementary question, he said: "I think this is one of the great difficulties of maintaining websites. We all know that when we have databases. I take your point that that could be better, but it would be quite difficult to do. I am not saying it should not be done, but I do think there should be a proper mapping."

If the National Safeguarding Steering Group is monitoring the implementation of accepted recommendations, then such a table showing which recommendations have been accepted and progress towards implementation should not be difficult to provide.

So I repeat the question from February 2022: can we please have a list of all the recommendations made in safeguarding Lessons Learnt Reviews commissioned nationally or by dioceses over the past ten years; and all recommendations contained in



external safeguarding audits and inquiries (such as IICSA) over the same time period; and indicate next to each recommendation whether that recommendation has been accepted or rejected; and if accepted the progress made in implementing it; and if rejected, the reason it was rejected and the body that made the decision?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* At this time the NST do not have the resources to maintain a public document of progress of recommendations that have been made in National and Local reviews. The recommendations from NST Learning Lesson Reviews are monitored by the National Safeguarding Steering Group and local recommendations are monitored by the Diocesan Safeguarding Panel or the Cathedral equivalent. The NST takes the members point as this will help with transparency of actions and progress. The NST is committed to exploring how we might focus on progress/updates of reviews that have a National impact however this will depend on securing appropriate resources.

*Mr Gavin Drake:* Can I ask what method the Safeguarding Steering Group is using to monitor whether the recommendations of Lessons Learnt Reviews are being implemented? I just do not understand the difficulty in providing that information in a public form. If they are monitoring, that information should be available.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* I think you are moving a bit forward with this. You tried the other year and this is a bit more forward thinking. As I said the last time, this is an area that we did not have the capacity for or the understanding of. I would say, and I will pick up more on this on Sunday, that monitoring is very difficult in these areas to understand what the impact is. You can have reports, you can have inquiries and you can have many, many recommendations, but actually to see what difference they are making on the ground is really difficult. I think what you are helpfully suggesting is we could map better, but I still do not think mapping necessarily gives you the sort of confidence of compliance that we would all like. We might want to talk about that on Sunday in relation to what a future Board might be able to do.

31. *The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes (Europe)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Please could we have an update on the results of the Transforming Effectiveness programme. In particular:

- What are the particular areas in which service levels from the central church have been improved?
- How much money has been saved?
- What are the summary changes in metrics of Church House staff wellbeing and morale?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The Transforming Effectiveness programme consists of several strands. The Joining up project, involving the joining up and realignment of teams across the NCIs, delivered an annualised saving of £2 million. Whilst service levels are not directly measured, focus groups and surveys conducted showed encouraging and positive signs

that there is an emerging culture of collaboration and learning between and across teams and with the wider church.

The Accommodation project is on track to deliver £1.2 million a year of savings by the end of 2023. Staff have found some of the building work annoying but once in the new offices, morale is expected to increase.

The Simpler Support strand of work which looks at additional national support for parishes and dioceses has been focusing on a growth in Parish Buying and the launch of Church Organiser amongst others. The Simpler Support Stand has more information.

Staff engagement scores measuring motivation, advocacy, and commitment remained stable between March 2021 and November 2022. Responses to questions about wellbeing fell by an average of six percentage points over the same period. If there are specific questions about staff morale or wellbeing, NCI colleagues would be happy to discuss them with Robert.

*The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes:* I am very grateful to John Spence for his helpful answer on my question about the results of the Transforming Effectiveness programme. I do pick up quite a lot of concern about this programme, not least from the employees of the National Church Institutions and I suppose that is to be expected because this kind of programme always does generate stress and difficulty. However, I wonder whether, in the interests of proper accountability and transparency, the Archbishops' Council might consider conducting an impact assessment of this programme and publishing its results for General Synod to see?

*Canon John Spence:* Well, thank you very much and it is a very fair point. You cannot undertake a programme where you are removing posts without creating great anxiety. Throughout the process, we were very keen, and I know that the chief officers and the HR team were working with our staff to try to reduce - you can never eliminate - the anxiety that they were feeling. I will certainly take it to JECSB, which is the appropriate group, whether we should do a further assessment.

If you look at the next question, actually, it talks about morale. The work that the chief officers and the HR department have done around morale tells us that, actually, it is in a good place. It is not perfect but it is in a good place. Nothing can matter more surely than we take care of the welfare of the people who work so hard for us. I would honestly say to Synod I do believe that we have walked very carefully down this path, that we have thought about our people at every stage and, yes, of course, there was anxiety and unease when jobs and posts were going. We could not avoid that entirely.

32. *Mr Robert Zampetti (London)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Please provide a list, spanning the last 5 years, of all NCI job titles which have been made redundant, or otherwise eliminated (i.e. retire/move on and then not filled as a replacement); alongside a list of all new positions created as part of the Transforming Effectiveness program?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The information requested is not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost. However, the following may be helpful:

The majority of the Simpler NCIs programme involved realigning existing roles in order that the operating model could better serve the national church. During the programme 8 roles were eliminated including 3 senior posts removed in Phase 1. In addition 12.6 FTE of vacant roles were removed from the structure.

*Mr Robert Zampetti:* John, thank you for your response which actually did have some useful data in there for us. I would ask if it might not be possible in the future, when such programmes do involve headcount reduction or shifts in roles, that plans be put in place ahead of time knowing that that is going to happen so that that information can be tracked. It can also help as per the previous observation in doing impact assessments. Is that possible in the future?

*Canon John Spence:* It is a fair point. Can I just start by apologising that you must have felt you were being given the run-around a little bit. Our concern, obviously, is to maximise the response we get when we undertake such survey work and it was the advice of our experts in the HR department that, really, you need to assure people that what they say is not going any further, which is why we do not have permission to share the data. I would be very nervous about going down that route.

I do think I have to ask General Synod that there comes a point where you can end up being in the operational role. I have referred to the JECSB - that is the Joint Employment and Common Service Board - on which two trustees each from the Church Commissioners, the Pensions Board and the Archbishops' Council sit with all the chief officers. I will tell you that those surveys are scrutinised in great detail. We check on where things have changed positively and negatively. Out of our surveys have come all the work on diversity and inclusion and I would want to commit to Synod on behalf of the future Chair of the Joint Employment Common Service Board if there were things that were moving in an adverse direction, it is absolutely right that they be included in the Archbishops' Council's report so that members of General Synod are fully briefed.

33. *Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In answering my supplementary question to Q68 in February 2023 asking for information on staff morale and welfare Mr Alan Smith said he would have a copy of the Staff Survey sent to me. After several gentle reminders I was finally sent (but only in May) a one-page summary. This is not what I asked for and its 'areas for development' point to some concerning comments. I would like to see the data behind the areas for development and to receive an update on Next Steps. Will the full report and an update be provided?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* I thank Mr Hogg for his interest in staff morale and welfare at the NCIs and

apologise to him on behalf of the NCIs for the delay in the response to his request which Alan Smith passed on immediately after the February meeting of Synod. The NCIs are unable to offer more than summary data into the public domain due to its commitment to staff concerning with whom their response data is shared and the maintenance of trust. Alan offered to share the full report in good faith without this background to the survey. If there are any further specific questions on staff morale or welfare NCI colleagues would be happy to discuss them and the actions that are being taken to address the areas for development. However, please be assured that staff morale and wellbeing are closely monitored by the Church Commissioners, Pensions Board trustees and Archbishops' Council members who sit on the relevant board.

34. *Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Noting that since 2020, the National Stipends Benchmark has so far fallen behind inflation (as measured by the CPIH index) cumulatively by over 13%; what work has been undertaken, or is planned, to identify and support those Dioceses which will be least able to increase stipends to recover some of this fall in real clergy incomes?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: We live in fast moving times. Only three months ago it was the expectation that inflation would fall rapidly towards the Government's 2% p.a. inflation target so that the increase of 5% in the National Minimum Stipend from April 2023 would significantly cut into the accrued shortfall. We now await the outcome of the stipends consultation for next year given the revised outlook. Archbishops' Council are acutely conscious of the financial pressures being faced at diocesan level.

I note that over the period 2001-2021 the National Stipends Benchmark (NSB) broadly kept pace with CPIH inflation. However, since then actual NSB increases have lagged the comparator used in setting the NSB (CPIH for the previous September) by a little over 6%.

As part of the package of spending plans from the Church's endowment managed by the Church Commissioners, last year it was determined that 28 dioceses would receive Lowest Income Communities Funding in 2023-25, most of which is used to support mission and ministry in the lesser resourced areas of the country.

*Mr Ian Boothroyd:* Is any work underway or proposed to identify resources beyond the Lowest Income Communities funding which might support dioceses where most needed to help restore the real value of stipends across all communities, please?

*Canon John Spence:* Yes. As I said to you when the consultation was taken at the end of spring, the expectations were firmly that a 5% stipend increase would mean that there would be real inroads made into the shortfall that has occurred over the last three years. Quite clearly, the consultation remains underway. We are going to come to a very difficult moment. On Monday, I will share with you information around the scale of diocesan deficits. We are already seeing situations where, sadly, dioceses feel there are no

alternatives but to reduce the number of priests and so there is absolutely work underway to have the debate across the governing bodies of the Church Commissioners and the Archbishops' Council and something called the Emerging Church Steering Group where everybody comes together, a large body of people, to see how we apparently balance an unbalanced equation and that, I assure you, is very much front of mind.

35. *Ms Fiona MacMillan (London)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What levels of SDF funding (amounts or percentages) has been spent or set aside for spending on projects or work of or among minority groups, e.g. on basis of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, et cetera?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In 2020-22 the criteria for SDF included "Promote growth within the largest urban areas and one or all of younger generations, UK Minority Ethnic / Global Majority Heritage populations and deprived communities." In total, £198m was awarded under SDF. Detail has been gathered on the proportion of funding allocated to younger generations and deprived areas.:

	Total funding	Percentage
Younger generations	£87m	47%
Deprived areas	£76m	41%

For some other groups, work has identified the number of projects (of 101) which contain this as an element of their work - note that this may only mean one element of a much larger project, and the figures include the project totals.

	Total projects with this as an element	Total funding to those projects	Percentage of total funding
Children, youth and schools	51	£96m	48%
Young adults	52	£108m	54%
Estates	25	£56m	28%
UKME/GMH	13	£32m	16%

Note that for both analyses, projects may feature more than once.

There is no analysis on disability or gender. An additional note is that SDF is now closed, with new applications coming to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment (SMMI), which includes the Vision and Strategy's priority to be younger and more diverse in its criteria.

36. *Ms Rebecca Mynett (St Albans)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Do the NCIs have and enforce compliance with an official conflicts of interest policy to which all trustees, employees, servants, agents, service suppliers and contractors must conform?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The NCIs do not have one conflict of interest policy as outlined in the question.

The NCIs are all separate legal entities and as such each entity has its own policy and the trustees of each of these need to consider the interests of the particular entity when acting as a trustee.

For staff of the NCIs, conflict of interest is covered under various policies, and which cover a wide range of scenarios including dealing with supply chains.

*Ms Rebecca Mynett:* Are the policies of bodies referred to in your answer publicly available and, if so, where can we find them?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* Again, I am afraid I do not know the answer to that. We will try to find out for you and tell you. As you know, it is a very odd business that we have all these different ones. Perhaps, as you say, part of the governance review will be to try and bring everything together so that we do have one more clear policy.

37. *The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes (Europe)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What is the strategy of the Archbishops Council in regard to national church investment in theological writing and research (across all areas of doctrine, teaching, ecumenism, et cetera)? (Please note that this question does not refer to TELs or investment in theological education/formation.)

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The Archbishops' Council is involved in theological writing and research in a number of ways. The Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) is the primary focus for doing theology on behalf of the Church, especially on doctrinal matters, and brings together a broad and deep range of theologians. Much theology is also done outside FAOC - for example policies from the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) always have a clear theological framework and EIAG includes a number of Christian ethicists to lead on this.

The Faith and Public Life (FPL) team includes published theologians in fields such as Christian Ethics, Church History and Ecumenical studies who continue to write original material, both for FPL and for wider audiences. FPL continues to sponsor the theological journal *Crucible* which was begun many years ago by the Board for Social Responsibility.

A new strategic venture is a Theology Round Table involving FAOC, Universities from the Cathedral Group and other bodies which will bring together a wide range of academic and practical thinkers.

One concern is the decline in applications to study Theology in Universities. This is on the agenda of the Lords Spiritual leading on HE, but is not strictly a matter for the Archbishops' Council.

*The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes:* I am very grateful to the Chair of the Ministry Council for replying on behalf of the Archbishops' Council. There may be an element of confusion here. The Faith and Order Commission, of which I have the honour of being the Chair, is indeed the primary focus for doing theology but it is not part of the Archbishops' Council; it is an independent Commission. I should say that all the six Bishops and nine academics who sit on FAOC give their time freely and so there is no investment required from the Archbishops' Council in that sense.

My question is, to be really precise, could the Archbishops' Council tell us how many people employed by the Archbishops' Council do theology or have theology qualifications and are engaged in theology and what is the budget for doing theology, both the doctrine and ecumenicism?

*The Bishop of Chester:* Thank you, Bishop Robert. I am very content to supply that information. Perhaps I could work with you over a beer, which I think this time is your round rather than mine, discover exactly what you want and then provide a written answer to you.

38. *The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Considering a number of high profile cases of the hacking of companies' data systems, what are the procedures in place to protect the new People System for the Church of England from hacking and is there a regular reappraisal of security and of the details held on the system?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The People System is based on Oracle a global service provider as part of their Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications suite. From the outset this platform was developed with a focus on security first. Based on an industry leading design that includes data protection, scalability, and performance. The solution is monitored 24/7 by a dedicated security function to ensure potential threats are identified and remediated before they can cause disruption to the organisations they serve.

In addition, and following the National Cyber Security Centre's best practice guidelines, all access the system also includes a Multi-Factor authentication solution that requires every user to have a username and password, this is further validated by way of a time limited token delivered to the users' mobile device.

Our contractual agreements with the supplier include clauses that provide access to their penetration test reports, we also conduct code reviews of any bespoke software that we have commissioned as part of the implementation process for completeness.

39. *The Revd Folli Olokose (Guildford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: It is encouraging to hear that the Racial Justice Unit is operational. Having in mind that the Racial Justice Commission on which it depends has a three-year Tenure of Office, could the Archbishops' Council clarify what plans are in place to ensure the continuity of the work of the RJU?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as *Joint President of the Archbishops' Council*: The Report of the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce: From Lament To Action (FLTA) made a number of recommendations of how best to make sure the work of racial justice is reflected in the work of the whole Church, rather than being seen as a minority concern. Accordingly, they recommended the creation of a Racial Justice Directorate (Racial Justice Unit) operating as part of the NCIs for a 5-year period to ensure delivery, monitoring and accountability for the actions outlined in their Report. Aware that the Archbishops' Commission for Racial Justice (ACRJ) has a three-year term, the ACRJ chairperson has commenced discussions with the chairperson of the Archbishops' Council's Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) to explore options for continued high-level monitoring of the progress on FLTA and ensuring ongoing support for and monitoring of the work of the Racial Justice Unit.

40. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: At the time of asking this question, no details of the process towards establishing the promised Independent Review into a complaint by Dr Martyn Percy have been published. Will the President of Archbishops' Council please provide Synod with a fully particularised chronology starting 1st February 2023 setting out, who has taken what decisions and practical steps on behalf of Archbishops' Council to collate the allegations, identify the issues and evidence to be considered, agree a suitable reviewer and devise a suitable timetable whereby all material steps required to bring this to a timely conclusion are expedited?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as *joint President of the Archbishops' Council*: Although we are not able to supply a fully particularised chronology, the Archbishops' Council recognises the importance of this Review into the handling by the Church of safeguarding allegations made against Dr Martyn Percy and is giving it active consideration proposing to work jointly with the Diocese of Oxford. We hope, in the near future, to be in a position to consult all interested parties on a proposed way forward. Synod members will understand that we should consult all of the interested parties first before making further details public.

*Mr Martin Sewell*: I have given the Archbishop warning of this question and I know he wants to answer it, so will you please give me a few more moments than you might otherwise?

*The Chair*: If you could get to your question.



*Mr Martin Sewell:* I will, indeed. The question that you have purportedly answered on the Questions paper is not the question that I submitted on 21 June. The question I submitted concerned a promised independent review into Dr Martyn Percy's complaint. His complaint is about "deliberate weaponisation of safeguarding allegations with intent to cause me harm". The words that I quoted have been excised and your answer that we see turns the question on its head and talks about "handling of safeguarding allegations against Dr Percy". Now receipt of my question was duly acknowledged on 21 June and given the early reference number 35 in case we need to come back to you. No one ever did, so when the Q&A Notice Paper was published yesterday I was shocked to see that my questions had actually had reversed polarity.

*The Chair:* Could you ask your question, please.

*Mr Martin Sewell:* Were you aware of the unauthorized changes in the wording to my question? Did you or another person, if so who, draft your answer? And will you now undertake to circulate to Synod members an answer to the question that I actually submitted?

*The Archbishop of York:* Thank you very much, Martin, and we were able to have a very brief chat earlier about this. This is my understanding. My understanding is that I did see what I am assuming was your original question. I did not know that the question had been changed until I arrived an hour or so before the proceedings started. There may be good reasons why the questions have been changed, but I do not know what they are. I think you deserve an explanation and I think you should have been consulted. I would like an explanation as well. I am not a conspiracy theorist. I am sure there are reasons, but this is a confusion. I apologise for that and I look forward to finding out a bit more about what has happened and then being able to, through other means, give you an answer to your question.

*Mr Martin Sewell:* Your Grace, I thank you for your grace and I look forward to hearing from you. We do need to lower tensions but this sort of thing does not help, I am sure you will appreciate.

41. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: A Review in response to a complaint by Dr Martyn Percy was announced by ISB Chair Maggie Atkinson, in February 2022, "paused" in October 2022 and withdrawn in February 2023 without consultation with either Dr Percy or the then ISB members: can the President of Archbishops' Council confirm that each of these steps occurred as a result of a formal decision taken by minuted resolution of the Archbishops' Council, and if not, clarify by whom, and under whose authority each of these steps have been taken?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* replied as joint President of the Archbishops' Council: A review into the handling by the Church of safeguarding allegations made against Dr Martyn Percy, has been proposed by the Archbishops' Council and the Diocese of Oxford acting jointly. Detailed decisions on the

handling of individual cases and reviews are not always decided at the level of the Archbishops' Council board. However, as indicated on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023, the decision to seek a route other than the Independent Safeguarding Board was decided at an Archbishops' Council meeting in January 2023. Furthermore, the Council recognises the importance of ensuring this Review happens as soon as possible, regrets the length of time it is taking to get started, and acknowledges the importance of the questions that have been raised.

*Mr Martin Sewell:* That is me again, I am afraid. Let me just see if I can shorten it for you. It is the same issue about the review being reversed from being a complaint by Dr Percy to a complaint against him. What I would like to hear from you is a confirmation that the Archbishops' Council recognises the importance of the review that he requested and that we establish it without delay and that we have an open inquiry, as you have just offered, into the circumstances about the change of wording because we really must not have this sort of thing happen again.

*The Archbishop of York:* Once again, thank you, Martin, and thank you for the collaborative way you have helped me approach this. Once again, I think we just need an explanation as to why the questions have been changed. There may be a very good reason. We just need to know it. But I think I also do want to be clear on the substantive issue of this question, that it is my strong view and my consistent view that it is in everyone's best interests and to everyone's benefit - obviously especially Martyn Percy himself - that an independent review takes place of the issues and concerns that have been raised and I look forward to that happening.

42. *Mrs Jane Rosam (Rochester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: At the Religions Media Festival the Archbishop of Canterbury is reported as saying "until we have a fully independent central safeguarding system - and this is not the official view, but it's my view - until we have a fully independent safeguarding system in the Church of England, we cannot hold our heads up".

Can the President clarify his remark by explaining why, following the IICSA recommendations, it is not the official view.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* replied as *Joint President of the Archbishops' Council:* I was expressing a strongly held personal view with which others may differ. A move to Independent Safeguarding oversight at one level or another would require official decisions by the various governance bodies of the Church of England, including this Synod.

*Mrs Jane Rosam:* May I please ask, in your lived experience is opposition to an independent safeguarding system strong within Archbishops' Council and the Secretariat?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* No, it is not. In my experience, the answer to that question is that some people probably agree with me - I am being optimistic, it is not a frequent experience in this job - and no doubt many disagree with me, but I think most people want to hear the question explored very carefully to make sure that the extremely high quality work done by the NST and by DSAs and DSOs - diocesan safeguarding advisers and officers - and safeguarding advisory panels all the way down to the volunteers in the parishes is recognised, is appreciated and is not made more difficult by structures that are not going to help. In other words, the further into the frontline you get the more complicated the questions become as to what is helpful and what is unhelpful to effective safeguarding both policy and operations after events and complaints. So, no, some people agree, some people do not agree. I think this is going to take a lot of very hard thinking.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Given that the Archbishops' Council voted unanimously two and a half years ago that we were absolutely committed to fully independent safeguarding, given that the Council brought proposals to the Synod which were unanimously agreed and given that the House of Bishops had also agreed that our goal must be independent safeguarding, I wonder if the Archbishop could explain what he means by saying this is not an official view and whether he is aware of how very, very difficult indeed it makes for colleagues on the Archbishops' Council when he makes statements that gives the impression that we are not committed to fully independent safeguarding when we have said repeatedly that we are.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* As a very faithful attender at the Archbishops' Council, I am sure you can appreciate that the answer is that what we mean by fully independent safeguarding has not been discussed in detail. We were unanimous in looking for independent oversight through the ISB and there is no question about the commitment to that. Whether, for example, we are unanimous that parish safeguarding officers should be independent of the diocese in which they work is something that, to the best of my memory, though I have missed one or two meetings of the Archbishops' Council, I cannot remember us ever discussing.

The degree and level to which safeguarding goes in the Church is not something that I remember - I am quite happy to be corrected by you - that we have discussed. I cannot even remember personally whether we have in detail discussed what the independence of the NST might look like. As far as I remember, it has been the oversight that we have considered on which we are absolutely unanimous, but we have not defined to what degree that goes and to what level in the Church that goes.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* I am not sure my questions have been answered, but there we go.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* Sorry, in that case I would like to answer your question. Could you just tell me which bit I have not answered.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* Well, you said in the interview that the commitment to independence was not the official view, but we have resolved that independent safeguarding is the view of the Council, it is the view of the Synod and it is the view of the House of Bishops. So in what sense is this not an official view? I understand we may not have discussed all the details and, of course, the practical arrangement in dioceses - as I keep being told - are not the purview of the Archbishops' Council. All the things we have purview about we have been unanimous. It is the official view.

*The Chair:* This is out of order, I am afraid.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* May I answer the question though because I think I would not like not to have answered the question.

*The Chair:* If you would like to say something, yes.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* The question I was asked in the interview covered a very broad range of bits of the Church being independent. The answer I gave was, "Until we have a fully independent central safeguarding system". That was intended to include not only the ISB but also the National Safeguarding Team. I am not aware that our discussions have included the full independence from the Archbishops' Council of the National Safeguarding Team which is, at the moment, fully part of the Archbishops' Council. I hold to my answer and I do not think we have decided that detail of independence which is what I was asked in the interview.

43. *Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Truro)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What was the rationale for the Archbishops' Council taking a "strictly neutral" stance in their intervention into the case of *Higgs v Farmor's School* when this Christian employee had lost her job for expressing her Christian beliefs?

*Mr Mark Sheard replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* It was necessary that the Council remain neutral in order to be given permission by the Employment Appeal Tribunal to intervene on the wider point of importance. An intervenor is not permitted simply to repeat the arguments made by one of the parties in the proceedings or align itself with one of the parties.

Our purpose was to offer the Tribunal a Proportionality Assessment, based on the Pastoral Principles, bringing into consideration the wider context of individual cases. There is little value in being able to hold a faith if it cannot be expressed in a meaningful way. We wanted to establish that how a person expresses their views is as important to Christians as the content of their views, showing awareness of others' rights as well as their own, as Human Rights law demands.

The judge not only endorsed our analysis of the law but the Proportionality Assessment and the guidance we proposed. We consider that this will put all Christians, including Mrs Higgs, in a stronger position to defend their right to express their faith.

We are pleased that the judge remitted the case to another Employment Tribunal, applying the Proportionality Assessment. We await the outcome with interest.

44. *The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: GS 2270 'Affirming and Including Disabled People in the Whole Life of the Church', which was unanimously passed in all three Houses in July 2022, referred to the development of data collection to quantify the numbers of disabled clergy, lay ministers and NCI/diocesan staff which it is now proposed will be done via the new People System. Please clarify how this data is being handled, and how and by whom this information can be accessed?

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The development of systems to safely capture, store and enable reporting of this data is progressing well. The People System went live in March this year for NCI staff and stipendiary clergy, users are now accessing the new system to carry out various HR and Payroll tasks and there is now an opportunity to record disability data.

As the programme continues, other populations, such as non-stipendiary clergy and laity, will too be able to add their data. The next phases come with significant culture and technical challenges, so it is important to highlight that this additional data is not going to be available in the short-term.

Data is held securely and is only accessible by the owner, it will only ever be used for statistical reporting which we hope to start providing when the quantity of data meets a suitable threshold.

We recently launched an NCI campaign to encourage this data capture and other initiatives are being shaped for our clergy too.

Malcolm Brown and Fraser McNish are very happy to work with the disability networks to encourage this data collection and welcome conversations on how they can support this.

45. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Please would you confirm that of the 19 positions on Archbishops' Council, 4 are members of the House of Laity who are directly elected by the House of Laity (the Chair, Vice Chair and two others); 4 are members of the House of Clergy who are directly elected (the Prolocutors of each Province plus 2 others elected across both Provinces) and two are members of the House of Bishops elected from the House of Bishops (by recent custom, the Chair of Ministry Development Council and the Chair of the National Society)? This makes a total of 10 members of General Synod elected from their respective Houses out of a total of 19 positions on Archbishops Council - a majority.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The National Church Institutions Measure sets out in Schedule I the membership of the Archbishops' Council. The membership of 19 comprises:

- Six Ex-Officio members by virtue of their office (the Archbishops, the Prolocutors of each Convocation, the Chair and Vice Chair of the House of Laity);
- Six members elected directly by their respective Houses (two members from each House in Synod);
- Six members appointed by the Archbishops acting jointly;
- One of the Church Estates Commissioners appointed by the Archbishops acting jointly.

The election of the Prolocutors by their respective Convocations and the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity by that House are of course, direct elections. But their place on the Archbishops' Council is by virtue of that office, and not by a direct election to the Archbishops' Council.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood:* An attempt to lighten the mood somewhat. We are going to join up the dots, Alison.

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* Okay.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood:* You are a member of the House of Laity. In December 2021, you were elected by the House of Laity to become our Deputy Chair, congratulations, and by virtue of that office you are a member of the Archbishops' Council. So the reason you are standing here today is because you were elected by the House of Laity.

*The Chair:* Could you ask your question.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood:* That was a question.

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* My answer is yes.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood:* And the answer is yes.

46. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Please would you confirm that the 'Charity Code of Governance', which is referred to extensively in GS 2307 (a) was written by a group of interested organisations, including the Association of Chief Executive Officers of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), The Institute of Chartered Secretaries (ICSA) and the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO); (b) was most recently reviewed and re-issued in November 2020; and (c) as far as the Charity Commission is concerned is expected to be operated by registered charities on an '*apply and explain*' basis, thus allowing each Charity to consider the relevance, appropriateness and proportionality of each recommendation of the Code in the light of its own unique context?

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Yes. The Charity Code of Governance was developed by a cross-sector

steering group, which included the Association of Chief Executive Officers of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), the Chartered Governance Institute, the Association of Chairs and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. The Charity Commission was an observer of its work. The refreshed code was published in December 2020, following rigorous consultation with the charity sector.

The Charity Code of Governance is intended for use by charities registered in England and Wales. It has been endorsed by the Charity Commission but is neither a legal nor regulatory obligation. You are correct that trustees are encouraged to make use of the code, by using the 'apply or explain' approach recommended in the Code.

The guidance indicates that organisations may find it helpful to adapt the Code to reflect their context. An example is given within GS2307 of how the Code has been adapted by the Association of English Cathedrals for use in Cathedral governance. A core aim of the Code is that charities use this tool to continuously improve their governance arrangements.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood:* I have to say I do not share your view that the consultation in 2020 to refresh the Code of Governance was rigorous, to use your words, partly because it took place during the lockdown. The first I heard of it as a charity trustee of several charities was when the actual thing was published. But would you agree that the Code is very likely to be refreshed again before 2026 and, if it is, could you use your significant energies and efforts and passions to ensure that the Archbishops' Council or its successor takes a full part in that consultation?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* I do not know that, Adrian, but I like the Code enormously. I think it is a very useful tool and I would be very happy to engage with that work and so, actually, thank you for that challenge, which I take up.

47. *Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Will the Archbishops' Council make available to General Synod the common terms of engagement/standard terms required of independent contractors over and above the published terms of reference, subject to the redaction of personal and financial data and with the consent of the reviewers, so General Synod Members can carry out their work of scrutinising the control exercised by Archbishops Council over independent contractors in safeguarding?

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council The Archbishops' Council has no standard terms for independent contractors in safeguarding. Such contracts are drafted to ensure they are appropriate to the specific functions for which it is contracting, and they are kept under review during the life of the term.

*Mrs Carolyn Graham:* As a lawyer, I am aware that you usually draw on a bank of precedents when drafting contracts, do you have precedents in these contracts that you can share with Synod that you have used?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* I would have to find out. Obviously, I work in a people team as an HR professional and these details are confidential to individuals, so I would need to see what we can share and what we cannot share, Carolyn.

*Mrs Carolyn Graham:* Yes, I was only looking for generic stuff. Nothing personal or financial just the generic stuff.

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* I can find out.

48. *The Ven. Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What does the national Church invest in developing rural strategy and through what bodies does it develop its understanding of and strategy for rural mission and ministry?

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Through the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB), the Archbishops' Council distributes funds to dioceses to undertake their strategic plans.

For many dioceses this will include their plans for rural areas. Each of the projects will have a monitoring and evaluation plan to provide learning to support the national Church develop its understanding of strategies for rural mission and ministry. A number of dioceses with projects in rural areas have upcoming final evaluations, and so the national church is exploring the possibility of a thematic analysis around this learning.

*The Ven. Stewart Fyfe:* Alison, thank you for your answer, but are we to take it from your answer that, other than responding to strategic investment business from dioceses, the national Church is not investing at all in the development of rural strategy or that, aside from learning from diocesan projects, doing anything proactive to develop its understanding of and strategy for rural mission and ministry?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* As you know, the way that we invest in the Church of England is through dioceses and, as a member of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board, I have been really excited to see more bids coming which include rural ministry. We do not, as far as I know, have an overall strategy or an overall workstream that looks at this, but I would just encourage dioceses when you are thinking about bidding to us, please do include rural parishes because we are keen to support that ministry. If that needs to happen, then maybe you would like to take that forward, Stewart, if you think we need to have an overarching strategy.

*The Ven. Stewart Fyfe:* Thank you, I accept your invitation.



*The Ven. Sally Gaze (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I am leading one of the SDF projects in rural ministry and mission which has an upcoming evaluation and so I am very excited with your mention of that project. By what means is the national Church currently exploring the thematic analysis of learning around rural ministry and mission that you mention in your answer and how many rural practitioners contribute to that exploration?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* Well, that is part of the great SDF team who are doing that analysis. I can ask them to come back to you, Sally, and give you more detail. I know that we are really keen - I am just going to call it the Investment Board because it is so long and I keep tripping over the S and the MMIB, so the Investment Board - to look at the learning and to create learning communities and to share learning. We have been talking about ways of doing that and so it would be great to have your thoughts on that. I will ask the team to get back to you as to how they are going to take that forward. I just think that they have provided a level of sort of strategic thinking and analysis that we have not had in the Church before and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team very much for their work and thank you to you for your question.

49. *Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Archbishops' Council asked the Church Commissioners to complete a review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011. Their terms of reference were so narrow that many issues that have a strong bearing on our parishes' wellbeing were not even acknowledged as important enough for them or others to consider. The focus was on updating the old MPM rather than looking in any holistic way to the future.

Is the Archbishops' Council satisfied that the narrow approach taken by the review was appropriate; and, if not, what steps will it take to address these issues that are vital to the future of our church?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* The Council asked the Commissioners to review the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011(MPM), as part of a wider process of legislative reform. The responsibility for the review was delegated to the Council's Legislative Reform Committee (LRC) and to the Commissioners' Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee (MPCPC) which is responsible for the legislation. The LRC and MPCPC agreed the terms of reference in October 2020 and General Synod then voted overwhelmingly to support the review in July 2021.

The Church's legal frameworks should facilitate our shared ministry and they need to be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and are consistent with good administrative law practice. Within the context of the MPM review, the Commissioners have put an emphasis on parish wellbeing by listening and developing a consensus based approach which is more pastoral and collaborative. The need for the NCIs to provide more focused support services around the MPM tailored to parish needs has also been recognised. The Council supports the pastoral approach taken by the Commissioners and commend

the draft proposals which are set out in GS2315 to Synod. Effective legal frameworks are a necessary and critical element to support the future of our Church.

*Dr Ian Johnston:* Thank you for your answer, but I am afraid it has not really answered the question. I should have been a bit more precise. How, for example, will the new MPM intend to be used in the case of the reorganisation of the parishes in Truro? More generally, is proactive rather than reactive oversight intended?

*Mr Alan Smith:* Ian, thanks for the question. As I understand it, and correct me if I am wrong, it really is do you think the remit was too narrow. If you look at the way in which the Third Church Estates Commissioner, Flora and the team really consulted and the outworking of what is there, I think it has really sought to take on board all of the views at a very granular level from the parishes and so I would hope that you are rest assured on that. Obviously, when we go through the actual paper in a couple of days' time, we can go into further detail, but the Commissioners and the Third Estates Commissioner and her team were really ensuring to consult very well and to get the views of the parishes.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I am Chair of the Legislative Reform Committee as well. Many of the things that emerged in the work we have done on the MPM do not really touch on legislative things, the sorts of things Ian is talking about. I wonder if it would be helpful if Flora and her team might produce a separate document outlining some of those issues that remain, as it were, work in progress or work to be done arising out of the excellent consultation she and her team have done in the past period.

*Mr Alan Smith:* I will consult with Flora about that but, again, her and Wendy, I am sure there are immense learnings from that that they would be willing to share.

50. *Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022 a letter signed by a wide variety of interested parties was sent to the Charity Commission to raise and explain concerns about the manner in which Archbishops' Council managed the regime for dealing with complaints in the fields of safeguarding and the related matter of clergy bullying; can the President inform General Synod who attended on behalf of the Archbishops' Council to brief the Charity Commission in respect of that letter?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022, the Chair of the Charity Commission wrote to the Secretary-General of the Archbishops' Council requesting a meeting between William Nye and colleagues in the Charity Commission to discuss correspondence which the Charity Commission had received. On 25<sup>th</sup> November, William Nye, along with an HR colleague, attended a meeting with the Director of Regulatory Services at the Commission. The specific nature of correspondence with the Charity Commission was not shared with William Nye and his colleagues. The Charity Commission wrote to William Nye on 18<sup>th</sup> January to confirm that the meeting and supplementary written

correspondence had been helpful in giving them background information in order replied to correspondents. The Charity Commission did not seek to speak to trustees, nor did it share any details of the correspondence it had received, and therefore the meeting between the Director of Regulatory Services and the Secretary-General was for the purposes of gathering background information on Church of England policies and processes.

*Mrs Tina Nay:* As a matter of completion, can you or will you confirm which member of the HR team attended the meeting?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison:* I shall certainly try to find out, Tina. I do not know the answer.

51. *Mr Stephen Boyall (Blackburn)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In the light of the Church's agreed and confirmed doctrine of marriage, what plans do the Archbishops' Council have for the Church of England to participate in the annual Celebrating Marriage Week, and what special resources will be developed to help local churches participate?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: It is for individual parishes and dioceses to decide whether to participate in ventures such as this, and to make use of the opportunities they afford for mission in the local context. With so many designated "weeks" in which parishes could participate, it would be invidious for the Archbishops' Council to single some out rather than others. The "Life Events" team, during its existence, did a great deal to support clergy and parishes in their work around weddings and marriage and many of those resources remain on the website. A number of Christian organisations produce further excellent resources to support marriage, and it would not be a good use of limited resources in the NCIs to duplicate that work. Upholding the Church's doctrine of marriage is the task of the whole church all the time and in many forums and that is where our energies are focused.

52. *Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Given the Church of England's priority "*to be a church that is younger and more diverse*", are Average Sunday Attendance figures available by age-range (e.g. 18-30, 31-40, 41-50 et cetera) to enable us to know where and why the "younger" are being attracted? If the figures are currently available, can they be provided please? And, if the figures are not currently available, why not?

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Average Sunday Attendance figures are calculated from actual attendance numbers reported at Sunday services during the annual "October Count" exercise. These numbers are counted as they would be in the normal course of church worshipping life and are not analysed by age-range, except that there are separate attendance reports for "adults" and "children and young people" (aged 16 or younger). Worshipping Community numbers, measuring persons rather than attendances, offer a

more reliable basis on which to profile the age distribution of regular attenders across the range of church services, including at weekday services and at fresh expressions of church.

Churches can use the Church Development Tool, a short anonymous survey for completion by the Worshipping Community, to produce a simple report giving a clear picture its demographics, discipleship and evangelism. Aggregate Worshipping Community age distribution numbers for end-of-year 2021 were compared with those for end-of-year 2019 in page 6 of the Church of England's Statistics for Mission 2021 Report, using the broad age categories 0 to 10 years; 11-17 years; 18-69 years and 70 years and over. Church of England Data Services continue working to embed these categories in support of Vision and Strategy priorities.

53. *Mrs Debbie McIsaac (Salisbury)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Archbishop of Canterbury recently (June 2023) said:

"... the Church of England is built on the rural communities and . . . the church is always at the centre of rural communities. It has been since St. Augustine was a lad. If we lose sight of the local in the Church of England, we lose sight of everything. We lose sight of God. If ...every bishop in the Church of England disappeared entirely, [the] Church of England . . . would go on working because it works at the local. It works through the churchwardens and parish priests and people who turn up to do the flowers."

What specific financial and other direct and indirect support is or will be available to rural churches so that they can continue to work through parish priests and Churchwardens and volunteers?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* replied as Joint President of the Archbishops' Council: All the work of dioceses and the national church is to support the fruitfulness of our churches and their priests, wardens and volunteers across the country. Much of the specific direct support for parishes will be from dioceses who know the needs of their local parishes better than the national Church.

Nationally, the Archbishops' Council is funding both rural and urban parishes through the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Programme. This includes investing significant sums into the pipeline of stipendiary priests, supporting the costs of the increased numbers of ordinands and curates, with around £40m in 2020-22, and around £60m allocated for 2023-25.

The Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment will also support diocesan plans as these relate to mission and ministry in rural areas, learning from funding for rural areas in dioceses such as St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Salisbury, Exeter and Winchester.

54. *Mrs Debbie McIsaac (Salisbury)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: When the Archbishop of York was answering Questions last July at the RIGGS (Rural

Interest Group on General Synod) meeting, he was asked about the priority being given to children and young people. He expressed the view that 'younger' was a relative concept and that anyone in their mid-50's or older might be "positively youthful" in context such as in many rural areas.

Has this thinking been made known to the various funding streams, how has or will it be reflected funding criteria and how will it be incorporated and implemented especially in rural churches in light of the spiritual malaise many experience in their older years?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Joint President of the Archbishops' Council:* Yes. The thinking I expressed was directly reflective of the bold outcomes of Vision and Strategy. As we seek to become younger and more diverse, the bold outcomes set out below are vital. Both are reflected in the published criteria for the funding distributed by the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment board.

- i) doubling the number of young active disciples
- ii) becoming a church which represents the communities we serve in age and diversity

The implementation of this thinking will vary because representing the communities we serve can look very different, for example between rural areas of Salisbury and central Birmingham. Of course, there is also significant variance between parishes even within dioceses. Sometimes when I visit parishes in York diocese, I feel remarkably young, and sometimes, perhaps not as often as I would like, I feel very old. The thinking is implemented only partially through funding in support of diocesan mission plans. Above all, it is implemented locally in mission as each missionary disciple in each parish (whether rural or urban) seeks to look outwards and engage those in our communities - young and old - who we are not currently reaching with the good news of Jesus Christ.

*The Ven. Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle):* Your Grace, thank you for your answer. If your answer to the previous question was correct, it would appear that, so far, only four diocesan bids have included strategic plans for rural areas. Given that 66% of our parishes are in rural areas, what is being done to ensure that strategic rural thinking is going on in diocesan bids?

*The Archbishop of York:* I am the Bishop of York as well as the Archbishop of York. We are a diocese of great diversity but a large proportion of the diocese is rural. We are not on the list yet, but we are in the process of preparing a bid. I think what I would want to say - I hope this is in answer to your question - is a big encouragement to dioceses to see the help that is available, to note that we are now approaching this in a whole new way and it is about working closely with the new Investment Board to see what can be done, to learn from other dioceses and to create learning communities amongst the dioceses. My great hope is that dioceses like the one I serve with large rural areas will look to find ways of revitalising the life of our parishes in those areas and support exciting new initiatives. I have probably wandered from your question but, if your question was why

has not more happened, the answer is I do not really know. But I do know that lots of dioceses are preparing bids like York and I want to encourage that.

55. *Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Stephen Hance has said on Twitter that 'The papers [on Revitalising the Parish for Mission] were prepared in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders from within and without Synod'. Who was consulted as part of this exercise, and how were the consultees selected?

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The consultees included members of the Synod, chosen for representing a range of perspectives and including one member of Save the Parish, a serving bishop, and members of a recent SLDP project team whose project had been about the future of the parish.

56. *Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Does the Archbishops' Council still support the Church of England's strapline: "A Christian presence in every community"? If so, how does it think the local Christian presence can be maintained in dioceses that are merging PCCs, and/or enlarging benefices, in what is sometimes described as a 'minster model', creating large church entities that risk being totally detached from the small rural communities that make it up?

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool)* replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Yes. The historic vocation of the Church of England is to be the church for everyone everywhere. We are the national Church. We want every person we serve to have an opportunity to encounter the transformation that a life centred on Jesus Christ can bring. So far from being detached, we will need to find ways of reaching and serving people in the very diverse communities and contexts of our national life today - in communities of leisure, workplace and education as well as local neighbourhood. On-line as well as in person. Our Vision and Strategy bold outcomes seek a parish system revitalised for mission through a mixed ecology church creating new Christian communities across those four areas of home, work and education, social and digital - those communities in which we live our lives. And as we do this there will be diocesan and local decisions around simpler governance and how finite resources of people and money are deployed. All changes must always be with the aim of ensuring we enable everyone to have the opportunity to encounter the transformation of a Jesus-Christ centred life that we ourselves have known.

*Mr Andrew Orange:* I asked the question does the Archbishops' Council still support the Church of England strapline, "A Christian presence in every community", and I am pleased that you have answered yes. The trouble is in the countryside the community is the village and what we are observing is more and more village churches that cannot offer a service once a week, that cannot perhaps even offer a service once a month. I think we all have to recognise that our strapline ---

*The Chair:* What is your question, please?

*Mr Andrew Orange:* I would like to just not be interrupted and to complete what I am saying.

*The Chair:* Just ask your question.

*Mr Andrew Orange:* Because this is important. We are being hypocrites if we are saying we have a Christian presence in every community and at the same time we are not offering services in country churches.

*The Chair:* That is not a question.

*Mr Andrew Orange:* May I please have a working party on this and may I please be a member of that working party?

*The Revd Kate Wharton:* I do not know, Andrew, if I can answer that question. Thank you for the question. I hear the heart behind what you are saying. We have heard that. I cannot answer it at this moment, I am afraid.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Would it be possible to have a meeting to discuss how we could take such proposals forward with yourselves?

*The Revd Kate Wharton:* I hope that on Monday Synod will be interested in the debate on revitalising the parish for mission, which I hope might touch on some of these questions. Do come along prepared to question that then. But, again, Sam, I will take away what you have asked.

## **HOUSE OF BISHOPS**

57. *Mr Richard Brown (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the Pastoral Guidance that replaces *Issues in Human Sexuality* contain a definition of the word 'adultery'?

*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 be significantly different in tone and format from *Issues in Human Sexuality*, and seek to explore questions not covered elsewhere, and pertaining specifically to questions arising from the introduction of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. Additional material may expand its range and concerns.

*Mr Richard Brown:* Bishop, thank you very much for your terse answer. I will take that perhaps as a no, but can I ask a further question? Many people, of course, are very interested in the contents of this document which will eventually appear, and could I ask

you will all processes and principles contained within this document apply equally and fairly to all clergy regardless of their sexuality?

*The Bishop of London:* The answer is there for the first answer.

In terms of your second question, tomorrow there is a presentation and opportunity for discussion which will outline a bit more about what we are thinking around the Pastoral Guidance.

*The Ven. Mark Ireland (Blackburn):* Bishop Sarah, in your answer you said that the Pastoral Guidance will explore issues not covered in *Issues*. If I heard you correctly in February, you said that the Guidance would replace all previous teaching documents on marriage. Would that include the House of Bishops' statement in 1999 that, "Sexual intercourse as an expression of faithful intimacy properly belongs within marriage exclusively"?

*The Bishop of London:* No, I did not say that it would replace all documents around the Church of England teaching on marriage and doctrine. The motion itself made it very clear that we continue to uphold the doctrine of the Church of England around marriage. This is around Pastoral Guidance and it will not look like *Issues in Human Sexuality* and so it will not be a book. It is likely that it, in the same way as other guidance, will probably change slightly over time. We will tomorrow talk a bit about the work that is going on to say, well, what does the format look like and how do we make sure that it is a document that is used consistently across the Church.

58. *Dr Alan Downen (Chester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In just 4 weeks' time, I will be celebrating 50 years of marriage to the same woman - my one and only wife - however, I have to admit that I appear to be a member of an ever-decreasing minority! Sadly, many of my friends are now either divorced and single, on their second marriage, or in one case, married for a third time. The reasons for these 'failures' are far too complex and varied to summarise here but, whatever the cause, I am sure that none of them entered into matrimony with the view that 'this is only going to last for a few years' (or in some cases months!). I doubt whether I am the only person with this life experience, so, with those background observations, what criteria would be proposed by the LLF Next Steps Group to discern whether a relationship is 'demonstrably faithful, exclusive and permanent'?

*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 address this question.

*Dr Alan Downen:* Thank you for your answer but, apart from perhaps suggesting the need for patience, there was little indication as to whether criteria to discern whether a relationship is "demonstrably faithful, exclusive and permanent" have been considered and discarded or are actively under development. If criteria for assessing the longevity



and faithfulness of a relationship are to be developed, will they be used to discriminate or will they be applied to heterosexual couples who are seeking to enter into Holy Matrimony?

*The Bishop of London:* One of the realities of pastoral ministry in the Church, even at this time, is that most interactions with people that come to clergy to be married is a pastoral interaction. It is a conversation. We know that goes on all of the time at the moment around marriage. What the Pastoral Guidance is looking at is what at the moment does that look like. If, for example, the suggestion has been that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are for those that are faithful, exclusive, permanent, lifelong, in a sense is saying, well, if, again, a person will engage with a member of clergy, then how do we support that pastoral conversation? That is what the Pastoral Guidance will look like.

59. Mr Clive Scowen (London) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: We confess one holy catholic and apostolic church. In reaching decisions concerning the proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith* and Pastoral Guidance has the House of Bishops considered whether their proposals (a) promote the oneness of the church; (b) are holy; (c) are catholic; and (d) are apostolic; if so what conclusion did they reach; and if not will they now do so as a matter of urgency?

*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 considered all these factors as part of their deliberations over the six years of LLF work. These were explored extensively during the first part of LLF work and will form part of the background to ongoing work on the *Prayers* and Pastoral Guidance.

*Mr Clive Scowen:* I am grateful to the Bishop for answering the first part of my question. Since the Bishops have considered these matters, what conclusions did they reach as to whether the proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the associated materials do promote the unity of the Church, whether they are holy and whether they are consistent with the teaching of the Church Catholic and the apostolic faith?

*The Bishop of London:* As I think in the presentation tomorrow will indicate, in terms of the work that will come back to November implementing the motion that was agreed at Synod in February, it is work in progress. The things that you raise, there have been discussions about it. I think I made it very clear at the last Synod that when we come back with the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, with the Pastoral Guidance and what we require around pastoral reassurance, we will make it very clear that our workings around theology and doctrine are made very clear.

*The Chair:* That concludes the questions for this session. We have come to 7 o'clock. We will continue with Questions tomorrow. Can I encourage you to stay in the chamber for worship.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford) and Mr Bradley Smith (Chichester) led the Synod in an act of worship.*

## **Full Synod: Second Day Saturday 8 July 2022**

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 9.19 am

*The Chair:* Good morning, Synod. A notice before we start. If you were on Zoom yesterday and you are now present in the chamber today, can you let the information desk know so that you can be changed over from the Lumi platform to voting cards. So, if you were on Zoom yesterday and are here today, please inform the information desk.

### **ITEM 502**

#### **SPECIAL AGENDA I**

#### **LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

#### **DRAFT CHURCH OF ENGLAND (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) MEASURE (GS 2272B)**

#### **DRAFT AMENDING CANON NO 43 (GS 2273B)**

*The Chair:* We come now to Item 502 and you will see that on Order Paper II. The Synod will now take the final drafting stages for the Draft Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure and draft Amending Canon, No. 43. Members will need the draft Measure, GS 2272B, the draft Canon, GS 2273B, and the report of the Steering Committee, GS 2272Z, and 2273Z, which relates to both the draft Measure and the draft Canon.

I now call on the Chair of the Steering Committee, Mr Stephen Hofmeyr KC to move Item 502, that the Synod do take note of this report. You have up to ten minutes.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* Good morning, Synod. Every few years, a Miscellaneous Provisions Measure is introduced. These Measures deal with matters that do not merit separate, freestanding legislation, but they nevertheless contain important provisions. Whilst legislative business can be tedious and even boring, legislation makes a real, sometimes profound difference, so let me thank you for your attention to the detail.

You will recall that we began this process exactly a year ago, when we gave First Consideration to the Measure and Amending Canon 43. The second stage was done by the Revision Committee, this took place in November and December last year. Nineteen submissions were received and the Revision Committee made several amendments and additions.

The third stage, the formal Revision Stage, took place in the February sessions. Together we looked at each clause of the draft Measure and each paragraph of the draft Amending Canon. During the Revision Stage, one provision was withdrawn, others were amended in accordance with proposals made by members of Synod and other proposed amendments were rejected by General Synod. This was when we did the heaving lifting, as it were.

The Measure and Amending Canon then went back to the Steering Committee for consideration in respect of their final drafting. This has now taken place, and my first task this morning, under this item, is to invite you to take note of that succinct report of the Steering Committee. The debate which will follow will be a take note debate only. If you want to address the content of the Measure or the Canon, your turn will come in a moment, so please hold your horses. This is a take note debate only.

However, before I invite you to take note of the report, may I remind you that there are only two types of amendment the Steering Committee is authorized to make at this stage. First, there are drafting amendments, those amendments to clarify uncertainties of meaning or to improve the drafting. Second, there are special amendments. Those are amendments which do not reopen an issue which has been decided by you, but which go further than mere drafting, and are considered necessary or desirable by the Standing Committee to be made.

Now, the Steering Committee made various drafting amendments, and these are shown in bold type on the draft Measure and Canon. They speak for themselves, but for your convenience, are described at Annex A to the report of the Steering Committee. There was one amendment which the Steering Committee considered was more than just a drafting amendment, which concerns clause 8 of the Draft Measure, which inserts a new Section 25(a) in the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986.

The purpose of this insertion was to prevent a patron from exercising rights of patronage if the individual had been convicted of certain offences, criminal offences, or was included on a barred list under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Act 2006. The intention was to impose a safeguarding protection. Unfortunately, and it is a mistake for which I must take full responsibility, the clause as originally drafted went much wider than was intended. It referred to the whole of the part of the Church Representation Rules, part 7, when it should have referred to one rule within the part, namely Rule 68. Part 10 contains ten rules and a reference to part 7 would have had unintended consequences of disqualifying all sorts of worthy people from exercising rights of patronage.

This was never intended. What was intended was to exclude those individuals disqualified by Rule 68 on safeguarding grounds. I will ask you to give consideration to the special amendment under the next item. But first, I am asking you to take note, and for this purpose let me remind you very quickly of the four drafting amendments.

The first set of drafting amendments are a consequence of General Synod in February having approved Amending Canon 42. You will recall that Amending Canon 42 amends the canonical requirements on safeguarding, requiring the bishop of each diocese to appoint a diocesan safeguarding officer rather an advisor, and there are a number of references to DSAs in other Measures, and these all need to be updated to DSOs, so they are purely consequential amendments.

There are also three drafting amendments to the Canon. The first makes the way Queen Camilla is referred to consistent with Royal Warrant. The second merely inserts the date on which the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 commenced. The third substitutes canonical references to DSAs with references to DSOs.

Under the Standing Orders, drafting amendments are deemed to have been made without being moved. Special amendments must be moved, and I will do that in the next section in relation to the one special amendment the Steering Committee is proposing. But before we come to the special amendment, may I invite you to take note of the Steering Committee's Report.

*The Chair:* As we go to debate, I would ask members not to raise matters in the debate on the final report that concern the special amendment, but to wait until the amendment is moved after the take note debate has concluded. Please do not address the content of the Measure or the Canon themselves at this stage. The place to do that is on the Final Approval debate, which will come after the special amendment has been dealt with. This is a debate on the report of the Steering Committee on Final Draft only. We will start with a speech limit of five minutes.

I see no one standing. This means we will go straight to the vote and we only need a show of hands, and those of you on Zoom, a green tick will be in order. So, can I now see a show of hands of those who would like to take note.

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

## **ITEM 512**

*The Chair:* The Steering Committee proposes one special amendment to the draft Measure, it is set out in the Order Paper II at Item 512. I call on Mr Hofmeyr to move Item 512. You have up to ten minutes.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* May I first thank members of Synod for taking note of the Steering Committee's Report. As I mentioned in my introduction, the Steering Committee proposes one special amendment to the draft Measure and as I explained why the amendment was necessary, to substitute Rule 68 for part 7, and the purpose of the amendment, as I said, was to disqualify patrons on safeguarding grounds and not to disqualify others who were not intended to be disqualified. Whilst we were advised that

it is arguable that the amendment is merely a drafting amendment, the Steering Committee chose to take a cautious approach in the interests of transparency, and to bring the matter specifically to the attention of General Synod and to give General Synod an opportunity to test the proposed amendment.

The Steering Committee hope that you will have appreciated the obvious need for the proposed amendment, and I would now invite General Synod specifically to approve the special amendment.

*The Chair:* This item is now open for debate. I see no one standing so we will go straight to the vote.

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

## **ITEM 503**

*The Chair:* We now move to Item 503. Synod has reached the Final Approval stage for the draft Measure. Members will need GS 2272B. I call on Mr Stephen Hofmeyr to move Item 503, that the Measure entitled Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure be finally approved. Mr Hofmeyr, you may speak for up to ten minutes.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* It now gives me great pleasure to invite General Synod finally to approve both the Measure and Amending Canon 43. Apart from the drafting and special amendments, which we have now dealt with, there will not be and may not be any further amendments according to Standing Orders. General Synod has already given its support at the Revision Stage to the drafts before you, and we are now at the Final Approval stage, and in a moment, I will be inviting you to give the legislation Final Approval.

We will be taking the Measure first, and when we have voted on the Measure, we will move the Amending Canon. As I said in the introduction, the Measure contains a potpourri of pieces of legislation, none of which merit their own freestanding Measure, but each of which is important. The draft Measure has 22 clauses, all of which you are familiar with, having debated them clause by clause at the February group of sessions.

But reminding you of those, clause 1: during Covid, we passed a Measure to enable General Synod to hold remote and hybrid meetings on a temporary basis. Having gained confidence in the use of remote and hybrid meetings, clause 1 makes the change permanent. It also removes the prohibition on Article 7 and Article 8 business being considered at a remote or hybrid meeting of Synod.

In February there was a lively debate on that subject. Some members expressed their strong opposition to the removal of the prohibition, but the mood of General Synod was very clearly that remote and hybrid meetings are here to stay and that all members of General Synod should be given the opportunity to participate in all of the business of

General Synod, and there are people today on Zoom who could not otherwise have been here and it is in order to enable them to participate fully that this is now being made permanent.

As to clause 2, in 2018 the Legislative Reform Measure was introduced giving Archbishops' Council power, with the approval of General Synod on a case-by-case basis, to make orders removing or reducing burdens resulting from legislation. The Measure contained a five-year sunset clause. Clause 2 removes the sunset provision and makes the Measure continue indefinitely. Some members felt now was too soon to remove it but in February the clear mind of Synod was to make the Measure permanent. The change, of course, will be scrutinised by Parliament when it comes to consider this Measure as a whole.

Clause 3 is another attempt at simplification. Synod will no longer have to approve revisions to the safeguarding code of practice which are insubstantial, or provide guidance on how to comply with the requirements which have been imposed. Clause 4 removes the requirement for General Synod to approve a change to the name of a suffragan see, in contrast to a diocesan see.

Clause 5 amends the terms of service regulations to make modest improvements to common tenure. Clause 6 removes a restriction on bishops acting during vacancies in diocesan sees and gives Archbishops a power to delegate archiepiscopal functions to another bishop where the bishop is unable to exercise his or her functions because the bishops is on sabbatical, overseas or likewise.

Clause 7 provides that the constitution of a cathedral may permit the appointment of lay residentiary canons. The Revision Committee found this to be the most contentious proposal and spent some considerable time debating it. In the end, when the matter was put before you in February, it received strong support. Clause 7 must be read together with Schedule 1 to the Measure. I have already mentioned clause 8, the subject of the special amendment. Clause 9 amends the law on the appointment and retirement of ecclesiastical judges.

Clause 10 concerns the training requirement to be met by ecclesiastical judges. Clause 11 amends the legislation on ecclesiastical disciplinary proceedings, making legal aid more widely available and streamlining the appeal process. Clause 12 puts the provision for the broadcast of proceedings in an ecclesiastical court on a statutory footing. Clause 13 amends various provisions that are concerned with the care of churches.

Clause 14 is concerned with the care of land and removes lacunae, update references and removes unnecessary provisions. One aspect of this provision was substantially amended by General Synod at the Revision Stage in February following a very healthy, considered debate: the power of the disposal in the absence of an incumbent will rest with the priest in charge rather than the bishop. Clause 15 deals with the care of

cathedrals, in particular the procedure for a cathedral to put any of its objects of special interest on display.

Clause 16 is another that has to do with Church property, allowing for a wider category of professionals brought in to advise on any proposal to lease glebe land. Some minor changes to the Church Representation Rules are made by clause 17. Other more radical proposals, which received the unanimous support of the Revision Committee, were referred to the Elections Review Group who have agreed to consider both points promptly as part of a more general review.

Clause 18 amends the Church Commissioners' procedures to reflect usual practice for a large charity dealing with complex financial transactions. Some members queried the need to allow 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 19 provides that where the see of one of the Archbishops is vacant, the joint power of the Archbishops to make appointments to the Pensions Board will instead be exercisable by the other Archbishop. Clause 20 puts into effect an inspired suggestion made this time last year by Aiden Hargreaves-Smith that we make provision for Church bodies more generally to hold remote and hybrid meetings in the same way as Synod does. The applicable provisions are set out in Schedule 2. Clause 21 is a drafting amendment that brings into one place the synodical procedure for making orders under this Measure itself, and clause 22 contains the standard provisions on commencement and extent.

Well, that was something of a canter through diverse provisions. Thank you for your patience, thank you for listening so carefully. Madam Chair, I move that the Measure entitled Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure be finally approved.

*The Chair:* Item 503 is now open for debate. Please may I remind members that under Standing Order 64, motions for the closure or next business are not in order in this debate.

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

*Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark):* I want to congratulate the Steering Committee on putting together such a comprehensive set of items in this Miscellaneous Provisions Measure. It is always the joy of Synod to have at least one of these in every quinquennium. And whilst we recognise, like in Paul's image of the Body of Christ, that each of these individual items is of equal value, and has equal status in the law of the land, I particularly want to put on record my support for Item 7, lay residentiary canons. This matter was first raised by the former Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, and I am so pleased that - the Bishop is nodding - that we have reached this stage where Paula Gooder can be made a Canon of the cathedral which she serves, so that is great news.

Thank you so much, everyone, for steering that through and I would just put out a plea to the other 41 dioceses that, now that this power exists, you might like to use it in your cathedral.

*Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford):* I really do welcome this particular Measure. I congratulate Stephen Hofmeyr KC and the team. It was an interesting presentation today. Some of these Measures can be incredibly boring and tedious, and as a former MP I have had to receive them across the way, but this is good news. I am so pleased that the Synod will be open to all by having hybrid and remote meetings, so clause 1 is to be really welcomed. I have got Geoffrey sitting nearly next door to me, he wanted that, I wanted that, I am delighted it is there.

As to clause 20, yes, again, I welcome it. The only thing I would say to Aiden Hargreaves-Smith is that it is great that we will have other meetings allowed to be remote. We do have this with a number of meetings for the Church Commissioners as well, but you also need to have some in person. I think we miss out sometimes from not being able to meet in person, to talk and to have the comradery before and after votes - sometimes quite difficult votes.

As far as the remote meetings and that facility is concerned, it seems to me that the House of Bishops, particularly on a Monday and Tuesday when we are meeting, can be in the House of Lords, because they are needed there, too. I think that is important.

We move to clause 2 and removing the sunset provisions from the Legislative Reform Measure. Again, I think that is needed. I feel we have been listened to. I think this is good news for us. I think we become more accountable, but we are also more able to be present, so I welcome it all, and I thank Stephen Hofmeyr and the team.

*Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter):* I appreciate that this is in its Final Stage but of course Synod could (and I am sure it will not) choose to reject it if needed to. We are not a rubber-stamping body, and so I still think there is a place for scrutiny.

I broadly appreciate and am in favour of most of the items in the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure. It was mentioned about Article 7 and 8 business the last time we looked at this, and I do not feel that that point has actually been addressed or looked into. If you look in all of the New Testament, in the Acts of the Apostles, at Pentecost, you see people being gathered together. I am very in favour of hybrid Zoom and I am very in favour of hybrid church, but have we thought spiritually and theologically about the implications when we are discussing our most important business of having not everybody in the same space? I am sure this will go through, but it might be something we want to keep an eye on, whether there is a theological impact when we are discussing our most important business.

*The Chair:* Bearing in mind that we are in two different spaces, I am looking on Zoom and there is nothing there yet. Mr Scowen.



*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I just wanted to pick up on something Mr Hofmeyr mentioned, which was the provision which the Revision Committee unanimously endorsed but then removed and referred to the Elections Review Group. If you have read the papers for the rest of Synod, you will have seen that on Monday we will be considering the Report of the Elections Review Group, which has indeed done what we were asked to do, and that Report makes some recommendations. That will be followed immediately by a resolution to be made to amend the Church Representation Rules to give effect to those recommendations. It is all to do with what happens at annual meetings when there are not enough candidates, and also with the need to ensure that people who are elected to our PCCs are qualified and not disqualified from serving. That matter will come to Synod on Monday afternoon even though it is not in this Measure.

Also to respond to something Luke Appleton said just now, even though the ban on taking Article 7 and 8 business at remote or hybrid meetings has been removed, it will still be in the discretion of the Business Committee as to whether it is appropriate to take such business at, for example, a fully remote meeting, and some of us at least on the Business Committee will be astute to make sure we do not do what we judge we ought not to do.

*The Chair:* I see someone standing here. Would you like to speak?

*Ms Sarah Tupling (Deaf Anglicans Together):* Good morning. I want to thank you, Bishop Rose, for calling me. My name is Sarah Tupling. I am from Derby and I am one of the three representatives for the Deaf Anglicans Together team. How long do I have, sorry, Bishop Rose?

*The Chair:* Five minutes.

*Ms Sarah Tupling (Deaf Anglicans Together):* Okay, I will pace myself. So this is one of those spontaneous reactions to the conversation that I have just been listening to and the legislation. I thought that Stephen Hofmeyr explained things so clearly and it is very obvious that a huge amount of work has been going on for a long time to bring this to where we are today for Final Approval.

There is one area that I would like to keep on Synod's mind and that is within one of the particular clauses. When we think about online meetings, hybrid or fully remote, on Zoom or whatever, this is great. It works here. We are here and there are also many people at home working online. One of them is one of our Deaf Anglicans Together representatives. She is watching now online. She has a good command of written English and so she can access Zoom with the subtitles. What I have been thinking about, however, is how the legislation and how the conversations that we have might meet the needs of a deaf person who does not have that kind of command of written English.

I have been informed that there may be a way to provide interpreters, but what I believe we would need is two teams, because we would have one group of interpreters who would

be working online and another group that would be working here in the chamber. So, there are implications if we do provide BSL interpreting in both formats, but there is something about making sure that we make ourselves accessible to a wide range of deaf people and actually thinking about people who are deaf and blind as well, because not everybody is the same. I hope that I have raised my point and I think that is all. Thank you. Please do think about these things.

*The Chair:* I am going to Zoom first and after Zoom we will go to the Chair of the Business Committee. Val Plumb on Zoom. You also have five minutes.

*The Revd Canon Val Plumb (Oxford):* Thank you to Sarah Tupling. It was really enjoyable to hear what you had to say. Like you, Sarah, I am just picking up on something Luke said, as somebody who can be described as a seasoned Zoomer. Unfortunately, I have an immunological problem so it has remained unsafe for me to be present at this stage while my medication settles down.

I think the point I need to make here is present is present, whether I am on a screen or whether I am sat next to you. This is not just what is about what is the best way to have meetings. This is a disability issue as well. As a priest who is both physically disabled and neurodiverse, it is critically important that I feel I have a place where I can be with you and actually share my concerns and my views with you without feeling like I should be grateful for this.

I can understand what you are saying that it is important to be together and I would love to do that but, actually, what happens when we cannot? Are we just to be left out on the side? Of course, that is not Christian, it is not kind and it is not appropriate, and it does not do anything other than make people feel that they are something other than fully human.

I have spent most of my working life in these last three years during this pandemic and as it begins to drop down now doing multiple Zoom meetings. I have done training and I have chaired, and it does work, and do not forget there are also communities of people out there who we minister to and worship with. Just be mindful, Synod, that when you make this decision, please do it for the reasons that are in your heart rather than whether or not it is practical. That is all I wanted to say, thank you.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Hopefully this will help Mr Hofmeyr. I would like to thank Sarah Tupling and Val Plumb for their comments. I do not think that directly affects the legislation and the changes that we are being asked to consider, and indeed which the Business Committee fully supports around hybrid meetings, but I want to say the Business Committee absolutely recognises what you, Sarah and Val, have said, and we will continue to work as hard as we can to make sure that our Synod is as accessible as possible, both here in the chamber and on Zoom. We absolutely welcome both your comments and any feedback that you want to give us. So, the Business Committee has heard and we will continue to try our best.

*The Bishop of Woolwich (The Rt Revd Dr Karowei Dorgu):* Thank you to the Chair for giving me the opportunity to speak this morning. I am delighted to make my maiden speech on this subject of virtual meetings. I want to thank Stephen Hofmeyr and the team for doing such a brilliant job. I just want to follow on from what has been said by the two previous speakers. We live in an age of technology, first and foremost.

Secondly, on a theological basis, the church of Christ is a body of 2.8 billion Christians all over the world and it is a virtual church. We might never meet some of them face-to-face until we get to heaven, but I thank God for modern technology that today I can be part of this Synod even though I have been unable to travel to York for personal reasons.

I think that for a church that is wanting to be young, diverse, inclusive and more accessible, this is a welcome day for us that we can make all our meetings hybrid in nature so that we will be accessible. It is a welcome opportunity for those we want to include and, as our last sister said, those who cannot attend physically like myself, and many others, will be able to participate in the life of the Body of Christ. I think theologically it is a day to celebrate.

Secondly, it is also very good for the environment. It is good for the environment and good for our health. It is good for the health of God's creation that we can use all the facilities available to us and save so many tonnes of carbon dioxide that would be let out into the ozone layer at this time.

*Miss Rosemary Wilson (Southwark):* Thank you to the Steering Committee and to Mr Hofmeyr for a really brilliant document, because I was able to read it all the way through from the beginning to the end, so I am really, really grateful for that.

I just wanted to pick up on clause 17(2), Elections under Church Representation Rules. I know it was debated last year and I know it went through, but I still have a concern I want to put out there, which is that the bishop may vary the eligibility requirements for election to parochial church council by waiving the requirement that a person must be an actual communicant.

I remember the context. This was in the terms of Messy Church and mixed ecology where we have people in the community who are becoming part of the Church family or becoming part of the Church who are not necessarily Christians, and we want this all to work and we need to gather a PCC around these particular types of mixed ecology and Messy Church. I understand that. I still feel I wanted to register my concern that we are saying that it is okay to be part of a PCC and not be a Christian. I just wanted to, as I say, flag that concern.

*The Revd Canon Dana Delap (Gloucester):* We have talked about unforeseen consequences of what we are talking about, and I think this has an unforeseen consequence when we are talking about hybrid church because "present is present", said

Valerie Plumb, and we live in a technological world. All of this is true, but we hit up against this during lockdown when we were talking about Communion. If present is present then that is the same for God and we also need to talk about Holy Communion and whether or not hybrid Communion is also a possibility. The Bishops promised us that we would talk about this and that they would publish something relating to it at the end of 2020. We are now a little way beyond that and it would be really good for us to think about these unforeseen consequences.

*The Chair:* I see no one else standing so I will call on Mr Hofmeyr to reply to the debate. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* May I thank those who thanked my Steering Committee who worked very, very hard indeed in relation to these matters. I am most grateful to Adrian, to Peter and to all of those who expressed their gratitude. Thank you for that.

In relation to remote and hybrid, I think that the message is clear that we will continue to seek to meet in person as the default insofar as it is possible, but we have heard moving accounts of how important it is for people to have accessibility and it is of critical importance that we make our meetings accessible to all insofar as it is possible to do so.

Particular thanks are due to Sarah and Val for sharing with us their own experiences, and Bishop Karowei as well. In relation to the point that was made by Sarah of the possibility of two signers being available if matters are dealt with online, I will certainly ask the Synod staff team responsible for these matters to look into that in order to see whether it is possible to ensure that you have that accessibility.

Thank you to Clive Scowen for reminding me that the Elections Review Group Report is being considered on Monday. Again, Synod, be encouraged by that. We felt unable to deal with the matter properly in this Measure. We passed the matter to the Elections Review Group and asked that they deal with it promptly and look at what they have done: they are bringing it back to us very, very quickly. So, thank you to the Elections Review Group for dealing with the matter so quickly.

Luke Appleton, we note your concerns about having meetings in person. Those have been heard and will be thought through further as time passes.

Robert Hammond, thank you for the message that you brought to us effectively from the Business Committee that you will continue to make meetings as accessible as possible, and that is certainly what our intention was through this Measure.

Rosemary Wilson, again thank you for expressing your concern. The Bishops here will have heard the concerns of both those present and those on Zoom, and I am sure that they will have regard to those concerns.

So far as virtual Communion is concerned, that is a matter for another day, but thank you, Dana, for raising the matter. That will be considered in due course by those in the right places at the right times, but now is not the right time nor the right place for us to deal with that, but thank you for raising it.

In those circumstances I move Item 503 standing in my name.

*The Chair:* The question is “That the Measure entitled ‘Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure’ be finally approved”. In accordance with Standing Order 37, I order a counted vote by Houses.

*The Chair:* The vote on Item 503: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 20, against none, with one recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, 123 in favour, none against, with three recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 146 in favour, one against, with five recorded abstentions.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chair:* The motion is therefore carried. The Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure now stands committed to the Legislative Committee.

## **ITEM 504**

*The Chair:* We turn now to Item 504. The Synod has reached the Final Approval stage for draft Amending Canon No. 43. Members will need the draft Amending Canon GS 2273B and the Petition for the Royal Assent and Licence GS 2723C.

I call on Mr Stephen Hofmeyr to move Item 504 “That the Canon entitled ‘Amending Canon No. 43’ be finally approved”. Mr Hofmeyr, you have up to 10 minutes.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* We move then to Amending Canon No. 43. We are on the last furlong and we move from a canter to a gallop. The draft Amending Canon contains 16 paragraphs in three parts. The first part, paragraphs 1 to 5, are amendments necessitated by the demise of the Crown. The amendments substitute references in the Canons to the Queen’s Majesty or similar with references to the King’s Majesty or similar.

Paragraph 13 to 16, part 3, are merely updating amendments. Part 2, the central part, paragraphs 6 to 12, contains a potpourri of miscellaneous amendments.

Paragraph 6 reinstates a provision that was inadvertently removed. The provision that was inadvertently removed was a provision preventing a church ceasing to be used for public worship altogether unless it is formally closed for worship under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

Paragraphs 7 and 8 relate to the marriage Canons but do not get too excited, they do not deal with what marriage is or what marriage is not - or not directly at least. Paragraph 7 amends Canons B 31 and B 32 by raising the age at which a person may lawfully marry from 16 to 18 in line with the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022.

Paragraph 8 amends Canon B 34 which is concerned with the legal preliminaries to marriage, and Canon B 36 which makes provision for services after civil marriage in line with recent amendments to the Marriage Act 1949 which replace superintendent registrar certificates with marriage schedules. Paragraph 9 amends Canon C 21 to make it consistent with the Measure that you have just assented to, which you have just approved, which made provision for the appointment of lay residentiary canons and so it is a consistency amendment only.

Paragraph 10 amends Canon F 17 and Canon F 18 which contain requirements as to the keeping of records of church property and for the survey of church buildings. The amendments are to make life easier when a rural dean is not available. Provision is made for a different person to act in her or his stead. Paragraph 11 provides for the qualifications for appointment as a deputy diocesan or provincial registrar to be the same as for the appointment of a registrar, including the requirement to be a communicant.

Paragraph 12 amends the interpretation Canon I. The interpretation provisions are extended to regulations made under this Canon, Canon No. 43.

Those are the provisions of Amending Canon No. 43 but, before I invite General Synod to give the Amending Canon Final Approval, may I please take this opportunity to thank you, the members of General Synod, who took an active part in the legislative process, whether through making proposals to the Revision Committee, through proposing amendments to the draft legislation or through simply expressing your views in votes. Thank you to each of you.

May I also thank the Steering Committee who have helped me with this process over the last year. Their contribution has been invaluable and I am grateful to each of them personally. Thank you very much indeed. May I also thank members of the Revision Committee for doing the heavy lifting during the revision stage. Above all, may I thank the legal team for their work on the legislation - sage advice and cold towels in equal measure. I move, "That the Canon entitled, 'Amending Canon No. 43' be finally approved".

*The Chair:* Item 504 is open for debate. May I remind members once more that, under Standing Order 64, motions for the closure or move to next business are not in order in this debate. The speech limit is set at five minutes.

I see no one standing and, therefore, I will be putting this to the vote. The question is, "That the Canon entitled 'Amending Canon No. 43' be finally approved" in accordance with Standing Order 37. I order a counted voted by Houses. I direct under Standing

Order 38(3) that the ringing of the bell be dispensed with. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 504.

The vote on Item 504: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 19, against none, with one recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, 119 in favour, none against, with one recorded abstention. And in the House of Laity, 151 in favour, one against, with one recorded abstention. This motion was carried in all three Houses.

*This motion was put and carried.*

## **ITEM 505**

*The Chair:* I call on Mr Hofmeyr to move Item 505, "That the petition for His Majesty's Royal Assent and Licence (GS 2723C) be adopted". Please, move Mr Hofmeyr.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* Thank you, Synod, for your care and attention that you have paid to this important legislation. I now move, "That the petition for His Majesty's Royal Assent and Licence (GS 2723C) be adopted".

*The Chair:* This item is now open for debate. I see no one standing and, therefore, this will now go to the vote and a simple show of hands is all that is required.

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

*The Chair:* The petition will, accordingly, be presented to His Majesty, having been carried. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* took the Chair at 10.26 am

## **ITEM 506**

### **AMENDING CANON NO. 42 (GS 2269D) AMENDING CANON FOR ENACTMENT**

*The Chair:* Members of Synod, we now move to the next item of business, which is 506. Amending Canon No. 42 received Final Approval from the Synod at the February 2023 group of sessions. I have to report to the Synod that the Royal Assent and Licence has been given in respect of the Amending Canon. Under Standing Order 68, once the Instrument of Enactment for the Canon has been read to the Synod, the motion appearing on the Order Paper must be put to the Synod and voted on without debate. I call upon the Registrar to read the Instrument of Enactment.

*The Registrar:* Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, maturely treated upon by the Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Church of England in their Synod begun at Westminster in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-One and in the Seventieth Year of the Reign of our Late Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth the Second, of blessed and glorious memory, and continued in being upon the accession of our Sovereign Lord King Charles the Third by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of his Other Realms and Territories, King, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, being a Canon entitled "Amending Canon No. 42" which received His Majesty's Royal Assent and Licence on the Ninth day of June Two Thousand and Twenty-Three.

We, being the Presidents, the Prolocutor of the Convocation of Canterbury, the Prolocutor of the Convocation of York and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity of the said Synod do hereby declare and testify Our Consent to the said Canon entitled "Amending Canon No. 42". And, in testimony of such Our Consent, we have hereunto subscribed our names as hereafter follows: Dated this Eighth day of July in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Three and in the first year of the reign of Our Sovereign Lord, King Charles the Third.

*The Chair:* I, therefore, move, "That the Canon entitled 'Amending Canon No. 42' be made, promulgated and executed".

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

*The Chair:* The Instrument of Enactment, having been signed by myself and the Archbishop of York and the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the House of Laity and shortly to be signed by the Prolocutors, the Canon will now be sent for proclamation in the diocesan synods in the usual way. That completes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 10.33 am

*The Chair:* Good morning, Synod. May I first start with a housekeeping point. The air conditioning is on and we get the best effect from that if we keep the doors of the chamber closed - so that is the two doors going out and the doors at the top. Thank you very much.

We now come to Item 8 on climate change. Members will need GS2032.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Point of order. Under Standing Order 33, I move that we proceed to next business.

*The Chair:* Thank you. I will just take some advice on that. Thank you for your patience. Ms Dailey has moved the procedural motion that the Synod do pass to the next business. If that procedural motion is carried, Item 8 will lapse and it will not be in order to reconsider the question in the same form or in a form that is substantially similar within the lifetime of the Synod except with the permission of the Business Committee and the general



consent of Synod. The motion for next business may be debated at my discretion and I call on Miss Dailey, as mover of this motion, to speak to it, first of all, please.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* After the Chairman of the Business Committee advised me yesterday that my knowledge of Standing Orders in relation to presentations is 13 years out of date, I wanted to give the Synod the opportunity to express its mind on the subject of having a presentation at this stage. We have received a written report on this subject and we are also having a debate later on in this group of sessions during which the proposer of the motion will have the opportunity of an opening speech to present the most important points. I am sure we will be presented with compelling reasons why we should have this presentation at this stage but, given the pressure of business that we are under in this group of sessions, I would invite the Synod to consider whether that is the best use of our time at this moment.

*The Chair:* I now call on the main speaker to reply. You have up to three minutes.

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio):* Prudence, thank you very much for that. It is a really important thing because, even yesterday when I heard those opening challenges about presentations, it actually made me go and reflect and I actually tore up the talk that we are coming here to give now. I can understand why people misunderstand the word "presentation", but what Clive and myself are coming here today to do is an act of accountability to Synod.

Synod, five years ago you asked us to do something around what is the defining issue of our age, climate change, and how we have acted in consort with you to do that. That is what we are about to do. We can play with words, but what this session here is about is us being accountable to what you have asked us to do over what is the defining issue of the age. I would hope that we can continue in the slot that you have asked us to do.

*The Chair:* I do not consider that the motion for next business needs to be debated further and so I, therefore, put the motion to Synod.

*This motion was put and lost on a show of hands.*

## **ITEM 8**

### **NATIONAL INVESTING BODIES: REPORT ON JULY 2018 SYNOD MOTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (GS 2302)**

*The Chair:* That is clearly lost and so we continue with this item. I call on Mr Smith to start the presentation, please.

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio):* Thank you very much, Synod. It is a real privilege to be here today with Clive Mather, Chair of the Church of England's Pensions Board, to give some

introductory comments on our Report in GS 2302, approach to climate change, before, more importantly, getting your questions and perspectives. Being here is more than a privilege; it is our responsibility. We are here to report back to you, five years on as we committed from when we as the National Investing Bodies were asked by you, Synod, in 2018 to respond to your motion on climate change and that is set out in the Report.

As I said a couple of minutes ago, it goes without saying that climate change is, and will be, one of the prime defining issues of our generation and generations to come. Alongside Clive and myself, we have members of all three of the National Investing Bodies to whom that motion was addressed: the Pensions Board, the CBF funds managed by CCLA - that is done on behalf of 14,000 Church of England organisations - and the Church Commissioners. We are reporting here today as a result of their excellent work and we would like to express our deep gratitude to that entire team for their excellence, their professionalism and the integrity of their work. We would also, more importantly though, like to thank you, Synod.

This journey here, on this slide, of the last decade - but actually really which started two decades ago - represents an integrated leading approach of how to address climate change. It is actually us as an integrated Church of England through our common faith setting best practice standards on climate change around some important issues; of how we clearly articulate climate change policy, of setting targets, of acting intentionally towards achieving those targets; through us being co-founders of very important industry leading bodies, again with the encouragement and endorsement of Synod, like Climate Action, 100+ and the Transition Pathway Initiative that seeks to set standards for companies across the economy on climate change.

Through shaping in a very disciplined and evidence based way how we engage with the firms as part of an integrated engagement and divestment programme with the world's largest and most consequential companies, including and in particular the fossil fuel companies, again as you asked us to engage with the motion; and, very, very importantly, through an unequivocal articulation that the target for net zero must be keeping average global temperature rises to below 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels. The kind of mantra of "1.5 to stay alive" is not just a slogan. It is actually essential if we are to flourish as communities. That work that we have done with the encouragement and support of Synod has been fundamentally important and so we thank you for that, Synod.

Actually, Synod, this journey represented on this slide represents something more profound. It represents Synod and synodality at its most powerful. Synodality means refusing to go it alone. Synodality means insisting on working together. Synodality means walking together on the same road. This pathway here is exactly that. What we have done, Synod, what we have responded to you is not just about climate change. It is about the essence of what being a Synod is. All the NIBs are very, very thankful that you have engaged with us and challenged us and supported us on that journey. That road that we are walking together though has come to a very important crossroads as you will have seen very recently around our engagement and divestment programme, Engagement and

Divest. It is actually just one of a number of approaches that all of the NIBs use and, in particular, that the Church Commissioners use as we address climate change, but it is the one that gets the most focus.

You would have read last week about our decision at the Church Commissioners to exclude 11 oil and gas companies for their failure to align with climate change goals. It was not a decision taken lightly. It was evidence based and data driven. It was a sobering decision because it means that we have not seen the leadership that we would have expected and hoped for in some of the world's most consequential companies leading on this.

By the end of 2023, the Church Commissioners are excluding all oil and gas majors from their portfolio and will exclude all other companies primarily engaged in oil and gas exploration, production and refining unless they are in genuine alignment to a 1.5° pathway. In making these decisions, it is important to set out some important principles. This decision is not just about emissions, it is also about investment discipline.

Companies that are not meaningfully allocating capital in support of the transition are not the companies of the future. We believe in engagement and divestment. It is a bit like faith and works. Faith without works is dead. Engagement is faith, divestment is works. The fossil fuel companies have not worked meaningfully on this, we must now work and divest. Our investment in them is now dead for the time being.

We, though, believe in reconciliation and working together. We would be prepared to reinvest in energy majors in the future if such companies are seen to become Paris aligned in a clear evidence-based and data-driven manner, while also meeting our risk return targets within our portfolio and our capital allocation principles.

Our paper notes, Synod, that we are at a crossroads. I would expand on it a bit and give it another framing: we are either crossing the Red Sea or the River Jordan in how we engage going forward. We must ensure that it is the Jordan that we are crossing. We do not have 40 years to waste.

Synod, that was our perspectives and I would like now to hand over to Clive to share what the Pensions Board are doing.

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* So, we have engaged as a Pensions Board with the oil and gas sector for over ten years vigorously and rigorously, and we have achieved much, but we did not achieve the standard that we brought to you five years ago that they would be aligned with the trajectory to 1.5°C in the short, medium and long term. So, we have excluded them from our investment portfolio.

It is good that we made the commitment, it is good that we tracked it, pushed as hard as we can, and it is good as a consequence that we have demonstrated our intent. But it is still sad, it is sad that we did not succeed. It would have been better if we could have

persuaded them. But it was clear. Now, we may go back, but we would need very credible evidence over an extended period to be sure if we were to reinstate our investments.

So, now the focus moves, we will not be engaging directly with these oil companies as shareholders, but we will continue to engage with them, and we will put more focus on the demand side of the equation, because if you can choke the demand, that has a very, very immediate and compelling impact on production. So, car manufacturing, utilities, steel and so on.

Next slide. It may not be easy to see this graph, and if you read the Report, you will understand the extent to which we track these various companies in terms of their commitments against the standard we need. But you can see that although all of them will talk about a pathway to 2050, that is nowhere near good enough in the short and medium term. Hence, for us, it was perfectly clear that we had no option but to divest.

But we have achieved much, Synod. I am enormously proud of what small teams of dedicated people have done over the past five years. The Transition Pathway Initiative is an extraordinary gift to the world. We are talking about going up to 10,000 companies that they will review and report on publicly. We are talking about simply astonishing levels of assets under management that we can influence. We have, through Climate Action 100, brought something like 75% of the major emitters to develop standards. They may not be good enough but this is an enormously important start. We will continue to do that, and we will continue to do that with all the resources that we have.

But if I had one message I would leave to you, it is that if you engage with the teams, be it in CCLA or in the Church Commissioners or in the Pensions Board, please do say thank you for people who have gone an extraordinary extra mile to bring us to where we are. So, we look ahead. We have disinvested, we have not disengaged, and the hard work continues.

*The Chair:* We now have a time for questions. You will see from the Order Paper that the next item is Questions, which is a continuation from yesterday, and that starts no later than 11.45, so we have got a hard stop. I will be taking these in groups of three and they are questions, please.

*The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe (The Rt Revd Robert Innes):* I want to express my huge congratulations to the National Investing Bodies for this extraordinary achievement, it is simply huge, and for a Church like ours to be a player on the world scene to the degree that we are is simply remarkable. So, as a Bishop, thank you so much for this. What I would say is that I would love our Church to be able to project this good news more effectively into the public square.

I would love that we are known, as the Church of England, not as a church that is always associated with divisive issues around sex and gender but as a church which is known

as a leader in the fight to control and combat climate change. When I talk to other people, even in our own Church, and other church leaders, they have rarely heard of the Transition Pathways Initiative, and yet it is extremely important at a world level.

So, I would love our communications departments to put their thinking caps on and try to project what is a rather abstract story but one, nonetheless, which is of fundamental importance out into the public square in a more effective way.

*Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln):* As it may be seen as being relevant by some, I should declare that I am a Chartered Engineer. I am also heavily supportive of the direction being taken by the NIBs and I commend them for the stance that they are taking. My question, though, relates to what is seen as a divisive subject by some, and that is the question of nuclear power, which many expert commentators see as being an essential component of a zero carbon future for the times when the sun don't shine and the wind don't blow.

I will be interested in knowing what the NIBs' position is on nuclear energy related investment, in, for example, micro nuclear reactor technology.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* We have heard, particularly from Mr Mather, about the extraordinary achievements of engagement in the last few years which has arisen from the shareholdings that we had in the oil and gas majors. I wonder if it could be explained to Synod, now we are selling those shares, presumably to people who do not share our ethical commitment with regard to Paris alignment and what the Transition Pathways were seeking to do, how is that going to help to achieve what we have been seeking to achieve all along of persuading those companies we are disinvesting from to move in the direction we want them to move?

*The Chair:* Now, we will have some responses, please.

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio):* I will take that first one and the third one and then Clive will speak to the nuclear point. On that point of coverage and how we communicate, it is a very important thing, and you have actually seen how, even with our press release recently, how that got a lot of effect. We also, though, Synod, need to be humble, because this is a complex issue.

I will give you a real example of the complexity. In one of our land holdings quite recently, we actually found out there is an oil well on it. It has not got into the press, as yet, but actually it is quite right that that person is doing that. Now, what is interesting, because that oil well is on lots of land, it is most probable that that property is negative emissions, you know, and it brings out the complexities, and we are in a world where we need to communicate and we are very conscious of that, that we are wise. We need to be communicating but we also need to be humble because there is some really complex stuff out there.

Clive, you are right, engaging and divesting means that we are no longer at the table with those companies. There are two dimensions. There is the dimension of how we steward the money on behalf of the Church, and actually if you look at the long-term returns of the Commissioners where we have actually been excluding oil and gas through some of our areas already, it has not affected our returns. So, from a stewardship point of view, in supporting the Church, that is not a worry.

I think one of the key things with the oil majors, and it was why it was so sobering, was that they have not moved, and in this last year, when it was at such an important point, they had not moved, almost to the extent that we have to be careful that people aren't engagement-washing. Because there is a certain way in which these big firms, by engaging with entities like ourselves, it becomes a rubber stamp, and the way in which they have rowed back in this last year, it was important for us to reflect on that.

I think when we were discussing it with the Archbishops, Stephen actually gave us a very good bit of Scripture, and he said "Our Lord says sometimes you just have to shake the dust off of your feet". And that is what we have had to do at this point in time, because they have not moved this intentionally, but we are also clear in terms of us stewarding the money on behalf of the Church. That will not stop us getting the long-term returns that we need in support of ensuring that we are supporting our mission. Clive, you take the one on nuclear.

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* Nigel, you make a good point because clearly at a headline level, nuclear is an extraordinary provider of electricity at low carbon levels, and ideal when demand is stable, stable in terms of the normal utility requirement of nations and communities for electricity and power.

However, there are three big issues. The first one is, of course, public concern. The word "nuclear" tends to trigger an emotional reaction and it does not help with current commentary around weapons moving into Belarus. People are fearful, and there have been some bad accidents. If you compare those accidents with other risks in society, for example motoring, they pale into insignificance, but in the public mind they are very real.

Secondly, the carbon balance is very complicated because of the amount of concrete and steel and infrastructure that is needed. And finally, the timescales. As we know, in the UK, had we invested, perhaps ten to 15 years ago, we would be in a far better position than we are today. We did not, and those investments are still under discussion and still in planning, and for all I know the world will have fried before they come onstream.

But I would say, and I, in a sense, have to declare an interest, I am part of a group in North America that has been investing in small scale nuclear reactors. This is not an investment of my money, I am part of the technical expertise in developing them, because the opportunity, particularly in rural areas, to make a very big difference and immediately and wholly displace coal, oil and gas is highly attractive.

So, I am putting some personal effort into that, and as a Pensions Board we will look at all the options and measure them against the full scale of risks, but I cannot give you any commitment at this stage, given the reasons I laid out a moment ago. We will keep it under review, but I hope something may happen.

*The Chair:* We will now move to our next group of three

*The Revd Kathryn Campion-Spall (Bristol):* One of the delights of being the rector of a medieval church is that I find myself a trustee of several charitable historic trusts connected with the Church, which between them have investments worth about £2 million. Now, I know that pales into insignificance compared to what you are managing, but I was encouraged last week to hear one of the trustees say we should be using the Church of England investment principles to make sure that the way we use our money is aligned with our faith. Not all of the trusts I am involved with have that attitude.

I will not be alone in having influence over a small but not insignificant investment, so the question is how can we apply the principles you have developed to the amounts that we might have influence over, and can that add weight to what you are doing?

*The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds):* I want to thank those working for the NIBs for fulfilling the strategy set out by this Synod five years ago with integrity, creativity and transparency and for doing precisely what we asked, both in your work on engagement and the decision to disinvest, which has been impactful.

I would like clarity about whether the decision to disinvest from fossil fuel companies means that the principles of engagement and the Transition Pathway Initiative, which this Synod endorsed, are still undergirding the NIBs' approach, and also on the ongoing usefulness of the TPI.

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher):* I am speaking as the lead Bishop for the environment. A huge thank you for this presentation and for the outstanding work that has happened. I am very grateful to the staff of the NIBs who I know are passionate about this subject and have worked incredibly hard over a number of years. I have really valued the engagement that the Environmental Working Group has been able to have with you. Thank you for that.

Whilst we have done much, and this Report shows what has been achieved, ultimately we have failed in the motion that this Synod brought, and for me that is a source of huge lament. The cry of creation is calling out amongst us all. The prophetic voice of the Fifth Mark of Mission is something that should be ringing in all our ears, because climate change knows no international borders and its impact is being seen all around us.

So, my two questions, looking forward with this cry of lament ringing in my ears, are, first of all, how will we use our investments in the future to have a positive impact in terms of investing in new technologies? Secondly, how might we use our investments to ensure

a just transition, particularly for those nations around the Anglican Communion, our sisters and brothers, who are on the front line of climate change?

I have the voice of the Bishop of Vanuatu, speaking as he did at the Lambeth Conference last year, saying “my islands are sinking”. I hear the voice of Archbishop Cyril, who is with us from West Africa, who is seeing drought in the northern parts of his province. So, how will the NIBs work positively for climate change in investments in new technology, and how will you ensure a just transition, particularly for the poorest people in the world?

*The Chair:* A response, please.

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* Kat, thank you for your question and thank you for your personal engagement in this and your willingness to do things differently. Of course, for all sorts of legal and other reasons, I am not in a position to guide you, formally. We cannot tell you what to do. What we can do is provide you with lots of information and material, I would start with the Ethical Investment Advisory Group - looking at my dear friend Bishop David - which has done extraordinary work on this and many other issues that connect with our environmental, social and governance responsibility.

And, of course, specifically in this space we produce material all the time around how we are investing, the results of our investments and the principles which underpin our work. That comes through in material on the web, it comes through in our Annual Stewardship Report, et cetera, and, indeed, at any stage the team is available to you, so please do use us.

On the question of engagement and the TPI, we in no sense are reducing our commitment to engage. We will continue to use every opportunity to engage with oil and gas companies, although that is now slightly hampered by the mass of publicity that has surrounded our announcements, and of course the fact that we do not own the stock, but we will continue to engage through every channel that we can.

In that, the TPI and the TPI Index are essential components. I do feel, and some of you in this room were there when we launched the Transition Pathway Initiative, and then when we launched the Index on the Stock Exchange, you will know what a gift this is to the world. It is a gift. We do not charge for this, and some very important stakeholders have funded this privately to ensure that the work done through the London Stock Exchange and through the London School of Economics and the other key partners like ourselves who are pension funds, institutional investors, et cetera, their work is available for free. Is that not special?

You have access to the most rigorous, meticulous, academic, objective, independent assessment and you do not have to pay for it. So, yes, we are going to continue, we will grow that. We in part, of course, are part of the governance structure ourselves, and it will grow organically because the world needs it, and so many corporates now,



recognising the investment challenge they are under, are tracking themselves by comparison to their peers, and that is a really great way of achieving learning.

I do not know about you, but any league table, if I am at the bottom of it, I tend to think, what? How can we do better? And that is what is happening in the real world. And TPI, remember, is not just oil and gas, it is right across the sectors, attempting to address all of the high emitters in every part of our society. Alan?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio):* Thanks, Bishop Graham, for your immense confident support. We are both sobered, but actually we are quite hopeful also about this. People say the darkest hour is just before dawn, and this last year is quite sobering and it has led to the decisions that we have taken. But if we reflect, and I think it is the power of how, Synod, you have encouraged and supported us to act, we have a lot more agency than we think. I think that is really important.

So, even that earlier question about the fund where you only have £2 million, but actually in global capital markets' perspectives, the Church Commissioners' £10 billion is like two cents. It is really important that you have that ability, even as we are going for a just transition, to realise that we have a lot more agency because what we are dealing with here is not with the example of our power but the power of our example. That is very, very important and it is actually how we, as a body, have been able to have the influences on that part, so, Bishop Graham, I think that is a really, really important point, that even as we are in a tough place, we have a lot more agency and, I would say, a reason for hope in a very powerful way.

How are we looking at investing in the future? Obviously, those dimensions, even within our portfolio already we have moved about £800 million of investments in direct renewables and green energy, but we believe that actually, again, it comes back to more than just looking at money but using our voice, using our values to engage around the just transition.

Within the Responsible Investment Team, we have just brought in someone who is focusing on the human rights dimensions of it, because so much of the social side, the environmental side and the governance side are all interlinked to whether companies function properly and create value in our economies, and create just value.

Because we look at it almost as we want a just transition and it must be a just "in" as we move in to the new economy that everyone gets fairly considered in that, and it must be a just "out", as we move away from fossil fuel industries, for example, that communities are not left behind.

We must be seeking justice and it cannot be just us. So much of this is focused on just our narrow world, but, as we said, from the Church Commissioners' point of view we do not just want a Church Commissioners' net zero portfolio; we want a net zero world. Just as the Bible says the rain will fall on the just and the unjust, climate change is going to do

exactly that, even though it is hitting some other communities first. That is very much how we look at it from the Church Commissioners.

If there is one thing that we think is essential in ensuring that justice and that just transition, in particular for vulnerable economies and communities, is making sure we have that laser-like target and ensuring that everyone is aligned to 1.5°C. There is a lot of political and social talk that says, “We are going to miss that target, let’s give up on it now”, but no, we have to keep it. Even if there is an overshoot and we have to pull back, we must keep it because what happens between 1.5°C and 2°C is quite fundamental. If we are talking about justice, if we are talking about flourishing economies. if we are talking about healthy economies, and not just in the emerging world but here, we very much view it that that target of ensuring that everything is aligned - our processes, our engagement and how we invest towards that - is essential to achieving justice. That is how we are looking at it.

*The Chair:* I am having a look on Zoom. There is no one on Zoom so I will restrict myself to the chamber.

*The Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield):* First of all, I need to say that I am a member of the Pensions Board. God has a huge sense of humour. Two things. First of all, as a member of the Pensions Board and having not sat on a board such as that before, I have been absolutely blown away by the level of stuff that happens there both from the exec and from the board: it is absolutely brilliant. I wondered, having seen all the work that has been done by the TPI and particularly what we have seen from Adam Matthews, whether Synod would be willing to send a formal thank you for all the hard work that has been done to get to this point and to be divested.

The second point I would like to make is a question to all of Synod. I am looking around and once again there are probably about half the people missing. It is a really important issue. How, Synod, do we make sure that people outside this chamber see we are bothered about the world and about these things that are happening and not just bothered about one issue?

*Dr Catharine Rhodes (Sheffield):* Conflict of interest: I am the Chair of the General Synod Environmental Group and the Environment Officer for Sheffield and I have campaigned for divestment and was absolutely delighted to hear the news of divestment.

In view of the fact that the International Energy Agency has said there can be no new fossil fuel developments if the world is to limit global heating to that important 1.5°C, I would be very grateful for a really clear statement that I believe all would welcome, and that is very accessible, that the NIBs will not reinvest in oil and gas companies which are planning to explore for and/or develop new fossil fuel resources and/or reserves.

*The Revd Martin Poole (Chichester):* Thank you for your work on this and your recent action on disinvestment and the ensuing publicity. It has been fantastic. How can the

Pensions Board use the power of your example to encourage dioceses like my own to follow your excellent lead?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* Eleanor, thank you for your great work. I would love it if Synod would by acclamation send a message back to Adam and all of the guys. We will take that back. Bless you.

I will not comment on attendance in the chamber. I know myself that Synod is a special time in terms of catching up with so many people and other agendas, but, yes, of course, Eleanor, if there is one issue on which we all need to apply ourselves, personally, professionally, in all our various roles and not least on our knees, it is climate change.

Cathy, yes, we have given that commitment. There is actually, I think, a written Question to which we have replied. It is number 229. If you look at your papers you will see under 229 that we are quite clear about the circumstances in which we would consider reinvestment, and that is a very high hurdle indeed. So, we are not going into this with any sense of backsliding at all. We are clear what we need and we will hold companies fully to account in every respect.

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio):* On that one about engaging with dioceses, that is one I will take up with Bishop Graham. Obviously, we have quite a lot of bilateral discussion with diocesan finance leads and boards, but I will take that one with Bishop Graham, because I think there is room for us taking it even further from that point of view, and so, Bishop Graham, if we can take forward as to how we can be more intentionally ensuring best practice and also learning from across the dioceses on that.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* Being objective, what effect on the oil majors has our disinvestment had? There is a feeling outside this hall that this is virtue signalling, and that, as far as they are concerned, they will find another investor, and so it does not really matter and that the Church is virtue signalling, something which I think can be described it as doing on other occasions.

Also on nuclear, if I can come back on a very quick point on that, I think the public needs to be educated better on nuclear, and I think we can help on that. The question I have is how much are we investing in the development of new technologies specifically? I am reminded that the Chinese, for example, are developing a five megawatt formalin-based reactor which will fit inside a shipping container. You could put two or three of those around my town and that would supply us with all the energy and heat we need. Are we looking at really radical solutions, or are we just taking the easy way out and disinvesting in the easy things to disinvest in and not really doing enough otherwise?

*The Bishop of Bath & Wells (The Rt Revd Michael Beasley):* I just want to add my thanks for this and wish this could be the main story coming out of this Synod.

Could you tell us a little bit more about how the disinvestment that we have done is leading to conversation with other investors and what fruit of that are you starting to see? We all speak into the public square as well. What would you like us to say about the disinvestment decisions that have been made?

*Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark):* I would just like to ask a slightly bigger picture question particularly of Clive and Alan. Clearly, we are all focused on climate change and energy transition, the key word being “transition”. However, current oil demand is running at 102 million barrels per day, and it continues to increase slowly, and clearly there will be a need for oil for many years to come. That is, unfortunately, just a reality.

I would contend that the world’s most responsible oil producers are actually the international oil companies - BP, Shell, Total, Exxon, et cetera - and if we do not continue to invest in those companies, their production in the medium term will be displaced to production from Russia, the Middle East and East Asia, and many of the national oil companies do not have anything like the ESG credentials that the listed Western majors have. I would welcome your comment on that in terms of the reality of the energy balance and likely increases in demand, particularly from developing countries rather than OECD countries, over the next 20 years.

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* Thank you, Ian. You raised three questions, if I heard you correctly. One was impact on the majors. Yes, they will find other investors and that is the sadness of our decision to disinvest - the word “lament” was used - although in reality, of course, many of these oil and gas companies are currently buying back shares so they are not in a position that they need new shareholder funds. However, I do not want that to hang in the sense of therefore, this was a futile gesture. This was not futile gesture. This hurt them and this brings them into yet sharper focus, not just in the public debate, in the political debate and the environmental debate, but specifically in terms of their long-term investors, for whom the risks attached to stranded assets, the risks attached to the opprobrium that markets will give to these companies for their lack of stewardship will dent their long-term returns. Yes, financially right now it is not a big impact, but I am convinced very real impact going forward.

On nuclear yes, I fully agree about education. It is complicated. Government policy is not clear and commitment is lacking, and if we could build a foundation of understanding that would help.

New technologies - very much so. We already hold something like 5% of our equities in climate solutions and new technologies, and we will continue to develop that going forward, having assessed them, of course, against all of our normal criteria. Let us be quite clear: some of the new technologies are very high risk. If you are somebody with lots of free cash and you fancy high-risk high-reward investments, these may be for you, but as a pension fund, with a clear fiduciary responsibility to provide investment returns for the long term, we have to look through a more prudent lens.

Michael - has/will divestment trigger other conversations? I think very much so. Can I just flag two specific aspects? One is that much as I enjoy genuinely the recognition of Synod and the recognition of the media and the recognition of wider society for the work we have done, in reality we do this in partnership. We have committed friends right around the world, institutional investors, pension funds like ourselves but also academics, politicians and so on, and through our many partnerships we can multiply our own resources and our own efforts to huge impact, and through that, that little mustard seed is growing and growing and growing.

The other thing I would say is, and I am sure like for many others in this room, climate change and the need to address it is not something new in their lives. This is a slow burn. It is like having a stone with a piece of elastic and you pull and pull and pull and nothing seems to happen and then it moves. We have not reached that point but I think we are getting close when this is really going to move. And it has to, because the warning signs are visible every day. So through our partnerships, and with God's grace and the wider acceptance that will accelerate what we are doing, we are going to get there. Alan.

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio):* Clive actually asked a fundamentally important question and it is important for us to reflect and remember. As I say, our decision is very much evidence based and driven. I guess one of the key things about why we took that decision to divest of the majors, in particular the Western oil majors, is actually an act of corporate governance.

One of the big things, and you know better than I do Carl, which drives energy forecasts is the International Energy Agency. It underpins our work. That has been the industry body for the energy industry, for the oil majors, and it is its forecasts which are saying that we have to hit net zero in 2050 and that, actually, there should be no new investment in fossil fuels, in oil and gas, because there is enough there already discovered that can get us through the transition. So, this is their industry which is saying that. And they have chosen to ignore it. It is a bit like if you are an Anglican saying you do not want to believe in the Canons. That is it, quite genuinely, the industry by the standards that they have set up for a body has something which says the transition is on its way, you do not need to do more than this.

When we see that, it becomes an issue of governance because it is a company that has signed up to something and is not doing what it says on the tin. We recognise the importance and we would hope and want that our Western companies and our markets would be doing that. But if we look at a couple of the big listed energy majors, they have set targets and then this year rowed back on them. Carl, yes, you are right, we talk about the standards in "other" markets that are not regulated to the same extent, but what we are seeing is that these companies who we have engaged in are not operating to the standards that we would expect, not just in terms of emissions but in terms of what we expect from good governance. You do not give a target and then row back on it, in particular when you have made so much money from the windfalls of higher energy prices which gives you that ability to invest more in the future.

Also, one of the reasons why divesting is not just an ethical point of view but strategic is these companies are giving back their equity. They have taken the opportunity with all the extra money that they have to either give it back in dividends, to pay themselves, or to buy back their shares. Even that is a statement of intent on how they view their equity and their equity holders, because what they are saying to their shareholders is either we cannot make as much money from this as you can so we are giving it back, or are we are just going to be doubling down more on fossil fuels?

Our decision process around that as a steward on behalf of the Church of England means that we have to be very disciplined. Carl, we grapple with those things, but if you have the energy companies not following what their own industry body is telling them about what is necessary and what is possible, that will obviously make us have to think about the decisions that we have taken.

*The Chair:* I think we have time for two more questions, if they are concise.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* I have a question about the way in which we are handling our own problems at home. I was delighted to see we got permission for net zero homes and, as we know, many of the homes in our country are substandard in terms of heat and using energy. We also have concerns about our Government on the international aid budget, which we know is going to divert money from necessary climate change initiatives if we are not careful. Are there any conversations that are taking place politically which will be helpful to climate change in general around the world, and specifically in our country? Is there any change in our investment process which will assist those of us, all of us really, except for recent developments in my own community which has 200 new homes with heat pumps and just electricity; is there any pressure we can put or set an example to our Government in the work that you are doing?

*Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford):* Looking at this document, it is full of that buzz word “complexity”, which seems to be a feature of our group of sessions so far. I want to go back to a plea. In the Church of England we have a duty to be witnesses to the Gospel of the good news of Jesus Christ. There is no mention of God in this document and there is no mention of Jesus. Thinking of that wonderful Christmas message from Apollo 8 as they looked from a barren space to this orb, this wonderful world, Anders read out: “In the beginning God...” So please can we put Him back in the centre. Without Him we are lost; we need Him. Can we have a prayer and reference to Him?

*The Chair:* We have to finish at a quarter to, so I will ask for a response.

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio):* I will take the first one and Clive will take the second. On that aspect of net zero homes, it is one of the key things within our power as Commissioners to deal with our properties, and within our strategic land portfolio how we do our developments is very much at the forefront. We are very conscious and sensitive to the

way in which the transition to net zero can lead to inequitable outcomes for those who are already the most vulnerable.

One thing which we have been reflecting on is this whole idea of green lining. In the past we used to hear of red lining, where particular communities and societies were kept out of getting credit or finance because of their particular circumstances. You can see that beginning to happen, this whole idea of somebody's house not being energy efficient, or in the wrong place and them invariably being some of the most vulnerable and them being left out of some of the essential things that give human dignity. That is one of the things they are looking at on that front.

On the other front, in terms of more internationally, we are a member of a body called the Net Zero Asset Owners Alliance. Olga, our Head of Responsible Investment has been engaged in that and one particular global initiative which has come out recently is the Bridgetown Initiative, which is looking at how more finance globally can be set up towards getting private and public sector finance going to emerging market countries for climate finance. That is one way behind the scenes we are engaged quite actively, and increasingly in front of it.

Finally, one really important aspect, and it was even reflected in our real assets update, is everyone is focusing on the transition dimension of climate change, but the resilience dimension is very important. Climate change has the transition aspect but what is going to happen physically with the climate, that is going to hit us a lot more before 2050, and we are increasingly thinking about how we focus on climate resilience in our discussions and in our work because, actually, making economies, societies resilient will ensure we are targeting the most vulnerable right away.

*The Chair:* Clive, I think you have 60 seconds.

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* Thank you, Mary. All of our work is underpinned by theological work through the Ethical Investment Advisory Group and through the various other institutions of the Church. We are very clear who we are and our Lord Jesus Christ is our inspiration. I will take away your challenge that we make that explicit in the text that we issue. As you said it I felt a kind a pierce in my heart because that is not who I am, but it is slightly complicated in a world where so many people now have turned away from faith. Your challenge is a wonderful way to end this conversation. Thank you.

*The Chair:* Thank you. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 11.45 am

## **ITEM 9 QUESTIONS**

The Chair: Good morning, Synod. We come to Item 9, Questions, Part 2. I am not going to go through my whole preamble again, but I will just mention when you ask your supplementary that it is just one question and not two or three. That would be helpful. We are starting at Question 60 and we are taking Questions 60 to 141 for the House of Bishops together.

60. *The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Question 160 at the February 2023 group of sessions asked if clergy were permitted to enter a same sex marriage under the new Pastoral Guidance, and whether this would be a national policy observed by all diocesan bishops. The response stated that this would need to be clarified, so could an update be given on this and also whether other aspects of policy arising from LLF would be applied nationally or subject to the postcode lottery of Diocesan autonomy?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There was a desire at both the House and College of Bishops that application of the *Prayers* and Pastoral Guidance should not create a disparate and unpredictable approach across the country. Bishops are the focus of unity for their dioceses, and corporately for the wider church. While it essential that every bishop have their own freedom of conscience, it is essential too that they exercise their collective responsibility across the whole Church. The House of Bishops at its May meeting asked that further work be done on a proposed statement from the bishops that sets out this collective episcopacy and unity in practice.

*The Revd Chantal Noppen*: In some other parts of Anglican Communion, the distinction between marriage and civil partnership does not exist and so neither partnership formalisation has more validity than the other. In these parts of the Anglican Communion, they often have a quite high doctrine of marriage and so they expect their clergy to be married when they decide to live with their partner, which gives a kind of problematic consequence for a clergyperson through obedience to local expectation being caught in this Catch-22 situation where divorce or separation becomes considered necessary to move between and across the Anglican Communion and, subsequently, dioceses, I guess. How are the House of Bishops planning to deal with that in line with the developments we are working towards here?

*The Bishop of London*: I think probably my answer at the moment is we have considered the nature of marriage not just in the Anglican Communion but also, for example, the nature of marriage and civil marriage here and also across Europe because, as you rightly point out, there are different views and so we have considered it.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)*: Bishop, when you say that it is essential that every bishop have their own freedom of conscience, is the understanding that the freedom of conscience trumps the need to uphold the doctrine of the Church or does the commitment to the doctrine of Church constrain the exercise of freedom of conscience?



*The Bishop of London:* I do not think conscience trumps doctrine. I think that there is a connection there. I also think there is an issue around individual conscience and corporate conscience as well. What you raise is a point of where, in fact, there is a conversation going on between it. That is not a clear answer to you, I know, but I think there is further work to do on both is what I am saying and we recognise that.

61. *The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that the Church of England existed for centuries prior to the publication of *Issues in Human Sexuality*, is there any reason why it can't be repealed with immediate effect while we wait for the publishing of the new Pastoral Guidance?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As *Issues in Human Sexuality* has been used in situations such as the discernment process it would create inconsistency if it was repealed before something was in place to replace it.

*The Revd Mae Christie:* Will the new Pastoral Guidance be a required tick-box - I think that is the British phrase - on the paperwork and the online portal for the shared discernment process as the *Issues in Human Sexuality* currently is? Or will that cease when *Issues* is replaced and, instead, will the Pastoral Guidance exist as a discussion document?

*The Bishop of London:* A great multi-choice question there. Neither are what it is going to look like. The new Pastoral Guidance will not look like *Issues*. Of course, *Issues* was formulated for one reason and it has been used for another. The Pastoral Guidance is the bit of the work we are doing at the moment, what does that look like? It is likely to be a whole series of different things that will relate to the *Prayers of Love and Faith* but also relate to the procedure for discernment. There is a whole series of things. It will not ever quite look like issues and a tick-box, but there will be a number of things that will feed into a discernment process as there will be into the use of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* While *Issues* was a document, will ordinands or those exploring vocation still be required to order their lives in accordance with the Canons and to witness the Canons of the Church of England in the lives that they lead?

*The Bishop of London:* Yes.

62. *Mrs Kat D'Arcy-Cumber (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can it be confirmed that once *Issues in Human Sexuality* has been retired from use by the House of Bishops, there will no longer be any expectation that any clergyperson who has been required to agree to its content in the past should continue to do so?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Once the Pastoral Guidance has replaced *Issues in*

*Human Sexuality* the Pastoral Guidance will set the standard by which lives should be ordered.

*The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield):* Will the BCP and the ordinal continue to be the standard in which our lives will be ordered?

*The Bishop of London:* Yes.

63. *Mr Benjamin John (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Where can I find the clearly stated official teaching and theological rationale, if any, of the Church of England which justifies the acceptance of the concept of “transgenderism” and “transgender persons”?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Transgender persons are persons in the eyes of God and of the Church and are accorded all the respect and love that we are commanded to show to all people. The House of Bishops agreed some time ago that a person whose transitioning has been legally recognised should also be recognised as such by the Church, and may therefore marry, according to the rites of the Church of England, a person of the opposite sex. The House also has a long-standing policy that transitioning is not an impediment to baptism, confirmation or ordination. The LLF process has recognised that more theological work needs to be done to fully understand Trans issues, and this work will be undertaken in due course.

*Mr Benjamin John:* Please may you provide details such as when it was agreed, was there a vote, what theological work was done ahead of making a decision for the agreement and the longstanding policy referred to in your answer?

*The Bishop of London:* I am sure somebody can provide that to you.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Perhaps this will help, Mr John. I am wondering if the Bishop is aware of the Synod's overwhelming support for the Diocese of Blackburn's motion to welcome transgender people back in July 2017 during which an amendment to consider theological, pastoral and other issues around gender transition was rejected firmly by all three Houses. Could I suggest that it might be useful for us to more fully understand the range of matters to do with gender identity, including non-binary people, and perhaps also for us to better understand intersex.

*The Bishop of London:* I do like it when our questions build on each other rather than standalone, so thank you for that. *Living in Love and Faith* was not just about same-sex marriage. I suppose one of my great sorrows is that is where we have ended up spending a lot of our time on, because, of course, it did deal with a lot of wider issues related to human identity and sexuality as well as what makes a good marriage, relationships. So I do think there is more work for us to do,. As you say. My fear in answering it is I just do not know where the resources for time and people will come from. Sometimes we

struggle to do what we are needing to do at the moment. I do think you are right that there is the requirement for future work and I do think that the Church should be part of that. I am very grateful for the work of the Families and Household Commission and for their Report, *Love Matters*, because that in some sense does take some of the things that *Living in Love and Faith* tried to look at and did, in fact, look at, but we have dropped along the way because of where our focus has ended up.

64. *The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: If a man and a woman marry according to the rites of the Church, and the man undergoes gender transition, are the couple still married in the eyes of the Church and in the view of the House of Bishops? If so, is that because the House and the doctrine of the Church consider that he is still a (biological) man, or because the House and the doctrine of the Church in this instance sanction same-sex marriage?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Cases such as this were considered by the Pastoral Advisory Group in the earlier stages of the LLF process.

The group concluded that the union of a couple where one partner transitions, but both wish to stay together remains a marriage. The reasoning behind this is that the Church has never advocated divorce as a positive moral requirement, which would be the couple's only remedy if the Church declared their marriage invalid. Marriages survive many changes undergone by the partners and the theological goods of life-long commitment, and mutual support and comfort, for which marriage was ordained should continue to be honoured. The PAG did not wish to commend any approach which reversed the Church's view of divorce - and it wished to support and celebrate the self-giving love that allows many people to go on *Living in Love and Faith* with a partner who has changed in unexpected, and perhaps challenging, ways.

The people in a marriage continue to be the same people, with a continuity of memory and experience, and the history of love within a marriage was considered a more significant pastoral factor than trying to define the status of that marriage in the abstract.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* Bishop Sarah, thank you very much for your extremely clear and helpful answer that the people in a marriage continue to be the same people. I wonder if you could tell me where members of Synod can access the documentation around the discussion in the Pastoral Advisory Group and the reason for coming to this conclusion and, if it is not available, when might it be published?

*The Bishop of London:* Ian, I will look into that. I genuinely do not know whether it is available. That is not how the Pastoral Advisory Group worked, I do not think. But I will see what I can find out for you.

*The Revd Mae Christie:* Is it the policy of the Church of England that parish priests should ask invasive questions regarding the gender identity of couples purporting to get married?

*The Bishop of London:* I think, Mae, what you know is that as clergy, when a couple comes to us to get married, we have pastoral conversations and I expect - because I know that parish priests are very good at that and so, in a sense, I rely on the parish priests to do what they do well - within any marriage preparation there are pastoral conversations in the preparation of the marriage.

65. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Paragraph 19 of GS2303 states that it "...was a majority desire by the bishops at both meetings that It should be possible to disagree and inhabit a generous theological, ecclesial and pastoral space that holds the Church together in different interpretations of the answers to these questions." Since it was only a majority saying that it should be possible to disagree, it suggests that there was no overall agreement, nor walking together. However, paragraph 20 has no such caveat in stating that "The bishops are upholding the Doctrine of Marriage and their intention remains that the final version of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* should not be contrary to or indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England." For clarity, could you please set out the Church of England's Doctrine of Marriage that all Bishops agree to uphold, and which will be the measure as to whether the final version of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* will be contrary to or indicative of a departure from said doctrine?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Church of England teaching on the nature of marriage can be found in a number of historical documents, including the 1999 Marriage: A Teaching Document, and the Faith and Order Commission's 2013 report, *Men and Women in Marriage*, as well as the Canons and the Book of Common Prayer.

*Dr Ros Clarke (Lichfield):* I notice that while the question concerns the doctrine of the Church of England, the answer refers to its teaching. Can we now take it that the teaching of the Church of England is, indeed, recognised to be its doctrine?

*The Bishop of London:* I think what, Ros, you raise is a really interesting question. Some of the work that the Faith and Order Commission are doing on our behalf - and I will make a reference to that this afternoon - is, in fact, that conversation between doctrine and teaching and, in a sense, how they develop and change. I think there is a conversation to have. One of my reflections often is that, in this area, some people here will feel that sexuality is a salvation issue. One of my things is have we, therefore, changed the Church of England's doctrine around marriage, because actually it probably was not historically a salvation issue. I think there is a very interesting conversation around teaching and doctrine and the Faith and Order Commission are helping with that at the moment. I think you are absolutely right, related to where we are at the moment around the response from *Living in Love and Faith*, that we need that conversation and that has been provided.

66. *Dr Ros Clarke (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Does the Church of England's doctrine on marriage and the place of sexual intimacy remain as stated in

the House of Bishops Pastoral Statements on Civil Partnerships of July 2005 and Dec 2019?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The College and House of Bishops has not proposed any changes to the doctrine of marriage and the place of sexual intimacy within it.

*Dr Ros Clarke:* I am very glad to have this confirmation, Bishop Sarah. Can you also confirm that the Church's doctrine on sexual immorality and sex outside marriage remains unchanged?

*The Bishop of London:* Oh. I think ---

*Dr Ros Clarke:* That was not meant to be a trick question.

*The Bishop of London:* Was it not?

*Dr Ros Clarke:* Not really.

*The Bishop of London:* If I give you my reflections on it. Some of the conversations that we have begun to have in the College and House - and I am sure it goes round - is around the nature of sexual intimacy which clearly is linked to immorality. Of course, some of us over the last few weeks have been reading Nehemiah and Joshua and other bits of the Old Testament where, actually, we could sit there and think, oh, my goodness, that is sexual immorality, is it not? I think there is a conversation about that and where does that then sit with our teaching and doctrine. Has really our teaching and our doctrine gone into some of those details that really we have not gone into because, actually, even since 2017 some of our understanding about some of these things is different. I am not going to give you a straight answer, but I do think it is something that requires a better conversation than standing in a Q&A in the middle of this wonderful group of people.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Can you give the Synod any help in resolving this clear statement with what appears to be very clearly contradictory statements made by the Archbishop of York immediately after the February session of Synod and again a contradictory statement made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the last two weeks?

*The Bishop of London:* I do not think that is a question for me.

67. *The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The second communication following the House of Bishops' meeting on 15 to 17th May 2023 stated that 'the Bishops' views differ on matters of sexuality and marriage.' Does this mean that some bishops continue to believe, teach, expound, and model the Church's doctrine of marriage as found in Canon B30 and restated in recent statements

by the House of Bishops and confirmed in this Synod, whilst others no longer do believe this doctrine? If not, what is the nature of the 'differing views'?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The LLF motion passed in February endorsed the Bishops' decision not to propose any change to the doctrine of marriage. Given this decision, the 'differing views' on matters of sexuality and marriage expressed at the House of Bishops in May, were largely focused around how the Bishops might seek to offer a genuine pastoral response to those in permanent, faithful, loving same-sex relationships. It was clear to the House that the different views range from provision of a more limited pastoral accommodation to a broader affirmation of same-sex relationships, which are appropriately defined.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Bishop Sarah, I am a little bit confused. I thought that the purpose of LLF was for us to understand that we had differing understandings on marriage, on relationships and the whole purpose of LLF, which you encouraged the whole of Synod and the whole of the Church of England to engage with, was to enable that conversation.

*The Bishop of London:* Yes.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne:* Indeed, at the Lambeth Conference the call actually firmly stated that there were a plurality of views held in all theological understanding. Would you agree with me that some of these questions are trying to make you dance on a pinhead that negates a lot of our LLF process and that we should be encouraging discussions not closing them down?

*The Bishop of London:* I will not make a comment on the question because I do not think that is my place. It may be a matter of opinion. I think the whole purpose of LLF has been recognising the fact that there is difference. There is difference within the Church, our own Church communities and within the House of Bishops. There was a brilliant bit of investigative journalism done by the *Church Times* this week - how did they spot that we were different? But anyway. In a sense, I think our discernment as a Synod is to discern how do we move forward, what is our response, recognising uncertainty and difference? It is not about bringing around a consensus, but it is about trying to find that space in which we can occupy, recognising our difference. If it continues, which it will do, the nature of difference and uncertainty is that we need to be people open to listening to the other and I will learn as much from you as I hope you would learn from me.

68. Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At the House of Bishops' meeting on 15th -17th May 2023, in an indicative vote on Pastoral Guidance, a number of bishops voted that the Church should allow clergy to enter into same-sex marriages. Given that the doctrine of marriage ('holy matrimony') in Canon B30 is that marriage is between one man and one woman 'according the teaching of our Lord', and that ordination vows commit clergy to believe in, teach, expound, and model their lives on

the doctrine of the Church, were these bishops voting to change the doctrine of marriage, or voting for a revision to ordination vows?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The House of Bishops has not voted to change the doctrine of marriage, or for a revision to ordination vows. In its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> May 2023, the House of Bishops sought to give indications of areas where it was requesting more work to be done.

*Dr Andrew Bell:* Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your answer in which you refer to requesting extra work being done. I guess I may be anticipating something that we will hear about this afternoon, but just in case. When will we hear the outcome of the additional work that is being requested and of the workings behind those outcomes? Despite the volume of work needed, will this be in good time for consideration and discernment before November's Synod?

*The Bishop of London:* The timeline, which is not completely clear because with any discernment often it slightly varies, is that our intention is to bring to the November Synod both the workings as well as the proposals for implementation of the motion that was agreed at Synod in February. That is our proposal.

69. *The Revd Dr Brenda Wallace (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What discussions have taken place in the LLF implementation groups on whether, and if so, when, licensed clergy in faithful, permanent and stable relationships with a partner of the same sex will be able to publicly regularise their relationship through marriage, and clergy who have already entered into a same sex marriage will have their licenses reinstated?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The LLF implementation groups have worked with the House and College of Bishops on the question of clergy being permitted to enter into a same sex civil marriage as documented in GS 2303. The Pastoral Guidance will include answers to these questions.

*The Revd Dr Brenda Wallace:* I wonder what consideration has been given to the pastoral support that will be needed for clergy whose marriages are living in enforced celibacy or those whose licences have been removed should these situations not be regularised in the near future?

*The Bishop of London:* I think what you raise is a really important question that the issues that we are talking about, the questions being raised, all of them have pastoral implications for many of us here. I think one of the things, with or without *Living in Love and Faith*, that we as a Church should be investing in is in our pastoral care for our clergy and for their relationships. I do not think we do enough for that and some of us will see the consequence of that. There is something for me about investment in our pastoral

support for our clergy in their relationships and in their households that I do think we have to work harder at.

*Mr Robin Hall (Europe):* In February, Bishop Sarah, I asked you whether the apology offered to victims of Church homophobia would mean an individual apology and compensation, where appropriate, to those clergy who lost their home or income as a consequence of marrying their same-sex partner. You undertook to come back to me with a full response which I have not yet had and I wonder if you would be able to answer that now or could come back to me fully soon.

*The Bishop of London:* I apologise that that has not come back to you yet. I will follow that up.

70. *The Revd Barney de Berry (Canterbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How does the church define and understand the word Holy in the phrase Holy Matrimony?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: It does so in the way set out in the Church's marriage liturgy:

"Marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God. It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the Church. ...Marriage is a way of life made holy by God, and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty which all should uphold and honour. It enriches society and strengthens community. No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God." (*Common Worship, Marriage Service, Preface.*)

*The Revd Lindsay Llewellyn-Macduff (Rochester):* Thank you for your answer but it created some curiosity in me, Bishop. How is this distinct from civil marriage? The following questions, just to emphasise, are rhetorical rather than additional questions. But is it not a gift of God in creation? And is it not a sign of loyalty and unity that all should honour? And are we suggesting that civil marriage is a light undertaking?

*The Bishop of London:* I am glad that you have got a curiosity because I do think that what we need at the moment is curiosity and so I am grateful that you express that curiosity. Of course, the Civil Marriage Act in 2013 raised questions that had not been raised before and, therefore, one of the pieces of work that we are doing is on the nature of holy matrimony and civil marriage and how that influences what we are doing around *Living in Love and Faith*. I would never pretend to think that anybody goes into any sort of commitment like civil marriage lightly or carelessly, but with profound thought.

71. *Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Is it the teaching of the Church of England that "*sexual activity should be within permanent, stable*



*and faithful relationships of marriage as that is understood in each society” or is it the teaching of the Church of England that “sexual activity should be within permanent, stable and faithful relationships of marriage” as that is understood in Canon C30 and the Book of Common Prayer?*

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* It is only in very recent years, and as a result of very rapid cultural change in our society, that a divergence has emerged between marriage as it is understood by the Church, reflected in Canon C30 and the BCP, and marriage as it is understood by secular law and society. The Faith and Order Commission have been asked to reflect theologically on the relationship between the two.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr:* Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for preparing an answer to my question. If I were in my day job I would be simply saying to the witness, "Could you please answer the question", but I cannot do that in this circumstance.

*The Bishop of London:* I am glad I am not a witness but your sister in Christ.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr:* My question is this. Is it the teaching of the Church of England that sexual activity should be within permanent stable and faithful relationships of marriage as that is understood in Canon C 30 and the Book of Common Prayer?

*The Bishop of London:* That is the teaching of the Church of England and I think that what we are doing around *Living in Love and Faith*, in a sense, is understanding that we are being required to provide a pastoral response in a different world, in the same way as historically around the change of remarriage of divorce people that we provided a pastoral response. Therefore, there is something about us having to reflect here and also wider around what that response is. What you raise is a really important question. One of the reasons why we do not come back in July with a full set of “this is our implementation of *Living in Love and Faith*” is recognising some of the complexities in which we are ministering and in which we are caring and in which we are shining and making the love of God known in Jesus Christ.

72. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How does the Church of England define sex between two women and is this act permitted between two female priests in a civil partnership?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Pastoral Guidance will set out expectations of priests in same sex relationships. LLF has always tried to recognise that the expression of sexual intimacy between two people cannot be reduced to a small set of defined actions.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne:* Given that sexual intimacy between two people of the same sex goes to the root of all our differences, as we have seen in these questions, and that my personal

desire for sexual intimacy with a woman bans from me being ordained or married in the Church of England, can I suggest that it is critical that we clearly define what we are disagreeing about, particularly if, with women, we are talking about penetrative sex or not, so that we can ensure that we are disagreeing about the same thing? Can I ask whether we could do some research about whether we understand sexual intimacy in the same way within the Church of England and, indeed, across the Anglican Communion.

*The Bishop of London:* It would be interesting to know whether research has been done. Michael King, who sadly died, in the early work in 2017, they were some of his exact points of recognising that as a Church we do not talk about sex very often. I have to say it has not always been easy in the House of Bishops and the College of Bishops to talk about sex and it was not minuted how we did it.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne:* And God created it.

*The Bishop of London:* Now I am blushing. How we spoke about it. Sorry, that was not a distraction, Jayne.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne:* It will be memorable.

*The Bishop of London:* But I do agree with you that it is at the heart of some of our difficulty. However, I am not sure in Synod we have the environment or the way in which we talk about it or even provide papers to talk about it in that way. One of the challenges around moving forward with *Living in Love and Faith* is understanding what is at the root of our difference and how do we together, because in this room there will be people who will have read Scripture, studied it and come up differently and who have different views on exactly the question that you have raised to me. I go back to the fact that, actually, what are we seeking to discern? We are seeking to discern a way forward when there is a difference in this House and with Synod and there is this uncertainty. Therefore, there has to be a question: how much time do we spend and what is a distraction and what is not? I think that is one of the things around the next stages of *Living in Love and Faith* is saying: what are the real things we need to have spent time on to come back in November to implement what the agreement of the motion was in February? My belief is that the question you raised will not go away.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne:* It is a core question.

*The Bishop of London:* From this General Synod. But we need to say what do we need to do to come back in November? That is, in a sense, our task.

73. *The Revd Joy Mawdesley (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In Dioceses where there are no bishops who uphold the traditional teaching of the Church on marriage, there is evidence that this is impacting on ordinations of both deacons and priests. Given the length of time it is likely to take for the issue of alternative episcopal oversight to be permanently resolved, what arrangements will be made in the interim to

ensure that the mission and ministry of the church are not held back, and ordinations can proceed?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* In a recent consultation with diocesan vocations teams, the impact of the current LLF process and the various episcopal perspectives on human relationships was found not to have had significant impact on ordinations, or on candidates in discernment and training, except in a very few individual cases.

As ever, diocesan teams work extremely hard to facilitate candidates in hearing and discerning God's call towards ministerial vocations. They are specifically and intentionally engaged in the work of reassurance and provision where differing views subsist.

*The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield):* Thank you for your answer to Joy Mawdesley's question. How many ordinands withdrew from ordinations this Pentecost in light of February's LLF vote?

*The Bishop of London:* I do not have that figure.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* If I thought I was going to ask a supplementary, I would not have been sitting up there, but anyhow.

*The Bishop of London:* It keeps you fit, Clive.

*Mr Clive Scowen:* It takes more than that, Bishop. Is the House of Bishops aware that many members of Synod know of people who had been sensing a call to ordination who are no longer pursuing it in the Church of England, although they may do in other churches? are they aware that there are people known to members of this Synod who have not felt able, having been ordained deacon to go on to be ordained priest this year? If they are not aware of that, then will they take steps to find out?

*The Bishop of London:* Yes, Clive, both in the College and the House we have had that conversation and, therefore, there are some dioceses where it is not an issue where, as you will know, there are some dioceses where it is, and we have made those conversations happen in both the House and the College.

74. *Mrs Sandra Turner (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At a recent meeting of the House of Bishops, the House agreed that, while the Bishops' views differ on matters of sexuality and marriage, they wish to create a generous theological, ecclesial and pastoral space holding the Church together in one body, thus suggesting that there is freedom for bishops and other clergy to either accept or reject the Church's doctrine of marriage. This being so, what revisions are planned for the ordinal and the ordination vows, and what supporting theological work has been done to demonstrate that the doctrine of marriage is one of the 'things indifferent' (*adiaphora*)?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* There are currently no plans to amend either the ordinal or ordination vows in the light of this subject and the decision has been made to continue to uphold the doctrine of marriage. The Faith and Order Commission are supporting the bishops' theological reflections.

*Mrs Sandra Turner:* Could I ask what measures are being considered which will allow the "generous theological, ecclesial and pastoral space" to be provided in a way that is not incompatible or incongruent with the ordinal and ordination vows?

*The Bishop of London:* That is exactly the work that is being undertaken at the moment. What I cannot do is detail them. One of the things we have spoken about at the House and the College of Bishops is, in a sense, that there is such a link between so many of the different parts that, in fact, some of those parts are moving all the time. But we absolutely hear your point and that is some of the work that we have talked about, some of the work that is ongoing that will, in a sense, come back in November.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* I wonder if the Bishop could clarify whether or not there has been any theological work yet done on the question of whether or not the doctrine of marriage might be considered "a thing indifferent" or not?

*The Bishop of London:* Yes, there is some work going on that but it has not concluded.

75. *Mr Martin Auton-Lloyd (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Are lay people disqualified from training for Reader Ministry if they are married to a person of the same sex?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Eligibility to train for Reader Ministry is determined individually by each diocese.

76. *Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In light of the fact that (a) in answer to a question from Mr Sam Margrave (Q36 in November 2022) the Bishop of London, on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops, affirmed that Canon B30 does indeed continue to articulate the doctrine of the Church [specifically, that, according to our Lord's teaching, 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], including asserting that holy matrimony is the proper context for sexual intimacy, and (b) the General Synod in February 2023 endorsed the decision of the College and House of Bishops not to propose any change to the doctrine of marriage, and their intention that the final version of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* should not be contrary to or indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England, does the House of Bishops then accept that the final version of the said *Prayers* must not be, nor are they intended to be, used for same-sex couples who are in a sexually intimate relationship, and that the

draft *Prayers* should be so read, or, if not, please explain precisely how not, consistent with facts (a) and (b) as aforesaid?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The House of Bishops has not voted to change the doctrine of marriage. In its meeting on 15-17th May 2023, the House of Bishops sought to give indications of areas where it was requesting more work to be done by the LFF Implementation Groups. Additionally the Faith and Order Commission have been asked to reflect theologically on the relationship between civil marriage and Holy Matrimony.

*Mr Daniel Matovu:* I regret that the answer you have given to my question does not seem to answer the question, but I want to build on what you responded to Mr Hofmeyr in relation to question 71 that sexual activity should be within a permanent relationship as understood in canon I think it should be B 30, should it not?

*The Chair:* Your supplementary should be relevant to the question you asked.

*Mr Daniel Matovu:* Yes, I am explaining my supplementary in the light of the answer the Bishop has given to question 71. Question 71 is about the teaching. My question was originally about the doctrine of marriage and it was in that context. My supplementary question is simply this. Will you assure this chamber that the Bishops will not seek to resile from the assertion that you made in November 2022 in relation to doctrine that Holy Matrimony is the proper context for sexual intimacy and that that would remain part of the doctrine and teaching of the Church?

*The Bishop of London:* The conversation we are doing is around teaching and doctrine and where they are the same or different and I think that what I said in a previous answer is that we are not seeking to change the doctrine of marriage, that is really clear. The motion was affirmed in it. But what we are trying to do is to respond to pastoral care for people. That is the sort of work that we are doing at the moment and that is the response that will come back in November.

In terms of reassuring the chamber, what I would say to the people who are in this room is that it is a complexity and I think the questions will demonstrate that complexity which is why we have not been able to bring something back in July.

77. *The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Whilst we do not have any record of when *Issues in Human Sexuality* was inserted into the vocations process, is there a date for when it will be removed?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* *Issues in Human Sexuality* will be removed from the vocations process at the point at which the House of Bishops agrees new Pastoral Guidance regarding many of the matters included in *Issues in Human Sexuality*. It is not yet known exactly when this will be.

*The Revd Chantal Noppen:* Given that we have already heard there is concern around a number of people not getting ordained because of February work's on LLF, could we acknowledge that lots of candidates have stepped back, willingly or not, from the discernment process through the years due to the use of *Issues in Human Sexuality* and they have been unseen and unheard due to the damage and pain that that has caused them. Can we acknowledge that with regret and concern?

*The Bishop of London:* I am very happy to acknowledge the hurt that the Church has caused LGBTQI people.

*The Revd Mae Christie:* Thank you so much, Bishop Sarah, and thank you for that really important statement. Can we have assurances from the House of Bishops that the new Pastoral Guidance will not use some of the worst language from *Issues in Human Sexuality*, such as referring to gay people as homophiles and saying that bisexual people are, by nature, promiscuous?

*The Bishop of London:* You raise a really important point that we all have to watch our language. What I will make a commitment to is that we will do our best to make sure that we sense-check right across the range of traditions and a range of people that we have a sense-check that what we do not do is use language in a way that is offensive to people.

78. *The Revd Vinny Whitworth (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the current national church guidance for clergy appointment panels regarding whether they are permitted to enquire of potential candidates their views on LFF issues and their potential use of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There is currently no national church guidance on clergy appointments, as the previous guidance was withdrawn, as it was out of date in a number of areas and needs to be amended to reflect legislative changes to the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 2019. What can be asked of candidates about LLF issues will need to be included in the Pastoral Guidance. We also need to issue an updated version of the general guidance to clergy appointments, which will be cross-referenced to the LLF guidance.

The previous guidance recommended that any requirements arising from a parish's theological tradition, for example the requirement not to be divorced or in a civil partnership, needed to be identified at the beginning of the appointments process and ideally included in the parish statement of needs and person specification. The Pastoral Guidance Workstream may find it helpful to bear this approach in mind as part of its deliberations.

79. *Mrs Sandra Turner (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Prayers* for sealing a covenanted friendship indicate that a couple show their desire to “

dwell more deeply in the grace of Jesus Christ by sealing a covenant of friendship with each other” and the covenant is sealed with these words “Where you go, I shall go: I will seek to share your burdens and your joys. I will pray that you will know God’s blessing and walk with you wherever God calls us; through Jesus Christ our Lord” Could the bishop explain the nature of this covenant in terms of how binding it is, and the consequences should such a covenant be broken?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* None of the *Prayers* in the PLF represent legally binding *Prayers*; they are primarily *Prayers* to be used with individuals who wish to bring their relationship before God and ask for God’s wisdom, guidance and blessing. As such, a covenant of friendship is a promise between two individuals before God, similar to that between David and Jonathan who promised friendship to one another with God as their witness. It is as binding as the individuals making the promise make it.

*Mrs Sandra Turner:* Thank you very much for the answer to my question about covenanted friendships. Could I ask what measures will be put in place to ensure that the individuals understand their covenant to be “as binding as the individuals making it” in order to avoid misinterpretation, disappointment or distress when such a covenanted friendship breaks down?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* I think it is really important that that understanding of covenanted friendship is made clear. That may feature in the Pastoral Guidance. It may also feature in some of the notes which will be supplied to the *Prayers of Love and Faith* when they appear in final form. As the Bishop of London has said before, we do trust our clergy and other ministers who will be meeting for pastoral conversations with couples to make those points clear.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Forgive me if I have missed something somewhere, but has any consideration been given as to whether married people can enter into covenant friendships either with other married people or with single people or whether only single people can enter into them?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* I do not think that consideration has been given to that and no doubt that is a point that the Pastoral Guidance Group will want to take on board.

80. *Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Prayers of Love and Faith* process has marked an important precedent in removing the input of PCCs from determining the theological preferences of their Parish. Clearly this is inconsistent with the current practice of requiring PCCs to pass resolutions. To address this inconsistency, what plans are being made to enable incumbents to pass resolutions without the approval of their PCCs?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The exact route of authorisation (or commendation) for the

*Prayers of Love and Faith* and how this is negotiated locally is currently under discussion and will be covered in the Pastoral Guidance. In reference to paragraphs 12 and 13 of GS 2303: If the PLF are simply commended, and available for use under Canon B.2, the choice of whether to make any use of them will be with the incumbent. If they are approved by one of the routes described in paragraph 13, consideration will need to be given to the precise mechanisms around that, and the respective roles of PCC and ministers. The *Prayers of Love and Faith* do not remove any responsibilities from PCCs.

*Mr Luke Appleton:* Thank you, my friend, very much for your answer. I perhaps asked the question a little bit prematurely, I guess. Are there plans explicitly to review the approach to passing resolutions after the *Prayers of Love and Faith* matter has been settled to ensure ecclesiastical consistency?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* I understand the desire to get clarity on this issue, but this will depend not only on the final forms of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, which are being refined, but on the route by which they are approved for use in churches or by ministers. As you know, when they first came to General Synod in draft form in February, the proposal was of commendation for ministers to use at their discretion. Part of the continuing conversation in the LLF process amongst the House of Bishops since then has been whether there might be canonical routes to authorization and the answer to your question really will depend on what the outcome of that is.

81. *Mr Nic Tall (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In February 2023 all three Houses of Synod welcomed the House of Bishops plans to commend the *Prayers for Love and Faith* and the replacement of *Issues in Human Sexuality* with new Pastoral Guidance. Since then the lack of timetable and overall delay in implementing the decision has caused disruption to couples' plans to marry, the progression of LGBTQIA+ ordinands, and to clergy whose ministry supports couples in same sex relationships. Given this disruption, what guarantees can be given that the PLF will be commended and new Pastoral Guidance issued by the House of Bishops in a swift and timely fashion to those couples, ordinands and clergy so they can make plans and set dates accordingly?

82. *The Revd Martin Poole (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that some of us are planning services which might incorporate some of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, and had been expecting some form of commendation or approval at the July General Synod, can we receive an update on the expected timetable for moving these *Prayers* from draft to approved so that churches can start to make plans for use of these *Prayers* without fear of censure or complaint?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission I will answer questions 81 and 82 together.

We recognise the frustration felt by those who were hoping to use the *Prayers* sooner, as well as the uncertainty for couples and ordinands. However, it is important that the



theological, pastoral and liturgical work promised by the *Living in Love and Faith* motion is conducted thoroughly and responds to the many questions raised by General Synod and others.

An update is to be presented to this Synod meeting that we hope gives clarity about where we are in the process of implementing the motion and the ongoing work. As a number of steps in the work remaining are potentially subject to approval by the House of Bishops and/or General Synod (as appropriate) a timeline cannot be guaranteed, but all efforts are being made to progress the work.

*The Revd Martin Poole:* A supplementary on 82. Given the current draft status of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the uncertainty of the timetable to approval or commendation, or whatever it is we are going to do, what would happen if someone used some or all of this resource in the intervening time?

*The Chair:* I am afraid that is a legal question.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Given that Canon B 53 allows discretion to incumbents to conduct worship for which no provision is made, subject to being consonant with the doctrine of the Church of England, and given that the House of Bishops has declared that the draft *Prayers* do not contradict the doctrine of the Church of England, what advice can the House give to clergy who wish to use those rights now?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* I think that is a very good question. The response which I know that many diocesan bishops individually have given to their clergy or other ministers is to ask them not to use the *Prayers of Love and Faith* in their draft form at present while the process of refinement and the wider discussions around their approval continue through this synodical process and I think probably that is a very sensible position to adopt.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Bishop, given that the *Prayers* were presented in draft form, they were not returned to us with any revisions and given that the process has not been resolved, is it not the case that the formal position is that it has not yet been resolved that these *Prayers* as presented are not indicative of a change in the doctrine of the Church of England? Sorry, there were three negatives there.

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* There are a lot of negatives in that. Can you just reframe the last one?

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* The legal status of the *Prayers* that were presented in February has not yet, in fact, been resolved, is that not the case?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* There is advice from the Chief Legal Officer that they are not contrary to the Church of England's doctrine of marriage but the process of discussion continues.

83. *The Revd Rachel Wakefield (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In February the Bishop of London stated that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the Pastoral guidance would, hopefully, be ready in time for the General Synod meeting in July 2023 (Q161). Given that this has not happened, despite the support of all three Houses of Synod for the proposals, can the reason for this slippage be explained, and the timetable following the July Synod outlined?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The LLF motion passed in February 2023 gave no timetable for the completion of the work, but it was hoped to complete the majority of the tasks by July 2023. However, given the emerging necessity for well-considered pastoral reassurance to meet a range of needs, the implementation phase has required further work. This has impacted the production of guidance and the consideration of the routes by which the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are offered for use. The expected timetable now is that we are working to bring draft guidance to the November meeting of the General Synod.

84. *Mrs Zoe Ham (Carlisle)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the February 2023 sessions of Synod, the Bishop of London claimed that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* ‘do not use any of the liturgical material of the Church of England’s authorized services of marriage.’ This contradicts the answer given to Q176, in which the Bishop of Lichfield listed the sources for the *Prayers* (see p.1 of the Annex to Questions Notice Paper 2 [here](#)) which showed that 15 of these were very clearly adapted from authorized liturgical material in Common Worship: Pastoral Services (the marriage liturgy). Which of these answers is correct, and what action will be taken to ensure that any future proposed *Prayers* will not use existing marriage liturgy in order to avoid being indicative of a departure of the Church’s doctrine of marriage?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Prayers of Love and Faith* do not contain texts which are essential parts of ‘The Marriage Service’ in Common Worship: Pastoral Services, or from the ‘Form of Solemnization of Matrimony’ in the Book of Common Prayer, or from that in Alternative Services: Series One, which are the ‘authorized services of marriage’ in use in the Church of England.

The document listing the sources which we provided in February does show that some of the material in the *Prayers of Love and Faith* appears among the optional texts which may be included in marriage services. Where this is the case, this material is not expressive of a distinctly matrimonial character. In some cases, *Prayers* have been altered to this end.

The prayer that asks God to ‘pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love’, an optional text included in Pastoral Services, is in its substance itself borrowed from the Collect for the Second Sunday after Trinity and also appears in *New Patterns for Worship* in a sample service for St Valentine’s Day, under the discretion of the minister allowed under Canon B 5.

85. *Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops have included a reading from Ruth 1.15-22 in the proposals for the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. The vows made by Ruth in this passage are of filial piety to her mother in law, and are not reciprocated at all. Has the House of Bishops considered whether this reading is suitable for the blessing of people in a) a romantic relationship given that Naomi and Ruth have a parent/child relationship or b) any other type of relationship, given the unbalanced nature of the vows made?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: In including this reading the House of Bishops is not suggesting that the relationships celebrated with *Prayers of Love and Faith* are necessarily exactly the same as those in this passage. The inclusion of this reading helps one to reflect on how different kinds of love, friendship and commitment between people can help them to recognise and respond to the love of God.

86. *Dr Gracy Crane (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What safeguards will the bishops put in place to ensure that the *Prayers* for covenanted friendships will not be used to legitimize polyamorous relationships?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Pastoral Guidance for the use of *Prayers of Love and Faith* will identify the contexts in which the *Prayers* may be offered, and provide advice to ministers who will be engaging pastorally with couples.

87. *The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Does the House of Bishops have a record of how many/which dioceses have now added possible implications of the proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith* to their risk registers - and if so, how many are there who have done so?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: A Diocesan Board of Finance's (DBF) principal risks will be stated in its approved Annual Report and Financial Statements. However, there is no central record of running changes to Risk Registers of the DBFs which are not publicly disclosed.

Each DBF will be making an ongoing assessment of risks to its objectives and will be considering the potential impacts of the General Synod's decisions. Where those risks are assessed to be material, they will take mitigating actions to reduce their likelihood and impact.

88. *Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In introducing *Some Issues in Human Sexuality* to Synod in February 2004, Bishop Richard Harries explicitly rejected the idea of the Anglican 'three-legged stool' of Scripture, tradition and reason, and instead talked of Scripture as our final authority in all matters of faith and

conduct, with tradition and reason functioning as hermeneutical lenses through which we read Scripture. Does that view still command the assent of the whole of the House of Bishops, and has that been the guiding principle in developing the *Prayers of Love and Faith*?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The idea of the “three-legged stool” can be traced to Richard Hooker (Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V, viii.2). In taking this position Hooker rejected the ‘Genevan’ tendency to derive all positions from Scripture alone. However, Hooker did not treat Scripture, reason and tradition as equal authorities - and that was Bishop Harries’s point. For Hooker, and in contemporary Anglican thought, Scripture is the primary source of ecclesial authority, but tradition and reason must not be ignored or belittled. This approach, with Scripture as primary, read in dialogue with tradition and reason, characterizes Anglican thinking.

Thus, for Anglicans, theological reasoning usually involves debate about how, and how much, insights from reason and tradition illuminate readings of Scripture. That is certainly both explicit and implicit in discussions in the College and House of Bishops and is a sign that the Church of England collectively is true to its inherited model of theological exploration.

The *Prayers of Love and Faith*, like all Anglican liturgy, draw upon Scripture, both directly and in thematic terms, reflect the traditions of the Church, and are framed to engage with humanity’s capacity for reason.

*Mrs Rebecca Cowburn:* Thank you for your thoughtful response about the three-legged stool with its legs in Scripture, tradition and reason. Given, as you say, “Scripture is the primary source of ecclesial authority” and that treating Scripture as “primary, read in dialogue with tradition and reason characterises Anglican thinking”, why then, when it comes to the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, have the Bishops not provided a clear, agreed theological basis for their proposals but have, instead, effectively sawn off this leg of the stool?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* I do not want to pursue the metaphor of the stool too far but it is the case that theological reflection is continuing. The Bishop of London mentioned the involvement of the Faith and Order Commission which is part of that and when the *Prayers of Love and Faith* reappear in final form - which we hope they do - in November, no doubt there will be some theological augmentation in the Pastoral Guidance, in the Pastoral Reassurance Group and in the notes and introduction to the *Prayers* themselves.

*Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester):* In the last paragraph of your answer, you say, “*Prayers of Love and Faith*, like all Anglican liturgy ...” Can you confirm that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are liturgy because I am confused about it and, if so, would they be subject to liturgical business?

*The Bishop of Lichfield:* I think I need to apologise for rather loose language there. They are not designated as liturgy.

89. *Dr Gracy Crane (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: There have been anecdotal reports of bishops using threatening and even bullying language towards clergy who have expressed their disagreement with the direction of travel indicated by the House of Bishops' reports, and who have said they will not be willing to use the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. What is the House of Bishops' response to these concerns, and what measures are they planning to put in place to ensure that clergy can freely hold a view which differs from that of the Bishop?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* answered on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Threatening and bullying language and behaviour are unacceptable in the Church. Bishops as chief pastors are committed to ensuring that the conscientious and theologically grounded decisions of their ministers (both ordained and lay) are respected, including when they differ from their own decisions. Work continues on pastoral reassurance which will make clear how this can be guaranteed in practice with reference to the *Prayers of Love and Faith*.

90. *Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has a documented risk assessment regarding the probable impact of the introduction of *Prayers of blessing* for same sex couples been undertaken at any stage by the House of Bishops?

91. *Mrs Zoe Ham (Carlisle)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: "If we have a recommendation, it is that the Church of England sets in place robust ways to assess the impacts, positive and negative, that will undoubtedly come whether decisions are made or not made to allow SSB or SSM"

(see <https://lfc.churchofengland.org/mod/resource/view.php?id=694>, p.14).

As a result, the Archbishops' Council is undertaking its own risk assessment in the areas of finance, numerical growth, plans for church planting, calling young people to faith, risk of schism, clergy morale, vocations to ordained ministry, and possible reduction of ethnic diversity of the Church. What risk assessment has the House of Bishops undertaken in each of these areas, in response to the 2022 report; if none, then when is such assessment planned to take place?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission I will answer Questions 90 and 91 together.

The House of Bishops has undertaken no such risk assessment. Instead it monitors regularly all aspects of the implementation of the Synod's motion on *Living in Love and Faith*, noting that there is much further work on the detail of the *Prayers*, on Pastoral Guidance and on pastoral reassurance that will affect the nature of any threats and opportunities. The House understands that the Archbishops' Council is conducting a risk

assessment of the impact on its objectives of the Synod proposals on *Living in Love and Faith*.

*Dr Simon Eyre:* Supplementary to question 90. Luke 14 reminds us of the importance of counting the cost before undertaking any major enterprise and so, in view of the reaction to the *Prayers* from within the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion already, would the House of Bishops consider such a risk assessment an urgent priority at this time?

*The Bishop of London:* I think it would be wrong to say that we have not counted the cost. Part of *Living in Love and Faith* from 2017 was recognising the cost to individual people. In terms of the work that we have done since then, we have spoken and recognised the cost not just to LGBTQI people but also the cost that the motion that went to Synod and was accepted by Synod amended has caused to people within Synod, within the wider Anglican Communion and within our dioceses, so are we very much aware of that cost. Therefore, in terms of our response, both in terms of listening and also taking that listening into what we are doing, we are absolutely serious about that. I have to say I do not think that the House of Bishops is necessarily constructed to do the formal type of risk assessment that you have spoken about. I suspect that belongs to the trustees more than it does to the House of Bishops.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Given that the LLF supplementary document, which is cited and linked to here, specifically enjoins the House of Bishops to actually undertake that kind of risk assessment, I wonder if the Bishop could help us understand on what grounds it was decided to reject that specific commendation.

*The Bishop of London:* Sorry, can you repeat your question, Ian?

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* Yes, in question 91 that Zoe Ham has asked, there is a link there to the LLF paper in which Lesley Francis, and another author, specifically recommend as a matter of urgency that a formal impact assessment is done before any change is introduced as part of the discussions. That was part of the LLF process. Is it possible for you to explain on what grounds the House of Bishops has decided not to follow that explicit recommendation of the LLF process?

*The Bishop of London:* I think it goes back to my answer that we understand "that the Archbishops' Council is ..."

92. *Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What legal advice has been provided to the House of Bishops in relation to the best way to protect clergy conscience in the matter of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*?

93. *Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops sought or received any legal opinion concerning the propriety of seeking the approval by General Synod of the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* under Canon B2 and,

if so, when will the same be published in the interests of promoting openness and transparency?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* With permission I will answer Questions 92 and 93 together.

The staff team advising the House of Bishops throughout the LLF process has included members of the Church House Legal Office. External counsel have not been instructed. The legal advice has been comprised in a number of email exchanges, as well as comments on policy documents and oral advice during meetings, and a formal note of advice prepared for the meeting of the House of Bishops on 23 March 2023 (it was also given to all members of the College of Bishops, which met on the same day). That advice has addressed the options available for commendation or approval of the *Prayers*, and the legal implications of those options, including for the protection of clergy conscience. In order to ensure that the House can get frank and full legal advice, we have chosen in the past, and now choose to continue, a policy of not publishing legal advice. The decision as to the appropriate option to take has not been finally made, and when it is, it will be based not only on legal advice but also on all other considerations.

*Mrs Rebecca Hunt:* I am from Portsmouth not Truro, contrary to what it says.

*The Chair:* The same sort of coastline.

*Mrs Rebecca Hunt:* Can I ask that, since you prepared the answer, has external counsel been engaged by you or the Archbishops on this question and, if so, please could you share the legal advice that you have been given?

*The Bishop of London:* We have not engaged external counsel. As part of the work of *Living in Love and Faith*, we have talked a lot about the theological resources and the work with FAOC. We, obviously, receive legal advice and I said in February and I have reiterated I think today that we have to, when we come to November, show our working. That working will show both the theological working as well as the legal working.

*Mr Daniel Matovu:* Bishop, I just wanted to ask you specifically about Canon B 2 and whether the House of Bishops has sought or received legal advice in relation to Canon B 2 and whether they have shared it with the other Bishops and when?

*The Bishop of London:* In the House and in the College of Bishops, we have spoken about Canon B 2, Canon B 4.2 and Canon B 5. I suspect there may be others that I am missing from my list. We have discussed those. There has been legal advice and some theological reflection. We have yet to make a decision about how the *Prayers* will be implemented, but we will make that very clear in terms of that legal advice when we come in November.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* You state that external counsel have not been instructed and you have confirmed again that not even in recent days is that the case by you or the Archbishops. You say the legal advice has been comprised in a number of email exchanges as well as comments on policy documents. Can those, please, be provided to General Synod in the interests of transparency?

*The Bishop of London:* What we will do is we will provide the clarity when we come to November of the legal advice that we are using for the way in which we are going to approve it.

94. *Mrs Sue Cavill (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Why are there no lay members on the *Living in Love and Faith* implementation group focusing on the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith*, and no or few lay members on the implementation group focusing on developing new Pastoral Guidance, given that the issues they are dealing with impact not only on the clergy but on the laity, including lay leaders?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The membership of the working groups tried to include a balance of views between those drafting material. The selection was made by the LLF Next Steps group primarily on an individual basis of who had the practical and theological expertise necessary to get the work done, both lay and ordained.

*Mrs Sue Cavill:* Following up on the answer you have given, given that the Church of England's direction of travel is towards greater numbers of lay leaders, in some cases outnumbering ordained leaders, when will the model for groups working on issues such as LLF change so that lay people are seen as having equal voices with the clergy?

*The Bishop of London:* Sue, I think your point is well made and we can look back in reflection and think, oh, gosh. I think your point is well made. We are in the coming months going to set up a process of consulting with stakeholders and in that we will make sure that we get that balance right.

95. *Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How were the members of the 3 LLF Implementation Groups selected and by whom?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The LLF Next Steps group discussed the membership of the implementation groups and invited people to join each group. The membership of the working groups tried to include a balance of views, but they were not intended to be representative bodies that had membership from the full range of different perspectives that were encompassed in the preceding LLF work. Instead the selection was made primarily on an individual basis of who had the practical and theological expertise necessary to take the work forward.



*Dr Simon Eyre:* This is really building on that last answer. I think there are only four of 38 members of the Implementation Group who were lay members. In view of the fact that these are live discussions, what is planned to be done about the current discussions involving the lay voice more clearly?

*The Bishop of London:* This afternoon, I will talk about how we are moving to very specific pieces of work and in some of those we will continue to use the members that we have with the Reference Group, but we will also do stakeholder engagement to, in a sense, correct the balance that we have not got.

96. *The Revd Will Pearson-Gee (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Who made the decision to terminate the work of the three subgroups working on the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, the Pastoral Guidelines, and Pastoral Reassurance, and on what basis, and when was this decision communicated to the groups themselves, the House of Bishops, and the Archbishops' Council?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: When the working groups were set up it was initially envisaged that they would be in place until Summer 2023, to report back to this Synod meeting, and a commitment was sought of members on this basis. While substantial and fruitful work has been done by the groups, it became clear that the work would continue beyond the original commitment made by members and would need to focus on bringing the work of the three workstreams together for ongoing drafting. This work continues to draw on members of the implementation working groups.

This latest phase of work was communicated to the groups at their joint meeting on the 16th June, and confirmed by email after, following a decision by the Steering Group.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Bishop Sarah, thank you for your answer to the question, but I think you have only answered one part of the three parts there which is you do not make any mention of when this decision was communicated to the House of Bishops, the Archbishops' Council and perhaps even members of General Synod.

*The Bishop of London:* I cannot remember the dates, actually. I am very happy to give them, but it was literally College, House, members of the working group. An email went out and then it was made public. It was a pretty close span, but I am very happy to get the precise dates to you.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul:* That would be very useful, thank you very much.

97. *The Revd Steve Wilcox (York)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: We are grateful for the wide-ranging and deep work that is ongoing, in order to explore all relevant areas and possible blockages as we seek to move forward. With that in mind, how will proper opportunity be given to all currently involved in the LLF process/in all 3 Houses to

safely identify and work through their strong emotions regarding the LLF process/those with whom they strongly disagree, to ensure that these emotions are not inadvertently blocking positive progress through the process?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The LLF group work that was conducted as part of the February General Synod sessions was aimed at building trust and discernment about the way forward between members of all three houses. Although plans are yet to be finalised for the November meeting it could be considered whether similar work would be of benefit to the process for members. We continue to urge all involved in the LLF process to inhabit the Pastoral Principles.

98. *Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops considered calling a halt to the proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith* on the basis that false teaching leads to sexual immorality in the people of God?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The House of Bishops has not considered halting the work on the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. The overall LLF process has been one which has sought to encourage careful listening and discernment among the people of God, which has included paying attention to Scripture and the historic teaching of the Church, and recognising the range of interpretations and understandings of Scripture and teaching which we hold. The LLF process has not sought to characterise differing views as false teaching, but rather to help one another understand the different perspectives that exist in the Church.

*Mr Richard Denno:* May I address you as a sister in Christ?

*The Bishop of London:* You may.

*Mr Richard Denno:* Bless you. Bishop Sarah, thank you for pointing out that we have been in a process of careful listening and discernment among the people of God and I for one am thankful for that process. We have paid attention to Scripture and the historic teachings of the Church, as you say, and we have recognised a range of interpretation and understandings of the Scripture, as you say. But in recognising that range we have also recognised that those interpretations are not all within the doctrine of the Church, therefore my question is the language of the false teaching and sexual immorality, which does not sit well with the word you used, "uncertainty", in one of your earlier answers, how are we to reintroduce those words to be faithful to the word of God as we have received it?

*The Bishop of London:* I think we have to be very careful with our language. I am somebody who is regularly called a false teacher on social media. I am not sure where that evidence is to call me a false teacher. I do not think they often would - I mean, some of them do do it to my face, actually, I have to say. I know the consequence on me

personally of that. I think we have to be really careful about our language. I do not believe that I am a false teacher. I take very seriously my ordination vows. I have studied the Scriptures deeply. I may get it wrong sometimes and I recognise my vulnerability in that.

My view is, actually, we have to think really carefully about our language. That does not mean to say that we do not seek to understand Scripture and to teach it as we have received it and to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in our midst and to reflect the light and love of Christ to the world. My answer is let us think really carefully about the words we use and the impact they have on people.

99. *Mr Philip Baldwin (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the House of Bishops confirm that they consider all intersex people to be: (i) fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image; (ii) part of God's natural diversity and that being intersex is not an illness or disorder?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Yes.

*Dr Julie Maxwell (Winchester)*: I am a paediatrician and I would just like to ask for some clarification of what you understand by the term "intersex" in your answer to this question. In the medical profession, we currently use the term "differences of sexual development" rather than "intersex" and this encompasses a wide variation, some of which are just minor anatomical differences but others such as congenital adrenal hyperplasia can cause serious and even life-threatening health issues. I would just like some clarification on your understanding/

*The Bishop of London*: So what is your terminology used, differences?

*Dr Julie Maxwell*: "Differences of sexual development". If you look on the NHS website, you will see that.

*The Bishop of London*: I think we mean the same and I would love to pick that conversation up with you so that we can learn about the language that we should be using.

*Dr Julie Maxwell*: I think the point is, therefore, some of these are serious medical conditions.

*The Bishop of London*: They are, absolutely.

*Dr Julie Maxwell*: Your answer does not quite fit with that but, yes, I would love to talk to you about it.

*The Bishop of London*: For example, earlier this week I was talking about what does the Church teach about healing and I think one day we will be without pain and whatever but,

at the same time, Christ was resurrected and his body had wounds in it and it was transformed. I still believe, even if there are complex medical conditions, those individuals are made in the image of God.

*Dr Julie Maxwell:* Oh, absolutely.

*The Bishop of London:* I do understand that range is really complex and I would love to have a conversation with you so we can learn from your experience.

*Mr Philip Baldwin:* I ask this question because a number of my intersex friends wanted me to ask it. They were really pleased with the response that you gave because a number of them have been subject throughout their lives to unwanted medical interventions from medical practitioners. It seems to be the case that for many intersex people too often their lives have really been marred by unwanted surgeries. I just wanted to ask can you reaffirm this and your support for the intersex community?

*The Bishop of London:* Yes, I can absolutely reaffirm it. One of the real hopes around *Living in Love and Faith* is that we get better at, in a sense, understanding life from other's people's perspective and to be able to listen to them and their experience. I think that there have been great improvements around how the NHS supports people with those differences that they have. I think that we need to reduce our lack of understanding so we are better able to understand what as a Church we are talking about. But I absolutely would affirm that they are made in the image of God.

100. *The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TEs)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Archbishop Welby said in his Second Witness Statement to IICSA (June 2019): "I am informed by Mr [Graham] Tilby [at the time National Advisor, C of E Safeguarding] *that these [LLF] resources will be reviewed by the NST before they are finalised to ensure that they sufficiently address safeguarding related issues.*" The only reference to IICSA in LLF (2020) is: "While acknowledging the reality of abuse in the church, *it is important that the specific work of theological reflection on IICSA be carried out separately from the Living in Love and Faith project...*" (p. 87). May Synod know what group is carrying out the separate work of theological reflection on the learning from IICSA to ensure the LLF process does "sufficiently address safeguarding related issues" as stated by the Archbishop in 2019?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The question asks about two separate things. Theological reflection on the findings from IICSA underpins the work of the National Safeguarding Steering Group in overseeing the implementation of IICSA's recommendations. Meanwhile, the materials arising from the *Living in Love and Faith* process are still in development, as reported in GS 2303. Material on Pastoral Guidance and pastoral reassurance will be reviewed from a safeguarding perspective before they are finalised.

*The Revd Canon Judith Maltby:* It is good to know that all the learning and insight from IICSA about the connection between sexuality and safeguarding is being taken on board and, of course, it is also numerous Lessons Learnt Reviews, as you know, making this point as well. But it sounds like it is going on parallel tracks in your answer and so I am wondering how the work of the National Safeguarding Steering Group and the LLF group are going to talk to each other about it?

*The Bishop of London:* We have up to now had conversations around when it comes to this point, so they have been ongoing conversations and we will ensure that continues.

*The Revd Charlie Skrine (London):* I am very glad to see that the Pastoral Guidance and the Pastoral Reassurance will be assessed from a safeguarding perspective. Are you able to tell us by whom and when we will see their assessment?

*The Bishop of London:* As I said before, the Pastoral Guidance is not going to be something that comes off the shelf and says here it is. It will be a series of things. I think every time one of those pieces are there, then we will ensure that it is assessed. It will be assessed by the National Safeguarding Team and it will be there. It will be done almost in parallel with each individual piece of guidance.

*The Revd Charlie Skrine:* And we will see their assessment?

*The Bishop of London:* Yes. It will be interesting. I suspect the assessment is not like a sort of impact assessment and they give a report. I would expect them to be working with the group to change them to, in a sense, make them safer if they are not safer. I would expect that the guidance that comes through would have been seen.

101. *The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith argued that it is not permissible to bless same sex unions, in a Responsum ad dubium issued on 15.03.2021. Has the House of Bishops engaged with these arguments as part of their ecumenical reflection on marriage and sexuality? If so, what is their theological response? If not, when do they plan to?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Bishops and the staff who support them have considered ecumenical factors throughout the LLF process and remain in touch with Roman Catholic and other ecumenical colleagues through regular conversations. The House as a whole has not engaged or given a formal response to this document as a House, but instead concentrated on shaping an appropriately Anglican way forward, while maintaining warm ecumenical relationships.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Given that the Church of England understands itself to be part of the one holy Catholic and apostolic Church and given that the Roman Catholic Church has actually done the theological work here in quite an explicit

way about the question that we are ourselves addressing, on what grounds did the House of Bishops decide not to actually engage with this as part of the theological reflection?

*The Bishop of London:* We have engaged with the Roman Catholic Church in dialogue. It is interesting that they also recognise the learning from us. I suppose what we are saying is we did not consider the specific document but we have been in dialogue and conversation and they have received the work that we have done, as well as talked to them.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* The question said that it was looking for an Anglican way forward. Can the Bishop confirm that, as Anglicans, we are both Catholic and Protestant?

*The Bishop of London:* Yes.

*The Chair:* Thank you. That concludes our session of questions. Synod members, I would just like to inform you that there will be a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Ministry Experience Scheme taking place in James Hall at lunch-time. Thank you very much, Synod.

*Questions not reached during Synod.*

102. *Mr Benjamin John (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In Q171 in February 2023 the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote that:

“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.*” [emphasis added]

The Archbishop further clarified in a supplementary that he assumes a Bishop does believe the current teaching unless stated otherwise.

Given the Archbishop’s statements that doctrine develops and changes, and that Bishops only need to teach that the official positions of the Church of England are the official positions of the Church of England, and there are well known public statements from Bishops disagreeing with the official positions of the Church of England (for example the Bishop of Oxford on marriage): what specifically does a Bishop need to believe and uphold, if anything, or is it the case that, as appears to follow logically from the Archbishop’s answer, a Bishop does not need to believe any of the official positions of

the Church of England rather that they must simply acknowledge what is the current teaching of the Church of England?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops:* With reference to my previous answer the preface to the Oaths and Declarations made by all clergy sets out the basis of our doctrine and teaching saying, “The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons.”

103. *The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: I am grateful that a number of bishops, including the two archbishops, have spoken out against the Church of Uganda’s support for the Anti-Homosexuality Act. Will the House of Bishops be considering the impact on the relationship between the Church of England and churches in the Anglican Communion who do not uphold the commitment made by the bishops of the Anglican Communion at the Lambeth Conference in 1998, “to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear” of gay people, and by the Primates of the Communion in 2016 to reject “criminal sanctions against same-sex attracted people”?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops:* It is very important that the full text of Lambeth 1:10 is understood and the lines quoted in the Question are of immense pastoral significance. Indeed, the address the core issues of human rights and dignity. However, the Anglican Communion works primarily through debate, prayer and the search for consensus and, on this as well as many other topics, those processes continue all the time. Synod will understand that the way in which each province’s words and actions on the subject of human sexuality affect the lives of other Anglicans worldwide is complex, especially at present. So, in answer to the question as put – yes, the House is considering the points raised, but as part of a much wider reflection on the issues, and on how provinces across the Communion relate to one another, especially including the historical contexts of each province. It is important that each province protects the lives of everyone.

104. *Mrs Busola Sodeinde (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: During the LLF debate, I put forward an amendment to consult with the secretaries of the wider Anglican Communion on the impact positive or negative, of adopting Same Sex Blessing, which was dismissed on a technicality. The Archbishop of Canterbury agreed to follow this up with the Secretary of the ACC, Bishop Anthony Poggio, and report back. Has this now happened, and with what result—and if not, when will this consultation take place?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion has

regular discussions with primates and others in provinces around the Communion. He has reported that these discussions have included provinces giving views on the “Prayers of Love and Faith”. Meanwhile, the new Adviser on Anglican Communion Affairs, The Revd Dr Sammy Wainaina, joined us in May and, as he settles into the post, is rapidly taking on board the history and content of the whole LLF debate and reflecting on its impact on the wider Communion. Discussions are currently under way to determine whether a formal and structured, or more informal, consultative process is likely to be most effective and where such a process should originate. We hope to progress this consultation later this year.

105. *Mrs Abigail Ogier (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Terms of Reference for the Humphreys Review (into the handling of allegations concerning the late Revd Devamanikkam) included that:

"5.6 So far as they are available, the Reviewer will review relevant documents from the following sources

..... The Diocese and Bishop of Sheffield (including the suffragan See of Doncaster)"

Is this a standard provision routinely included within NST Review Terms of Reference?

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The terms of reference for a Learning Lesson Review are bespoke to each individual review.

106. *The Revd Esther Prior (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: I ask this with the declared interest of being a Zimbabwean. In 2022, at General Synod, the then Lead Bishop Jonathan Gibbs stated that there would be an investigation into the abuse by John Smyth in Zimbabwe and South Africa, but only after the Makin Review had been published. Given that seven years will then have passed since the abuse of African children became known, can the new Lead Bishop restate that commitment, in the light of the further delays to the Makin Review?

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: When a review is commissioned, it needs to be clear about its own terms of reference: what is in scope and what is out of scope. It can only bring into scope matters over which it has a reasonable degree of responsibility and ongoing control. A review's conclusions may point to further areas that merit exploration, or where there would appear to have been consequences ensuing from the matters covered by that review. Where data sharing can be agreed and properly managed, it can commit to handing over evidence which it believes may be relevant to those further explorations and which, when pieced together with other evidence which will be outside of its ownership and therefore scope, might help to bring further clarity to other elements of the case or to the bigger picture. It cannot, however, mandate that these further explorations must take place. Our intention at the end of the Makin review is to liaise with those looking into the



abuse perpetrated by John Smyth in Zimbabwe and South Africa and to seek to share relevant information in appropriate ways.

107. *The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: On 15 June 2023 the following statement about the John Smyth Review (announced on 13 August 2019) from the reviewer, Keith Makin, and posted on the 'Reviews and Reports' pages of the Safeguarding section of the Church of England website, included this: *"The review is now able to proceed to the next stages, which will culminate in it being handed to the Archbishops' Council, for subsequent publication. Relevant extracts from the draft report will soon be shared with the victims of John Smyth and with people who are named and criticised. This is to ensure that the draft report is factually accurate and is entirely framed within the Terms of Reference as well as being based on verifiable evidence."*

What is now the earliest foreseeable and realistic date for publication of the Review, given the inevitable delay between completion of the draft report and the sometimes lengthy process of 'Maxwellisation', referred to in the statement, by which those criticised are afforded the opportunity to respond, sometimes via lawyers?

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The reviewer is starting the process of victims of survivors reviewing the draft report, due to the volume of people reviewing the report it is anticipated that this will take place in August and September, with the representation stage commencing in October. The report will not be published until both of these phases have been completed. The review team is aware of the distress and impact further delays are likely to cause survivors and is working hard to complete the report as soon as possible. Support continues to be offered for victims and survivors who are impacted by this review.

108. *The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The NST Director was required to respond to the ISB's first case review, Mr X, within 4 weeks. Now there is no ISB, what timescale is there for accepting and acting on the recommendations to ensure no further harm is caused to Mr X?

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The NST Director continues to progress some of the recommendations. It is anticipated that the recommendations will be presented to the National Safeguarding Steering Group in July as this is the group that would formally accept the recommendations. The outcome of any such decision would then be presented to the Archbishop Council.

109. *The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: A number of Synod members have indicated support for a debate on a Private Members' Motion seeking independent investigation of a specific safeguarding case. Can the House confirm that the case in question is being investigated objectively, impartially, and with good quality

assurance, and, as the Archbishops' Council moves towards a fully independent safeguarding *scrutiny* function, does it remain of the view that the current arrangements for the *investigative* function (i.e. external investigators overseen by Case Management/Core Groups) is the best way to deliver good outcomes for complainants and respondents?

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The National Safeguarding Team and Diocesan Safeguarding Team employ staff who are both experienced and qualified to conduct safeguarding investigations. This is an active investigation which is being conducted in line with the House of Bishops managing allegation policy. We are unable to comment any further on a live safeguarding investigation.

110. *The Revd Robert Thompson (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Secretary-General: Will you please provide to Synod a summary of the proposed process, project management oversight, projected costs, and likely time frame for the currently proposed joint Review into the Soul Survivor allegations?

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* This is an active investigation which is being conducted in line with the House of Bishops managing allegations policy. We are unable to comment any further on a live safeguarding investigation.

111. *The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Who, within Archbishops' Council, the Secretariat, or the National Church Institutions, holds the executive responsibility to monitor compliance with, and /or resourcing of the Church's responses to the formal recommendations of Learned Lessons Reviews?

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The National Safeguarding Steering Group has oversight and accountability to track and ensure recommendations are delivered and implemented. This would include updates to the Archbishops' Council on progress. Any resources would be allocated from the NST budget. If the resource was over and beyond the allocated funds within the NST budget the Archbishops' Council would be approached for any additional funds

112. *The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What safeguarding provision and oversight are being provided for mixed ecology of churches?

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Church of England Safeguarding policies and learning and development framework apply to a mixed ecology of church as they would a parish.

113. *Professor Helen King (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: If an elected member of the PCC, churchwarden or other church officer refuses to take the

safeguarding training modules which the diocese lists as being required for their role, are they able to continue in that role?

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework sets out the required attendees for each of the safeguarding learning pathways and the Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance states that Safeguarding learning is mandatory for all posts that fall within the scope of that guidance. Under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 all authorized clergy, bishops, archdeacons, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens and PCCs must have 'due regard' to safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops. A duty to have 'due regard' to guidance means that the person under the duty is not free to disregard it but is required to follow it unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so. ('Cogent' for this purpose means clear, logical and convincing.)

114. *Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the complexity of the Church of England as a confederation of independent charities in addition to the inherent challenges of Charity Law and actuarial calculation, what professional resource is available to those consulted by the Church to offer lay opinion on improving its Redress scheme?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Indeed we are a much more complex Scheme than other redress operations in our multiplicity of legal entities and charitable bodies, but we are determined that the Scheme will not appear complicated to the survivors who use it. We are designing a single point of contact, offered by a third-party supplier and this procurement process is in progress, to make sure that survivors are served promptly and equitably, wherever and however long ago their experience of abuse occurred. We are one body and, to express our shared covenantal commitment, we will bring forward legislation to General Synod to underpin a consistent approach to working together to demonstrate our repentance and willingness to change in order to be a safer church for everyone. We are inviting input from a range of lay and ordained people around the Church of England to help us anticipate and respond to the practical implications of this whole church approach, including discussion here at this General Synod, and have undertaken exhaustive research of other Redress Schemes. We are currently recruiting staff to help churches and other local bodies to advise us on the resources and support they will require in order to participate in the Scheme.

115. *The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Church has recently made a further announcement in respect of the promised Redress Scheme to compensate victims of abuse for which the C of E bears legal and/or moral responsibility. Given the inevitable complexity of forecasting the resourcing of an unknown number of claims, with a potential multiplicity of personal circumstances expressed through individual impact statements, from whom has professional actuarial

advice and assistance been sought to ensure that the proposed £150m provision is reasonably commensurate with the magnitude of the problem?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Specialist staff with relevant professional experience were hired to work on the Redress Scheme and have taken advice from colleagues and external experts to help to develop the Scheme, which is overseen by a Project Board chaired by the which I chair.

Having reviewed the evidence already available to us about abuse perpetrated within the Church of England and available data relating to other Redress Schemes, we are clear that it is impossible to provide projections relating to levels of demand, and it is likely that the initial funds allocated will require replenishment.

Prior to the Scheme launch, we will develop a funding model which enables contributions from other parts of the Church, including through insurance claims where this is viable, expressing our shared covenantal commitment to survivors and to each other. As part of that model, we are grateful to the Church Commissioners for allocating £150 million to underpin the Scheme so that we will in due course be able to commence the Scheme and make financial awards promptly to people who are eligible for Redress.

116. *Mr John Brydon (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the reorganisations in Truro and Leicester dioceses will be heavily reliant on volunteers, is there any record of national volunteer numbers and whether these have increased or decreased over the last 10 years?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Data Services team does not collect national statistics on the number of volunteers who are supporting ministry and are therefore unable to answer the question on growth or decline over the last 10 years.

Every diocese depends on the work of volunteers. I cannot speak for the Diocese of Leicester, but given that plans in Truro include maintaining if not increasingly stipendiary clergy numbers, using our historic reserves for that purpose, I do not anticipate that we will become more reliant on volunteers, though of course we are always keen to see people step forward into Christian service and do all we can to encourage it.

117. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What conclusion has the House of Bishops reached on changing the national norm that Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers should have their licences revoked on reaching age of 70 and replaced with permission to officiate, given that the same no longer applies to clergy?

*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 not reached a conclusion on this matter.

Approaches to permission to officiate for Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers differ between dioceses. The outgoing episcopal lead for lay ministries, Right Revd Martyn Snow, held a focus group about lay ministry canons with members of the College of Bishops in December 2022. The feedback from that consultation has been passed to the Lay Ministries Advisory Group, chaired by Canon Dr Paula Gooder and Right Revd Sophie Jelley to inform their ongoing work.

118. *The Revd William Pearson-Gee (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: There are widespread reports of clergy facing financial hardship as a result of the comparative decrease in the value of the stipend—and many retired clergy in the same position as a result of the loss of value in the pension. Does the House of Bishops consider its responsibilities as ‘shepherds of the shepherds’ to include addressing these issues, and, if so, what action have they taken to address the decrease in value of both stipend and pension?

*The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The decrease in the value of the stipend and of the pension is a matter of concern to the House of Bishops and involves the whole people of God because the money for stipends and pensions comes largely from the giving of the faithful.

The Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee (RACSC) is responsible for making annual recommendations on stipend levels to the Archbishops’ Council and has to balance considerations about the appropriate level of stipend for clergy with what is affordable, in the light of current levels of giving and pressures on Church finances. As part of its work on these issues, it consults diocesan secretaries and CEECA, part of the faith workers branch of Unite, on stipend levels and affordability.

RACSC carried out a review of clergy remuneration, which concluded that the package was worth around £50,000 and was adequate for the majority of clergy and indicated that its value should be increased in line with increases in CPIH inflation except during periods of high inflation. We are experiencing high inflation at the moment, but we remain committed to the goal of catching up with inflation in the medium term, but this will depend on levels of giving, which are a matter for the whole Church. Discussions with the Finance Committee enabled £3m to be allocated to clergy facing hardship as a result of the cost of the living in 2022. A further £15m was distributed in 2023 to dioceses mainly to help PCCs with church energy bills, though there was some scope to help ministers if dioceses chose to do so.

119. *Mrs Helen Smith (Durham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the House of Bishops dedicate any time to reflection on the King's Coronation; and if so, will the House seek input from historians, liturgical scholars and the wider church?

*The Bishop of Bath & Wells (The Rt Revd Michael Beasley)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops has spent some time reflecting informally

on the Coronation. It has not at this time formally commissioned the kind of input from outside parties suggested in your question.

120. *Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: A handful of reports from 2008-2014 showed an association between the air particulate matter released from burning incense with charcoal and several acute health effects, including mortality, hospital admissions, respiratory symptoms, and lung dysfunction. More recently problems are coming to light with the particles in vaping causing lung damage. Have there been any recent investigations into the safety of burning incense in church or are there any planned?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Statistically, an association does not necessarily imply causation. We are not aware of any studies showing a direct causal relationship between the use of incense in a typical church context and acute respiratory diseases. The comparison with vaping is also unlikely to be indicative as the manner through which particulates might be inhaled or absorbed is very different and the number of exposures in a given time period likely to be much more frequent. Overall, the health risks associated with the use of incense in a normal parish setting are likely to be considerably lower than other forms of exposure to particulates such as proximity to major road traffic.

The responsibility for the conduct of worship in individual churches rests with the minister, and decisions on matters such as the use of incense should be shared between the minister and the PCC. Any member of a congregation who has concerns over possible risks should raise these with their incumbent or PCC.

We are not aware of any recent or planned studies in this area of research.

121. *The Revd Lindsay Llewellyn-MacDuff (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: It was heartening to hear the Bishop of Lichfield's confidence in the capacity of Church of England policy documents to establish culture (supplementary answer to q38 [[Questions Notice Paper 1 - February 2023](#)]). However, given that in most contexts theory is tested against evidence, what research has the Faith and Order Commission made to check that women do in fact flourish under the episcopate of a man who does not think they should have been ordained?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Practical research into the outworking of the Five Guiding Principles is not a task that the Faith and Order Commission would undertake. However, one of the responsibilities of the Standing Commission on the House of Bishops' Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles is 'to consider how effectively the Declaration, including the Five Guiding Principles, is being promoted throughout the Church.' The Standing Commission is undertaking a number of projects which will help with this consideration and continues to consider other projects which help with this responsibility

while recognizing that there are limitations to the number of projects it can do at any one time.

122. *Mrs Sarah Finch (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How is provision made for conservative evangelical parishes which have passed a resolution in the dioceses where the Bishop of Ebbsfleet is not an Assistant Bishop?

*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 makes arrangements for parishes which have passed a resolution to receive extended episcopal care from another bishop, including from the three Provincial Episcopal Visitors or from the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. The arrangements state that *'The precise extent of the ministry entrusted to the bishop is for the diocesan to determine and is likely, for practical reasons to vary according to the pattern of episcopal ministry in that diocese and the extent of the bishop's other commitments.'*

However, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have recently notified the College of Bishops that their preferred policy is now for Diocesan Bishops who choose to draw on the ministry of these bishops to make these bishop(s) Honorary Assistant Bishops in their diocese. This precedes work being done by the Standing Commission on the Five Guiding Principles on guidelines for PEV bishops which aims to produce guidelines for diocesan bishops which encourage a more consistent approach to extended episcopal care for parishes who do not accept the ordination of women to the priesthood.

123. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What prayers and services have hitherto been commended or authorized under Canon B 4.2 other than the Remembrance Day service mentioned in the online version of the Canons?

124. *The Revd Tom Woolford (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In light of the reference to Canon B 4 in GS 2303, please could you supply a list of the forms of service approved under Canon B 4.1 and B 4.2?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* With permission, I will answer questions 123 and 124 together.

There are no services which have been approved by the Convocations under Canon B 4.1.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have approved the following forms of service under Canon B 4.2:

- *A Service for Remembrance Sunday*
- *Special Forms of Service in commemoration of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*
- *The Coronation of their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla*

125. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What plans are there to start holding meetings of the House of Bishops in public, with the usual notification, access to agendas, and minutes, as would be normal practice for any meetings of a House of this Synod, and has been the routine practice of the other two houses of Synod when they have met?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Under the House of Bishops Standing Orders, the default position is that meetings are open to the public, but the House does regularly make use of SO 14, which allows the House to sit in Committee without members of the public present. This permits candid discussion in a collegial atmosphere. On occasions when it is dealing with legislation, which requires a formal vote, the practice has been to not use SO14.

The agendas, minutes and other papers are not published. We do usually issue a summary of business.

There are no plans to vary this practice.

126. *Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Governance Review's clear recognition of the existential issue of the trust deficit is very welcome. Others could take note of its emphasis. It is explicit in the detail of many of its proposals. The obvious omission is the means of providing effective oversight of Church of England National Services (CENS) as referenced in para 12 of GS 2307. Is it the intention to have Synod provide effective, timely, comprehensive oversight of CENS and the other NCIs and for them to be obliged, by statute if necessary, to take due regard of Synod's opinions; and if not, what are the principles by which such oversight will be assured?

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Governance Review sets out in Annex One, paragraphs 27 to 35, its recommendations in relation to strengthening the arrangements for synodical oversight of the National Church Institutions, including the proposed new CENS body. It will be for Synod to determine if these proposals provide adequate assurance.

127. *Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: With the report from the National Church Governance Project Board (GS 2307) before General Synod, what further evidence is required to underline the Independent Appellate Function of the, Pastoral and Church Property Committee Function for it to remain in operation as a permanent separate stand-alone body and function within the remit of the Church Commissioners, rather than revert to the CENS at some time in the future as indicated in GS 2307?

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Governance proposals before Synod, which are to be debated



on Sunday evening, and are contained within GS2307, include a set of recommendations and a clear rationale for these changes. The Project Board does not anticipate that there will be reasons to keep the Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee function in the long-term within the Church Commissioners, given the proposals to give a clear focus to each of the national bodies. The proposals have been welcomed by the Church Commissioners Board of Governors. But it is for the Synod to determine where the function should rest in any legislation that may be brought forward, assuming Synod approve the proposals before it.

128. *Mr Jonathan Baird (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Archbishops' Council and General Synod share a Secretary-General. This appears to lead to increased conflicts of interest and an over concentration of power. If the General Synod approves the motion confirming the recommendations of the National Church Governance Project Board (GS 2307), will the draft legislation include having an independent and exclusive Secretary-General for the General Synod?

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Within any organisation, ensuring there are proper segregation of duties in place to avoid potential conflicts of interest is an important internal control that needs to be carefully balanced alongside resourcing implications, cost and whether there is a material risk. In accordance with the National Institutions Measure the Archbishops' Council appoints a Chief Executive to be known as the Secretary-General. It is a requirement of General Synod's Standing Orders (SO. 145) that the Secretary-General of the Synod, is the person appointed by the Council as its Chief Executive and, separately, under the standing orders of the House of Bishops (SO. 11) that the Secretary-General acts as Secretary to the House. These arrangements arose out of the previous review of Governance which led to the passing of the National Institutions Measure.

The National Church Governance Project Board has not made recommendations in relation to specific roles or yet considered the executive structures which may be required to support its proposals.

129. *Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Now that under the recent Legislative Reform (Church Commissioners) Order 2021, elected Church Commissioners have their terms of office restricted to a maximum period of ten years falling into line with the other Committee of General Synod where their elected Members terms of office are similarly restricted to a maximum period of ten years, what consideration if any has been given to applying the same restrictions to all Diocesan Bishop who are also elected by the College of Canons and whether all new post holders as Diocesans in the long term should be similarly restricted to a maximum term of office of 10 years, as are the Diocesan Bishops who serve as Church Commissioners on the Board of Governors.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied on as Joint Chair of the House of Bishops:* Thank you for your question. The duration of membership of Committees of the General Synod is governed by Standing Order 128, which does not preclude a Synod member being re-elected to a Committee even if they have served more than ten years. The change to the Church Commissioners' period of service was made because that is a trustee body. However, no such consideration has been given to the suggestion made in the question. The election by the College of Canons of a Diocesan Bishop is done so at the direction of The Sovereign and as such constitutes a very different process from the election of Church Commissioners or other General Synod Committees. Bishops, in common with other Ecclesiastical Office holders, vacate their office when they choose so to do, or automatically upon attaining the age of 70. It is possible to extend such appointments beyond 70 in certain circumstances.

130. *Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Please provide a list of current members of the College of Bishops, and the current criteria for membership.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Joint Chair of the House of Bishops:* The College of Bishops is not a formally constituted body. It is a body that brings together diocesan and suffragan bishops. In addition three UKME clergy participant observers attend. There are currently nine bishops who hold other roles within the life of the Church of England who still attend College of Bishops meetings.

131. *The Revd Chris Moore (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What advice has the House of Bishops given to the Archbishops on the exercise of their discretion in the matter of allowing bishops to continue in office beyond the age of 70?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops:* The House of Bishops has not given advice on this matter to the Archbishops because it is not the role of the House of Bishops to give such advice. The Archbishops' Council has issued such guidance, as it is required by the legislation to do, and that is here.

The request from bishops to continue in office beyond the age of 70 happens infrequently. In recent years, in the Southern Province, if a bishop has requested an extension of ministry after the age of 70, I have asked one of my senior team to conduct a short consultation in the diocese, to establish what the pastoral need was, and used the outcome of that consultation to inform my decision on whether or not to grant an extension of ministry and for how long.

In the Province of York, there has only been one occasion in recent years which involved an extension by a few months purely for pastoral needs within the diocese.

132. *Mr Nigel Lea-Wilson (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Research from the Bible Society shows that Christian faith and church attendance is not in decline

in England but is at least holding steady. What work has the House of Bishops done to explore with other denominations the reasons for their growth, and what we can learn from them?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Bible Society research was conducted by survey and was not denominationally specific. We are not in competition with other denominations but rejoice when they grow. The conclusions from the Bible Society were encouraging. In practice consideration of missional strategies and outcomes of ecumenical partner churches is dispersed across a wide range of bodies and relationships, with varying strengths. Specific bodies such as the Anglican-Pentecostal Steering Group and the Methodist-Anglican Panel on Unity and Mission mutually explore missional experiences and approaches, and where possible insights gained are fed back into reflection on the Church of England's own strategy. A wide range of other interdenominational relationships, at local as well as national levels, enrich the Church's work in various ways. Reasons for decline and growth are inevitably complicated, just as the social and economic contexts of different churches are extremely varied, and do not always translate easily into practical measures to counter the one and encourage the other. But the spirit of a joint missional enterprise is very strong in Churches Together in England, in which we participate fully, as well as elsewhere. It would be better if we were all one church, of course, if one follows the commands of the Bible.

133. *The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the progress on reducing the carbon footprint of the Church of England?

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* There is a full update to General Synod on this in the pack; GS Misc 1347 "Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030 – Annual Carbon Emissions Report

Data from the 2021 Report indicates that the total estimated carbon emissions for that year were 411,000 TCO<sub>2</sub>e, some 4,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e lower than the same figure for 2020.

However, these figures are based on data from just 35% and 40% of all Church buildings (cathedrals, churches, schools, housing, church halls, TEI's etc,) submitting energy returns in 2020 and 2021 respectively. While it is far too early to confirm this as an actual reduction in overall emissions, the results are encouraging as they pre-date the adoption of the Routemap to Net Zero in July 2022 and the establishment of the Net Zero Carbon Programme which formally commenced in January of this year.

The more we can do to encourage uptake in the use of the Energy Footprint Tool and Energy Toolkit the more reliable the results will be. Much good work is already being undertaken and this will hopefully be reflected in future Annual Emissions Reports.

134. *The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: There are several milestones in the Routemap to Net Zero Carbon due to be completed in 2023. What is the news on progress towards reaching these milestones at this stage??

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Routemap to Net Zero Carbon contains milestones for all parts of the Church and the Programme Team are still in the early stages of developing the reporting mechanisms to track progress against all of these since the Programme formally commenced at the start of this year.

Of the 126 milestones, 91 sit with the NCIs to progress. Of this group, 44 are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2023, and 67% of these are either completed or on track to be completed this year.

The NZC Programme will be working with diocesan officers to understand overall progress against the 6 diocesan milestones. Net Zero Carbon Capacity Building grants are being rolled out to provide the additional capacity needed to work on net zero carbon actions within dioceses and to develop diocesan Net Zero Carbon Action Plans.

135. *Mrs Sue Cavill (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How can the Church ensure that the crisis of biodiversity loss and nature degradation is not overshadowed by our focus on tackling the climate crisis?

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: When I became Lead Bishop for the Environment, I set out three priorities, one being to enhance biodiversity on all church-owned land.

“Land and nature” is one of seven key areas of work for the national environment programme. Churches are encouraged to take action through Churches Count on Nature, and through A Rocha UK’s Eco Church scheme, which has a section on land. Guidelines for managing diocesan-owned land have just been published [here](#), and many more resources from the environment programme can be found on its [webpage on land and nature](#).

The climate and biodiversity crises are inextricably linked. [This webinar](#) addresses this issue directly. A motion has been submitted (LAND AND NATURE, GS 2319) which can be found as contingency business on the agenda, with the aim of ensuring that we keep our focus on both areas as we seek to care for God’s creation and tread more gently on our single island planet home. I point members of Synod to the fringe event being hosted by RIGGS on Saturday morning.

136. *Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Is the Church of England Net Zero Carbon Programme planning to issue advice to churches on the best mixes of trees to plant within their churchyards and on their land (subject to Faculty rules) that are:

- a) suitable for their localities; and
  - b) adapted to cope with, and help combat, the effects of climate change; and
- that could also be planted by parishioners in their gardens to help create long-term sustainable green corridors for plants and wildlife within their localities?

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The current scope of the Net Zero Carbon Programme does not extend to tree planting as the focus is on emissions reductions from the built estate and work-related travel. Trees do play a part in carbon sequestration and can offset some of the Church's emissions, but work on offsetting policy is not planned in the Routemap until 2024 (Section 6.1). Counting carbon sequestration on church land would only be legitimate if the whole carbon footprint of land is accounted for. The emissions on our land are not currently in scope for the purposes of the 2030 target, the Routemap showing that this will be reviewed in 2025 (Section 6.2.5). Churchyards can also provide valuable wildlife habitat and it is important to keep these multiple benefits in mind when considering changes in land use.

There is existing advice about trees on the Environment Programme website [here](#), and advice on biodiversity and creation care [here](#). Caring for God's Acre also have this advice on [improving the carbon footprint of your burial ground](#).

137. *The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What steps are being taken to encourage more dioceses to engage with the Communion Forest, which was launched at the Lambeth Conference in 2022?

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Several members of the Communion Forest team joined the Environment Working Group meeting in May 2023 to share information about the project and to discuss ways to take this forward. The Communion Forest is about habitat creation, protection and restoration, and will look different in varied places around the world. It does not have to be about planting trees.

The Church Commissioners' Rural Team is working with the Communion Forest team to identify a project which would make a good showcase. Once the right project has been identified, it can be shared across national and diocesan communication networks to highlight the Communion Forest initiative and encourage dioceses to take part, for example on suitable parcels of glebe land.

I am encouraging other bishops to follow the bishops in the Diocese of Norwich who give a hazel tree sapling to all who we confirm.

Members of General Synod can share information with their own diocese to encourage participation. Find out how to get involved [here](#).

138. *Mrs Michaela Suckling (Sheffield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the House of Bishops lend its support to the Essentials Guarantee Campaign launched by the Trussell Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation calling on the UK Government to enshrine in law the amount people need to ensure that the basic rate of Universal Credit at least covers the essentials?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Bishops are extremely active on this theme.

In the Lords, I tabled a question to Government on the ‘Essentials Guarantee’. Lords Spiritual continue to press for adequate levels of UC. In the past six months:

- My Private Member’s Bill – the Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill – completed its House of Lords stages and has passed to the Commons. This would remove the restriction on UC payments to the first two children only.
- I also tabled questions asking how many children receiving UC are ineligible for free school meals, and on debt deductions for those on UC and unable to afford essentials
- The Bishop of Manchester supported a motion “That this House regrets that the Rent Officers (Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Functions) (Modification) Order 2023 will freeze Local Housing Allowance at the levels applied in April 2020 and therefore fails to account for inflationary increases in rent, resulting in vulnerable claimants spending a greater proportion of income on rent”.
- The Bishop of Chelmsford asked Government about debt management for UC claimants, citing Trussell Trust research showing that 57% of people referred to food banks who are in receipt of UC face Government deductions from benefits income.

139. *Mr Guy Hordern (Birmingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Archbishop of Canterbury recently affirmed, in response to a question, that we should be more confident and unapologetic in communicating the Church’s doctrine of marriage and sexuality. What resources and support has the House of Bishops offered to chaplains and lay Christians working in education who teach and explain the Church’s doctrine of marriage, particularly in situations where they are criticised or threatened for doing so?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Diocesan Boards of Education provide advice and guidance to their schools in this area. We have produced national guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education and the particular need to be mindful of faith perspectives in this (for all schools, not simply Church of England schools) is here [Relationships, Sex and Health Education | The Church of England](#). In this guidance we make particular reference to the need to teach the Church of England’s view of marriage in a Church school setting.

140. *Mr Stephen Boyall (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What action has been taken by the House of Bishops, to lobby the Government to take actions to support marriage according to the doctrine of the Church?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops Our active engagement with HMG about marriage is currently focused upon the recent Law Commission report on Weddings. At the consultation stage, I responded to the draft proposals, severely criticizing the Law Commission's approach. The fundamental problem is that they focused on the law surrounding weddings whilst explicitly refusing to engage with the meaning of marriage. Consequently, their report was seriously deficient, suggesting, for example, that a wedding must be "dignified" without any notion of what that would mean or how it could be enforced.

The fundamental shift they called for was to move from a premises-based to a celebrant-based system. Whilst that approach works adequately in Scotland, the recommendations were clearly intended to open the "weddings market" more widely to commercial celebrants operating for profit.

However, HMG wishes to implement the recommendations of the report, and staff from FPL have already met the Ministry of Justice team and stressed our position. We do not believe that every legal change must be resisted, but that the move to commercialise weddings is likely to undermine the Christian understanding of marriage.

141. *Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In GS 2289, Annex A, the bishops committed to working with the National Society to produce an updated version of the guidance for church schools, Valuing All God's Children. When can we expect to receive this updated version, and how will both the guidance and the timeline be affected by the Government's plan to issue new guidance for schools on issues around gender identity?

*The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops The guidance will most certainly be updated in the light of the Government guidance. It is expected that the Government guidance will be published this term for consultation in the Autumn and final publication in 2024. We expect our guidance to be updated on a similar timeline.

## HOUSE OF CLERGY

142. *The Revd Canon John Bavington (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the House of Clergy: At a recent meeting between members of the House of Clergy and representatives of the LLF groups a considerable number of questions were submitted. How many questions were submitted, and when and where will answers to those questions be published?

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool)* replied as Chair of the House of Clergy: Between points raised in the meeting, in the Zoom chat and by email after the meeting there were

83 comments on the Pastoral Guidance, 31 on Pastoral Reassurance, 27 on the Prayers of Love and Faith, and 28 on process matters, although some were very similar, and some members made several comments in one or more of the areas.

The paper containing all of the submissions has now been circulated to members of the House as promised. Although the paper is mentioned in paragraph 17 of GS 2303, at present there has been no formal response from the LLF Implementation Group.

## SECRETARY GENERAL

143. *Mr Adam Kendry (Armed Forces)* asked the Secretary-General: What is the breakdown of General Synod boards and committee membership by each church tradition: a) Central, b) Liberal, c) Traditional Catholic, d) Modern Catholic, e) Conservative Evangelical, f) Charismatic Evangelical, g) Open Evangelical?

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary-General:* I am afraid that the information requested could not be collated without disproportionate time being spent in doing so. In any case, it is optional for General Synod members to state their church tradition when submitting their data to the Central Secretariat, and therefore any answer would not be complete.

144. *Mr Adam Kendry (Armed Forces)* asked the Secretary-General: How many Church of England parishes belong to each church tradition (as provided as options for General Synod members to describe themselves), namely: a) Central, b) Liberal, c) Traditional Catholic, d) Modern Catholic, e) Conservative Evangelical, f) Charismatic Evangelical, g) Open Evangelical?

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary-General:* The Data Services Team does not collect data which asks parishes to describe their church tradition.

145. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Secretary-General: With the welcome use of Reference Groups in the early stages of formulating legislative proposals, what processes are followed, or guidance provided, such that the membership of such a Group provides a reasonably balanced representation of the range of pertinent opinions and concerns?

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary-General:* It is good to hear that the use of Reference groups has been welcomed. There is no formal policy or guidance for the use of such groups as they are a recent development. The expectation would be that project leaders would decide what kind of group would be appropriate and that would be agreed with the group/senior officers overseeing the work as part of the governance of the project. It would be good practice to ensure that the role and responsibilities of any such groups are clear, through terms of reference or project documentation. As the purpose of these groups is to gather a range of opinions a broad and diverse membership would be appropriate and expected.



146. *Mr Clive Billenness (Europe)* asked the Secretary-General: Please provide details of where the Church of England's Conflicts of Interest Policy can be inspected or, if no such policy exists, please provide details of how conflicts of interest are identified, managed and recorded?

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary-General:* The Church of England is not one single institution and therefore there is not one single conflicts of interest policy. Each legal entity which makes up the Church of England will have its own policy on conflicts of interest.

With respect to the Archbishops' Council, in accordance with normal practice in the charity sector, we require trustees to complete written annual declarations of interest, and conflicts of interest is a standing item on the agenda of each meeting, so trustees must consider whether any item of business to be discussed might give rise to a conflict.

147. *Mrs Jane Rosam (Rochester)* asked the Secretary-General: Where can members of Synod read the C of E conflicts of interest policy the application of which will explain to them why Meg Munn would not have a conflict of interest in acting simultaneously as Chair of the ISB and NSP with a passported seat from the NSP onto the NSSG.

*Mr William Nye replied as Secretary-General:* The Church of England is not one single institution and therefore there is not one single conflicts of interest policy. The Archbishops' Council requires trustees and members of the board to declare any relevant interests.

The National Safeguarding Panel and Independent Safeguarding Board are not trustee bodies of the Church of England. Both the NSP and ISB have been set up to advise and scrutinise the work of safeguarding in the Church. They both expect members to declare conflicts of interest at each meeting.

The role of Independent Chair of the National Safeguarding Panel is not automatically in conflict with the role of Chair of the Independent Safeguarding Board. The independent chair of the NSP attends the NSSG to contribute NSP perspectives into the formulation of NSSG policy, in the same way that members of the ISB attend the Safeguarding Programme Board to contribute their perspectives into safeguarding developments.

## **CLERK TO THE SYNOD**

148. *Mr Clive Billenness (Europe)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Please provide a detailed technical explanation of why signatures for Private Members Motions submitted via the website were not received by staff between May 4 and June 20 including details of what technical mitigations were put in place to prevent a repetition of the issue?

149. *Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Concerning PMMs, please can you provide a detailed account of how the failure of the registration system

during May-June has been dealt with, and can you give an assurance that all attempts to register support during the period of failure have been captured and re-registered, and may the published list of members who have signed each PMM be updated so that it is comprehensive and correct?

150. *Mr Tony Allwood (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: General Synod Standing Order 6(7)(b) provides that “*The number of names supporting each [Private Member’s] motion is to be... made known to members in such manner as the Business Committee determines from time to time*”, and SO 6(7A), added by amendment to the SOs in July 2018, provides, “*In the case of each motion, the name of each member supporting the motion is to be published on the Synod website.*” Bearing in mind the recent “technical issue with signatures for PMMs via the website(referred to in paragraph 24 of the Business Committee report, GS 2297), what procedures are in place to ensure that the website is updated frequently (a) to show the number of supporting signatures for each PMM, and (b) to provide a link to the list of members supporting each motion?

*Ms Jenny Jacobs replied as Clerk to the Synod:* With permission I will answer questions 148, 149 and 150 together.

The issue that arose in May was that the signatures for Private Members’ Motions via the website was not synching to the generic PMM mailbox. This meant that when staff went into the mailbox, only those signatures via the App were being seen. There were no signatures lost as those submitted via the website were still stored in the website database.

To address this issue, our IT team has set up a new mailbox for the PMMs which staff have access to. This has been vigorously tested internally, and this issue should not arise again.

The signatures that had been submitted via the website have now been added to the rolling list of signatures and the list of PMMs is correct up to 21 June. It will be updated following the group of sessions with any signatures received from 22 June and during the group of sessions. We will then ensure that the list of signatures is updated regularly until 30 October which will be the cut-off date for the November 2023 group of sessions.

151. *Mr Tony Allwood (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Please explain why the Report of Proceedings of the February 2023 group of sessions of General Synod does not include the text of the answers to the questions asked in November 2022 pursuant to SO 117 (as set out in a Notice Paper circulated on 1 December 2022), as required by Standing Order 117(3), and inform Synod of the procedures that are in place to ensure compliance with this Standing Order.

*Ms Jenny Jacobs replied as Clerk to the Synod:* The answers to written questions in November 2022 had been included on the Synod web pages and circulated in their own

right. It is correct that these should have been added to the February 2023 Report of Proceedings. This was an oversight which has since been corrected. This has been included on the staff work plan so should not happen in future.

152. *The Revd Tim Edwards (Rochester)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Will the Synod briefing document that is sent to diocesan secretaries in advance of a group of sessions also be routinely sent to members of General Synod before future groups of sessions?

*Ms Jenny Jacobs replied as Clerk to the Synod:* The briefing for Diocesan Secretaries is put together by summarising information found in the Business Committee Report, the Agenda and the emails sent out to members from Synod Support. It had not been sent to members as we are aware that there is already considerable documentation sent by our team for Synod, and did not want to add to it, particularly as the information can be found elsewhere.

We do encourage the Diocesan Secretaries to share this but if members would like to receive this directly, we would be happy to include them on the mailing list. We would suggest that members contact us directly on [synod@churchofengland.org](mailto:synod@churchofengland.org) to be included in the circulation.

There is also a post-Synod summary that is sent to Diocesan Secretaries which pulls together the results of votes, final versions of motions and other key points of relevance. We would be happy to share this with members as well if this was of interest.

153. *Mr Philip Baldwin (London)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Why did the Synod membership details form, sent out in early May, ask about age, disability, race, ethnicity and sex, but not gender reassignment or sexual orientation, also protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010?

*Ms Jenny Jacobs replied as Clerk to the Synod:* The form which members were invited to complete included demographic data (year of birth, race and ethnicity, gender and disability). This data is used to enable us to produce anonymised statistics about the demographic make-up of the General Synod. Further detail can be found in the General Synod Privacy Notice. It is optional for members to provide the demographic data.

We did not review the categories of data requested, but simply repeated those from the previous quinquennium. It would be possible to conduct a review of the data requested, if there were an interest in obtaining such statistics either about the other protected characteristics, or indeed any other factor.

154. *The Revd Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Following the recent confirmation of November 2023 sessions, many Synod members began to book hotel rooms. Already, charges for this period at basic hotels within safe reach of Church House are at, or exceeding, the accommodation limit. A recent press article highlighted the trend ([Premier Inn room rates soar as budget hotel era 'evaporates,'](#)

Guardian. 22 June 2023)\*. What is the basis on which expenses allowances for General Synod members are set?

*Ms Jenny Jacobs replied as Clerk to the Synod:* The expenses policy applies to staff, trustees and committee members. Dioceses are also encouraged to follow this policy. It has been recognised that the current rates within the policy are at times challenging or not possible to remain within. Therefore, a benchmarking exercise was taken early this year to review the expenses policy for the National Church Institutions. The exercise looked at comparable charities and led to an uplift of 10%. This equates to bed and breakfast rates increasing from £141 per night to £155 per night.

Dioceses are encouraged to follow these guidelines but as they are responsible for reimbursing the expenses, it is for the diocese to consider if they are willing to pay more, recognising they are using charitable funds.

## **CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL**

155. *Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Church Buildings Council: Now that the UK is no longer governed by EU law, has the Church of England asked HM Government for VAT relief for work on church buildings? If not, have Church of England representatives had any recent discussions with HM Government on revising the unrealistic rules on the Listed Places of Worship Grant scheme?

*The Ven. Robert Cooper (Durham) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:* The Church of England is engaged with partners in Historic England, the Heritage Alliance, the DCMS and elsewhere over the impact of VAT on works to historic buildings, including churches.

The DCMS is the responsible department for the VAT grant scheme and keeps the operation of the scheme under review. The Council and the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance write around at least once each year asked for concerns over the operation of the scheme to raise with the department. The scheme is generous, and we always encourage parishes who receive a grant to write to thank their MP and invite them to see the completed work. The scheme must be careful to fund only things that are permanently in the building and expenses that directly lead to works to the listed building. This can lead to frustration over where boundaries are drawn. The DCMS will listen to proposals for review of what is eligible but must always keep the focus of the grants on the fabric of a listed building.

A new website, with online application form was recently launched, more consistent with other modern Government websites. This will make the application process more straightforward.

156. *The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Church Buildings Council: Many churches find themselves with very valuable and historically important

Communion Plate and Vessels, yet they are unable to sell them to raise funds or have them stored safely somewhere secure. Many counties' Museums are not accepting any more plate, and Cathedral treasuries are full. Can we have guidance and a national strategy on this?

*The Ven. Robert Cooper (Durham) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:* The church buildings of the Church of England are home to an amazing variety of treasures and artworks that are of high significance, including church plate. The Church Buildings Council considers that church treasures belong in churches and should only be removed in the most exceptional circumstances. In some circumstances a loan to a museum or cathedral treasury is possible through a deed of gift.

The Church Buildings Council has guidance on the ChurchCare website on the care of church plate, and also a template deed of gift for where there is a suitable museum or treasury to house the plate. There is also guidance on the law around potential disposal when there is an exceptional reason to consider this. The Council can assist with advice and sometimes grant aid towards the cost of secure display or repair of church plate.

The church and its historic furnishings, including plate, are an intergenerational resource and part of shared memory in a place. After the pandemic we have come to see just how important place and all that contributes to it is.

157. *The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Church Buildings Council: Where should historically important and valuable plate be put if it is at risk?

*The Ven. Robert Cooper (Durham) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:* The Church Buildings Council considers that plate belongs in the church. It is also aware of current heightened concerns over security after some well-publicized thefts during this year.

The Council is part of the National Police Chiefs Council Heritage Crime Group and works closely with Historic England over its crime prevention advice. The church contributed to the recently published Historic England advice on Heritage Crime Prevention, and at a forum for police and crime commissioners where church crime was featured.

Police crime analysts at Opal have been tracking church burglaries as they emerged from the start of 2023. Their analysis shows that these crimes, though serious, are still very rare. Attempted burglaries can be thwarted by following the security advice published on the ChurchCare website and by insurers. For churches that have installed an alarm, extending it to the vestry will make a church a less attractive target. In the same vein, if there is CCTV keep the recording where it is not easy for a thief to find and take it, or otherwise disable the system.

158. *Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the Church Buildings Council: How much money has been spent on the development of the Quinquennial Inspection App, when will it be available and how has the demand for it been assessed?

*The Ven. Robert Cooper (Durham)* replied on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council: The Council has developed a function to add Quinquennial Inspection reports to its Church Heritage Record and Online Faculty System. The function is not currently supported by a digital “app”.

The QI function cost around £15k to develop. It is presently not widely used as reports are most often added as PDF documents. This has not allowed development of interrogation of inspection reports as intended – for example to understand costs and urgency of work across the diocese. The facility to add reports has however proved to be successful in that diocesan officers now have a single repository to view ongoing and past Quinquennial Inspection reports, and the facility provided allows inspectors to add the reports directly to the system.

As part of the redevelopment of the Online Faculty System and Church Heritage Record, we will look at options for developing a more integrated QI report feature. We will work with the Ecclesiastical Architects & Surveyors Association to discuss options for onsite recording to streamline the process for all.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

159. *Mr Robert McNeil-Wilson (Gloucester)* asked the Chair of the Finance Committee: Total Return Accounting is making additional Diocesan Stipends Funds available to those dioceses using it, to be spent on clerical stipends. Latest figures suggest that an additional £40 million could have been generated in this way in 2022, nationally. On average, this provides each Diocese with an extra £1 Million per annum, which is the equivalent of an extra 18 vicars per diocese per annum. Can the Church explain why only 13 of the 42 Dioceses applied Total Return Accounting to their DSFs in 2022?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio)* replied as Chair of the Finance Committee: Every DBF is an independent charity and makes its own decisions. Nationally, we have strongly encouraged every diocese to consider this option seriously and continue to do so. However, we cannot enforce adoption.

The financial benefit of adopting a total return approach varies considerably between dioceses depending on the value of their investments, so using averages in this case is somewhat misleading. Of course the money can only be spent once. What total return does is to enable the spending of investment funds today which would otherwise be locked away to support future distributions. The level of additional funds that can be spent depends on the period over which a DBF decides to spend its unapplied total return and whether or not this is intended to be a sustainable rate in real or nominal terms.

The £40m Mr McNeil-Wilson states in his question may be an illustration of all dioceses spending 5%p.a. of their DSF (the average expenditure rate for the ten dioceses which had adopted total return accounting by the start of 2021) compared with DSF income stated in DBF accounts. But some dioceses transfer DSF income directly to defray stipend costs so this figure will be overstated.

160. *Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester)* asked the Chair of the Finance Committee: All trends in church statistics show that there will be no congregation by 2045. At that time, trends predict that the number of stipendiary clergy will be 3607 (80 per Diocese), and the number of Diocesan support staff will exceed 10,000 (approximately 200 per Diocese). Does the decreasing congregation size and decreasing number of stipendiary clergy, contrasted with an increase in Diocesan support staff, suggest an alternative approach that the Church might make to limit the decrease in congregation size?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Finance Committee:* It is our intention, ambition and prayer is that our Church will grow through a combination of the Vision and Strategy for the 2020s 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.

An emphasis on increasing our Church's engagement with children and young people is a key part of our combined efforts to encourage numerical and spiritual growth. It is true that in recent years there have been increases in diocesan support staff. This has been driven by factors including staff involved in creating and delivering strategic change programs; and strengthening the resource for safeguarding management and oversight and DDO teams as we successfully increased the number of ordination candidates between 2015 and 2019. The recent trend in diocesan running costs is not expected to continue into the future, nor would it be affordable.

## **COMMITTEE FOR MINORITY ETHNIC ANGLICAN CONCERNS**

161. *The Revd Folli Olokose (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns: The annual CMEAC report shows many encouraging initiatives from dioceses working with UKME. Could the Racial Justice Unit share some of the success stories more widely? Are there lessons to be learned from these stories? And how are these being shared with the wider Church?

*The Dean of Manchester (The Very Revd Rogers Govender) replied as Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns:* In 2022, the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) undertook a review of actions at the diocesan level to promote racial justice and further the implementation of the report of the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce: From Lament to Action. It is anticipated that such a review would be a recurring process, preferably annually. While the findings were presented to the Archbishops' Council in December 2022 and subsequently shared with dioceses, some

dioceses requested that the information shared be updated to ensure a complete up to date account is available. Accordingly, further information and data gathering is currently taking place with the expectation that the completed report will be published in accessible formats, complete with success stories and lessons learned, later this year.

## MINISTRY COUNCIL

162. *The Revd Canon Ian Flintoft (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Given the apparent difficulties in finding Advisers for stage 2 residential panels, when will Ministry Council carry out a further review of the current discernment process, including the issues of the recruitment and retention of Bishops' Advisers?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: In the current year (September 2022 – August 2023) we have run 77 Stage 1 panels requiring 462 Bishops' Advisers for Discernment. We have set up 50 Stage 2 panels requiring up to 400 Bishops' Advisers for Discernment.

Only one panel (at Stage 2) has been cancelled because of not having the required number and type of Bishops' Advisers, but in the same week another panel still has spaces. Therefore, no candidates have been prevented from coming to a panel because we have not been able to find Bishops' Advisers.

Where Advisers have needed to withdraw from panels it is normally for good reasons and often illness-related (including Covid).

We agreed that Ministry Council would review the new Shared Discernment Process after the first two years, and this will take place in Autumn 2023 in connection with the DDO Consultation.

163. *The Revd Fiona Jack (London)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What guidance has been given to DDOs supporting LGBTQ+ candidates, given the uncertainty created by the House of Bishops' decision to withdraw "Issues in Human Sexuality", but in the absence of any replacement?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: *Issues in Human Sexuality* remains in place until the House of Bishops provide new Pastoral Guidance. However, there is a deep recognition of the uncertainty caused for candidates as well as for DDOs around this (as well as about many other aspects of Living in Love and Faith) at the current time. DDOs have been encouraged and supported in their work to treat LGBTQ+ candidates, and all other candidates concerned by this uncertainty, with empathy, care and sensitive awareness. Members of the Ministry Development Team have made clear that any DDO is welcome to seek support in offering the best care and support for candidates in any particular situations they are facing.



164. *The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Already we see adverts for clergy mentioning the need to lead church communities through the effects of sea level rises. Conversations with TEI staff indicate that the provision of teaching enabling emerging church leaders at Theological Colleges and other Ministry Training Courses is patchy in regard to matters relating to the 5th mark of mission. What is being done to address this and how will the Church of England tackle this serious weakness in the teaching of Ordinands to ensure that they are adequately prepared to provide appropriate guidance, teaching, missional leadership and pastoral care for their future parishioners as we all face the dire consequences of sea level rise, climate change and ecological breakdown?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The new Formation Framework for ordinands, makes explicit references to creation and to the *Five Marks of Mission* – in the Formation Criteria which previously applied environmental issues was nowhere explicit, though implicitly included in references to mission. This year's annual Common Awards conference, open to all TEI staff, is on the theme of theological education and the environmental crisis. As well as plenary sessions with speakers, staff will be invited to discuss in disciplinary subject groupings how their learning from the conference should affect their own teaching. The recently formed Theological Colleges Environmental Network, with which we liaise, is also doing work on integration of environmental issues across the curriculum as well as specific modules. They are seeking to develop the Eco Church awards for TEIs to include curricular and formational issues.

Clearly the formation of clergy continues beyond IME1, so further learning should take place in curacy and beyond.

165. *The Revd Esther Prior (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: In the consultations about the development of ministerial training, there was a strong sense of the need for a move towards a common syllabus/shared framework for training across the different institutions and range of pathways. What progress has been made towards this?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The premise of this question correctly reflects the desire for a shared framework but any desire for a common syllabus was, and is, contested (as reflected in previous responses to synod questions).

The new Formation Framework offers clear overarching expectations for the initial training of ordained and licensed lay ministers (available at [Training institutions | The Church of England](#) for IME1 and [After Ordination | The Church of England](#) for curates in IME2). Likewise, Common Awards offers elements of common practice for TEIs, except where an exception is granted by Ministry Council. We have begun discussion with TEIs and dioceses to consider whether greater coherence between IME1 and IME2 can be achieved and what level of commonality of syllabus best serves the formation of the

Church's diverse ministers, but there is not sufficient capacity to do this work while the Resourcing Ministerial Formation review remains underway.

166. *The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Has the Ministry Council considered the impact on the theological education sector of the widespread growth of training pathways for older candidates on the 'Caleb' model, outside Bishops' Guidelines, where discernment takes place simultaneously with a single year's theological education before ordination?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: This question addresses the impact on the theological education sector, which is dynamic, responsive, and seeking to engage with innovations such as 'Caleb' in which discernment and formation take place concurrently. Ministry Council continues to note the impact on the TEIs of such innovative approaches.

It is also important to note that the year's 'Caleb' training takes place at TEIs, though not within the normal funding for the training of ordinands. As GS 2286 stated, the Council is committed to sustaining and expanding the work of TEIs to have the ministers we need. In the medium term, even with initiatives such as Caleb, we require TEIs to train more ordinands within the standard pathways than they currently do. The RMF funding model, agreed by Synod in February, offers TEIs significant protection against reduced ordinand fee income when they have a temporary downturn in numbers for any reason.

167. *The Revd Canon Rick Stordy (Sheffield)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What is the agreed national requirement in place for ensuring understanding of, familiarity with, and competence in the use of the Book of Common Prayer in public worship for ordinands, and how are the training institutions assessed for their meeting of this requirement?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: Canon C 7 requires that all those to be ordained must possess 'sufficient knowledge...of the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of England as set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and the Ordinal.' There are no specific requirements for how TEIs ensure this, just as in other areas TEIs have discretion in how they ensure ordinands receive the necessary formation. As part of the Periodic External Review process, TEIs are specifically required to provide as evidence their worship policy including information about the rites used and the frequency as well as documentation on training ordinands in leading public worship. Reviewers are specifically asked to comment in their report on the TEI's use of the Book of Common Prayer. It is clearly an important function of IME2 to extend the candidate's competency in leading worship, building on the foundations laid in IME1.

168. *The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TEIs)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: This year the number of ordinands in training has fallen by over 14% (from 1,285 in 2021-22 to 1,101 to 2022-23), with the numbers in full-time training dropping by over a

fifth. TElS have been told that the numbers of new starters this year has fallen sharply to about 380 in 2022 from 475 in 2021. How many people have been recommended for training so far this year following a Stage 2 panel, and how many are booked to attend one between now and the end of August?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* 239 candidates have been recommended to train for ordained ministry at Stage 2 panels since 1 September 2022 until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

156 candidates are registered to attend remaining Stage 2 panels before 31 August 2023 (123 of these will come before the end of July and 33 by 8<sup>th</sup> August)

There is also a much higher number than usual of recommended candidates who have deferred the start of their training from previous years, and it is not yet clear how many of those will enter training this year.

169. *The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Given the major drop in the number of ordinands who entered training in 2022, and the potentially low intake again this year, what ongoing support has been offered to Theological Education Institutions given the dramatic impact this is having on their income?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* TElS were offered one-off additional funding in 2022 to mitigate the financial effect on them of the drop in the numbers entering IME1 in that year. Payments totalled approximately £1 million. The RMF funding model, as agreed by Synod in February, offers TElS significant protection against a loss of ordinand fee income when they have a temporary downturn in numbers for any reason.

170. *The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: According to GS 2286, the church needs at least 630 new ordained ministers per year to achieve the 'bold outcomes' set out in the Vision and Strategy initiative. This will require an increase of two thirds on the numbers entering training in 2022. In the light of such ambition, what work is being undertaken to increase the number of ordinands entering training each year?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* The Ministry Council and the Archbishops' Council both share the concerns around lower numbers of new ordinands starting training.

At its May meeting, the Ministry Council approved a stream of work to renew the Church's shared task in discovery and nurture of new ministerial vocations across the Church of England, both lay and ordained. Work will start in the autumn. In the meantime, all Synod members are encouraged to pray for God's provision of ministers for his Church.

171. *The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Will the Ministry Council please supply a full breakdown of ordinand numbers at the several TEIs for the academic year 2022-3, for the information of Synod?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The requested information has been posted on the noticeboard.

172. *The Revd Canon Nick Moir (Ely)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: In the debate on GS 2286 Resourcing Ministerial Education at the February 2023 Synod the former Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University challenged the failure to assess the true cost of ministerial training and the relative costs of full-time residential, full-time non-residential and part-time training, making it clear that such costings are regarded as essential in the higher education sector however difficult they are to calculate. The report suggested that the task was too difficult and chose simply to accept the current settlement with adjustments for inflation. In the light of Professor Hill's criticism are there any plans to revisit this and to establish the true cost of training for ordained ministry?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The RMF Working Group concluded that assessing fee levels would not form part of the current project. This does not preclude the Ministry Council from requesting a review in future although there are no specific plans to do this at present.

173. *The Revd Paul Bradbury (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: GS 2142 stated a Ministry Division target of doubling and doubling again the number of pioneers (lay and ordained) by 2027. The aims of Vision and Strategy set out in GS 2223 include the bold outcome of 'creating ten thousand new Christian communities across the four areas of home, work/education, social and digital'. Given that pioneer ministers are those called and gifted in the area of forming new ecclesial communities, can I ask:

- How many candidates were accepted for training as ordained pioneer ministers in each individual year between 2019 and 2022?
- What progress has been made toward the targets set out in GS 2142?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: In each of the following years, the number of Ordained Pioneer Ministers recommended to train were:

2019: 19

2020: 32

2021: 45 (32 through the national discernment process and 13 through pioneer panels)

2022: Due to transferring to a new IT system we are not currently able to identify the number of OPMs coming through the national discernment process in this year. One OPM came through a pioneer panel.

In 2021, the introduction of the Shared Discernment Process meant that ordinands coming through the national discernment process could also discern a pioneer charism at the same time. Lay and previously ordained pioneers continue to go through pioneer panels.

Whilst much of the disruption in 2022 can be attributed to the pandemic, some may also be a result of staffing changes and work on this priority is currently delayed.

174. *The Revd Paul Bradbury (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Whilst Vision and Strategy continues to encourage a mixed ecology of church there appears to be no-one within Ministry Division named as holding a responsibility for pioneer ministry, fresh expressions, or for the development of Greenhouse which plays a really important role in growing and sustaining new worshipping communities.

Who is now holding this brief with Ministry Division? And how do they plan to connect with, for example, the pioneer panels, the network of Ordained Pioneer Ministers, the network of Diocesan FX and Pioneer ministry advisers and the work of Greenhouse?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: As a result of recent staffing changes, this work is currently shared.

The discernment of OPMs is shared between the National Discernment Team (as part of the National Discernment Process) and the Gregory Centre for Multiplication (pioneer panels for lay and previously ordained candidates).

The work of Greenhouse on fresh expressions is held for the Archbishops' Council by the Vision and Strategy Team.

There is not currently a pioneer focused role in the Ministry Development Team (formerly 'Ministry Division') although each of the various teams share the brief in respect of Lay Ministries, Vocations, Discernment and Formation of pioneer ministers.

175. *Mrs Catherine Butcher (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What are the central strategic plans for training and supporting those who are starting new worshipping communities?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: Published diocesan plans to date suggest over 4,000 new worshipping communities are currently planned. Appropriate leadership is crucial to this and there needs to be a right balance between central and local training and support. Most church leaders will need to be equipped to start and oversee the start of new expressions and some will be involved in church planting.

This is being considered throughout ministerial formation both centrally and locally, ordained and lay. The national Shared Discernment Process for ordained ministry and

associated new formation frameworks have been developed with widening access and the mixed ecology in mind. In line with the aim that at least 2,000 of the new worshipping communities are in our most deprived contexts there is a strong focus on growing leaders on urban estates and other areas of deprivation, with examples including the Birmingham Local Ministry Pathway, Become (in London), M:Power (Diocese of Blackburn) and Stepping Up (Mustard Seed, Diocese of York). Nationally we continue to fund and support the Greenhouse project in partnership with dioceses, developing leaders in fresh expressions. So far 16 dioceses have participated with a further 9 in current discussion. The national work also supports the sharing of learning leading to expansion and multiplication of particular new worshipping communities such as Choir church.

176. *The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Dioceses like Leicester, Sheffield and Truro increasingly want clergy to exercise oversight of multiple parishes and wide areas, not just a traditional parish. What is being done centrally to help select, train and support clergy regarding these new roles?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: Initial discernment focuses on candidates being able to build relationships that are enabling and collaborative, and leading in a way that enables thriving and healthy churches. For incumbent level ministry, managing change, seeing the big picture, growing vision with others and showing nuanced negotiation and problem solving skills, whilst being able to hold the ring in decision-making are key. Responding with missionary imagination in God's world is also important.

IME1 forms all clergy for collaborative leadership in the context of a church where a range of multi-parish benefice arrangements are normal.

IME2 is the responsibility of each diocese and has to strike a balance between forming those who will continue to serve in that diocese with its particular vision and approach to ministry and equipping those who will serve elsewhere to do so.

Rural/Area Deans and Archdeacons continue to support clergy in these and other kinds of roles.

177. *Mrs Katia D'Arcy-Cumber (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Recognising that non-residential training is the only practical option for many ordinands, what measures are in place to ensure breadth of churchmanship and theological perspective within these non-residential institutions?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: We make no comment on the assertion with which the question begins.

All TEIs are required to ensure ordinands are well-formed in the breadth of Anglican traditions, equipped to reflect critically on their own practices, and able to engage

generously and respectfully with those whose liturgical preference or theological position differs from their own. Periodic External Review teams always include reviewers drawn from a diversity of traditions, and consider the breadth of approach evident in the TEI's worship. There are no additional (or reduced) requirements for TEIs offering non-residential training. TEIs offering non-residential training will be particularly engaged with their local dioceses who will expect them to offer appropriate formation to the widest range of ordinands, and in most cases the diocese will have representation in the TEI's governance.

178. *The Revd Claire Robson (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What progress has been made in the areas addressed in GS Misc 1285 concerning the nature and role of ordained ministry, and in particular the matters raised in its conclusion?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: In the area of clergy discipline as raised in GS Misc 1285, the first draft of the new Clergy Conduct Measure is on the agenda for consideration at this Synod (GS 2311).

In relation to the wider issues raised by the paper: the Clergy Role Group, chaired by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich was established at the end of 2022, having been delayed by the 'Transforming Effectiveness' programme. The group has met four times (with two further meetings scheduled during 2023) and has been focusing on reviewing the nature and role of ordained ministry, using the current formation framework as a starting point. The group expects to report on this first stage to Ministry Council and the Legislative Reform Committee, to which the Group is accountable, in the autumn. Consideration of the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of Clergy should commence towards the end of this year.

179. *Miss Rosemary Wilson (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: How many licensed clergy in resolution parishes are ready to be appointed to a senior position?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner)* replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: This data is collated based on the position of the priest concerned rather than the parish (or other context) in which they serve.

Thus we cannot provide information relating to parishes which have passed resolutions. However, of the current clergy who have been discerned as ready for episcopal leadership, five describe themselves as either Complementarian Evangelical or Traditional Catholic.

This data is not independently available for other forms of senior leadership such as Cathedral Deans, Archdeacons or TEI Principals.

180. *The Revd Marcus Walker (London)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: How many parishes have a vacancy for (a) an incumbency and (b) a priest-in-charge in each

diocese; and how many (i) incumbents and (ii) priest-in-charge vacancies there have been in each diocese in each of the last five years?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* There is no central record of vacancies.

181. *Mr Paul Ronson (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What progress can the [Clergy Care and Wellbeing Facilitation] Group report on its monitoring and evaluation of the rollout of the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing since its adoption as an Act of Synod in 2020 and what is the anticipated timescale of the Group's report back to General Synod?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* The Facilitation Group for the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing is not currently meeting while the Appointments Committee seeks a new chair. Meanwhile, the Ministry Development Team is considering a possible resource to facilitate dioceses in developing wellbeing strategy and good practice which will also capture review data for collating and forming the basis of the next report to Synod. A new timeline will be proposed once the new chair is in post.

182. *The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Is data collected and collated centrally around the numbers of ordinands, curates, and post-curacy clergy taking maternity leave, and if so, please could the figures for the last 5 years be provided?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* This data is not collected centrally.

183. *Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What were the numbers of male and female stipendiary clergy in each diocese in the years ending December 2021 and December 2022?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* The information in reply to this Question and Question 182 is displayed in the Table on the noticeboard. 2022 data is not yet available, but data is provided up to 2021.

184. *Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What were the numbers of male and female SSM clergy in each diocese in the years ending December 2021 and December 2022?

*The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council:* The information in reply to this Question and Question 181 is displayed in the Table on the noticeboard. 2022 data is not yet available, but data is provided up to 2021.

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



185. *Mrs Jeanette Appleton (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: Why do clergy receive financial assistance when moving to a new post from the appointing diocese, but when they retire, there is no financial assistance from either the diocese where they have been a priest, or central Church of England, for the cost of moving to their new home where they will live out their retirement?

*The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson)* replied as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: Clergy are generally required to live in the house provided for the better performance of their duties in the parish(es) where they minister. On this basis, it is recommended (but not required) that dioceses should pay stipendiary clergy a minimum Resettlement Grant of at least 10% of the National Minimum Stipend (payable in addition to the cost of the van) for all moves.

In retirement, there is no requirement that clergy need to live in a particular place or continue to have a ministry, although many apply for Permission to Officiate and make a valuable contribution to the Church's ministry after retirement from stipendiary office. In addition, when clergy retire, they receive a lump sum that can be used to pay removal costs.

186. *The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: How has the clergy stipend compared with average earnings over the last ten and twenty years in percentile terms? What increase in stipend would be needed to restore it to its previous comparative value?

*The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson)* replied as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: The table below shows how the National Stipend Benchmark for 2021 compares with total income before tax by percentile points for 2021 (the latest year for which HMRC data is available), and how it compared in 2011 and 2001.

Year	National Stipend Benchmark (NSB)	Percentile point for total income before tax
2020/21	£27,000	52 <sup>nd</sup>
2010/11	£22,470	58 <sup>th</sup>
2000/01	£16,420	56 <sup>th</sup>

Looking at just the stipend, clergy receiving the NSB are towards the middle of the income distribution. Between 2001 and 2011 clergy receiving the NSB moved slightly up the distribution, though over the ten years to 2021 clergy fell back towards the middle of the distribution.

To restore the NSB to its previous comparative value in 2011, the NSB would need to have been £29,200 (rather than £27,000) in 2021, and to restore it to its comparative value in 2001 the NSB would needed to have been £28,700 in 2021.

187. *The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: Without telling clergy and their families to turn to charities, how is the Church of England going help clergy with the cost of living? It has been announced that the child tax credits are changing, the cost of living has risen above 10% and cost of Gas has gone up 129% and Electricity 67%?

*The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson)* replied as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: The best way of helping clergy with the cost of living is to ensure that stipends do not fall behind inflation, and this is the policy of the Archbishop's Council. Unfortunately with the current high levels of inflation and the drop in giving following the pandemic this is not affordable at present. However, it is hoped that, in the medium term, once inflation starts to fall, it may still be possible for increases above inflation to enable stipends to catch up.

RACSC remains concerned at the level of clergy hardship and the effect on clergy morale of reductions in the value of the stipend. Discussions with the Finance Committee enabled £3m to be allocated to be allocated to clergy facing hardship as a result of the cost of the living in 2022. A further £15m was awarded to help churches with energy bills in 2023. This was distributed to dioceses mainly to help PCCs with church energy bills, though there was some scope to help ministers if dioceses chose to do so.

## **MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

188. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: What progress has been made in following up on the motion, passed at the February 2023 Group of Sessions, calling on His Majesty's Government "to exempt charities, including churches, from liability for Insurance Premium Tax"?

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio)* replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: As with all motions which call upon His Majesty's Government for anything, a letter was sent by the Clerk to the Synod, in this case to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with details of the motion as passed. The Chancellor responded with an acknowledgement. So the Treasury is aware of Synod's views.

With the Public Policy team in Faith and Public Life depleted by staff sickness, vacancies and a secondment to LLF, and having lost our specialist in economic affairs in the Transforming Effectiveness/Simpler NCIs process, we have not had staff capacity to pursue the matter further.

189. *Canon Peter Adams (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Synod last reviewed the church's work in interfaith relations, and especially its

Presence and Engagement programme, in July 2017. Recognising the importance of this work over the past two decades in securing strong engagement with other faith communities when world and national events have sought to divide us and exploit our differences, what plans does the Mission and Public Affairs Council have to report on this work to Synod and seek its views on future work?

*Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:* Thank you for the question. The Coronation of King Charles III included for the first time participation from other faith representatives and was commented upon widely. This was a very public affirmation that our role as the Church of England includes serving all religious communities. The Presence & Engagement Programme helps equip the church for this role.

Since 2017, the National Census has shown an increase in people identifying with a religion other than Christian: now over 25% of people in London, our most religiously diverse city. The Presence & Engagement Programme, the P&E Task Group led by Bishop Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy and the network of Diocesan Inter Faith Advisers, work to ensure that the Church of England remains present in religiously diverse areas and engages positively with other faiths. This is not always easy. Global politics impact local relations as the question notes. It is vital that clergy and lay people are informed and supported to act with confidence and sensitivity at times of tension across religious boundaries. The Presence and Engagement programme enables this to happen.

If the Business Committee agrees, we would be delighted to bring a report for debate to Synod at a time of their choosing.

## **APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

190. *The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the Appointments Committee: With the pressure on some GS interest groups to fill GS Committees with like-minded candidates, and the fact that the only information most voters will have is that contained in a very short electoral Statement, what checks are applied to ensure that people standing for particular roles have the kind of experience they require?

*The Ven. Pete Spiers (Liverpool) replied as Chair of the Appointments Committee:* I am answering this question as it relates to appointments not elections. The Appointments Committee works hard to ensure that there is balance on committees, and has a transparent set of guidelines that it works to. Members of the Committee strive to engage with all Synod members to better understand their skills, expertise and experience.

For both appointments and elections, it is important to recognise that we are a Christian body, and we need to trust that when members state that they have particular experience they are being truthful.

## BUSINESS COMMITTEE

191. *Dr Ros Clarke (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: Can you inform Synod which members have received letters from the Business Committee as sanctions for their behaviour in the chamber during the February 2023 sessions? If this is not public information, can you explain how Synod can be reassured that sanctions are applied appropriately and impartially?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)* replied on behalf of the Business Committee: No members of Synod received letters from the Business Committee or its Chair, relating to their conduct in the chamber during the February 2023 group of sessions.

192. *Mr John Brydon (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: If it is subsequently found that the answer to a question, either at question time or during Synod debates etc was wrong, misleading or evasive, there is no mechanism in the Standing Orders to oblige the person who gave the answer to correct it and publishing the revised answer. Is there any plan to address this?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)* replied on behalf of the Business Committee: Standing Order 116 (5) allows for the information asked for to be provided after the group of sessions has concluded and this be included as an Annex to the Report of Proceedings. This is also how corrections to answers are made (eg the answer to Supplementary Question on Q56 in February 2023).

Should there be a need for further guidance on answers to Questions, the Standing Orders Committee could look at that.

193. *The Revd Lindsay Llewellyn-MacDuff (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: It has become a common feature of synodical questions that more complex or statistical supplementary answers are offered as a one to one exchange between questioner and committee member (for example "I will write to you" or "I will meet you"). What steps are the Business Committee taking to ensure that supplementary answers promised to Synod members outside the chamber are available to all Synod members?

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)* replied on behalf of the Business Committee: Where the responder to a supplementary question offers to provide more detailed information, under SO 116 (4) this should appear in an Annex to the report of proceedings and so made available to all members.

Where a responder offers to meet with a member to discuss a point in more detail, that is not covered by the Standing Orders, although I would expect any detailed statistical information to also be included as an Annex in the report of proceedings.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

194. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee: In the interest of clarity can you please confirm - in the amendment to the definition of “liturgical business” in Standing Order 78 (notice paper 1 point 34), is it the intent that liturgical business be restricted to Canon B2 matters exclusively?

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds)* replied as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee: There is no provision for Synod to commend a form of service under any Canon except Canon B2 as Liturgical provision is proposed, pursuant to the Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure 1974, for approval under Canon B2.

The House of Bishops has authority to commend a form of service under Canon B5. Canon B5 does not give any role to the Synod, so it would ultra vires for the Standing Orders to impose restrictions on the operation of Canon B5. Rather, Canon B5 would itself have to be amended to create some sort of role for Synod on a form of service before it is commended.

## **DIOCESES COMMISSION**

195. *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* asked the Chair of the Dioceses Commission: What work has been done to explore the economies of scale available, if some of the central functions of some or all of dioceses were to be merged?

*Dame Caroline Spelman (ex officio)* replied on behalf of the Dioceses Commission: The Dioceses Commission has consulted key stakeholders at the end of 2022 to hear their views on diocesan structures and experiences of collaboration between dioceses. We are in the process of gathering and discussing the feedback, determining any next steps, and will communicate the results and recommendations to those consulted shortly.

## **CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION**

196. *The Ven. Mark Ireland (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: Given the amendment to Standing Orders for the inclusion of additional Anglican Communion representatives to the CNC for the See of Canterbury, have any discussions taken place with the Anglican Consultative Council or others to clarify how and in what manner these people are to be chosen, how long that process would take, and the extent to which those provinces with self-declared “impaired” relationships with the ACC and Primates meetings will be included (or not) in the process?

197. *The Revd Tom Woolford (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: Given the amendment to Standing Orders for the inclusion of additional Anglican Communion representatives to the CNC for the See of Canterbury, have any discussions taken place with the Anglican Consultative Council or others to clarify how and in what manner these people are to be chosen, how long that process would take,

and the extent to which those provinces with self-declared “impaired” relationships with the ACC and Primates meetings will be included (or not) in the process?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:* With permission I will answer questions 196 and 197 together.

I am not involved in such discussions, quite properly, but I understand that the Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion and the Archbishops’ Secretary for Appointments have met to discuss the changes to General Synod Standing Orders as they relate to Anglican Communion representation on a CNC considering a vacancy in the Archbishopric of Canterbury. Given that there is no vacancy, current or imminent, in the See of Canterbury, these discussions are at an early stage, but will continue in the coming months, with others, as appropriate.

## **LEGAL ADVISORY COMMISSION**

198. *The Ven. Fiona Gibson (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission: In answer to Q39 at the last Synod in February 2023 the Commission said that its meeting on 08 March 2023 would consider the alleged effect of s.8 of the 1894 Local Government Act stopping parish councils from contributing to the maintenance of open churchyards under s.214(6) Local Government Act 1972. What was the outcome of that meeting?

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Legal Advisory Commission:* The Commission discussed this issue at its meetings on 8 March and on 5 June. It agreed that the legislation as it stands is unclear, and the only way to resolve that is to amend the legislation to make clear the intent that Councils can provide such funding. It noted that in June Bishop Vivienne Faull put down amendments to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill (at Committee stage in the Lords) which would fix the problem. That had wide support in principle from across the House, and so (as is customary) the Bishop withdrew her amendments following a commitment from the Government to a conversation to agree suitable amendments at Report stage, likely to be in July. Discussions are still underway between the Bishop (supported by the NCI’s Faith & Public Life team) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities on that.

If those amendments are passed, the matter will be successfully resolved. If not, and pending a further opportunity for amendment, an opinion explaining why the better interpretation of the existing legislation is that councils may make these payments would be helpful. The Chair of the Commission and I have prepared a suitable draft, which if needs be will be discussed by the Commission at its next meeting on 2 October and published promptly thereafter.

## CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

199. *The Revd Treena Larkin (Lichfield)* asked the Church Commissioners: In January, the Church Commissioners published a full report into historic links to transatlantic chattel slavery and announced a new funding commitment of £100m in response to these findings. Could the Church Commissioners provide an update on how this sum will be invested and how growth funding will be allocated and distributed for projects focused on improving opportunities for communities adversely impacted by historic slavery?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* replied as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners: When the report was published in January, the Church Commissioners made a commitment to working with people from communities impacted by the legacy of transatlantic chattel slavery to shape the response, including the design of the fund, listening widely to ensure this work is done sensitively and with accountability.

The Church Commissioners will progress this work with the help of an Oversight Group. This group has just been recruited through an open process and its role is to help the Commissioners' Board to design the impact investment fund and the grant funding programme. Specifically, the Oversight Group will make recommendations on the aims and criteria for the fund and grant programme, suggest areas for further research, commission any further work to inform their proposals, and advise on engagement plans. It is hoped that a recommendation regarding these matters will be made to the Board of the Church Commissioners in November 2023, with a view to the funding/investment programme commencing in 2024.

Worshipping communities are being encouraged to input their thinking to help shape the fund and details of how to do this will be communicated via Diocesan teams later in July. A video which gives more information for churches has been produced and this will be shown at the Church Commissioners' fringe event on Friday night. We can share this, on request, with any Synod member who is unable to attend the event.

200. *The Revd Roger Driver (Bath & Wells)* asked the Church Commissioners: At a time when the Church Commissioners have stated that their assets are valued at £9,056m (Annual Report 2022), is it the case that they are in a position to address the current deficits in diocesan finances, and could choose to allocate funds according to the actual financial positions that many dioceses find themselves in, and to this end what is the plan?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* responded as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners: Last year, the Commissioners announced they would increase distributions by 30% in 2023-25, a total amount of £1.2billion. Plans for the allocation of these funds were agreed by the Archbishops' Council and the Commissioners, which included significant funds for a Diocesan Investment Programme to focus on enabling the Church's Vision & Strategy to become a reality in parishes and

communities, and prioritising investment in the most deprived and resource-poor contexts. These plans were presented to Synod in July 2022.

The Diocesan Investment Programme supports dioceses and parishes in their plans to develop new areas of mission as well as revitalising parishes across the Church. When considering diocesan bids for funding, the Archbishops' Councils' SMMIB takes diocesan resources and financial circumstances into account. The programme also includes funds for formulaic distribution of Lowest Income Communities Funding to the 28 relatively lesser resourced dioceses. We have also responded to provide targeted funding to address particular challenges, such as in response to Covid and the energy-cost crisis.

Our aim and prayer is that such work will over time lead to spiritual and numerical growth which will address diocesan deficits through long term sustainable change, rather than providing subsidies which do not address the structural and missional challenges dioceses face, and so do not support the long term health of the Church.

201. *The Revd Paul Chamberlain (Portsmouth)* asked the Church Commissioners: What is the ceiling for growth of the Church Commissioners' assets - the point at which all real terms surplus over the previous year's assets will be distributed - and what is the financial rationale for reaching this figure or deciding that growth should be unlimited?

*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker)* replied as Deputy Chair of Church Commissioners: The Church Commissioners seeks to provide the maximum sustainable level of funding to support the mission and ministry of the Church of England. We don't seek to grow the fund for its own sake – we aim to earn returns that will enable us to maintain and grow this financial support.

The level of distributions is determined in light of actuarial advice and based on expectations over the long term for future investment returns from the portfolio, inflation (to understand the cost of maintaining expenditure in real terms), and pension obligations.

The long-term outlook is reviewed each year and thoroughly updated every three years to incorporate actual experience, including growth in the asset base. Growth in the fund in recent years is what enabled the Commissioners to announce last year that they plan to distribute £1.2billion from 2023 to 2025, up 30% from the previous triennium, and to hope to maintain this level of funding in the following six years.

Distributions are not determined with reference to one-year investment performance, as the aim is to provide sustainable support for the Church of England's mission and ministry, maintaining intergenerational equity rather than the Church having to respond to significant swings in levels of support from year to year.

202. *Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: What has been the growth, in actual real terms, of the assets of the Church Commissioners and the distributions to other parts of the Church each year over the last ten years?



*The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker) replied as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:* Between the end of 2012 and the end of 2022 the value (before the deduction of the estimated value of pension obligations) of the Church's endowment fund, managed by the Church Commissioners, increased from £5.6billion to £10.3billion. This was an annual increase of 6.3% p.a., or 3.6% p.a. in real terms after taking account of CPIH inflation which averaged 2.6% p.a. over this period. The non-pensions distributions from the fund in 2022 were £186.8m. This was an average annual increase of 7.6% p.a., or 4.9% p.a. net of CPIH inflation, on the equivalent distributions of £89.5m in 2012.

Our average investment returns of 10.2% per annum over the past ten years have enabled this growth in distributions, which is roughly three times the rate of inflation.

203. *Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester) asked the Church Commissioners:* Surely, the job of an Investment Body is to maximise returns so that it can invest more effectively in its core business. The returns on fossil fuel companies are currently between 10 and 15%. Those for green industries are between 5 and 8%. The demise of the Silicon Valley Bank earlier this year was because of its excessive investment in risky green technology. Can the National Investing Bodies for the C of E explain why they are prioritising investment in non-fossil fuel companies, and not investing to maximise returns?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Commissioners manage the in-perpetuity endowment fund in a long-term responsible, sustainable way so as to maximise distributions to support the mission of the Church. We do indeed have a duty to maximise risk-adjusted returns over the long term and an aim to remain at the forefront of Responsible Investment whilst doing so. These are complementary rather than contrasting aims. The Commissioners are a long-term investor with a return target of CPIH+4% per year and we have delivered a return of c.10% per annum on average over the past 30 years. The portfolio is genuinely diversified across sectors and asset classes.

Fossil fuel companies performed relatively well in 2022, but this was an exceptional year for them compared to the long-term trend. The sector has not prepared for the energy transition, which is already underway, and we believe their assets ultimately will be stranded if they do not transition. Hence our decision to disinvest. The risk of stranded assets is an important capital allocation and stewardship consideration for us. Our "in-perpetuity" time horizon extends well beyond the 2050 timeline for achieving Net Zero which, based on current scientific, economic and financial forecasts, will be critical for a flourishing economy, companies, communities and Church. Companies that, through action and inaction, are not aligning to this timeline, do not meet the financial or ethical criteria which we set at the Commissioners.

We have invested in climate and environmental solutions for a long time, which have the same return targets as the rest of the portfolio. For example, our investments in

sustainable forestry have returned on average 16.5% per annum over the past 10 years. We continue to believe that there are very attractive investment returns available from good climate solutions investments.

204. *The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Church Commissioners: The Anglican Communion recently signed the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and more than 20 Southern African bishops have called for no new fossil fuel developments in Africa. What steps are the National Investing Bodies taking to amplify these calls for an end to new fossil fuel developments?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners and Church of England Pensions Board seek to lead by example, each using our voices as responsible investors, including in relation to our own ethical exclusions. Our strong reputation for responsible investment means we can have an amplified impact, disproportionately large compared to the size of our funds under investment, which are relatively modest in the context of global financial markets.

On 22 June 2023, the Commissioners and the Pensions Board each announced they will independently disinvest from fossil fuels this year. There was widespread coverage across national and international newspapers, TV, radio, online, and on social media, mainly in the UK and global English-language media, but also in international media. The story made the front page of the Financial Times on Friday 23 June and was published in six other national newspapers, including The Times, which ran a second day story. Agence France-Presse, Bloomberg, and Reuters covered the story, which was subsequently syndicated across various global publications.

205. *Dr Catharine Rhodes (Sheffield)* asked the Church Commissioners: The National Investing Bodies' divestment from fossil fuel companies is a hugely welcome and important step that has attracted national and international media coverage. Following the letter to the Prime Minister and Chancellor signed by 49 Church of England bishops calling for no new fossil fuels, have the National Investing Bodies excluded future investment in oil and gas companies continuing with exploration and extraction of new fossil fuel reserves?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners are excluding all oil and gas majors from their portfolio and will exclude all other companies primarily engaged in oil and gas exploration, production and refining, unless they are in genuine alignment with a 1.5°C pathway, by the end of 2023. We will continue to assess whether companies become aligned with the Paris Agreement - this assessment of alignment will include TPI hurdles and whether the company is investing in new exploration and whether the way the company invests is aligned with the International Energy Agency Net Zero scenario. No fossil fuel company currently aligns with this.

We might be prepared to re-invest in energy majors in the future if any such companies are seen to become Paris-aligned, in a clear, evidence based, and data driven manner, whilst also meeting the risk/return financial targets consistent with our overall portfolio capital allocation principles;

We already do and will continue to invest in renewable energy in a disciplined manner where these investments also meet our risk/return financial targets.

We believe in the use of engagement and divestment as a dynamic mechanism as part of our approach to responsible investment – both are essential to being able have a real and lasting impact on the outcomes we want for people and the planet to flourish.

206. *Dr Catharine Rhodes (Sheffield)* asked the Church Commissioners: What is the current amount and percentage of Church Commissioners funds invested in climate solutions?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* Currently, our investments in assets that address climate change and in publicly listed companies focused on climate solutions add up to more than £800million (more than 7% of the fund).

In addition to this £800mn, we also invest in and enable initiatives in other parts of the portfolio. For example, we work with and enable our farming tenants to provide climate solutions, including permits for renewable energy, supporting improvements to slurry infrastructure or updating lease terms to ensure climate resilience.

207. *The Revd Nicki Pennington (Carlisle)* asked the Church Commissioners: What steps are the Church Commissioners taking to increase investment in climate solutions such as renewable energy, battery storage and energy efficiency?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* Investing in climate solutions is one of the Church Commissioners' three key levers for change to achieve a net zero world. 'Climate solutions' covers a range of activities, including investing directly in sustainable forestry, funds investing in climate infrastructure or green buildings, or investing in shares of listed companies that deliver products and services to help decarbonise the economy. Currently, our investments in assets that address climate change and in publicly listed companies focused on climate solutions add up to more than £800million (more than 7% of the fund).

The Church Commissioners continue to look for investment opportunities across the portfolio that can help address the climate crisis, safeguarding creation whilst also ensuring that we meet our financial obligations to the Church of England.

208. *The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury)* asked the Church Commissioners: What examples of investment in climate solutions have the Church Commissioners made during the first six months of 2023?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* Currently, the Church Commissioners have more than £800 million invested in climate solutions covering a range of activities, including investing directly in sustainable forestry, funds investing in climate infrastructure or green buildings, or investing in shares of listed companies that deliver products and services to help decarbonise the economy. We continuously look for good climate solution investment opportunities across our portfolio.

An example of a recent investment is a battery manufacturer where we invested in June 2023 through one of our infrastructure funds. Also, the Church Commissioners agreed a tenancy agreement to promote nature alongside sustainable agriculture on Hereford's Bartonsham Meadows, located in the heart of the city. This agreement will help restore the 100-acre site on the banks of the river Wye to a more natural state and create a wildlife haven for nature and people alike.

209. *The Revd Canon Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS)* asked the Church Commissioners: Nearly 800 million people around the world are still living without access to electricity. Have the Church Commissioners explored opportunities for investment in decentralized, clean energy access in the Global South, as the Episcopal Church and United Methodist Church in the US have done?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners are looking to address the lack of investable opportunities in climate solutions in the Global South by seeking to ensure a suitable enabling environment is created through our leadership of the Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance (NZAoA) Policy workstream.

In April 2023 the NZAoA wrote to G7 Finance Ministers urging them to call for systemic change in the governance and business models of the multilateral development banks, particularly the World Bank to enable and accelerate the increased flow of investment capital, both private and public, to finance the transition and climate resilience needs in the Global South. [The Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance urges G7 Finance Ministers to join its call for MDB and DFI reform – United Nations Environment – Finance Initiative \(unepfi.org\)](https://www.unepfi.org/)

At this point in time, the Commissioners have not yet identified suitable investments in climate solutions in the Global South which would meet our risk, return and responsible investment profile.

210. *The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark)* asked the Church Commissioners: With the Church of England securing planning permission for a 1,087-home development in Bracebridge Heath, Lincoln, a fifth of which will be affordable housing, will this housing development be built to accessibility standards, thus increasing the chance that people may continue to reside in these properties as their mobility potentially decreases with acquired illness or old age, thus reducing pressure on the care system?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* At Bracebridge Heath, which lies to the south of Lincoln city centre, we will be delivering over a thousand much-needed new homes within a new community where there will be a range of housing tenures and size. This will ensure a diverse range of people can live within the development and upsize or downsize within their community over the years and through changing life circumstances.

The development will include different types of affordable housing, bungalows, 2 and 3 storey housing and retirement accommodation, in the form of a care home. The development will also meet all current building regulations' standards in relation to dwelling accessibility. The scheme was unanimously supported by members at the planning committee in 2022 and we were delighted to secure the planning permission in April 2023.

211. *Mrs Christina Baron (Bath & Wells)* asked the Church Commissioners: What examples can be given to Synod of co-production in housing developments between the Church Commissioners and local communities, as recommended in Coming Home, the report of the Archbishops' Housing Commission?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied on as First Church Estates Commissioner:* In respect of potential housing developments, the Church Commissioners' team seeks to have early and continuous engagement with local councils, key stakeholders, local Churches and residents, as supported and championed by the Housing Commission's 'Coming Home' report.

Our engagement approach encompasses a variety of methods by which new housing proposals are developed in consultation with local communities, seeking their input and feedback. The positive and detailed nature of our approach has been recognised in our recently published, independently assessed, ESG baselining report.

Innovative and wide-reaching forms of engagement and proposal development have recently been followed at West Bersted in West Sussex for example, where the Church Commissioners is bringing forward a new community development of 2,200 new homes, and comprising a new primary school, parkland area, allotments, orchards, play areas, local centres offering shops and areas of employment land that will facilitate new local jobs. The scheme is currently the subject of a live planning application.

212. *Mrs Christina Baron (Bath & Wells)* asked the Church Commissioners: What proportion of "affordable" housing to be built on Church Commissioners' land since the publication of the Coming Home report, is planned to be available for social rent in perpetuity?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The development land portfolio held by the Church Commissioners currently has the capacity to deliver approximately 30,000 new homes, of which approximately 30% or 10,000 will

be 'affordable housing'. Within that number, the level of social rented homes will be determined on a site-by-site basis, in full consultation with the local authority in question and in accordance with the requirements of national and local planning policy.

213. *Ms Sammi Tooze (York)* asked the Church Commissioners: What progress has been made on the Church Commissioners' land regarding natural capital assessments, farm carbon audits and sharing this data publicly?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners conducted a natural capital assessment that completed in 2022, which looked at a range of areas including biodiversity, agricultural productivity, SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and greenhouse gas emissions. We will be publishing a report during July that reviews 'Our Approach to Sustainability for Real Assets'. This will include further details on our emissions profile and initiatives that we are taking in our land holdings.

All new publicly-marketed farm lettings include a carbon audit process which is a collaborative initiative between the Commissioners and new tenant, with many involving detailed soil sampling and assessments. In addition we are utilising technology such as LiDAR (laser imaging, detection, and ranging) and satellite imagery to undertake landscape scale assessments of soil carbon.

Within existing tenancies these carbon audits are voluntary and tenant-led. Through frequent tenant meetings, we have established an increasing number of farmers have conducted farm carbon audits for a variety of reasons, including supplier contract requirements, and efficiency and yield analysis.

214. *The Revd Dr Joel Love (Rochester)* asked the Church Commissioners: How are the Church Commissioners responding to the Lambeth Conference call to join in with the Communion Forest initiative at scale, given their considerable resources and influence?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Commissioners are actively engaged with the Communion Forest initiative and have been working with the Anglican Alliance to identify projects that can be registered. We recognise these projects can include land use change as well as tree planting. For example, we have identified a site focusing on water meadow creation combined with increased public access and will be sharing details of this site shortly.

We have planted 819 acres of new woodland in the UK since 2014. Over the past two years we have purchased 438 acres of land in Wales and Scotland, with the intention of establishing new woodlands with 350,000 trees. In total, we have planted 11.8 million trees across the land portfolio over the past five years. We participated in the Queen's Green Canopy initiative including an 11,080 mixed tree plantation in north-west England. We also facilitate a range of other initiatives including trees within hedgerows and wetland creation.

215. *The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester)* asked the Church Commissioners: What steps are the Church Commissioners taking to increase the biodiversity within its forestry holdings and ensure greater resilience to the threat of wildfires?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* All our forests are managed according to local best practice and are managed in line with third-party certification (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council, FSC), which goes beyond legal requirements to ensure sustainable management, including in relation to biodiversity and the environment. In the UK, at least 20% of the area within our forests are managed with biodiversity as the primary objective and we have more than doubled the area of native woodland in just under a decade.

Wildfire is a higher risk in some parts of the US, where we also have forestry holdings. Appropriate risk management and response procedures are in place to limit the risk and impact of a fire. Forest ownership is additionally dispersed to limit the overall portfolio impact of any fire that may occur. In the UK, where the risk of wildfire is relatively lower, fire response procedures are in place to ensure appropriate action is taken in the unlikely event of a fire.

216. *The Revd Canon Dr Anderson Jeremiah (Universities & TElS)* asked the Church Commissioners: What ambitions do the Church Commissioners have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on all their agricultural holdings, encouraging them to increase biodiversity and natural climate solutions on their land, recognising that this needs to be a collaborative process with farm tenants?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* We are fully committed to reducing our portfolio emissions to meet our 2050 net zero portfolio commitment and as we seek to enable our ambition of a net zero world.

All of our new publicly-marketed farm lettings include a carbon audit process which is a collaborative initiative between the Commissioners and the new tenant. We carry out a pre-letting environmental assessment to identify the best ways to increase biodiversity on the farm and ensure these are taken forward.

Over 2022, our Farmland team visited over 50% of our equipped farms to speak in person to our farming tenants and work with them on environmental initiatives, including running farmer workshops on topics such as lowland peat and managing marshland. We are members of, or signatories to, Fenland SOIL, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust Blue Recovery Leaders Group, Nature Friendly Farming Network, Future Land Forum, and the National Trust nature-based solutions compact.

This July we will be publishing a report that reviews 'Our Approach to Sustainability for Real Assets'. This will include further details on our emissions profile, collaboration initiatives and the next steps we are undertaking.

217. *Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Church Commissioners: Noting that Amazon continues to be listed (in GS Misc 1324) as one of the Commissioners' top 20 equity holdings, have the Commissioners engaged with the company about its corporate taxation policy and/or its business and employment practices?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners have been in a process of engagement with Amazon since 2019 on a range of topics including corporate taxation, human rights and supply chain due diligence. Most recently, we have been engaged on the issue of AI Ethics, as part of a collaboration with other investors via the World Benchmarking Alliance, and are continuing this engagement in 2023.

218. *Mr Andrew Gray (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Church Commissioners: How much money do the Church Commissioners have invested (either directly or indirectly through intermediaries) in companies who undertake business in or with the People's Republic of China?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* China is the second largest economy in the world. This means that most global businesses, wherever they are headquartered or their shares are listed, will either directly, or indirectly through supply chains, deal with Chinese companies. That will be true of very many of the companies that we invest in as the Church Commissioners.

At the current time we estimate we have less than less than 4% of the fund invested directly in Chinese companies. This compares to 39% in North American investments and 43% in European (incl. UK) investments.

Investments and holdings in China, consistent with investments in any country or jurisdiction into which the Church Commissioners allocate capital, are subject to our Responsible Investing reputational risk policies, which screen, inter alia, for any potential controversies which might be associated with a particular investment which the Church Commissioners might make to ensure that they are consistent with our values and principles.

219. *Mr Andrew Gray (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Church Commissioners: Do the Church Commissioners have any investments (directly or indirectly through intermediaries) in companies which offer personal loans?

*Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners invest in a very broad and diversified portfolio. This includes a range of companies providing personal loans, including banks as well as specialised loan companies.



The National Investing Bodies each have a policy on high-interest lending, informed by advice from the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. The Church Commissioners exclude “any company, whose main business activity or focus (defined as exceeding 10% of Group turnover) is the provision of home-collected credit ('doorstep lending'), unsecured short-term loans ('payday loans') or pawnbroker loans, directly or through owned-subsidiaries.” The EIAG's advice is that, through this policy, investment should be avoided in specialist consumer finance businesses that may exploit, or over-burden with debt, lower income borrowers.

The Church Commissioners have a small exposure to funds that invest in specialised finance companies, including personal loans. When investing in these types of investments, the Investment and Responsible Investment teams do in-depth additional due diligence to ensure that the investee businesses treat customers fairly and do not exploit, over-burden consumers with debt or target lower income borrowers.

220. *Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter)* asked the Church Commissioners: Funding made available to assist churches in reaching 'net zero' is very welcome. However currently funding is skewed towards large urban churches. What resources are being specifically made available and ring fenced for small rural parishes, which may have great appetite to improve their buildings, but lack the resources to do so?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* The Triennium funding allocated by the Church Commissioners to the Net Zero Carbon Programme is being applied strategically to maximise impact across our schools, churches, cathedrals, houses, offices, and more.

The challenge to decarbonise the circa 32,000 buildings that the Church of England encompasses by 2030 is a big one and the Net Zero Programme is focussing the first triennium's funding (£30million in 2023-25) on creating the capacity needed to deliver carbon action plans and providing financial support for a range of innovation pilots and demonstrator projects, which will include a broad range of churches.

All churches have a role to play in achieving Net Zero Carbon; however the main work for this does not fall on small, rural parishes, where the Energy Footprint Tool data shows us carbon footprints are already very low. Nevertheless, every church can play its part by undertaking simple measures such as installing LED lighting, localized heating solutions or draught-proofing entrances, and a lot of excellent work is already being done in aid of reducing our emissions and saving energy costs. We recognise that some parishes are facing immediate challenges with old gas or oil boilers which are at end of life and have taken this into account in the design of the grant funding streams which will commence later this year. Where their specific projects meet the criteria, small rural parishes may be eligible for such financial support.

221. *The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds)* asked the Church Commissioners: How is the national church supporting TEIs to reach milestones in the Routemap to Net Zero Carbon?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* Whilst the TEIs represent a very small fraction of our overall carbon footprint, their role in equipping the church leaders of the future with the skills needed to embed climate action and creation care at the centre of the Church's mission is recognised.

The NCIs' Environment Officer is supporting the Theological Colleges' Environment Network (TCEN). Within this network, she is developing the Net Zero Carbon workstream, convening bursars and operations managers to become a peer-led group sharing wisdom and best practice on decarbonisation. The TCEN is also working with A Rocha UK to revise the criteria for Eco Church to make it more suitable for TEIs so that they can make progress with the award.

The Net Zero Carbon Programme formally commenced at the start of 2023, and work is in early stages on the TEI workstream. The focus to date has been on supporting dioceses to build their net zero capacity and developing workstreams to scope, pilot and test a range of decarbonisation actions across churches, cathedrals, schools, and clergy housing. The Net Zero Carbon Programme Board will be focused on ensuring that the funding allocated by the Church Commissioners to the Net Zero Carbon Programme is being applied strategically to maximise impact across our schools, churches, cathedrals, houses, offices, and the Board will be considering proposals for an allocation to progress decarbonisation work in relation to the TEIs in this triennium (2023-25) at its Board meeting on July 5th.

222. *The Ven. Nichola Groarke (Worcester)* asked the Church Commissioners: How many pastoral schemes are currently with the Church Commissioners awaiting processing, and what is the average length of time from submission of a scheme by a diocese to it being made?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* There are currently 160 pastoral schemes and orders with the Commissioners, encompassing a range of different types of cases, and the majority of cases usually progress without representations against the proposals being made. The time taken for individual cases can vary widely depending on several factors including the type of case and its complexity and whether representations are received. A straightforward case where there are no representations would typically take about 10-12 weeks. Those requiring more complicated drafting, such as churchyard disposals or complex patronage arrangements may take longer.

When representations are made against a proposed scheme or order, the case requires consideration by the Commissioners' Mission, Pastoral & Church Property Committee.

This involves additional correspondence and can add typically a further three to four months to the process, sometimes more. Significantly more time can be taken if a subsequent appeal is made to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC), the timescale for which is outside the Commissioners' control. In the review of the Mission & Pastoral Measure, the Commissioners have recommended that new service standards are put in place to give greater clarity and certainty on timescales.

223. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Church Commissioners: What plans do the Commissioners have to provide guidance or practical support for parishes seeking to actively engage their local community in the life of their church buildings, both to prevent closure and to ensure that the Gospel can be proclaimed at a local level, taking account of existing initiatives such the work done recently by the Churches Conservation Trust that resulted in the reinvigoration of an almost-extinct PCC in Suffolk, as reported at its fringe meeting at the February Synod?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* The Church Commissioners provide advice, guidance and practical support to dioceses and parishes through the work of the Cathedral and Church Buildings team. Additionally, as part of the 2023-25 triennium funding package, £11m has been provided for the 'Buildings for Mission' programme which will provide additional church-building focused staff in dioceses to enable them to support their parishes, including some funding for minor repairs. The impact of this programme will be evaluated to inform future initiatives.

Dioceses also provide advice on these matters and some examples are given in the case study in the Review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure ('MPM', see GS 2315 p28). In the MPM Review, the Commissioners also made recommendations for improving the guidance for parishes around community engagement.

The Church Commissioners provide funding for the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), alongside the Government (through DCMS). As part of their wider work, the CCT have completed a pilot project to provide consultancy support to a fragile parish in Suffolk and the learning from that pilot was recently discussed by the Commissioners and CCT Board with a view to being fed into the work on the MPM review.

224. *The Revd Marcus Walker (London)* asked the Church Commissioners: What pastoral schemes have been made, or certificates issued, by the Church Commissioners under section 11 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, to enable or facilitate the establishment of minster communities in the dioceses of (a) Leicester and (b) Truro?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* The way that dioceses organise their partnership and mission structures varies: Leicester diocese is following a 'minster' community model, but others such as Truro take a different approach and use the terminology of mission communities. These are usually informal groupings or partnerships which facilitate joint working and

complement the formal benefice and parish structure. There is no requirement to seek Church Commissioners' approval for establishing these structures as they may not be permanent. However, if the diocese wishes to align the underlying structures of deanery, parish and benefice with those partnerships then the Commissioners' permission is required, under the provisions of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

No pastoral schemes have been made in Leicester or Truro dioceses in relation to these mission structures. However, we have recently received three draft proposals for pastoral schemes in Truro which flow from the diocesan plan. The proposals will be published over the summer and people will have the opportunity to make written submissions for or against the draft proposals. As usual, the Commissioners' Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee would consider any objections and may conduct committee visits or hearings if they assess that this would better inform their decision making.

225. *Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury)* asked the Church Commissioners: The Review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 could and should provide an appropriate opportunity to help to address the widespread collapse of trust in the Church and the alleged misuse and episcopal and diocesan power. Thus far, the opportunity has not been seized.

Regrettably, in attempting to address meaningfully and substantively such matters, members of the General Synod Reference Group have been hampered by restrictive Terms of Reference.

For the next phase of the work, is it intended that the General Synod Reference Group will continue to be used, and if so will the Commissioners undertake to ensure that its Terms of Reference be broadened suitably?

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio)* replied as *Third Church Estates Commissioner*: The Church Commissioners have recognised the importance of trust in their work on the review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011. The review process involved wide consultation, engagement and listening, including through the establishment of the General Synod Reference Group, to help develop confidence in the process and to identify the consensus around what needed to change and what those changes might look like. The Commissioners have immensely valued the participation of all those involved in the Group, which has played a key role in shaping the final recommendations.

The current phase of work on the MPM review, and hence the role of the Reference Group, is complete. If Synod approves the proposals in GS2315, the work will move to preparing draft legislation and it will be for the Steering and Revision Committees to take the development of the detailed proposals forward.

Building trust is at the heart of being church – this is widely recognised and is receiving particular focus through a major project on trust in the Church of England led by the

Bishop of St Edmundsbury that began in Autumn 2022 and whose aim is to understand the dynamics of trust and mistrust in the Church and to offer recommendations of how we mitigate mistrust. The project expects to produce an interim report later in the Autumn and a full report by Spring 2024.

226. *Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Church Commissioners: Can the Commissioners provide the Synod with the following figures relating to bishops' costs in a table with a comparison also showing the answers given to question 3 in July 2021, question 16 in February 2015, and whether costs have increased or decreased:

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

*The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner:* We are grateful for this question, which was previously asked in 2015 and 2021, and are pleased to provide the latest information as at 2022, the final year of the last triennium. We have placed on the 'noticeboard' the requested information, showing the comparison between the figures we gave in our 2015 and 2021 answers and the figures for 2022.

The expenditure figures for 2020 are obviously impacted by Covid restrictions. Since then, expenditure has been impacted by high levels of inflation and cost of living pressures in the last 2 years, including energy bills. Nevertheless, average expenditure is broadly in line with that in 2019, pre Covid, and lower in real terms. The cost of maintaining See house properties and carrying out works has increased in line with similar costs seen elsewhere in the property/building sector.

Under the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009, the Commissioners are required to provide a house for a diocesan bishop which is "reasonably suitable for the purpose". The Church Commissioners also pay bishops' stipends and other costs in support of their ministry as per the requirements of the Episcopal Endowments and Stipends Measure 1943. We recently reviewed Episcopal costs, working with Bishops and their offices to support them to carry out a zero-based budgeting. The exact allocation of how each Bishop manages their resulting expenditure budget (made available to them as a block grant each year) is determined by each Bishop and their office, so individual queries would need to be taken up with Bishops directly.

## **PENSIONS BOARD**

227. *The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What steps are the National Investing Bodies taking to encourage other investors to divest from fossil fuel companies, invest in climate solutions and refocus their engagement on other key sectors such as electricity utility companies, car manufacturers and banks that are financing the fossil fuel industry?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* Through its recently published Stewardship Report and the report to this Synod, the Board has been transparent about the approach taken to disinvestment from fossil fuel companies. We have also set out our priorities for future engagement with energy demand side sectors and companies. The Board is legally not in a position to offer advice to other investors as to how they should invest. It is the duty of each fund to independently make such decisions in line with their respective fiduciary duties. We do though hope that other funds can learn from the experience of the Board as a result of the transparency of our reporting.

The Board also continues to lead the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) which is supported by 130 funds with over \$50 trillion in assets under management; the Paris Aligned Investors Initiative which governs the Net Zero Investment Framework, which is used by 135 funds with \$33 trillion in assets under management; and continues to lead the Initiative for the Responsible Climate Lobbying Standard that was supported by funds with \$130 trillion in assets under management.

228. *The Revd Dr Joel Love (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What steps are the Pensions Board taking to increase investment in climate solutions, given the International Energy Agency statement that investment in renewable energy must treble by the end of this decade?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* In line with the Board's fiduciary duties and our use of the Net Zero Investment Framework to help guide our investment decision making, we already invest in climate solutions and will continue to seek opportunities for future investments which meet our criteria. Specifically, we are considering this in private markets, infrastructure and in emerging markets as well as encouraging companies in which the fund is invested through our active stewardship.

229. *The Dean of St Edmundsbury (The Very Revd Joe Hawes)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Following the National Investing Bodies' significant and welcome decision to divest from fossil fuel companies, have the NIBs ruled out future investment in oil and gas companies that are pursuing new fossil fuel developments, given the International Energy Agency statement that new fossil fuel projects are incompatible with limiting global heating to 1.5°C?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* The position of the Church of England Pensions Board was set out in the report that we have provided to General Synod. The Board is disinvesting from oil and gas companies that do not have

short, medium and long term targets aligned to 1.5°C. As a result, it is exiting the oil and gas sector as no companies meet these criteria. Should a company increase the ambition of its targets, demonstrate that its capital expenditure is aligned to those targets, and evidence a credible track-record against those targets, then in principle the Board would consider reinvestment. We do not expect this to be a situation likely to occur any time soon given recent backward steps by a number of companies and the high bar we have set. So, for the foreseeable future we will have to seek other ways to engage with these companies as a key part of the international effort needed to address climate change.

230. *The Revd Rachel Wakefield (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What investments in climate solutions have the Pensions Board made in emerging markets?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* The Board has an existing allocation to Emerging Market Debt of £79 million as at 31 March. However, this allocation is not explicitly in support of climate solutions, and we are currently developing our approach in this regard. To aid our understanding we have convened an initiative of eleven UK pension funds, which was supported by the UK Pensions Minister, to explore how we can do this impactfully and result in real world emissions reductions. As a consequence of this initiative, we have developed and consulted on a set of 'emerging market just transition principles' to guide any future allocations. We will continue to review our approach and seek opportunities that meet our investment criteria.

231. *Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What examples of investment in climate solutions have the Pensions Board made during the first six months of 2023?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* The Board will report on investments in climate solutions as part of the 2023 Annual Report and Stewardship Report. One area we anticipate being able to report further on will be our approach to emerging and developing markets. In addition, the FTSE TPI Climate Transition Index – used for our passive equity allocation – has built into its methodology a prioritisation on weighting (increasing) investments in companies that offer green solutions. The Board also continues to look for climate solutions through our private market allocations.

232. *Dr Neill Burgess (York)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Please can you supply a table showing overall annual Diocesan contributions to the central clergy pension fund, with rows showing actuals by year from 2010 to 2022 plus 2023 budget, and with 3 columns of data: “base contribution”, “deficit reduction” and “total”?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* The information requested is not readily available exactly as requested, however, hopefully the tables on the Notice Board provide sufficient information to be of assistance.

Table 1 sets out the total employer contributions to the Church of England Funded Pensions Scheme (CEFPS, commonly called the ‘clergy scheme’) in cash terms as set out in the Scheme accounts from 2011. Table 2 sets out the contribution rates over the same period.

Following the latest valuation, deficit contributions were halved from April 2022 and removed entirely from 1 January 2023. This represents a material cash reduction in pension contributions. The scheme remains well-funded. We are confident of the Scheme’s ability to meet pension commitments, and the risk of future deficits emerging is low.

The strong funding position also enabled the Board to award a 10.1% increase to pensions in payment from 1 April 2023. This included a discretionary increase such that the total increase was double (or more) than the guaranteed increases in the Scheme Rules.

233. *The Revd Canon Dana Delap (Gloucester)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Will the Pensions Board confirm that it is still committed to providing housing for retired clergy who need it, through Pensions Board owned housing, equity sharing schemes such as CHARM, or other means?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* The Board is committed to providing housing support for retired clergy who need it. Specifically, we will offer retirement housing to new retirees for as long as the Church is willing to fund it. However, with costs having risen dramatically through inflation and interest rates, the current Rental offer has only been maintained by emergency additional funding. It is hard to imagine the Church could support the likely funding needed in perpetuity.

As part of our continuing commitment to the Church in general and retiring clergy, we will be bringing forward ideas as to how all our housing services might best evolve to meet the needs of future generations, provide more choice, and be financially sustainable.

The ‘Shared Ownership’ product was withdrawn because the market now offers better value alternatives, notably the Older Persons Shared Ownership scheme.

We continue to support those interested in home ownership at retirement through information, signposting and discounted mortgage/financial advice via Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services.

We encourage clergy to consider all their options at retirement including other faith-based charities and housing associations (and hopefully the Church’s new Housing Association as it grows) alongside the properties the Board can offer.

234. *The Revd Canon Ian Flintoft (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Given that the nearest available property is sometimes 70 miles from the desired



retirement location, and given the recent 10.1% increase in rents (well above the 7% directed for social housing by the Government), what steps is the Pensions Board taking to improve both the availability and affordability of clergy retirement housing?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* The Board offers clergy the opportunity to reserve a property in advance of their retirement from a national portfolio. The shape of that portfolio is regularly reviewed based on demand from retiring clergy. I confirm we are continuing to buy for the portfolio in response to the current surge in retirement numbers, even though securing new properties is harder in the prevailing climate of a slowing property market.

The portfolio offers a choice of locations and rents, which are set well below market for the local area. We carefully considered the rent increase this year and sought to keep this in line with increases to clergy pensions (see other questions on this).

We encourage all applicants to consider the range of properties carefully and we can assist clergy to explore housing providers, including other faith-based charities and housing associations, as a route to broader choice.

We continue to encourage anyone who might need help with housing in retirement to contact us up to 5 years in advance of retirement.

The Board is already working on proposals for the future that would enable broader choice for clergy, whilst being financially sustainable for the customer, the Church and the Board.

235. *Ms Fiona MacMillan (London)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: In the light of the findings of the Coming Home report, the Church Commissioners' reserves, and the Gospel imperative to bring good news to the poor, how does the Pension Board justify a 10.1% rent rise for CHARM residents during a cost of living crisis, when the poorest retired clergy and widow/ers are paying 50-100% of their church pension on rent?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* The Coming Home report sets an ambition that rents should be truly affordable. For many years, the Board has offered its homes at significant discount to market equivalents.

Historically, the Board has increased rents in line with RPI and with reference to the increase in clergy pensions. All organisations face rising costs: the Pensions Board is no different. With the cost of debt service equivalent to c75% of rental income the impact of inflation and interest rates has been severe. Indeed, the current rental offer has only been maintained in the short term by emergency additional funding from the Archbishops' Council. In this context, the Board increased rents by 10.1%, which is lower than RPI and in line with increases for clergy and state pensions.

I recognise that the cost-of-living crisis may be more acutely felt by those who retired early and/or who receive a partner pension. I encourage any resident struggling financially to contact the Board's staff to discuss their situation. Support can include assistance with

state entitlements and the Board's own charitable grant scheme which offers an additional monthly payment towards living costs for those on the lowest incomes.

I cannot comment on the Commissioners' reserves.

236. *The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: The Government announced in late 2022 that it will impose a 7% rent ceiling to social housing rent increases in the 2023-24 financial year as a temporary measure amid the cost of living crisis. In view of this and the hardship being experienced by many retired clergy, on what grounds has the CHARM scheme raised rents by 10.1% in 2023?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* The current "cost of living" is challenge for everyone and the Board carefully considered what rent increase to apply in 2023.

The Board is a charitable housing provider, not a registered social landlord. We do not have access to the same funding streams as social landlords. We operate a different rent increase policy.

Historically, the Board has increased rents for Church retirement property in line with RPI and with reference to the increase in clergy pensions. Like all organisations facing rising costs, the Pensions Board must be able to cover the costs of running the services to meet demand from retiring clergy and meet its landlord obligations. With the cost of debt service equivalent to c75% of rental income the impact of rising inflation and interest rates has been severe. Indeed, the current rental offer has only been maintained in the short term by emergency additional funding from the Archbishops' Council. In this context, the Board decided to increase rents by 10.1%. This is lower than RPI and in line with the increases in clergy and state pensions.

I encourage any resident struggling financially to contact the Board's staff for 1-1 support and advice.

237. *The Revd Robert Thompson (London)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Given that local authority/housing associations have had their rents capped at 7%, with no access to Government funds except to build new properties, why is the Church of England charging CHARM residents 10.1% when the Commissioners have such large reserves?

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board:* The Board is a charitable housing provider. It is classed as a private landlord, not a registered social housing provider. The funding model is very different to that of social landlords. The Board is obliged to purchase properties at full market rate and financed through commercial borrowing. Added to this are the costs of running the service e.g. repairs, surveying and compliance.

All organisations are facing rising costs and pressures from inflation: the Pensions Board is no different. With the cost of debt service equivalent to c75% of rental income the impact of rising inflation and interest rates has been severe. Indeed, the current rental offer has only been maintained in the short term by emergency additional funding from the Archbishops' Council.

All rent increases are considered carefully. Rent increases have historically followed RPI, with reference to the rise in clergy pensions. In some years this will have been higher than that for social landlords; in other years lower. The 10.1% rent increase from April 2023 is lower than RPI while being in line with the 10.1% increase in clergy pensions this year. The state pension also increased by 10.1% this year.

I cannot comment on the Commissioners' reserves.

THE CHAIR *The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 2.15 pm

*The Chair:* Before we move on to the business of this afternoon, I would like to invite the Chair of the Business Committee to address you.

## **VARIATION OF BUSINESS**

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Under Standing Order 9 I would like to propose a variation of business. We are doing quite well at the moment, but I gave you a heads-up yesterday about the way we would like to schedule business for Sunday afternoon. So I would like to formally propose that we move Item 11, which is the Oxford Diocesan Synod Motion, to Tuesday morning, and in its place we take Item 511, the Safeguarding Practice Review's Code of Practice on Sunday afternoon. I would also like to say that the Archbishops' Council's Audit Report has been called for debate and I would like to take that after Item 11 on Sunday afternoon.

If they are agreed by Synod we will make sure the Order Paper that you will receive for tomorrow afternoon reflects those changes that I have just proposed. We are aware that Item 501, the Electronic Register Book of Services, is still needing debate, and we will try to fit that in as and when we can.

*The Chair:* Synod, I need to get your consent.

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

*The Chair:* Consent is given. Thank you.

## **ITEM 10 SPECIAL AGENDA IV: DIOCESAN SYNOD MOTION**

## **THE CONTRIBUTION OF FAITH TO THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS (GS 2294A AND GS 2294B)**

*The Chair:* We now come to Item 10 on our business. You will need papers GS 2294A and GS 2294B. The Order Paper has details of the two amendments on this motion which will come before us. Just by way of explanation, we will have the main motion presented to us and then I propose that we will take a couple of speeches just to address the main motion and then we are going to take the amendments in turn, with your consent.

First of all, I invite Kashmir Garton to speak to and move Item 10. You have up to 10 minutes, thank you.

*Mrs Kashmir Garton (Worcester):* Good afternoon, Synod. I am pleased to present this motion which goes to the heart of our mission to bring hope, healing and justice to all. I want to acknowledge from the outset this motion does not seek to underestimate the seriousness of any crime, or its lasting impact on victims and survivors. By working in partnership, our aim is to create safer communities for everyone.

Thirty years ago I joined the Probation Service to help people to change their behaviour and to prevent further victims. I believe in each person's capacity to change and this is also one of the core values of the Probation Service whose origins are founded on faith. Today, the Probation Service's role is to assess risk, to protect the public and to help change the lives of those in their care, by working in partnership with others.

Over the years, as I got to know the life story of each person, I also became aware of the factors that are prevalent in many of their lives: abused as children, brought up in the care system, suspended or expelled from school, experiencing poor educational and health outcomes. Such experiences can make change a very difficult process. Yet what continues to inspire me in my work as National Lead for the Probation Service is the strength they find through faith to make that change. Often they can only see hopelessness and despair; yet as they reach out to God for repentance and forgiveness, they find grace, love and the hope of a new beginning. In prison multi-faith prison chaplains work with people of all faiths and none, to give them hope, by seeing them as more than the worst thing they have done.

GS 2294A sets out the steps that have already been taken by the Prison and Probation Service to engage with all faith communities. They are working with churches, with link bishops and with diocesan safeguarding panels. By working together in partnership, we can live out our shared purpose to create safer communities where victims, survivors and those who have offended can find healing and redemption.

Each week our churches open their doors and seek to share the message of hope and love of Christ to all who enter. Yet many of the people leaving prison each week are unable to find a faith community after practising their faith in prison. Synod, this is a loss

for people leaving prison who wish to maintain their faith. It is a loss for our churches that can provide a safe welcome with appropriate safeguards from probation, and it is a loss for our communities that can support their rehabilitation journey.

Synod, you have the opportunity to change that. As Christians we believe that we are all made in the image of God. If by working together we can support even one individual to find hope and new life through repentance and God's forgiveness, and become the person that God intended them to be, then this is worth doing.

As Luke Chapter 15 reminds us, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over 99 righteous people who need no repentance". Let us hear from those involved in this work.

*(Video shown)*

*Mrs Kashmir Garton (Worcester):* Chair, I move this motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* This Item is now open for debate. I call Bishop Rachel Treweek followed by Catherine Stephenson for a maiden speech. The limit is five minutes.

*The Bishop of Gloucester (The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek):* I am the Anglican Bishop for Prisons. The familiar narrative fed by the media is that our streets will be safer if more perpetrators of crime are imprisoned, and for longer. The data does not support this. Our prison population is probably now the highest in western Europe and nearly half of those leaving prison go on to reoffend within a year of their release. Approximately two-thirds of prisoners are in prison for a non-violent offence linked to poverty, addiction and trauma. We are failing to address the upstream underlying causes of offending and reoffending. Short-term policy is not serving offenders or victims well, and certainly not making for stronger communities. This is not about them; it is about us.

Each year approximately 17,000 children are separated from their mother who is in prison, mainly for non-violent offences. Over 60% of those women have experienced abuse. Did you know that over half of the children being held for offending are those who have been in care? Did you know that levels of illiteracy are four times higher in prison, or that 42% of prisoners were once expelled or permanently excluded from school? None of this is good news. However, as the Church, we can be good news.

I am ambitious for the Church to be at the forefront of reform, just as we have been in the past, not least with the establishment of the Probation Service. People beat a path to my door with many things they want to say, as we have seen in our Questions. No one has ever beaten a path to my door to decry why we are not doing more for perpetrators or victims of crime. Why not, if the Gospel good news, with Jesus Christ at the heart, is that of love, hope, reconciliation and transformation?

God's mission is to reconcile the world such that all will be made new and perfect relationship will be restored. And, as the Archbishop of York said yesterday, if we pray for God's Kingdom to come and God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, then we have a responsibility to join in. As people made in the image of God we have been given responsibility towards one another and creation. Of course that has implication for offenders. It also has implication for our justice system and who we are as the Church.

This motion is a response to that responsibility. Much of what Christians and churches are already doing builds healthy relationships and community, and that is reducing the drivers of offending: spaces for families, toddler groups, our schools, or coming alongside those who are hungry. And there is the need for overt support for those who have offended or are at risk of offending. Of course that must go hand in hand with listening and caring for victims of crime, too. We need an holistic approach in everything. This includes partnership with our probation and our amazing prison chaplains. When people leave prison, our chaplains play a key role in trying to pass on the baton, and this is where this motion comes in.

On a recent prison visit, I was deeply shocked when a chaplain told me she had been unable to find a church willing to meet someone at the prison gate who wanted to be linked with a local church. How are we offering people welcome, belonging, value, relationship, purposeful activity, all those things which we know are key factors in reducing reoffending?

The Welcome Directory signposts prison leavers to faith communities simply willing to offer a welcome. It is safe. There is safeguarding and policies built in. It has a woefully low number of Anglican churches registered.

Of course, many Christians, including people here, are already working across the criminal justice system, whether professionally or as a volunteer, and churches are doing some amazing things, as we have heard. Yet I am grateful to this motion for challenging us to be more imaginative and more connected with the Probation Service. Relationship is at the heart of this motion in every way. I am delighted to be working with probation at a national level and proud of the links we are developing locally. May we put on record our thanks to the Chief Probation Officer for keeping a focus on faith and can we thank Kashmir in her role. And then may we commit to taking up our responsibilities and stepping into the opportunities being given us.

This motion is about joining in with God's work of reconciliation and transformation, and I wholeheartedly support it.

*Mrs Catherine Stephenson (Leeds):* An important contribution of rural ministry in the Holme Valley, the heart of the *Last of the Summer Wine* country, is supporting the families and friends of prisoners in our local prison.

Last year a member of our congregation, Jenny, invited me to join her on a visit to New Hall Prison. As some of you may know, it is a closed adult female prison and female juvenile and young offender institution on former farmland.

I was curious to know how families and friends supported their loved ones in prison. I soon discovered that many of the prisoners end up far from their homes. Consequently, their supporters find themselves repeatedly facing a series of challenges in order to be able to simply attend their entitled allocated visitor slots. Thus they deal with long-distance travel, usually by public transport, which is limited in rural areas, and often in contrast to what they are used to. Bear in mind that these supporters include grandmothers taking their young grandchildren to visit mum.

The team of which I am now a part offer swarm hospitality and unconditional love. They are keen to come alongside everyone in a friendly, non-judgmental and non-prying way. What brings joy is observing how everyone - the supporters, the prison staff and the volunteers - are getting to know each other aided by cups of tea and plenty of cake week by week. This project was initiated by the Mothers' Union, and it transpired that this is just part of their work which in fact has been evolving organically since 2004. It began when the prison chaplain requested their help with a mother and baby unit.

After noting significant improvements in prisoners' behaviour, the governor then invited the Mothers' Union to work with women with particular mental health challenges. They ran cookery classes followed by eating together in their Rivendell Unit. These relationships are life changing. In a variety of ways the volunteers are bridge builders between prison life and life beyond. The Mothers' Union works in conjunction with the prisoners' Departure Lounge scheme where people are prepared for return to their community. Packages of essentials are assembled containing toothpaste, toiletries and even a handbag, to help the women on their way.

I noted with some disappointment that the worthwhile work of voluntary groups like mine through the Mothers' Union was missing from the GS paper. The New Hall Prison project is enabling firm foundations to be laid through faith in action, a vital strand of the rehabilitation journey for each prisoner, providing faith, hope and love for the present, and building bridges for the future.

Therefore, let us wholeheartedly vote in favour of the motion.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby):* First, it is a very welcome event that Worcester have brought this motion and, in particular, that it is about chaplaincies, especially about prison chaplaincies. If we are going to carry this through, it needs to be something which is a whole system change of mind and heart.

I heard not long ago from a prison chaplain of a diocesan conference where the person organising it said to the prison chaplains, "You are not expected to attend this because it for parish clergy only". The result was the prison chaplains, not surprisingly, felt rather

left out of the diocese. It also cut away the opportunity for partnership which is a particularly important word and contact in paragraph (b) of the main motion. We need more prison chaplains. We need them more widely spread and we need people to see that spending time during their ministerial lives as a prison chaplain is integral to the development of their future ministry. They bring with them the expertise of having been in parish ministry but they also take back, when they move on to something else, a far greater and gathered expertise as well.

That sense of training and development obviously links into what the Ministry Division does, so we need the dioceses to encourage chaplains to be partners in the daily life of the diocese at deanery, parish and diocesan level. We need the Ministry Division and others to encourage the development of chaplaincy as a vocation.

Lastly, and I have raised this with the First Church Estates Commissioner, prison chaplains do not get paid very much more at all than parish clergy but they do not get housed. If we are going to make it possible for people - and one could say the same about hospitals but this is about prisons - and if we are going to develop prison chaplaincy as a ministry and an expertise, they have to be able to move around the country. I would continue to put before the Commissioners the possibility of investing in housing for prison chaplains so that the same flexibility to move is given to them as is given to parish clergy. I welcome this very warmly indeed and hope it will be very strongly supported.

*The Chair:* After the next speaker, we are going to take the amendment Item 56, thank you.

*The Ven. James Ridge (ex officio):* I am the Chaplain General of Prisons, which declares my interest in this area.

Synod, I am hugely grateful to my colleague and friend Kashmir not just for being the driving force behind bringing this motion before us but much more widely for her work as Chaplaincy Headquarters adviser and Faith Lead for the Probation Service. At a time when we as a Prison and Probation Service are seeking to remember that the people in our care are whole people, not just the little packets of time that they spend in custody, I feel very much like an old dog trying to learn a whole set of new tricks, and Kashmir is a patient tutor.

It would be easy for the majority of you in this chamber to dismiss this motion as having little to do with you; to allow it to go through on the Synod and be swiftly forgotten. But the substance of this motion speaks to the heart of what it means to be the Church. It affects us all in our walk with God and in our common life with our fellow Christians.

The ministry of our prison chaplains among some of the most vulnerable damaged children, women and men in our society, very often a form of first-aid pastoral care, is carried out in cells and on landings on behalf of the faith communities which we represent.



The care that they provide for prison staff is equally wide-ranging and carried out at moments of crisis and also great joy.

I want to take the opportunity here to pay tribute to those chaplains and to thank them for their life-changing life-saving work. We are proudly diverse, individuals from different faith and belief traditions, proudly integrated into a criminal justice system about which we care deeply but also proudly rooted in our own faith and belief traditions which inspire, inform and resource that ministry.

We go where we go and do what we do on your behalf and because you pray for, support and encourage us. Such is the case for all chaplains in every discipline and, as with chaplains in a variety of different areas, what we do in prisons and probation directly affects you, the safety and wellbeing of your family and friends and the life and vibrancy of your parishes and communities.

This motion confidently asserts and acknowledges that faith makes a difference in the rehabilitation and resettlement of offenders, but it also points to a much more wide-ranging reality that the welcome of offenders makes a difference to the life of the Church by becoming welcoming, accepting communities who safely integrate those whose past is not their future. We live out the call of our Lord and Saviour to be his representatives and to model our lives on Him.

The rewards are huge. When I attended my first meeting at Chelmsford Deanery Synod many years ago and told them that my Sunday morning congregation was 50 young men in their late teens, twenties and early thirties, they, not knowing who I was or what I did, were immediately intrigued. When I shared the context of that ministry, many of them, sadly, lost interest. But these young people are not only part of our Church but they also hold the key in their enthusiasm and joy in their experiencing the love of God to our hopes and dreams of becoming simpler, humbler and bolder, not to mention younger and more diverse.

I absolutely endorse and underline all that Bishop Rachel has said about the Welcome Directory and for some years since being in this role and having access to some modest purse strings, I have been able to put my money where my mouth is: a list of those faith communities that provide a welcome to ex-offenders. You might say well, isn't that all of them? But the answer, as I think we know really, is sadly not. As such, it is an invaluable resource for chaplains seeking to find supportive communities for those leaving our care. They also provide training for churches who want to know how to offer a welcome to ex-offenders and who would like to join them. Is your church registered? If not, please do consider it. Just Google "Welcome Directory" to find out more.

Synod, I urge you, of course, to enthusiastically support this motion but, more than that, I urge you to engage as far as you can in this work that we share as fellow labourers in the building of the Kingdom of God.

*The Chair:* I would now like to invite Matt Beer to speak to and move the amendment, Item 56. Matt, you have up to five minutes.

## ITEM 56

*The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield):* Thank you to the Diocese of Worcester and Kashmir for bringing this motion, which I wholeheartedly endorse. Thank you to those too who have spoken so passionately in support of it. Rejoicing in seeing anyone attending an Alpha course or Christianity Explored is expected, even more so those who know what it is like to be in the criminal justice system. I have had the deepest pleasure to work with some of those who have been convicted of criminality and criminal activity as part of my day-to-day ministry in Telford. I have seen and heard of the change that Alpha courses and Christianity Explored courses have made on those valued members of our worshipping community.

I would like to share a story of Geoff - obviously not his real name. Geoff found himself at a young age being in trouble with the police and found himself being moved between schools regularly. He was addicted to class A drugs and regularly involved in petty theft. As a young adult, he found himself as part of a group dealing in class A drugs. Soon after, he found himself behind bars where he said his life fell apart. While in prison, the chaplain and he met regularly. The chapel services broke up the monotony of the week and he told me that the chaplaincy team treated him as a normal human being.

Geoff and some other of his prisoners were invited to join an Alpha course. He began to feel something different about himself and the other prisoners around him as he discovered who Jesus is. He came to faith one evening alone in his cell and he immediately felt lighter and that he knew that he was loved unconditionally. He continued on with the Alpha course but was not able to be baptized in prison due to his release soon after the course's completion.

He was released to a wonderful organisation called Yellow Ribbon who help to support those who have been ex-offenders and help to house them and integrate them back into society and I would like to commend those charities who help to do that. Geoff was soon baptized and became a valued member of our worshipping community and has subsequently led other people to faith in Christ.

Synod, these stories are replicated up and down the country. I hope and pray that more Alpha and Christianity Explored courses are to be released in every prison up and down this country. Please promote these life-changing courses to chaplains and governors in prisons. I, therefore, would like to move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair:* I now invite Kashmir Garton to indicate whether you support this amendment. You have five minutes.

*Mrs Kashmir Garton (Worcester):* We accept this amendment. Alpha and Christianity Explored and, indeed, The Difference Course are widely used already within our prisons. However, we note this amendment does not really relate to the substance of the motion.

*The Chair:* This item is now open for debate.

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

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave):* I have the honour of speaking as the Bishop of the diocese with the greatest number of prisons of any in the Church of England and also as a member of the National Bishops Prison Team headed by Bishop Rachel and with Bishop Libby. I warmly welcome the underlying motion and thank Kashmir for all the work she has been doing and helping us in the Diocese of Lichfield and across the West Midlands to develop a good relationship and a creative partnership with the Probation Service.

I also am glad to see in the amendment the theme on the importance of Christian teaching and nurture, but I want to say that that applies to all of us. We are one Body of Christ within prison and without and partnership has to be a key theme in this work. We belong to one another in Christ and I hope we can find ways of shared learning. For the early Christians, the experience of imprisonment was a present reality, the horizon always in their lives that shaped their attitudes. Hebrews 13:3 says, "Remember those in prison as though you were in prison with them".

Churches in our society today, like society in general, often feel much more distant from prisons and want to forget about the lives of prisoners, but my experience is that when churches do experience partnership in this area then their own faith comes to life in new ways, as the Chaplain General has rightly said. It leads to a renewal and sharpening of our own Christian commitment. Partnership is not all one way. Parishes receive from this too.

One of the prisons in my diocese, Swinfen Hall, is near enough to the cathedral for me to be able to take their Christmas service before going to celebrate the Eucharist at Lichfield Cathedral. Last Christmas day, as I was leaving the prison, I asked the men there, "Do you have a message for the people at Lichfield Cathedral?" "Yes, Bishop", they said, "tell them we are praying for them".

*Miss Ruth Abernethy (Channel Islands):* I wish to speak against this amendment. My concern with the amendment is that it identifies two particular courses that espouse views of Christianity that are somewhat partisan. The motion as currently proposed I think will receive broad support. It supports chaplaincy in its broadest forms and interacting with the prisoner and ex-prisoner community in its broadest form. The amendment proposes to limit the wording of the original motion, or at least to qualify the wording of the original motion in a way that I consider to be both unnecessary and unhelpful. The motion, unamended, I think will receive broader support. It will also receive support, I hope, from

across the house. Therefore, I would urge you, please, to resist this amendment, to leave the motion in its unamended form so that it can receive the most broad support possible.

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* I wish to speak against this amendment, pretty much for the reasons which Ruth has already outlined. I think that the reality is that the substantive motion which is before us already is comprehensive. It reflects a breadth of Christian teaching, the breadth of our relationships and our traditions within the Church of England. The motion, sadly, makes it sectarian and coming from a particular part of the Church of England. We are not given any data about what the "success rates" of either of those courses may or may not be in relation to prisoner rehabilitation. That is unfortunate in making an assessment before us in relation to this particular amendment.

As someone who has also spent 18 years of my life in chaplaincy, although in a healthcare context, I think that there are real problems about putting at the heart of this particular motion this amendment and, therefore, losing the overall thrust of Kashmir's motion. What we have when we work in a secular context, such as prisons or schools or hospitals, is we are there as guests. We are there as guests of the institution. To recommend anything in particular which may well have implicit and explicit teaching which is against equality and diversity law and - for example, in relation to LGBTQIA+ people in particular - it will be really problematic in terms of the Church maintaining a presence within secular organisations. That, I think, for me is the main reason why this amendment must be resisted.

I absolutely get what Matt wants to do and lots of us have benefitted from Alpha courses as individuals, although we may have moved on from its teaching ourselves in our own faith development. I get that Michael Ipgrave also respects that this is about teaching as well. However, unless we actually deal with the reality that we are guests in a secular environment and unless we actually think very carefully about what that means in relation to promoting particular sectarian teaching materials, we are going to be sunk in relation to our presence within our national life.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* I really welcome this motion and this amendment. If I had thought to contact Matt sooner, I would have asked for a sentence to be added about wider lay involvement. This may have helped with some of the issues that Robert has raised about sensitivities around the role of the chaplain. I am part of Christ Church, Winchester and in our parish is Winchester Prison. We have a group in our congregation who offer ministry to the prison. They regularly visit the prison, primarily to visit prisoners and care for them, but they also lead Bible study groups and also Alpha courses for those who want to attend and also support the chaplain in leading Sunday worship.

I am not actually involved in this ministry, but I am involved in praying for my church family who are and staying informed. The prison is part of our parish and the people who live and work there are part of our life as a church. I really want to support this amendment and this motion, but I think this ministry is something that many more of us could be

involved in. All of us need to support chaplains and chaplaincy and not to outsource this life-changing work.

*The Chair:* I now propose a motion for closure on the debate on Item 56.

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

*The Chair:* We will now take a vote on the amendment.

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

## **ITEM 57**

*The Chair:* I would now like to invite Mr Andrew Cornes to speak to and move his amendment, Item 57. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Andrew Cornes (Chichester):* I warmly welcome the motion. My amendment asks dioceses to enable offenders, after their release, to be welcomed as swiftly as possible into an appropriate church community subject to close safeguarding boundaries and to make this an important part of the brief for their diocesan safeguarding team.

To show the need, I want to tell you one man's story. I will call him John. John joined the church of which I was vicar and came to a committed and personal faith. A year later, he was arrested on sexual charges related to the past. While he awaited trial, two church couples had him live with them. During his ten years in prison, members of our church family prayed for him, wrote to him and frequently enjoyed telephone calls with him. Several members visited him even though his prison was 150 miles away. One couple looked after all his financial affairs.

In prison, John joined fully with many Christian groups such as Roman Catholics and Quakers, but mainly with Anglicans. He read the Bible daily and got to know his Bible well. When his release drew near, both a clergy friend of John's and I researched suitable churches for him. The Anglican chaplain wrote to these inviting their clergy to visit the prison and meet John. None visited. Only one replied. He was, in principle, happy for John to attend an appropriate Sunday service and to join an adult home group. The diocesan safeguarding officer was, of course, consulted. He advised against both and said he would find John a suitable church. Nothing happened. John rang the safeguarding adviser who, I quote John, "Made all the excuses under the sun". No other church was suggested.

When I heard this, I found a local church with almost no children. I phoned the vicar, who was sympathetic. I expect he talked it over with the diocesan safeguarding adviser. He rang back and said no. For the first three months, John was never able to go to church. He then moved to his permanent home. Again, I researched and came up with suggested

churches. John emailed the safeguarding adviser of this new diocese. No reply. He emailed again. Still no reply. So I phoned her. She got in touch with him promising to find him a suitable church. Then, nothing. Some weeks later, I left a message on her voicemail asking her to ring me back. No reply. A few more weeks, I did it again. Again, she never called me back.

A local vicar suggested that John come to midweek Communion subject to agreement by his probation officer and the diocesan safeguarding adviser but, despite John's asking, nothing was done. When John was about to leave prison, he told me that the first thing he wanted to do was to go to a church and pray. It is now 11 months since his release and he has not yet been able to enter a church and pray. I urge you to support this amendment.

*The Chair:* I now invite Kashmir Garton to come and indicate whether this is an amendment that you support.

*Mrs Kashmir Garton (Worcester):* I am happy to accept this amendment. It strengthens our aim for the Prison and Probation Service to work in partnership with dioceses and safeguarding teams.

*The Chair:* Item 57 is now open for debate.

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

*The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham):* I am in favour of this amendment and I want to say dynamic risk assessments are not that hard to do. Safeguarding matters. We need to learn to do this properly. I hope we were listening to the amendment and why it has been put forward and made to feel uncomfortable because that is not what church is meant to be, is it? We are not meant to just be welcoming those who look like us and meet our narrow remits. Focusing on the margins, which Jesus makes quite clear is what we are supposed to do, is messy and it can force us to change. That is a problem because it is scary - I get that - but, actually, doing it right means getting safeguarding right, which means are we able to open our doors safely? If the answer is, no, we are just not opening them, that is not the right answer.

All people are eligible for grace, proactively invited and welcomed to that. As church leaders, because lay or ordained as Synod members we are all in positions of church leadership, we each need to be willing to address the prevalent NIMBY attitude that I see in parishes. I work in low income communities. My parishes are never going to be places that are suggested for a transition house, but in my deanery there are parishes that have had such things put forward. It has been the churches and church members who have been really vocal about how this is a problem and, "We don't want that here". Why not?

We have heard the statistics on abuse and care and we know that community matters. We know that church matters. The Gospel is a gospel of love and acceptance and if we

do not give grace a chance, then what are we doing? That is the point, is it not? I hope that we pass the motion and I hope we support this amendment because we need to have the courage to back up our ideals and the ideal is that we can all come to know Jesus and worship God, is it not?

*The Revd Claire Lording (Worcester):* Throughout my ministry, I have been blessed with folks coming through the doors who have spent time in prison serving a custodial sentence. I am always struck by the desire that many wish to continue to nurture a faith, whether fledgling or established, once they have left prison. The positive experience they have had in the prison environment with the chaplaincy team and being part of the chapel community has left a lasting impact. Knowing that they can be loved and forgiven is an incredibly powerful life-affirming experience and one that needs careful nurturing by the local church that becomes the spiritual home of any former prisoner.

Sometimes though, the past life of a former prisoner cannot be shared or known publicly, especially in the case of sex offenders. It is beholden on those who do know the circumstances of a former prisoner's situation through the work of worship agreements which are informed by partnership with the Probation Service and a core support group to create a welcoming environment where those who may spend a lifetime on the sex offenders' register know that they too can safely worship with others, that they can nurture their faith and grow closer to God, that they can come to know what true forgiveness looks and feels like, where a new belonging to the Body of Christ can become the precious thing we all know it to be. This is what I have tried to do in the ministry I share and it is what I hope the whole Church feels compelled to do. All those who leave prison are vulnerable and we are asked to travel well with them, as much as we try to travel well with all victims and survivors of crime. I believe the motion and this amendment set before us enables us to do this to the very best of our ability.

*The Chair:* Synod, I propose a motion for closure on the debate on item 57.

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

*The Chair:* We are now going to vote on the amendment.

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

*The Chair:* Item 57 is carried. We now return to the main motion as amended. We really have very few moments left.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Point of order. Will you accept a motion for closure on the main motion?

*The Chair:* I am minded to accept your motion for closure. I will ask Synod. Synod, do you accept a motion for closure on Item 10, which is the main motion as amended?

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

*The Chair:* The motion for closure is carried and so I now invite Kashmir Garton to come and respond to the debate before we put the motion to vote.

*Mrs Kashmir Garton (Worcester):* Thank you to all of you who have contributed so powerfully to this debate and for sharing your stories. I am sure there are many more similar stories in this chamber. I will not have time to respond to every point, but I would like to make the following observations.

Bishop Rachel and James Ridge, thank you so much for reminding us about the Welcome Directory. By sharing this with probation staff, they can use it to connect with churches that are signed up to this Directory. I am also grateful to the Archbishop of Canterbury for highlighting the important role of prison chaplaincy and for the possibility of future investment in this work.

I would also like to thank Bishop Michael for pointing out the importance of partnership working and that by working with people coming out of prison this can actually renew our own Christian commitment. Also to Claire Lording, thank you for the challenges faced particularly by people convicted of sexual offences. Everyone who comes out of prison is vulnerable and whatever we can do to join that weak point in our system is going to make a huge difference. This is why working in partnership with the Probation Service can make such a big difference to people in their rehabilitation journey.

Synod, I urge you to be bold and to vote for this motion and send a clear message to the Prison and Probation Service that those who have offended and wish to turn their lives around can, indeed, do so and the Church can be a place of hope and redemption for them, a place where people can become the person that God intended them to be, a place of lifelong transformation.

*The Chair:* We now put Item 10, as amended, to the vote.

*The Ven. James Ridge (Chaplain General of Prisons):* Point of order. Given the importance of this matter, could I please ask for a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The Chair:* Yes. This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 10.

*The motion was put and carried 331 voting in favour, two against, with three recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* That concludes this session for the afternoon. Members are invited to remain seated and stay in the chamber for the update on LLF.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall KC (Manchester)* took the Chair at 3.23 pm



*The Chair:* Can we just settle down for this item of non-business. It says in the script that after 3.15 there will be an opportunity for an informal update. Now, nobody told me that the dress code was informal. Of course, you will know that I have no authority, like Jackie Weaver - no boos please - and therefore there are no Standing Orders which I have to apply, which is a shame because, of course, if there is a ruling, the Chair is always right, so I cannot say that now.

So, what is my role? Well, I have asked myself what is my role many times. It is either that of a well-meaning compere, but you will be glad to know I do not sing, or that of a benevolent despot and I am trying to work out which it is, but what I am here to do is really just to try and give some structure to the proceedings in a very light way, and the outline will be very much that the *Living in Love and Faith* group will make presentations, I think the Bishop of Truro will start, followed by the Bishop of London, then there will be a panel discussion on my left, chaired by the Bishop of Truro and there will be questions and answers and I will facilitate the questions and answers as best I can.

Although the Standing Orders do not apply, we have obviously got to make sure that we treat each other in a decent and kind way and I will make sure that we do that because we have to do that. So, Bishop of Truro, please, you have as long as you like.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Geoffrey, I am sure I speak for us all that it gives us great reassurance to know that we are in your benevolent care through this time, thank you very much indeed.

He basically said what I was going to say, but much better than I would have done, but this is an opportunity for us to have a conversation together, openly, honestly and kindly, I hope, about where we are and, as Geoffrey said, we are going to begin with a presentation that Bishop Sarah will lead on. We are then going to have a panel conversation involving the members of the Steering Group and I will tell you when we come to it what their particular involvement in the work of LLF has been over the last few months, and then we are going to have questions from the floor, or, I hope, a continuing conversation from the floor.

I will say this then, but I will say this now as well. This is not a rerun of Question Time. This is an opportunity for a conversation. So, Sarah.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Thank you, friends. It is good to be here in York, and I want to start by thanking you for the way that you handled February's Synod. Despite our deep held differences, we engaged with each other with grace, whether it was in the group work or the questions, or in the eight-and-a-half-hour debate. I hope that the way that we engage with each other is the way in which we can continue in the midst of uncertainty and difference and may well spill in to our other business.

Just a reminder for those that may not remember, in 2017, the Church of England began the *Living in Love and Faith* project. For the first three years, over 40 people were involved in helping to create the teaching and learning resources, which were published in November 2020. I am just trying to work this thing out; does it not work? Do I point it somewhere? Chair?

*The Chair:* You are asking somebody who does not understand these things anyway.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I am pressing the green button. Oh, it is in bullet points, that is always a challenge.

So, just to remind you that in 2017 the Church of England began the *Living in Love and Faith* project. For the first three years, over 40 people were involved in helping to create the teaching and learning resources, which were published in November 2020. For a period of 18 months, people across the Church of England engaged with the material, some offered creative responses, which some of you may recall were here a year ago. Some simply wrote to the LLF team. Over 6,000 people responded to a comprehensive questionnaire, all of these responses were gathered in the substantial report published in September 2020, called *Listening with Love and Faith*.

The National House and College of Bishops, who had already studied the *Living in Love and Faith* material together considered what we had learnt from the LLF resources, the Church-wide engagement, from Scripture and the Church's tradition, as well as through prayer and worship. The reason I remind you is that some people were surprised by February. But this process has been going on since 2017.

And then, of course, in February, the House of Bishops proposed a way forward. That response related to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. I just remind us of that, because in the midst of our discussions sometimes we miss those other areas which the LLF process have engaged with in such a rich way.

Presenting the motion to General Synod in February, the House of Bishops recognised that there was profound disagreement which exists across the Church of England. It is disagreement that persists within our Church communities and in our churches and also amongst the bishops of the Church of England. This has sometimes been characterised as a disagreement between those who take Scripture seriously and those who are swayed by the whims of culture. The LLF resources and process demonstrates that this is absolutely not the case. People read Scripture seriously and find different meaning.

As Bishops in the Church of England, we have been seeking the mind of Christ in the midst of the disagreement and also of uncertainty about same-sex relationships. The motion that was agreed endorsed the decision of the College and the House of Bishops not to propose a change of doctrine in marriage. It repented of the failure of the Church to be welcoming to LGBTQI people, and the harm that they have experienced. It

welcomed the refining *Prayers of Love and Faith* and committed to replacing issues in human sexuality with new Pastoral Guidance.

I want to, again, just go back to the fact that we started off with a much broader context. Some of that broader context, as I have already indicated, has been lost, but I would want to commend to you the work of the Families and Household Commission and their report Love Matters, which increasingly needs to be read in tandem with this motion and the work of LLF.

A lot has happened since we met in February and the House of Bishops have had a considerable list of matters that have been raised in various quarters. There was, of course, the Synod group works, and the many hours of debate, there was the amendment to the final vote and there have been vehement responses to the Synod debate in our dioceses and across the Anglican Communion and also in Parliament.

There have been expressed, with uncompromising, confident judgments, that some have abandoned the faith, that we have embraced sexual immorality, that we have denied biblical teaching and authority and that we are walking away from the love and teaching of the Lord Jesus.

But there have been other responses too. Referring to one diocesan synod meeting, the LFF session was described by some as bringing everyone together in a way that did not problematise the whole. Everyone was able to speak and hear what others think about how we are going to travel this well as a diocese.

There have been letters of gratitude. For example, many people, lay and ordained, regular churchgoers and those exploring their faith, have told me that they are really happy with the progress these *Prayers* make towards truly welcoming people into the Church and helping more folks know the love of Christ. And almost all the facilitators of the group work at Synod in February describe their group's engagement as honest, courteous, spirit-filled, even across disagreements.

Many of you have also expressed other deep concerns: that the process since the autumn has been too rushed and not consultative; that we have not counted the cost in the form of a risk assessment of the way forward with regard to its reception in our dioceses and the wider Communion. Others have said that the way forward contains within it many questions about which we disagree which would result in pastoral chaos.

There have been concerns around reassurance for those who use the *Prayers* and those who do not use the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. There are clergy who are planning to make some tangible means of differentiating themselves and their bishops and/or others in their dioceses. And others have expressed their concerns that we may not honour the decision made at Synod in February and that their voice is being lost in the louder voices of the powerful.

There are fears that we are rowing back rather than implementing what has been agreed. There are concerns about whether the *Prayers* are authorized or commended and there has been a damaging revision, at times, in the language we use and there has been, for some, an increase in homophobia.

Not everyone is experiencing this kind of polarisation. Some have told me that their diocese is relatively quiet, or is willing to consider how to work together given the reality of their differences. There have been many strong words, many strong feelings and many strong convictions.

*Living in Love and Faith* began its life in the context of sharp disagreement, much like the situation that we find ourselves in today. Its solution was not to seek agreement but to help the Church to become a learning community in the midst of disagreements and in the midst of uncertainty. Becoming a learning Church involved three things in the *Living in Love and Faith* process.

First, the realisation that what we disagree about is complex. In order to understand the nature of our disagreements we need to explore the many facets of sexuality and identity, of theology, of scientific, historical and biblical understanding. Among other things, we need to be willing to learn to be curious about why we believe what we believe and why others see things differently.

Secondly, the realisation that when we learn together, we begin to understand each other's perspective better and deepen our relationship with and respect for other disciples, other fellow followers of Christ. This means that we need to be present to one another, to listen to one another, to be present with Christ and to listen to Christ.

Thirdly, the realisation that everyone is called to be part of this learning community, the spirit is at work in the whole Body of Christ, wisdom and insight may just come from surprising places and people and not always through clerical hierarchies. We may need to embrace humility and provisionality. We need to admit that, as God's people, we do not speak with one voice and there may be times, and this may be one of them, that we need to suspend judgment in order to suspend hostilities. We may need to reimagine what it means to be fellow seekers of God's truth in God's Church, to reimagine what disagreement and uncertainty is in the Church, what it signifies and what is it that God is calling us to.

It could be said that *Living in Love and Faith* has been about a new way for the Church to engage with matters about which we disagree, or which we need to attend to. I wonder, and I often ask myself whether we at Synod have truly embraced this way, have we actively encouraged the people we have been entrusted with to travel along with it. How have we and how are we leading the people of God on this path, learning but also discerning together, being curious together, suspending judgment whilst not relinquishing the truth as we see it, paying attention to our power, being open to relationships across difference while continuing to seek God's grace and truth with love.

I wonder what it might mean for us now and the Church to travel down this path as we begin to develop the Pastoral Guidelines, refine the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, consider what reassurance is required. How might we hold on to the essence of *Living in Love and Faith*, how might we create space for the Spirit to work among us to bring about God's purposes for God's Church in God's world.

So, what have we been doing since February? It may be a question you ask; I often ask that myself. What have we been doing since February? Well, the House of Bishops set up three working groups to take this work forward. The work is interconnected but we set up the three workstreams. We aimed for those groups to be diverse but not representative and, as you heard in the questions this morning, looking back, yes, we may have got the balance of lay to clerical better than we did, for which we are very conscious of that.

These groups did not propose a way forward, what they helped was the Bishops to discern how to implement the motion. And you will see when you listen to the panel that the diversity in the group was real and they had to handle and manage their disagreements and difference.

So, in terms of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, the workstream around that refined the current form of *Prayers* with reference to discussions at the College of Bishops and also the feedback from General Synod. They began to consider the ways in which the *Prayers* can be agreed moving forward. They began to develop rubrics and introductory material which will give advice for good practice in a variety of situations. And that is where it became very clear that they needed to work closely with the Pastoral Guidance Working Group to identify contexts in which the *Prayers* may be used.

The Pastoral Guidance Group began to identify what the Pastoral Guidance needed to contain in the light of the College of Bishops' work and also the feedback from the General Synod. It began to look at the nature of the structure, and that, we touched on this morning, is very different from *Issues*, but also wider, containing different types of guidance. But we wanted to make sure it was also accessible, so they began to consider that.

They also began to identify which order the different elements of the guidance needed to be developed, taking into account the ministerial vocations discernment cycle as well as what is needed for November and what maybe could be developed beyond November. They began to look at the different components of the feedback, taking into account the feedback from those that were working on that group. And also, they began to identify past statements and guidance produced by the Church that needed to be seen in relationship with the Pastoral Guidance.

The third and final group was around pastoral reassurance. They began to look at what would be required to ensure the freedom of conscience for clergy. How do we support

parishes where difference exists; how do they consider the implications of freedom of conscience for bishops; how do they consider the implications for laity, including those who are licensed or in positions of leadership?

What was the guidance for deaneries, multi-parish benefices, cathedrals and churches and how to determine their approach to the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, and how best to implement transparency regarding offering couples *Prayers of Love and Faith*?

They also began to consider guidance for TEIs, for DDOs, for people in different discernment processes and ordinands. Then they began to consider a variety of approaches to Pastoral Reassurance, including informal and more formal options and they began to articulate that range to Bishops.

We are now moving on in the next stage of the implementation, and just to say that as we move on into the different place we have not, despite some views, disbanded the reference group. What we recognise is that the three streams of work are overlapping and what we need to do is bring the streams of work together and to become more focused.

As we do that, what I think we would want to underline is that the House and the College of Bishops, despite not being of one mind, have a real desire for unity amongst us. We want to create a generous, theological, ecclesial and pastoral place in which we can share our ministry and in which we can offer the implementation of the motion agreed in February.

There is a desire to joyfully offer pastoral response to those loving, faithful, long-term, exclusive, same-sex relationships. There is no intention to change the doctrine of marriage, as expressed in the Canons and authorized marriage liturgies. You will know, as demonstrated by the questions this morning and also by the continued discussion this afternoon, that holding these commitments together is not just painful, but it is also complex. Therefore, as a College and House going forward we will explore the way in which we do that before we come back in November.

We have also identified, as I think probably has come up in the questions this morning, some specific key questions which we are doing further work on. That is not to say we have not done any work on them but we are doing further work, with the support of the Faith and Order Commission. The three critical things are, first, that relationship between Holy Matrimony and civil marriage, the relationship between doctrine and teaching, and finally the routes for using the *Prayers of Love and Faith*.

It is also fair to say that there are some other questions that come around this that you would have heard this morning. For example, questions around the Prayers related to covenanted relationships. There is further work going on on that and further clarity that we are using.

So where are we now? Well, we are entering into this different phase. As I have said, we have disbanded the three implementation working groups, but we are continuing to use that group as a reference group. What we hope to do in terms of the Pastoral Guidance is to use that group, and maybe others from a wider group, to draft what is required to take forward in terms of coming to November.

In terms of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, we will continue to produce accompanying rubrics and also the introduction to the resources and how the Prayers may be used. Also, we will continue to do further work on how we make those Prayers available for use. That touches on some of the discussions this morning in terms of commendation, authorisation of Canon B 2, Canon B 4.2 and Canon B 5, and anything else that I have forgotten there.

In terms of the Pastoral Reassurance, we are going to look at how we can develop ways of offering pastoral reassurance. That includes the discussions around the best ways for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* to be brought into use, but it also recognises those who are asking for more formal reassurance as we move forward.

In terms of doing that, we will be using the members of the reference group at FAOC and also others that will join us. How we do that is either editing through email correspondence or through bringing together very focused task and finish groups, which literally come together to do a task and then fall away.

In both examples I have given it is not for those groups to agree; it is for those groups to bring further information to the College and the House of Bishops as they meet over September and October and then to bring the papers for the November Synod.

The other piece we will do is to further engagement, so not just with the Faith and Order Commission, which is ongoing, but also with wider stakeholders. Over the summer we will engage with stakeholder groups to listen to their hopes, concerns and fears, but also to be able to talk to them about where we have got to at that point.

Finally, around where we are now, is we have talked about the Pastoral Consultative Group in the past, so something around how we see the timeline going forward. I keep saying this and people sigh, but it is true, that issues related to sexuality, to relationships, to marriage, does not stop in November because it does not stop for us.

Therefore, there will be clear ways in which implementation will be carried by parts of, for example, the NCIs going forward, like the Ministry Division. One of the groups will be the Pastoral Consultative Group which you will have seen in previous papers. That is a new group that will need to be established, so we will look to establishing that. I hope that in November, as we bring the proposals for implementing the motion that was agreed in February, there will not only be the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, the Pastoral Guidance and the Pastoral Reassurance and we will bring something around what does that look like going forward.

The other final piece just to say is that when we come to questions, if you ask what has the House of Bishops agreed, the reality is that what we have agreed is that we will bring together proposals in November. So, in a sense, nothing is agreed in that way, so what we cannot say to you as we discuss is what is agreed. What we will talk about is some of those areas that we have been reflecting on and considering. In November we will bring our response to implement the motion as agreed in the February Synod. We will absolutely make sure that our homework and workings are clear and we will have a clear theological and legal rationale to that.

I know that some of you will believe that we are dragging our feet; others will still feel that we are moving too quickly. However, I still believe this is about discerning in an environment of uncertainty and disagreement, and therefore the best timelines are not always fixed. What I believe is that we need to get this right rather than get it done quickly. I would reassure those who will think it is me eking it out, it is not. We will bring a response from the House of Bishops to implementation of the Synod as agreed in February.

Just finally, can I thank everybody who has either contacted me or the team in one form or another. We are very grateful for your continued involvement and dialogue as we move forward and I am sure that you will continue to contact us. We are very grateful for your continued involvement and dialogue. Thank you.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Mark Mounstephen):* Thank you, Sarah, very much indeed. We are going to move on to our panel conversation and after we have had a conversation with the panel, we are going to have the opportunity for some questions. I am going to channel my inner chat show host at this point, although I am not exactly well-positioned with these good people a very long way away from me.

What I hope we can do in this next section is to reflect on the progress that has been made by the working groups to share some of their hopes for the future; to reflect candidly on some of the complexities of the work that they have done, being open and honest about the difficulties of trying to hold people together with very different views on this issue, and to be transparent as well about the way in which this has been personally challenging for people.

Let me introduce the panel. As Sarah said, we have been in three workstreams and the Pastoral Guidance Group has been co-chaired by Bishop Debbie Sellin and Bishop Sam Corley. The work on the *Prayers of Love and Faith* - I am trying to avoid use the word liturgical - has been co-chaired by Bishop Rosemarie Mallett and Bishop Michael Ipgrave and the work on pastoral reassurance has been co-chaired by Bishop Andrew Watson and Bishop Jackie Searle. Jackie, unfortunately, cannot join us. They are also joined by Bishop Mark Wroe, the Bishop of Berwick, who, along with Mark Betson and Georgie Morgan behind me, have been facilitating and supporting all the work of the steering groups. These good people over there, and Sarah and I, constitute the steering group which has been taking this work forward.



What else do I need to say about this? I think it does need to be said this has been hard and, in some cases, difficult work for these groups to do, in trying to give expression to the resolution that this Synod passed in February. There is, of course, diversity of view among the steering group, as there was among the working groups, as indeed there is among the Bishops, as indeed there is among the wider Church. It is that diversity of view but also our commitment to walk together that actually makes this difficult. If we cared only for one of those things, this work might be a lot simpler, but we care for both.

Let me dive in deep and start with this question. Could you talk about some of the complexities and challenges that you have faced. Perhaps if we could start with Michael and Rosemarie, if you do not mind, at least it gets you out of the way.

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Michael Ipgrave):* As you said, our group has been diverse. We have been facing some interesting challenges, but I think it is right to say that in terms of the difficulty of the working groups we are probably starting at the shallow end of the pool here. We have been a little bit smug but we have had a good head start in that we had a text which of course has been continuously revised, but we did inherit a text of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* which came to Synod in early February. We also inherited from Synod some large buckets full of yellow Post-it notes with your comments on those *Prayers*. Part of our workstream has been not to digest the Post-it notes but digest the contents of them, collate those, and see what refinements in terms of the text of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* would be appropriate in the light of that. We have also been aware that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are not just texts, they would be enacted, so we are thinking about the notes and the rubrics that accompany them. That is ongoing work.

Another distinct part of our work has been around the way in which these *Prayers* might be either commended or authorized. I am going ask my co-chair Bishop Rosemarie to talk about that one if you do not mind.

*The Bishop of Croydon (The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett):* I was not going to talk about that bit at all. I thought the lawyers did that part. I was going to say some of the challenge has been the speed with which this work has had to be undertaken, which has meant we have had to work via email. I think many in the group found it difficult if they could not come to the face-to-face meetings and perhaps people felt their views were not always being picked up on. I have to say at the last meeting we had where we had more people present, it was really an excellent meeting.

I think as Sarah mentioned, when you are able to journey together, to work together and to be together, actually, what we found is that despite the differences of perspectives and opinions on the issues that are being raised on how the *Prayers* are to be used, commended and authorized, on the wording, we were able to have good conversations and concord in the group. That was really important because I think people would feel there is nothing smug about it. It has been challenging, but the important thing has been

about working together and walking together. I think that working together in partnership has enabled us to come up with a revised draft which has listened to Synod, has listened to the comments from all the Bishops, has integrated those and, as best as we can, has reflected that.

With regard to authorisation or commendation, we have spoken deeply about that. There have been comments here in terms of the questions. We are still working through that and journeying through that. Obviously that will come into our conversations again in November, but, as we do that, we will be working very much with our legal team, and also we will be working to ensure that whatever risk assessments need to be taken on any part of however we authorise or commend it, that is going to be part of what we do before we make any decision.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Mark Mounstephen)* Thank you. Rosemarie, very much indeed. I will pass over to Andrew to talk about some of the challenges you have faced in the work on the Pastoral Reassurance.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* We had a big brief to look at pastoral reassurance both to individual clergy and to churches dealing with issues of this kind and how we had the discussion in most of our churches, which let us face it are not monochrome in this area, and are really needing to have those discussions. Also, I think one of the struggles, and this is something that Debbie and Sam have been quite relentless in pushing for, has been that sense of what level of change are we making. I think that has been a really tricky one for us because if we, in a way, take a relatively conservative view of what was decided in February Synod then the reassurance that says we will find ways where you can use these *Prayers* or you cannot use those *Prayers*, and we would support either, is relatively straightforward.

If the level of change is much more significant than that, then obviously that is where it becomes a lot more complex. We have been really wrestling with that and, therefore, having to come up with quite a number of scenarios of “If this, then that”.

Particularly looking at issues of whether we are changing our teaching on sexual ethics and on marriage, when is a change of teaching not a change of teaching has been quite a tricky one for us. Because of that we have then looked at what Bishop Sarah described as more structural forms of, and I do not like the word, “differentiation”, but that is the word that has been doing the rounds. We have identified five ways in which we could do that, ranging from a very light touch through to something quite heavy, and somewhere in the middle issues about extended episcopal oversight and some of the opt-in/opt-out type questions. We have begun to take those to the Bishops as well. Every time we have come up with something, quite a number of other issues have popped up at the same time. I have to say I think we are probably only 10% to 15% through the task, which has felt quite scary getting it up to speed in the time.

The groups themselves have worked increasingly well. They are obviously very diverse groups. It has been good working with Jackie Searle, and, although we have different views on some of this stuff, it has been good sharing that together. There have been some positives, but I do question quite how we get from here to there. I think that is quite a major concern for us at the moment because I am not sure that the process will get us from there to there, certainly in the time-frame we are looking at. I am aware that already the timeframe has obviously slipped for some of us in Synod.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Mark Mounstephen):* Michael is quite right to recognise that I have started not at the easy end of the spectrum but perhaps the less challenging end, so let us end at the other end of the spectrum. Debbie?

*The Bishop of Southampton (The Rt Revd Debbie Sellin):* I think one of the most challenging things for us is the vastness of the task. At the February Synod I sat not knowing I was going to be doing this role. I was listening to some of the responses of the questions and it kept coming up, "The Pastoral Guidance will look at that, the Pastoral Guidance will look at that". So actually defining what it is we are doing is probably the starting point, and trying to understand what is the work that we are being asked to do, what are the boundaries of it. I think we have a much clearer understanding now. I am really grateful to Isabelle for helping us in trying to frame what it is. When you are faced with, "What actually is this?" that is quite a difficult place to start, and we have worked through that.

I think also ambiguity in people's minds about what happened in February. I think as we have explored more and more we realise that we can come into a room like this, we can take a vote, but what has happened in that vote different people see differently. When you then begin to unpick this you realise the assumptions that have been made about certain things and when they come out in the open, that is actually quite challenging, and it is quite painful, because you realise you were in the same room voting for the same thing but your understanding of what was going on was quite different. We have been dealing with that as well.

I would echo what Rosemarie and Andrew were saying about group working. When you do not know each other particularly well, the first one can be a bit more challenging but by the final meeting we were actually working much better together, understanding one another and listening to one another. That is normal group dynamics, but we have had to journey together to get to know one another and to build trust. Certainly by that final meeting that was much stronger than when we had begun.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Reverend Mark Mounstephen):* Sam.

*The Bishop of Stockport (The Rt Revd Sam Corley):* Synod must be very reassured that the answer to all of your questions will be in the Pastoral Guidance, including the date of the return of Jesus Christ and everything else that you are not quite sure of.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Reverend Mark Mounstephen):* Do not over-promise.

*The Bishop of Stockport (The Rt Revd Sam Corley):* I think we have felt the weight of expectation on this document, and also felt that people outside of the group have a very clear idea what form it should take and what should be included. One of the challenges for us is normally you would write this kind of guidance in response to a very settled position. Even where there was disagreement, there would normally be a settled response to complex questions, whereas what we are doing through this act of implementation and ongoing discernment is trying to find answers to some of those questions which have not been asked or resolved by the Bishops or by Synod before. So questions like is there a place for sexual intimacy outside of marriage; can clergy enter into same-sex partnerships and marriages?

We are having to think about those questions and how we might bring those to the College of Bishops and the House of Bishops and to Synod at the same time as writing guidance that tries to scope out what the answers to those questions might be. Not to predict what the answers might be but, “If answer is this, then the guidance would need to say this”, “If the answer is this, the guidance would need to say this”, which makes it really complex.

We are all committed to three things. The first is clarity. The guidance has to be clear because good pastoral care is rooted in clarity, and not clarity just for ourselves but also my concern as the Bishop who oversees discernment for the discernment working group part of the Ministry Council. It is at the back of my mind always how is this going to land for a potential ordinand thinking through whether they might have a vocation, let alone a lay person considering ministry, and then how is that going to land for people working with those people in our dioceses as well. There has to be clarity around this, has there not?

It has to have the confidence across the wider Church as well, across a whole spectrum of views, not just guidance that one party is happy with but guidance the whole Church can have confidence in. And a confidence that will last. I am going to be a Bishop probably for another 23 years before I retire. It has to hold that kind of confidence rather than be something that just falls apart after six to nine months. It has to carry that kind of confidence.

There has to be compassion in this as well. *Issues in Human Sexuality* ticks some of those boxes, but it does not tick the compassion box when we are dealing with ordinands or people exploring the process. Those three things are behind everything we are trying to do, that kind of clarity, confidence and compassion, but if you were unsure, let me tell you it is really, really complex.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Reverend Mark Mounstephen):* Thank you, Sam, very much indeed. You have touched on this, more than one of you has, but could you say a little more about the inter-relatedness of the work that you are been doing, and, in a sense,

how you come up against that? Unless we address the inter-relatedness, and I am not trying to ask my own question here, moving forward becomes harder.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I think just using the analogy of walking together, which we all want to do, walking together where one person walking feels that the other one is genuinely trespassing is obviously much more tricky than walking together where you feel we are one. I suppose that is where the kinds of questions that Debbie and Sam have been posing to us are really quite difficult and quite important, because the way in which we walk together may be different according to how we answer those questions, which is where some of this structural thing comes, which, in a way, none of us wants but may be necessary. I guess for us we have been quite dependent not on poor Debbie and Sam trying to push those questions, but they are very relevant questions to what I think we are seeking to do in Pastoral Reassurance.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* I would add a little bit about that. One of the things in trying to hold together the three groups that we are realising is that decisions are always dependent on something else. A decision about the *Prayers* has to wait for a decision about what the Pastoral Guidance is saying. Whatever the Pastoral Guidance says and what the *Prayers* say has to relate to what Pastoral Reassurance is needed as well. There is a complexity in how we do that, which is why we are needing to bring those groups together and that work together in the way we are now.

One of the other complexities around the whole of LLF is that for the last few years we have been thinking about culture change and the way we have a conversation and our listening and our discernment. The other complexity is what happens when that discernment and that hopeful change of culture meets the reality of having to be implemented and go through the structures that we have as a Church.

There is a whole level of different complexities that we are working through and, if we are waking together, I think in our steering group some of us are walking over the hills right at the front somewhere and some of us are still stuck in the bog somewhere else. We are all stretched out in some ways but trying to make sure that we keep each other in view and make sure our work relates and we continue to relate well to one another.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Reverend Mark Mounstephen):* Thank you. I think that point about the inter-relatedness of the work and the people is a really important one. I want to finish with a couple of questions which I hope are more hopeful. Where are you finding hope in this work, if indeed you are? Do be candid in your answers.

*The Bishop of Southampton (The Rt Revd Debbie Sellin):* I think I am finding hope in the same way that I am finding hope in the dioceses. It is about people who want to understand one another. In gatherings I have had in your new diocese, Philip, they have been really positive occasions where people say, "I truly want to understand someone else's opinion". I have seen that in our group and I have seen that over lunch, over coffee, of people actually saying, "I really want to understand what it would be like to be in your

shoes; talk to me and tell me". I think that is hugely encouraging, because we may not change our own theological understanding, but we will have travelled with somebody and understood what is going on for them. I think the more of that that happens the fruits of this exercise will actually land in some of our other Church life too.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I would concur with that. Certainly my experience of churches that have done the LLF course and so on, it is so often those open conversations have been incredibly helpful, and just as in February Synod when we met together in smaller groups, they are deep and profound encounters.

The tricky thing is always when you have to make the gear change into whether that means a change of policy or a change of teaching or whatever. I think that was always going to be difficult gear change to make, but as far as possible recognising that listening to one another, and recognising each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, is extraordinarily important. For me that part of the process was really helpful. This part is much more challenging.

*The Bishop of Croydon (The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett):* I was just going to say that we talk a lot about walking together, and we talk a lot. The key thing is that we have to walk the talk - seriously. I think out there people have started to believe that what can be for some people small steps, just in terms of saying the apology, there are just some ways in which people have heard the Church start to walk that talk of love and inclusion. So, for me in the conversations I have where people say, "I feel I have been listened to, I feel I have been listened to", that begins to say that we are walking the ways in which we have been talking.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Reverend Mark Mounstephen):* One last question before we turn to questions from floor: more specifically, what do you hope for looking forward to November and beyond?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Michael Ipgrave):* I find myself in the embarrassing position of holding the microphone and having to say I shall be on sabbatical in November. Could I answer a different question?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Mark Mounstephen):* Of course, say whatever you want to say.

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Michael Ipgrave):* It is sort of your question about hope. Looking at those bucket loads of post-it notes, your heart slightly sinks, but I thought, actually, whatever the reactions in there, I am really encouraged that people care so much about how we pray. We are a praying church and there are strong, strong opinions about the Prayer which shapes us and forms us. I think that is something really precious about the Church of England and Anglicans.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Mark Mounstephen):* Amen, thank you very much. Are we playing pass the microphone? No, we are not.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I suppose my hope is that we will continue with the grace. We have to recognise that the response that we bring to implementing the Synod Motion will again cause anxiety for a lot of people. I do think that my hope is that we would continue in a graceful relationship with each other, recognising Christ at work in each other.

*The Bishop of Truro (Rt Hon Mark Mounstephen):* Thank you all very much indeed. Let us turn to questions from the floor and I will hand over to the Chair, who will take us forward.

The Chair: To the compere! Compere, yes. We turn to questions, which we will take in groups of three and the panel will determine who will answer. It will obviously be helpful, although we are not in synodical mode, for you to give your name, your Synod number and your diocese so we can at least know who you are.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark):* This morning, Synod gave Final Approval to Amending Canon 43. One of the provisions of that Canon raises the age at which a person can get married in church from the age of 16 to the age of 18. The reason for this was to bring the Church law in line with civil law in this regard. What this change has opened up is a gap of two years in a young person's life between the age of consent for sexual intercourse, which is 16, and the age at which a couple can get married, which is 18. Given the Church's clear teaching that sexual intercourse should only take place within Christian marriage, will additional teaching material and pastoral resources be made available to youth ministers and youth workers as well as to 16 and 17 year olds and their parents on the Christian ethics of sex and marriage in the context of a safer Church?

*The Revd Canon Kevin Goss (St Albans):* Thanks you, Bishops, much of what you have said this afternoon has been very, very positive. Last February's vote apologising for the Church's treatment of LGBTQI+ people gave positive recognition and affirmation of the evidential and God-given joy in their lives and loves and gave hope to many ordinary people in our nation that the Church actually believes the Gospel of love, of God's unconditional love. Can I ask what specific assurances can you give that in your work relating to actual same-sex relationships that the Church will continue to move forward to embrace the radical Christian inclusion of all that we were promised and not to reverse ferret out of negativity and fear with disastrous consequences not only for LGBTQI+ people but also for our national credibility?

*The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury):* It was heartening to read again in GS 2303 that there has been a commitment to provide a generous pastoral response, which is loving and celebratory to those in lifelong, monogamous, same-sex committed relationships. Given how taxing particularly the Pastoral Guidance is proving to be, is there anything

that we can do in our dioceses to prepare for this development and could you advise us on the best way to pray for you.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Let us take those in reverse order and let us start with the first one. What might we do in our dioceses to address that issue. Someone brave and bold. Sarah, you are brave and bold.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I have got the mic, so I will go first and then pass it to Sam, I think. I am going to take the two last ones together, actually I think.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Okay, yes, go for it.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* We had spent some time at the last College of Bishops asking ourselves the question how do we understand what an apology really looks like? We did not pretend to know what it looked like but how do we know what it looks like? Because, actually, if you apologise and do nothing, it is not an apology. We did not have an answer, but certainly the College of Bishops have begun to challenge ourselves to that. I think that is the first thing.

Going on to the second one, and for me that is partly linked, we have in the London diocese, because of LLF, established an LGBTQI Pastoral Advisory Group. For me, part of what the apology looks like but also part of how do we respond as a diocese, regardless of your theological position how do we respond in that pastoral joyful way, is something that I have put to the LGBTQI Pastoral Advisory Group because, in a sense, they are the people to advise the College in London. I think that is something and we do need to spend some time thinking, for example, what does good pastoral care look like in any of our churches for LGBTQI people.

*The Bishop of Stockport (The Revd Canon Sam Corley):* Pray would be the biggest thing you could do for us, pray somehow for space and time and clarity of thought - all of those things which I am sure you are doing anyway. Two things from me in response to all of those questions. One is this is about people not problems. These are people who are fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God and part of our Church, or not yet members of our Church, and somehow that everything we say and write will reflect that we recognise people's humanity and that there will be joy in this as well and we have got something to say that is positive about sex and sexual relationships. I did 20 years of youth work up until 2019, summer residentials, all of that kind of stuff. Trying to present this as something that is positive rather than, again, a problem, and so that somehow - and through all of this, with all of the complexity that you will know full well - there will be joy in this and a recognition of people's personhood.

*The Bishop of Southampton (The Rt Revd Debbie Sellin):* Just on that final question, I think this is about how we learn together. I think it was at the College of Bishops we began with sharing news and stories from our dioceses and what was working and what



was working well and what we could learn from one another. There is a sense in which how do we prepare and how do we equip. We need to learn together and I think there is something about learning from one another and not reinventing the wheel. That is where some of your input is incredibly helpful to say: we are doing this in our diocese and it is going down really, really well, so that we actually have some shared learning because we are all learning together. I cannot answer that question immediately, but how do we learn together and what could we be doing? I think the more that we can encourage that will help us prepare.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Andrew, I think you had your hand up and then perhaps we will move on.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Just a couple of things. Certainly, in Guildford, it was helpful to set up a chaplaincy team and that has been quite well contacted by a lot of people, which has been helpful. Another thing we did a few years back that yielded some fruit was I was invited to speak on some of the themes around LLF at our fairly informal LGBTI Christian group in the diocese and then a couple of months later asked to speak to the Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship. Because I knew both were in my diary I thought, well, I will actually give the same talk in both, which was challenging to put together but I think actually both groups really appreciated it.

As a result of that, after quite a complex process, we did actually get the sort of executive of both groups together to talk about what would good pastoral care and a good welcome look like for LGBTI people within a relatively conservative setting? It was really brave of everyone to enter it, but it was a really good discussion and came out with some principles and then the Pastoral Principles came along which were pretty much the principles we had come up with through that group as well, but that was really quite helpful.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* I am flippantly minded to ask Sam and Debbie whether they would like to add the issue of 16 to 18 year olds to your Pastoral Guidance. I will come to you in a moment, Mark, once I have finished pontificating. I do not think we really have the mechanism as a Church going forward for addressing these ongoing questions of pastoral theology and practical ethics and my hope coming out of LLF is that we might find the mechanism to do that, because I think the honest answer to Adrian's question is we do not have the mechanism at the moment to do that and I think we should do. Mark, please.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* I was going to say something similar, but I think one of the things I discovered as a vicar when I set up a pastoral care team was that it seemed that everybody else in the Church stopped doing pastoral care because they thought they would leave it to the team. One of the things I think we are often in danger of doing is putting every bit of pastoral advice and wisdom and need onto our Pastoral Guidance colleagues to solve. It is not just that but it is how we work in partnership, how we work together and, clearly, we need to work together with education and with others in how we respond to those questions. Our Pastoral Guidance team are

brilliant but they cannot answer everything, although they are giving it a pretty good go. The Bishop of London and I are still trying to work out how old Sam is, if he can have done 20 years of youth work and still have 23 years left as a Bishop. Anyway.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Just picking up the bit about the education and the 16 and 18, of course in the proposals that did go to Synod in February there was a section that spoke about our schools' work and there were some questions on our Questions that related to a similar thing. I think there is something about the work that the Bishop of Durham does that will pick that up and schools, but also the Families and Households Commission and Love Matters because, absolutely, we should be teaching around good relationships and sexual ethics in our school.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* I have got a broad question really which is about the context of this process and the wider Church. One of the things we keep sort of dodging around is the question of trust. Somebody said to me this morning I can choose whether I trust people, but, actually, I think we need confidence that we can trust. I suppose my question is how do we rebuild trust? How do we rebuild trust when the House of Bishops are constantly meeting in secret contrary to other Houses here? How do we rebuild trust when we are told, "Oh, formal prayers that are being commended are not liturgy", then we get a slip of the tongue saying, "Well, liturgy, oh, sorry, I shouldn't say that".

How do we rebuild trust? How do we rebuild trust when we are told pay attention to power and then we are now told that, oh, these things are going to bypass Synod and they are going to be commended by the Archbishops, the greatest possible concentration of power? How do we rebuild trust when we are told on the board here we want to approach something which is in a celebratory way which is clearly contrary to the doctrine of the Church while upholding the doctrine of the Church at the same time? There is a massive trust deficit, it seems to me, both in and outside the Church from every side of this discussion. My question is how and when are we going to rebuild that trust? Are we going to get to a point in saying, actually, this is irreconcilable difference and be honest about it?

*Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield):* There has been a great recognition about how hugely complex this work is and a sort of much more precise question is what is the staffing commitment to this work in terms of Bishops' time, laity time, volunteering time, staffing time and full-time equivalent posts? How many people, how long, what is the actual commitment in terms of time and staff?

*Mrs Sandra Turner (Chelmsford):* Firstly, thank you. Who would do your job? I do not know, but thank you very much. My question is about lay people. I noticed there was something up there about lay people on the screen, but mainly it seemed to be people who have a position and so maybe me as a PCC member. But my question is broader.

Can work be done to mitigate distress caused to congregations who may find themselves in a service where maybe the *Prayers* are being said but they did not know in advance and they say amen and you cannot say amen to prayers you do not agree with or that, in conscience, you do not agree with. As a lay person who sits in a church, I find it rather depressing that we have been a bit left out. I think it is really important that the clergy are looked after. Of course, you are brothers and sisters, you need looking after, but we need looking after as well and I just would really commend to you that you do that. In my own church, there are a large number of people who are this close to walking away.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Could we start with the staffing commitment thing and perhaps go to Mark, if you would like just to deal with that.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* Yes, I can deal with it in one way. In terms of the core staff team which are facilitating the work of the steering group, that is myself - I am kindly given two days a week by my diocese to do that, to this point - but also with Mark and Georgie being able to be seconded to this work. They are pretty much just about doing this full-time from now. Someone will desperately shake their head. Is that about right?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* At least full-time.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* At least full-time on that. Then there are obviously a whole host of other people, not least my colleagues on the stage, who are giving time to it. Also, we are taking advice and working with the whole range of other people, including Isabelle Hamley who is giving significant time to this as well as Malcolm Brown and others from the different parts of the NCIs where it is relevant. So it is a whole team of people giving of their time, but exclusively with LLF it is like the core team working with it.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Let us turn to this question about the potential pain within congregations, that really important pastoral question. Rosemary, do you want to deal with that? Oh, no, Michael does, apparently.

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave):* Thank you, sister. Thank you for asking that. I think the theme of lay involvement in the *Prayers* is a really important one or lay abstention or non-involvement in the *Prayers*. One thing which has not always been picked up is that at least in their present draft form the *Prayers* do refer to the minister who may be ordained but may also be a lay person. That might be something that we want to think further about in the Prayers Group and, of course, it may be something that we want some Pastoral Guidance on as well.

What is really important is that there are clear and well-managed and sensitive conversations in the Church at the local level about what is going on. I think that is true in all sorts of issues but the pain, it seems to me, comes where that clarity is not present. The *Prayers of Love and Faith* in their present form are a suite of resources and so there

is a whole variety of elements that might or might not be used and they might or might not be used in a whole set of different circumstances. Sometimes, it might be in public worship but it might also be in a more intimate pastoral setting. I just think those things need talking through to get as much clarity of understanding to avoid the kind of pain that you have mentioned.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Thank you very much. Sarah, do you want to deal with the trust question?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Yes, I suppose just a couple of things, really, because in a sense they are both linked, lay and trust. Of course, this has been going on since 2017 and so this is not a process that has suddenly been sprung on people. In fact, the Listening with Love and Faith was open to anybody and six thousand people answered the questionnaires. I do not know the breakdown, but certainly that was an incredible lay response. In fact, right the way along with *Living in Love and Faith*, we have involved the breadth of the Church of England. I know congregations, lay people, because they have spoken to me about their involvement. We have involved lay people.

There is no doubt in terms of the three workstreams, I put my hand up about that and we will alter it, but right from the beginning this was about trying to do something in a slightly different way which was involving the breadth. Right the way through, we have tried to engage Synod so Synod knows the involvement in what we have been doing. Certainly, in February there was good time given to Synod, but also looking back even in July last year good time was taken to it. We have given time. Trust is an odd thing, really. It can be hard gained and easily lost, but we are working together. Well, I think we are trying to work with not just Synod but the breadth of the Church of England, recognising that there have been many voices in this.

Of course, we will come back to Synod in November and we will work with that. Have we fully lost trust? I am not sure about that. I think that is difficult. I think it is hard when we do not necessarily agree on the way that we are walking forward, but we certainly have tried to involve lay people and I think *Living in Love and Faith* has probably been a really good example involving lay people in a way that we have never involved them before, in fact.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I think it is absolutely fair enough that the House of Bishops and other bodies should be able to meet in private. I would not take that everything has to be sort of shared with everyone. I think the tricky question is what happens when something does come in November and what is the proper route there. Certainly, speaking with my governance hat on, there is something about Bishops in Synod which is extraordinarily important and we obviously do need to have that discussion about, actually, how that is best done at that stage. My own views are public on that now, unwittingly but public, as they are for quite a number of others about exactly

what canonical route we take but we will need to discuss that among other things over the coming months.

*Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough):* In light of all the calls for openness and transparency, could I just ask what the rationale for cutting the live feed was so people from home cannot watch what is going on now?

*The Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester):* I suspect that almost everybody here would be really grateful for the commitment to clarity in the Pastoral Guidance and longevity, standing the test for time. My question relates to both adequacy and timetable. *Issues in Human Sexuality* dealt I think almost entirely with homosexual relationships.

In February, in a very helpful, I thought, sort of offer, the House of Bishops were saying that you also want to bring before us teaching on singleness, celibacy, chastity, friendship, community, family and household. Today, we have heard about transgender and intersex, for example. When the Convocations of Canterbury and York came together just for - I forget how long it was - an hour and a half Zoom, we came up with 169 questions that we wanted answered. We have heard that it is not going to be a book, it is going to be a document and so my question is, is it really going to be adequate? That is the adequacy part of my question.

The timetable part is we are four months from now until November. Bishop Andrew has told us that he is only 10 to 15% of the way through. I appreciate that many people here are longing for closure on this, but are we not in danger yet again of rushing ahead and producing something which will not pass the test of time?

*The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester):* The effect of the decisions in February on my congregation was really positive. It was very liberating and there is a gratitude we are feeling for it because, apart from anything else, when we recently had a series of teaching on Christian ethics it seems to have broken open the thinking about sexual ethics. My question is how do we help by feeding in this new way in which we are gripping this based on a core value of flourishing as opposed to sin, how do we feed in what we are learning in this new phase of creativity created by the decisions in February?

*The Chair:* Can I just say to Vicky Brett that we are enquiring why the live feed has come to an end. We are also enquiring as to whether or not a recording can be made and be available later on. I hope that deals with her question, which is one really for me rather than the panel.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Let us deal with Andrew's question around adequacy and speed and those issues, Mark.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* I think we are aware of all of the other issues and themes that we want to explore. One of the things that we are concentrating on at the moment is around same-sex relationships and the Pastoral Guidance at this

point has a focus there. But we are very aware that there is a whole load of other issues that we really want to get to. The initial one is quite tricky as we are working that through, but we want to be clear when we come back to Synod in November about the work of the Pastoral Consultative Group, which we have already mentioned, which will take on some of those other themes and explore them and add to guidance as we go so that the guidance will be clear about the issues it can deal with. It will also be clear about the work that needs to carry on and the important work that needs to carry on. But, at this point, our focus has had to be around same-sex relationships.

In terms of speed and adequacy, in that sense I think there is a real tension that we have. As we took on this implementation phase, lots and lots of people were saying it is going way too fast and a whole lot of other people were saying it is going really too slow and not quick enough. Somewhere in that, we are trying to negotiate that space. But we want to bring stuff that is ready for Synod and that will stand up to scrutiny from Synod. That will be the test in November, what we get to bring back to Synod.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Just to add to that, I am going to go back and remind you about the Families and Households Commission and Love Matters. I suppose I should not have been surprised but the press coverage was around singleness. That was received really well and a group of people contacted me and said, "Suddenly, I have been seen by the Church of England". That is really important work but, as Mark said, November is about bringing back the Pastoral Guidance that is required around the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and particularly around sexual intimacy and particularly some of those that relate to discernment. They will not all come but it is the ones that are required at that point that will come.

The bit about *Issues in Human Sexuality*, we put far too much weight on it. A lot of the things are relevant and not relevant. Actually, what we are really saying is we are finding a different way forward to deal with what it is to fashion your life and household according to Christ. That is what this is about. There will be some stuff that will not come and will come.

I think there is more work for us to do as a Church, as Philip said, around sexual ethics but also around what relation does that have to our teaching and our pastoring of people. Again, that is not work that will be done by November. That is different work and we just need to be really realistic about this.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Can we move to the kind of cultural question which was the third one about the sort of way this has changed and is changing culture and what that means for us. Is anyone volunteering to answer that or shall we just note the question?

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I think it is a really good question. I think the LLF course has opened up conversations in many congregations which I think have often been quite positive, people being able to talk about things that they had never

talked about before in congregational life. I do not think we lose that. I know that some people found that very difficult but I think that has, overall, been a positive experience. I think within some more conservative circles recognising good in long-term same-sex relationships that can be and should be affirmed and that has been a positive.

I think as well people being able to say that "I am gay and I am a Christian" within some of those circles. Living Out I think has had a big impact in some places. Also, recognising how churches so often can be so family focused that single people do feel that they are ignored or left out and that, actually, they are not part of the wider family. I think those are all sort of cultural changes which can be seen as really positive along the way.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* Just to add, in terms of flourishing and that story of a particular congregation flourishing I think we need to share our stories. That is how we change culture, by sharing the good news stories of what is going on in our congregations in our communities. I would just encourage that sharing of our stories.

*The Bishop of Southampton (The Rt Revd Debbie Sellin):* Just to add one more thing onto that. There is something about our teenagers. We want to have a real focus on young people. We are committing to saying we want to double our numbers of children and young people. If we can create places where teenagers are free to come and have the conversations in church that they are having with their friends, then again that is something about changing the culture. One of the things that we are discovering in the Pastoral Guidance Group is that there is already some work on some of those other things. It is gathering what is already there and being aware of what more needs to happen, so that exercise of understanding what we already have is ongoing.

*The Chair:* We will take three more and then I am minded to have a break. You know what I am like for breaks, although it is not for that reason.

*The Revd Charlie Skrine (London):* I do not know if we have to declare interests in this no Standing Order world, but I was on the working groups in the autumn and on one of the implementation groups. I am particularly grateful to see the three key questions for the Faith and Order Commission. I am very grateful that that work has been handed to them. Now four of the Bishops on the platform have all identified this question of whether sexual intimacy outside of heterosexual marriage in the new Church of England we are going to be in, is that going to be holy or is it going to be sinful?

My reflection on the implementation groups is not actually about the speed or about whether we all met together. It is actually it is impossible to make progress without the answer to that question. I think probably all of Synod will be very sympathetic to the College and the House of Bishops finding it very difficult to answer, that we have the same disagreements. Why is that not being referred to FAOC as well? And how and when will we have an answer to that question, please?

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Chair, I understood they wanted a bit of a conversation as well as a question. I am just going to put a couple of comments upfront. I am sure I am not the only one who is feeling quite tired of all these discussions. From a personal point of view I am feeling very tired that I have to point out that we have got eight straight people talking about LGBT people yet again. Dear friends who have just clapped me, thank you, but we use clapping at a football match for different sides, do we not, and I am tired of that too.

I am tired of the fact that the world out there looks in and shakes its head and does not understand what on earth we are getting ourselves into such a twist about. People like me exist. We are not going anywhere. Some of us, sadly, have actually left the Church but most of us believe that God has called us to be witnesses, to be the grit in the oyster that tries to shape a Church into something that truly believes in the love of God, for all. We have sex, if we find the right life partner. I am single and celibate and have been since I broke up with my ex, but we are human beings like everybody else in this room and it is so hard being talked about as if we get a special card saying that we have to be single and celibate for life.

I am tired of being treated like something different. I am tired of the questions that keep trying to close us down and shut us down. We have seen so many questions this week and through the years. These conversations have not been going on since 2017. They have been going on well before that. I like, many of you, were part of the Shared Conversations and we had conversations well before that. We are going to carry on having the same conversations unless we give room to each other. Dear conservative friends, you cannot force me to believe something I do not believe. You cannot force me to believe that God does not want to bless me.

For goodness' sake, I do not want to come to your church and be blessed in a church where you do not believe that, nor do any of my friends. We are not going to be turning up in droves making you bless us. That is the worst thing possible. We so often talk about unity and, Bishops, I understand the burden you carry, but it is we LGBT people who pay the price constantly for that unity. I will ask my question, Chair. I think you can hear that I am trying to change the direction of all this.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* I was going to say, Ms Ozanne, being very kind to you, there is a question to be asked.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* I will ask the question. Yes, there is a question to be asked, thank you for giving me that, sir. Forgive me, you might think this is me weaponising, but to whom do young LGBT people growing up in churches who believe all that the questions and those who disagree with me believe turn when they know they cannot carry the weight of the expectation on them that they will either transform themselves into something heterosexual or they will stay single and celibate for life? Because, at the moment, they are turning to me and other friends of mine and they should not be. They should be



turning to you knowing it is a safe place for them to go. Panel, who should they talk to and how can they know they will be heard?

*Dr Ros Clarke (Lichfield):* As I am sure we all did, I appreciated the long and careful process which was undertaken through *Living in Love and Faith*, the listening which has gone on and the learning together. I also really appreciate that this afternoon's session was set up to be a conversation rather than the sometimes combative question and answer process we have in Synod. It remains clear, however, I think - and even Bishop Sarah acknowledged at the beginning - that, despite all of those good conversations, the sharing, the hearing, the growing of fellowship and friendships, there remains a profound disagreement on these issues. Some feel that that disagreement needs to be lived with as we walk together despite the tension that brings. Some of those who wish that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* had gone very much further, and certainly some of those of us who felt they had already gone too far, feel that the disagreement is simply too deep and too serious for walking together to continue in any meaningful sense.

We have seen this week those disagreements exist between Bishops. February showed us they exist certainly within this Synod and those deep divisions exist throughout the Church. We were reminded this morning of the unknowable number of those who never considered going for ordination in the past because of the Church's views on sexuality. We are hearing now of those turning back from ordination because of the views that were represented in the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. Whether or not you consider this a salvation issue, it is and has been for a long time an issue which excludes people from the Church's life and ministry.

We were, and we knew we were, given an unrealistic timeline in February. I honestly think that November may be equally unrealistic. It may also be the case that there is simply no timeframe which would be long enough to square this circle. I think we may have set the group an impossible task. I wonder at what point we could begin to admit that disagreement is not in this case good disagreement and that walking together is no longer a realistic goal. My question is this: is there any room in this process which might allow that kind of thinking the unthinkable?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* I do not want to kind of oversynthesise, as it were, but it does seem to me that that these three questions do touch on some very fundamental issues: Charlie's question about where sexual intimacy properly, belongs; Jayne's plea that we should give room to one another, and Ros's question as to whether we can actually do that. There are some fundamental questions for you. Mark, you have got the mic.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* Just to begin with, Charlie asked the question around the questions that FAOC are looking at, supporting us with and the question about sexual intimacy. Members of FAOC are already part of the work that we are doing and so will be thinking around that so that question will be part of that

conversation as it relates to the whole of the work of LLF and how FAOC are supporting us and assessing that work.

In terms of Jayne's plea for space and room, we all hear that and it is very powerful. I had hoped that what we were doing over the last five years of LLF was about making space to listen to one another and to think through the Pastoral Principles. That is part of the answer, but where is the grace in all of that? We clearly need to do more work on that. We need to think together. We are all part of the culture that we inhabit as a Church and we need to think of our own responsibilities in how we shape and change that culture.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I think Synod needs to recognise that, as Bishops, we find any kind of thought of what is often called "differentiation" very difficult because we are leading dioceses and we love our clergy, we love our lay people, we love the diversity within them and we love visiting our different churches. It is really quite a difficult thing to think let us create structures by which, actually, that is going to be more difficult. Often, our missional plans as well are based on an openness within our dioceses to work in that way and for many of us our clergy get on very well with each other despite significant theological differences.

It is rather like the heart of as a parent that your children get on well. Even if they agree with you fundamentally on stuff, which they often do, you want to hold the family together. It is not surprising that as Bishops we found some of the discussions, opening up the discussions on do we need more formal structural approaches, really difficult to have. But we have begun to open up that discussion a bit and I think it has led us to think about something that particularly the Meissen Commission, the Anglican, Lutheran, German Lutheran Commission, is that right, Jonathan? Jonathan is shaking his head here. Oh, dear, I thought he had told me this, but anyway.

*A Speaker:* The Evangelical Church in Germany.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Thank you very much. The Evangelical Church in Germany have looked at the episcopate as the focus of unity rather than simply saying the Bishop is always going to be the focus of unity. That is quite an interesting concept. We actually have it already with the provision that we have made over those who are not ministered to in the same way over women bishops and women clergy which has been a really painful thing for us. I know that is painful for a lot of people, but it sorts of hold together. I guess we have been looking at do we need that kind of differentiation or something like it? I certainly have begun to think myself that that may be the only way to square the circle while not saying that means we are not walking together because, actually, we do walk together as the Church of England with that structural piece in place even with quite a lot of tensions and struggles along the way. I guess that is the sort of thing, some of the areas our Pastoral Reassurance Group has been drawn into and I think there is a lot more work to be done on that.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* I think it would be fair to say as well, as Bishops we look on the prospect of division with exactly the same unease as any parish priest would of division in their local congregation.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Just building on that, I was very struck by Archbishop Stephen's Presidential Address. I understand why some people are challenged by the idea about whether we can maintain our unity over all this, but actually unity is there and what we need to be doing is looking where the unity is. In a sense, you cannot say there is not the unity. But I do think, as you have heard, that we have been looking at reassurance, both formal and informal.

I think the point we have always been clear of is this is not about finding agreement, because it is clear that we cannot, but it is about saying what is it that we are called to be as a Church in the face of uncertainty and the disagreement. I think that is the question. It is not about seeking for us to find agreement because we clearly will not, but it is about what it looks like. In the midst of it all, it comes back to the very important pastoral question about individuals. That I think goes back to making sure that we are doing something around asking people about what does good pastoral care look like for you in whatever church you are in and I do think there is some work that needs to be done for that so people know what good pastoral care looks like for you, not defined by the people who are not going to seek it but by those who will seek it. I think that also is important.

*The Chair:* I think that we should now pause and resume about quarter past 5.

*(Short break)*

*The Chair:* Can I just ask the Archbishop of York to speak before we continue our questions and answers.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Chair, thank you so much for allowing me to make a short notice. As some of you will have noticed, my dear brother, Archbishop Justin, has left the chamber and, as I think many of us know, his mother is seriously ill at the moment - well, close to death - and so I have encouraged him to leave and to go to be with her and his family. He wanted the Synod to know that that is the reason that he has left. I did not say do not come back, but I did say he needs to be with his family now and that is what we would all want him to do. His mother's name is Jane and I hope that you will keep him and his family and Jane in your prayers and perhaps we could just very briefly pray for them now.

Heavenly father, loving God. We ask you to watch over our brother, Justin, and his family and to be with his mother, Jane, on this her final journey in this life. May she and Justin and their family know your presence with them and your peace and be sustained by the great hope of the Gospel for we ask it in Jesus's name. Amen.

*All of Synod:* Amen.

*The Chair:* We are going to continue with questions and answers probably for about another hour but we will see how we go.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Can I just say a couple of things first, Mr Chair.

*The Chair:* Sorry, by all means do.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Just before we get to questions, two things. First of all, it has been pointed out to me that you will not necessarily actually know who all the members of the panel are, so let us give them the opportunity to introduce themselves.

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave):* Thank you. I am Michael Ipgrave. I am Bishop of Lichfield. I have been co-chairing the Prayers of Love and Faith Group, though actually I took on that role only about a month ago from Bishop Robert Atwell, the Bishop of Exeter, who I see has left, and so has my fellow co-chair, Bishop Rosemarie Mallet, the Bishop of Croydon, because she had a train to catch.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* Mark Wroe, Bishop of Berwick and supporting the steering group leading a small core team.

*The Bishop of Stockport (The Revd Canon Sam Corley):* Sam Corley, the Bishop of Stockport.

*The Bishop of Southampton (The Rt Revd Debbie Sellin):* I am Debbie Sellin, the Bishop of Southampton.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I am Andrew Watson, the Bishop of Guildford.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* That was the first thing. The second thing to say is that there is a fringe event tonight at 8 o'clock in James Hall to which you are welcome, if you have not had a chance to ask your question and you want to carry on the conversation. We are not going to have a great deal of input because we have not got a great deal more to say, frankly, but we will have the opportunity to continue the conversation.

The third and really important notice is if any of you know where my black leather document case with all my papers in it is could you please let me know. Oh, we have it there, thank you very much. Fine, brilliant.

*The Chair:* Bishop, it is behind you.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Oh, no, it is not. Oh, yes, perfect.

*The Chair:* Can I thank the giver of this object which I think if I were to chew would probably jam my gums together, although that is not a criticism of the gift. Thank you very much.

*The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin):* I suspect that if my blood pressure level is taken at this moment it would be off the Richter Scale - and that is not a good place for it to be. It has been very painful listening and being part of the discussions in the House, in the College and here in the Synod, because it strikes me that all our children and grandchildren are having sex. They are having sex and yet I do not hear us saying we are not going to walk with them, we are going to keep them in, I do not know, an outhouse? What is it?

To hear brothers and sisters speaking so glibly as if it is normal that if we do not quite get this how we want it or, you know, we are just going to have to have differentiation again as we did with the women bishops and we are just going to do it differently. Actually, the women bishops thing ain't working. We are paying the price of it. We pay the price of it.

I really want to say to us is this really the most important thing? Is it really? And why is it? If it was that important, how is it that Jesus continued to walk with his disciples even when he knew of their betrayal and their denial? What is so special about us that we think we will not walk with them? What is it? I do not understand what is going on. What are we drinking? What are we eating?

My brothers and sisters, my heart is breaking listening and hearing this kind of conversation when there are real issues out there in the world. More than half the people who come to us for marriage are living together and they are having sex, so what is it about homosexual sex that we are reacting in such a visceral way, what is it? What is it saying about us, really? I wonder, panel, whether or not - I am not even sure I know what the question is. I really do not know what the question is.

I just know that as a priest in God's Church, as a deacon in God's Church, as a Bishop in God's Church, I want all people to be able to walk in and to receive God's grace. Perhaps the question for the panel, if there is a question, is: can we make sure that at the end of the day God's love is what is on the table and that we do not allow people to feel that they are less than human but, instead, made in the image of God and that seems to be far more important than doctrine and anything else.

*Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford):* Bishop Rose, I would love you to enter into a conversation with my 37 year old triplets in relation to the speech which you have just

made. You might be interested in them: faithful Christian members in churches in London and Guildford who may have a different view from you in relation to those matters.

Members of Synod, my question will come in a moment. At the February sessions three years ago in a different context, his Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said this: "It is often necessary to find new ways of relating in order to rebuild relationships that have suffered from severe and destructive difference. We find that in the Scriptures in the Council of Jerusalem where there was a need to reshape how the working of the Church was done. Once you had reshaped and created space you can use that space to find a new relationship".

Those words were pertinent then and they provide a model for a radical and better way. Rather than focusing on destructive differences, we need to shape how the working of the Church is done and once we have reshaped we can use the space to find new relationships. The proposals that we are looking at have and will continue to cause disunity, broken relationships and deep pain and hurt. For liberals, they do not go far enough; equal marriage is an issue of justice; the denial of marriage to same-sex couples is discriminatory and the marriage of same-sex couples is appropriate and right. For the conservatives, on the other hand, the proper place of sexual relations is within marriage and the blessing or marriage of same-sex couples is inappropriate and a serious moral error.

How do we resolve this impasse? As his Grace reminded us in 2020, by creating space. The ultimate irony is that by striving for too great a level of unity we will cause ongoing pain and hurt and potentially greater disunity, whereas reshaping the working of the Church by creating space we can achieve a win-win situation, that liberals could move swiftly to equal marriage and that conservatives could continue under the historic doctrine and teaching of the Church. There is a better way: consensus without compromise. My question to you is can you please contemplate allowing us to get round a table and reach a win-win settlement by discussion in the way that the St Hugh's Conversation was beginning to do.

*The Revd Mark Bennet (Oxford):* I am one of the General Synod representatives on the Council of Westcott House. I also have a Private Member's Motion on the issue of ordination following divorce and remarriage. I was interested in February to hear about the scope of the Pastoral Guidance. My first question - I have two, I am afraid - is whether the Pastoral Guidance can in its initial form or planned later contain all the guidance in relation to the ordering of the intimate and relational lives of our ordinands so that it is all in one place rather than dispersed because the dispersed guidance gets out of sync?

When I was training, I did a Master's dissertation looking at introductions and rubrics. As we have introductions and rubrics to *Prayers* and there have been lots of concerns expressed about what those should contain, could we make sure that our introductions and rubrics enable the people who use the *Prayers* to use them wholeheartedly and

joyfully when they do and not take away the joy by the tone of the rubric's notes and so forth that we have.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Let us take the last of those first. There were two questions about having all the guidance in one place. I do not know whether Sam and Debbie would like to pick that up - there we are, overloading you again - and then Michael perhaps the other question because there is only you to answer that now.

*The Bishop of Stockport (The Revd Canon Sam Corley):* As a former presenter, it is always great to hear about rubrics. Passive aggression is how I use rubrics to remote control Bishops, which is probably why I ended up as one. But they are seriously very important and that is one of the reasons why there is this need to work together between the three groups.

As regards the question about bringing everything together, that is one of the advantages of being in 2023 compared to 1991, that an online document can contain links to various things. Whereas we will not just copy and paste and have everything together, there will be cross-referencing across different documents. That is certainly how we envisage what we bring to November to include. It is some cross-referencing between what is already there and recognising that some of those things do need to change as well. We are aware there are lots of issues around C4 processes and we will not be able to answer all of those questions, but certainly we can highlight where there is further work required and that would be one of those areas.

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave):* Mark, it is very exciting to meet somebody with an MA in introduction and rubrics. We can actually go one further because the *Prayers of Love and Faith* will include introduction, rubrics and liturgical notes, so that may be your doctoral study perhaps.

I absolutely take the point that they need to be clear and that they need to convey a tone appropriate to the occasion. If I could just tell you what has happened with the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. We did originally in the draft - which I think went to Synod - include an introduction which did, we felt, express that tone. I think I am right in saying we have removed that introduction pending the Pastoral Guidance notes, to use that refrain, not because we want the tone to change but because, obviously, it needs to take account of what the Pastoral Guidance says. The rubrics and the notes all need to line up in the same place, but with that important note of meeting where the couple are at,

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Let us move on and pick up both Bishop Rose's and Stephen's comments which are kind of complementary at least to one another. One was an impassioned plea that we move in one direction and the other was an equally impassioned plea that we do not, that we create space, consensus without compromise, and recognise the depth of our disagreements and what that means. Who would like to pick that up?

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* I have got the microphone. I am going to start and then Sarah will follow on. Lots of you will remember the work that Eeva did with us through facilitating the *Living in Love and Faith* project and process. One of the questions that she left us with as we took the work into this next stage was a simple one about what kind of Church do we want to be?

I think that gets to the heart of both Rose's question and Stephen's question: what kind of Church do we want to be? How do we as Church reflect the love of Christ and witness to that love in the world? How do we as Church create a gracious space for all? That is the simple question, but the working out of that is what we are all involved in, what we are all praying for, what we are all working for through the Synod. I think for me that is the question that I take away and I keep with me: what kind of Church do we want to be and to offer to the world in desperate need of the good news of Jesus Christ?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I think that is a great answer. I suppose the other bit for me as well is that in terms of, Stephen, your comments, the reality is that it is not as binary as you put it. We know that all our congregations are mixed. Very few of our congregations will have a same view. We are not about a settlement. What we are trying to do is to understand the type of Church that we are being called to do and how do we then make a response at a time when there is uncertainty and disagreement. That is not just between churches. It is within churches and within communities. You have already heard that we are looking at reassurance, both formal and informal, but I think we also have to realise that there is a complexity in that and, therefore, there is a sense in which how we discern what that looks like in that right way.

The final comment I make, and it partly goes on to living out in terms of the Five Guiding Principles, is in London we have just had a review by what of that long group that Michael chairs, there is some technical word to it, what is it, the Commission?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave):* It is the House of Bishops Standing Commission on the House of Bishops Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* So are you surprised I do not remember it? But, anyway, they have just come and looked at the London Plan. You can say whether it works or it does not work, but what is clear is it is better to have it than not to have it. What is really important is not just the London Plan, but people. Actually, the other thing is, whether we have formal or informal, this is still about people and it is about how we relate. That is the bit that goes back to what sort of Church do we want to be. We want to be a Church that does relate to each other because God is relational: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.



*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Just responding to Rose's speech, I think there is a difference between pastoral care and teaching. Our pastoral care absolutely says we all recognise that we fall short of God's - you know, Jesus says, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect". Pastorally, we are dealing with others and dealing with ourselves and Jesus deals with us with extraordinary grace. But I think the challenge here is whether we change teaching and that is what marks us off a little bit from it is not really about sex; it is about teaching and pastoral care, it seems to me, that we are talking about here.

I think change of teaching or potential change of teaching does create a very different kind of situation than recognising that, of course, pastorally we are dealing with fallen situations including very much in ourselves the whole time. There is something about that sort of full of grace and truth, Jesus setting impossibly high targets on the one hand but also showing immense grace on the other. Sometimes we find it extremely hard to do that and I understand why we do, I find it extremely hard to do, to operate full of grace and truth, but it seems to me that is what we are called to do. I think that is why, Rose, you and I probably differ on this that, actually, I think that I do see this as a teaching issue and do we shift the teaching to accommodate the pastoral realities or do we say, no, the teaching remains but actually the pastoral realities are that we are all dependent on the grace and mercy of God.

*The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS):* Thank you, Chair, thank you, panel. This cannot be easy, I imagine. In the answer to a question I put to you in questions about the connection between safeguarding and LLF, the answer from Bishop Sarah was, "Material on Pastoral Guidance and Pastoral Reassurance will be reviewed from a safeguarding perspective before they are issued". The reason I keep bringing this issue up is because IICSA and numerous safeguarding reviews - I am thinking here of Gibb on Peter Ball; the jaw dropping report on Stowe and Maids Moreton in the Oxford Diocese, that case which you remember ended in the murder of a churchwarden; the recent case on Fr Griffin - all these reports point out to the Church that our attitudes and discriminatory attitudes towards LGBT people make the Church less safe. We are a key element in all those catastrophic safeguarding failures. My question is how are you going to incorporate this safeguarding insight in the production of the Reassurance and Pastoral Guidance?

*Ms Sammi Tooze (York):* We have talked a lot about the final version of the *Prayers* providing a joyful opportunity to celebrate what is good and holy in a relationship. We have talked a lot about the process of revision through the working group, but I wonder if you could share with us how the original draft of the *Prayers* were formed, who was responsible for drafting them and how they ensured that they met doctrinal tasks whilst upholding the joy which this paper speaks of and how that same sense of joy will be reflected in the social media and communications of the Church of England?

*The Revd Canon John Bavington (Leeds):* There is a sort of dissonance that I am struggling with. It is striking to me that it feels as if in our discussions this afternoon we

have heard very little reference to the Scriptures and yet, in his answer to Question 88 in the written Questions of this group of sessions, the Bishop of Lichfield affirmed that in contemporary Anglican thought Scripture is the primary source of ecclesial authority.

That suggests to me that perhaps the primary task in the House of Bishops post-LLF should have been an agreed statement on the Bible's teaching on our holy life in relation to sex and relationships. But in their letter to Synod in February, the House of Bishops seemed instead to emphasise the need for prayers which relate to "a proper 21st century understanding of sexuality". But to me, it felt the questions relating to Scripture were referred back to the LLF book but the LLF materials contain contested views of Scripture and of key passages. I have been told many times, "Well, people just disagree about the meaning of Scripture", but that suggests we have adopted a postmodern hermeneutic. When we read the Bible in church we end by saying, "This is the word of the Lord". That suggests to me that Scripture does mean something. I wonder if it would be possible if I could ask the Bishops, could they produce an agreed specifically scriptural rationale to support the theology that lies behind the *Prayers of Love and Faith*?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* It is clearly a really important issue that Judith raised around safeguarding. Would someone be bold enough to pick that up?

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Thank you, Judith. There are two things. We have involved the NST all along and that will happen in terms of Pastoral Guidance but, actually, what you are really asking about is culture. I do not know the detail of all the things you have quoted. I know about some of them. It is about culture and also about transparency and about having an environment in which fear does not exist. Therefore, I am sort of sitting here thinking, well, will the Pastoral Guidance do it or not? There is certainly the bit for me about how you develop. There are two bits. The one that is, I suppose, very explicit to that is around what does good pastoral care look like for LGBTQI people, whether they are clergy or whether they are people in our parishes. I do think that is a piece of work that needs to be done.

I also think that there is a piece of work about transparency so that we are more transparent about whether our churches are inclusive or not inclusive. That may be difficult because, as I have just said, not all our churches are the same. But I also think it goes back to the fact that we need to have an environment in which people are not afraid to talk about their sexuality. Certainly, my experience has been in a time that that sort of "don't tell you don't see", that is appalling. Therefore, that culture change only comes about by our actions in the Church and we are all responsible for that. Part of what *Living in Love and Faith* has done is enabled people to talk about it in churches and in dioceses where it has not been spoken about before. That conversation is not over yet and not least the fact that we are not good at the language we use when we have that conversation.

In a sense, I have not got a complete answer for you around it, because I have not, but I do know that we as a Church are responsible for our culture and I do think that something we have to take seriously is about how we do treat people in a way that they do not have to behave with fear because of their sexuality. We are not there yet. The reports I do know that you have mentioned, I know absolutely the cultures that we have to change. But it is to not just about that. It is about cultures of deference. It is the whole series of things about culture where we treat each other with respect. I think that is important and I also think it is important to bring into the context where we are looking at formal and informal reassurance.

What we cannot have is formal structures that mean that we are developing churches that are not accountable to something larger, you know something bigger, and churches that because they feel they want to slightly separate off they separate off from some of the other good procedures and policies. I do think that we have to bear in mind explicitly what you said in developing going forward. It goes back to the point, as Mark rightly said, what is the sort of Church that we are and that we believe God is calling us to be. So, sorry, not a full answer to that.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Can I turn to Michael for the drafting of *Prayers* question, if you would.

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave):* Yes, thank you, Sammi, for the question. I think you are asking about the lineage of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* before they were seen by General Synod. Briefly, the proposal to draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* was taken by the College of Bishops in December, I think, or late November/December 2022. The work was undertaken by the episcopal members of the Liturgical Commission who, of course, had been part of that meeting very ably supported by the staff of the Liturgical Commission.

Initial drafts were then circulated confidentially to a number of people from the LGBTQ+ community and we received anonymised comments and suggestions from them which we took into account. From there - and I think we are now kind of approaching New Year this year, so this was over the advent and Christmas period really - they came to a College of Bishops meeting in January and then to the House of Bishops and that was the version which then came to Synod. You asked about joy, I think, and it has been an entirely joyful process throughout.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Lastly, with this set, something about the role of Scripture.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* In terms of the role of Scripture, I think we want to say that is always part of everything that we do as the Church. It is part of our theological reflection. The question was about the House of Bishops producing a rationale. Well, the Pastoral Guidance will have a theological introduction to it. The work will have a theological introduction to it which will be grounded in Scripture. That will be

the work that is being drafted over the next few months that will go to the College of Bishops, the House of Bishops and will come to Synod in November and then you will be able to judge and see the work that we have done. But all of our theology, as we are set up as a Church, is grounded in the Scriptures.

*The Bishop of Southampton (The Rt Revd Debbie Sellin):* Just to add to that as well, the work of FAOC will also be contributing to that and we are really grateful to FAOC for taking this on and that is going to be a key part as well of what will then come.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I was going to say much the same. I think the point is taken that the LLF book really accurately put across different views in a number of these different areas in a very sympathetic and helpful way, but actually the work to then compare, contrast and so on I think we have not done as we should have done and I think FAOC's involvement there will be really helpful.

I just want to come back very briefly on Judith's really helpful point. I think it is absolutely right that we need to look at culture and particularly the culture of "don't ask don't tell" and how that can contribute and has contributed to some ghastly safeguarding disasters in Church life. I am very grateful that actually one of the best things I think CEEC have done is actually done some heart-searching on that in the evangelical culture and actually encouraged churches to look at their culture in that sort of way. The only thing that perhaps I might sometimes feel is that there can be a sort of a suggestion that to hold a traditional view on these things is itself abusive, which I think is really important that we do not fall into. I think there are cultural things about leadership styles - I have experienced that myself in my youth - where you would need to ask exactly those questions. I do not deny the question, but I think there is a danger that even the question could end up becoming weaponised.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* With the Chair's indulgence, I just want to say a couple of things. One is about - and I hope I say this kindly, Synod - kindness. There are some people amongst us who are not particularly used to Synod's ways and have found some of our ways rather upsetting today. We do need to pay attention to how we deal with one another, especially the people who we may not know and who may be rather adversely affected by the way that we express ourselves.

Also, if I may just plead that this is supposed to be a conversation. We are rather moving into Synod question mode and the giving of speeches. This is supposed to be about questions and conversation.

*The Revd Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Liverpool):* Just to begin by saying that I do agree with Bishop Rose. I do remember it being explicitly said in the debates on women bishops when we sat through those here, ten, 15 years ago, that those arrangements were not going to be used as a precedent for this issue which we all knew was coming over the hill. I am sure my friend Mark Bennet could look out the detail of that in Hansard if we wanted to. Let us talk about the Bible. I never thought I would stand up in Synod and

talk about the joy of sex, but let us talk about *Song of Songs* and that beautiful image and use of desire. There is no suggestion at all that the two people in *Song of Songs* were married but they absolutely passionately desire each other. I would like to commend Jessica Martin's work, *Holiness and Desire*.

We have been seeing a lot of requirements in a lot of the questions we had this morning and in a lot of the contributions and questions we have had today about wanting certainty and rules and that question about holiness and sin - if we are having a conversation let me have a bit of a conversation with somebody else. I genuinely do not think that we can talk about holiness and sin in a kind of here is a list of activities that we say are holy and here is a list of activities that we say are sinful. I do not believe that the sex I had with my husband before we got married was entirely sinful and then suddenly on the day of our marriage it suddenly flipped into being entirely holy. Sex does not work like that. People do not work like that.

I do really like the approach that is being taken here to say that this Pastoral Guidance is not going to be like *Issues* that is a list of things that are okay and things that are not okay. I can feel that there is a lot of people who would feel much more comfortable with that but I would like to encourage you to hold your nerve on saying, actually, we are going to take more of what sounds to me like a sort of virtue ethics approach of saying this is about principles because if you are doing Pastoral Guidance and it needs to have longevity, any list of things that are okay and not okay is going to be out of date very, very quickly. We need principles that we then trust people to pastorally apply to the reality of different people's situations which are always going to be very, very, very different.

Finally, just to say I am really grateful for the reiterated reassurance that is what is coming in November is not another eight hour debate and vote but is about the implementation of a decision that we have made. That is hugely reassuring. I would just like to ask the panel how we ensure that that is not derailed or delayed. Some of the questions we have heard this morning seemed to suggest that people might want to use a debate about details of implementation as a way of trying to reverse February's decision.

*The Revd Arwen Folkes (Chichester):* May I begin by sharing that the February sessions had such a positive impact on my parish, on our community and on our conversations and my immense gratitude is with you all for the complex work now being undertaken to take that forward. My question comes in two parts really. The first part is: is it possible to know the total amount that has been withdrawn from parish share contributions and to ask how you, as Bishops, also bearing the weight of diocesan responsibility, are bearing the pressure of that, whether it has a bearing on the important work that you are undertaking? Dare I say it, do you feel that that work is being held to ransom?

*Professor Helen King (Oxford):* This is not quite what I was expecting in a presentation with questions either, but hey. I do have a question and the question is quite simple: have you read the LLF book? There. Small laughter. I have been with LLF for a long time. I was involved as one of the 40 who were mentioned at the beginning of the presentation

and, as a result of that, I have read it probably seven times in different drafts. That is a lot. It is a very big book. The thing is it does actually answer some of the questions that are being asked now. It is not as if it is only about same-sex marriage. Far from it. In the early stages of this, it was even framed at one point as a possible sort of story of the whole of salvation. That is big. I am not a theologian, but I appreciate that is big. We had a biblical studies group. We had a theology group. We have done that. We had a question today about things that someone is not quite clear about like trans and intersex. We had trans people present. We had intersex people present - well, one, and she left and there is a whole story about that, but we did try. I think this whole story of we need more stuff on this, we need more stuff on that is very dangerous and it does look horribly like delaying tactics from where I am sitting.

I would also like to say there have been many changes in personnel through the history of LLF and I want to pay tribute particularly to Bishop Sarah who has been with it for the last stages and I think is in the hottest of hot seats, so well done. We have been through various manifestations of LLF. We have had the Next Steps Group. We have had the implementation groups. We seem to have the reference group. I do worry slightly that along the way people have forgotten to read their LLF. Can the current reference group be aware not only of what is in the book - it is a big book - but also what is on the website, the resources, the bibliographies, the additional papers we wrote as part of the process. There is a lot there and if you could use that it may save some of this oh, we need to do more, we need to do more.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Shall we pick up on the middle question, first of all. That was the one around the personal impact on us, issues around the parish share, just how this lands with us personally. Debbie is nodding so I will start with her. What is it like in Winchester, Debbie?

*The Bishop of Southampton (The Rt Revd Debbie Sellin):* What is it like in Winchester, Philip, well, we have not had many parishes withdraw parish share. We call it CMF, common mission fund. There have been two to date who have done, but a number have said that they are considering this. What it has allowed us to do is to have conversations about that. We have had some really, really good conversations about the use of that. When people feel it is the only lever they have, then that can be understandable but is it the right lever to use? More importantly, I think some of the conversations we have had are around what that might mean. Some of the parishes that have said to us that they would consider that are, actually, not at the moment covering the cost of the stipend that is in their parish.

That has raised some really interesting questions about if you are saying that it is difficult to walk together and yet in order to fund your stipend that has required a walking together in a way that now does not feel comfortable. It has been a really fruitful conversation to actually unpick some of the things behind it. Rather than it just being a random thing that is coming through, there is some really deep thought going on about what does this actually mean, what are we saying when we say that? Because it has not been a huge

thing, we have not made a massive deal of it. We have acknowledged where people have said that they will not and we have just acknowledged it and said thank you for letting us know. But I think it is that wider question about what does it mean to be part of a deanery, to be a part of a shared common mission fund and that has become quite a fruitful conversation in the midst of all of this.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Anyone else want to have a go at that one or shall we move on? No one is gagging for it. Helen's excellent question, have you read the LLF book? I am not going to ask you that because I am absolutely confident that you all have. Well done, Sarah, good, good, good.

Indeed, many of us did read many drafts as well. It is a very pertinent question and I think one of the comments that we have made on the steering group is we are rather shocked and, indeed, disappointed by how few people have read the book and done the course. There is a huge suite of resources there that are of immense value and deserve to be used.

Miranda's comment at the beginning touched on issues of sort of application of principles rather than things being hard rules or hard wired. Would anyone like to pick that up?

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* I think the question I heard from Miranda was about ---

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Yes, you answer the one you heard.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* I will answer the question that I think Miranda posed rather than the one you are just saying there, which I think was about giving reassurance.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Well, we will have a conversation about that later, but carry on.

*The Bishop of Berwick (The Rt Revd Mark Wroe):* Giving reassurance that the work will get there in November. I think what I can commit us to is working our hardest to ensure we do everything we can to bring to the November Synod what we need to get to Synod. I think that is what we can commit to. All sorts of things go on in life and the Church, as you know, but I think our commitment is to get what we can get done to Synod in November for us to have that ongoing conversation.

*The Chair:* If we move to probably the last three questions because I said about an hour.

*The Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities):* I ask for the Synod's indulgence. I am just going to ask a question. What reflection has been or is being done on the nature and extent of freedom of conscience?

*Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool):* I would like to pick up on some of the issues that Miranda raised to do with the extent of difference of opinion about what the Bible says and how to interpret it. In the LLF book we were given I think seven categories like a spectrum of possible beliefs about Scripture and how authoritative it is for us. It would seem to me that the position that Miranda has just advocated in front of Synod falls in a group within that spectrum that was said in the LLF book to be ones which many would consider not to fall within mainstream Christian thought. How is that to be reconciled bearing in mind the strong words from our Lord Jesus Christ about being beware of false teachers?

*The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford):* My question is not about the content of the *Prayers* but about the process of implementation and especially this Canon that Bishop Sarah has already mentioned to us, the liturgical Canons, B 1, B 2, B 4, B 5. We have heard plenty of blogs about these themes and there have been leaked letters on these themes. What we have not had as a Synod is a briefing paper on what those Canons are, their history, their weight and their process. I think that is really important for us as a Synod. When Parliament gave to this body responsibility for overseeing the praying life of the Church of England 50 years ago, I would love it - not your implementation teams which are overworked - if there could be another little workstream that could produce a paper on this, a briefing paper in the next two or three months.

I was really surprised reading GS 2303 that Canon B 4.2 is the kind of frontrunner at the moment in the House of Bishops. I guess it changes month by month. It has only been used once before, before the death of the Queen recently, and that was 40 years ago when Archbishop Runcie and Archbishop Habgood of blessed memory used it on one occasion for our prayers of Remembrance Sunday. You may know of the House of Bishops' Report of January 1983 which said B 4 will only be used for occasional material of lesser intrinsic importance. There are lots of debate about that that we are not briefed on as a Synod and that would be a great new project.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* It sounds like you have been doing your research, Andrew. If I may suggest, Richard, to your question, I think we have dealt with this issue about the reconciliation of very different opinions. I think we would be just going over the same territory. Could we touch on the work about the nature and extent of freedom of conscience, Andrew.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Yes, Malcolm Brown did some useful work on that as part of the Pastoral Reassurance Group which would be I think good for us to resurrect as part of that. It does raise other issues about how far the state allows freedom of conscience and that really ties in very much with the question about which Canon we would use as well because I think there are some questions about how far we would be able to have freedom of conscience, especially probably not to use the *Prayers* under some of those Canons given the Equality Act which only has very narrowly defined limits, as I understand it, as to exceptions. Clearly, that is more work that needs to be done as well as looking at the Canons more generally. I think that is an excellent



suggestion, actually, because I am pretty clueless about Canons and it would be really good to have a bit of a briefing paper on them.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* He did not really say that. Then, if I can suggest that this is the last question at this Synod that Bishop Sarah Mullally is going to answer. Oh, no, Michael, you are keen.

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave):* No, sorry, I am not going to be the last. I just wanted to say something about Canons.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Do you know more about the Canons than Andrew?

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave):* No. I was about to say that I do not. If I also say about conscience, there has been work on that by FAOC.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Right.

*The Bishop of Lichfield (The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave):* Which is embedded in the LLF book, so that is worth bearing in mind too. The group that I have been co-sharing with Bishop Rosemarie, the Prayers of Love and Faith Group, has been where the conversation around canonical routes including all the ones you mentioned, Andrew, and also Canon B 5A, I think I am right in saying, has been taking place, but to resource the discussion in the College and the House of Bishops. There is no decision on that as of now, so I think a paper briefing Synod or briefing whoever needs to be briefed would be really helpful because it is a complex issue. I think I am right in saying that the last use of Canon B 4.2 was the Coronation which would not really be described as an insignificant service. It is interesting how the language is used, but I think the proposal of that is a very good idea and we would welcome that.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* I think you have just excused Sarah from answering her last LLF question unless you really want to. No, she does not, no, quite right. In that case, Synod, thank you very much for your careful attention and indulgence.

*The Chair:* Can I thank Synod for a lovely tone for the questions and answers, which is much appreciated. I am asked to remind you before we go to worship that there is a Synod deep dive on mixed ecology which will begin at 8.15, not as previously advertised in the exhibition centre. There is, of course, the fringe event this evening for LLF at 8 o'clock somewhere. I cannot remember where.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Yes, but I ought to say that Bishop Sarah will not be at the fringe event so she does not have to answer any more LLF questions.

*The Chair:* I am also asked to remind you that if you go to the Minster tomorrow morning you should wear your Synod pass, so please do. Thank you very much indeed.

## **EVENING WORSHIP**

*The Revd Canon Falak Sher (co-opted) and The Revd Sarah Siddique Gill (co-opted)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

### **Full Synod: Third Day Sunday 9 July 2022**

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

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, Synod. We are going to begin with Opening Worship, thank you.

## **OPENING WORSHIP**

*The Revd Joanna Stobart (Bath & Wells)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

## **ITEM 11**

### **PRESENTATION ON DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO THE INDEPENDENT SAFEGUARDING BOARD**

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, Synod. Before we begin this item there are a couple of bits of business to bring to your attention. One is to remind members that if this is your first time being here in person as a voting member and you have been on Zoom and using the online voting system up until now, you need to go and collect your voting card before you can then proceed with any voting this afternoon.

Also, there has been a driving licence found so if you think it might be yours, the security outside have it, so perhaps go and check your bags as you leave to see whether or not you have it with you.

This afternoon we will be focusing on safeguarding. I am conscious that there will be survivors and victims here amongst us in the chamber and listening to our debate online today. Therefore, as always, can I encourage us to use our words carefully as we debate and discuss these important topics this afternoon.

It is a privilege to have Jane Chevous with us this afternoon. She is a survivor of Church abuse herself and co-founder of Survivors Voices. This item will take the form of a presentation in three parts. First, we will hear from Jane; secondly, we will hear from members of the Archbishops' Council; and thirdly, there will be an opportunity for Synod

to ask questions of the Archbishops' Council's members only. I will be taking those questions in threes, as you would normally expect, including those joining us on Zoom. We will hold a pause for silence at various moments and will end our session in prayer.

First of all, I would like to invite Jane Chevous to share her presentation to Synod.

*Ms Jane Chevous:* Thank you, Synod, for allowing me to bring the voice of survivors into the chamber. I am mindful of those present and those watching. I would like to thank the former members of the Independent Safeguarding Board, and in particular Jasvinder and Steve, for doing what you asked them to do: to hold the Church to account, publicly if needs be, for any failings which are preventing good safeguarding practice from happening, the mission statement on their website.

As they are no longer able to fulfil this role, I want to highlight a recent failing, one so disastrous that it has already been reported as a serious incident to the Charity Commission.

After the interim Chair was appointed to the ISB in March, survivors expressed their concern that there is a conflict of interest with the role of Chair of the National Safeguarding Panel and that the appointment happened without due process. This resulted in 76 survivors refusing permission for their data to be shared with the interim Chair. But the Council did not listen.

At the Council meeting on 9 May, the three ISB members gave their views of the way forward, and I was able to bring a survivor view, that many had confidence in Jasvinder and Steve. Council stated that they remained committed to proper independent scrutiny in safeguarding and take very seriously the views of both the ISB and survivors. But the Council did not listen.

At 12.03 on 21 June, they sacked the Board with no risk management or interim plan in place. At 12.42, Steve Reeves emailed the Council to advise, "I am urging caution as powerfully as I can. The harm could be significant and the announcement is not urgent". But the Council did not listen. For, as we learned this weekend, getting the papers prepared for Synod was more important than the lives of survivors.

At 12.17 that day, Jasvinder contacted me to share the devastating news. I felt like my whole world had crumbled around me. I trusted the ISB, I had hope, and now that hope had been snatched from me and trampled underfoot.

At 13.07, the NST emailed to inform me. I had already seen the media reports and had been contacting other survivors, who were as stunned and shocked as I was.

All ongoing independent reviews were immediately paused with no support or interim arrangements in place. Survivors are still waiting to discover (as no ISB exists any more)

who is commissioning the reviews, who will sign off the reviewers' reports, who will be responsible for ensuring the recommendations are implemented.

The impact is not just on the ten survivors with ongoing or pending reviews and Mr X with a completed review waiting for his recommendations to be implemented. It affects all survivors - watching, waiting, hoping for independent scrutiny and accountability. Many survivors have contacted me to say the Church feels unsafe. In their words, "What an absolute mess and carnage for everyone"; "How could this have happened with an appropriately regulated organisation?"; "They have disbanded the only safety I have", "My anxiety is through the roof and I'm struggling to function on a day-to-day level"; "I haven't felt safe since the announcement"; "My trust in the institutional Church is now completely shattered". It is not just trust, the most difficult part is the lack of care", "How can the Church be like this?

The damage done is beyond words. For some it will be the last straw and cause irreparable damage, not just to their relationships with the Church, but in their lives, their wellbeing and their faith. It is not just the impact of the reputational damage, the further trauma to victims; it is the wider Church feeling complicit in this, which is a moral injury in itself. The safety of the Church has been impacted directly, now and for the future. If Council members say today we are listening to survivors and we are committed to full independence, you will understand me if I say I do not believe them.

In her report on survivor experience *Don't Panic - Be Pastoral*, Jasvinder quoted Archbishop Justin Welby, "... survivors must come first. The Church has to get it right. There are no excuses for us for getting it wrong".

Council, I hope you will hang your heads in shame at those words, as you could not have got it more wrong, and survivors have paid the price. Survivors are asking where is the accountability for this disaster? Who is going to resign? This is a safeguarding and governance failure which should be properly audited with accountability to Synod for what is needed to ensure it can never happen again.

In my petition, which already has nearly 400 signatures, I conclude that the Council has shown they are not fit to manage church safeguarding. It is time to take safeguarding out of their hands. We are calling on the Charity Commission to intervene and ensure that a truly independent body is set up that survivors can trust without interference from the Church. Whatever happens now, it must not retraumatise. There should be immediate care and support for the survivors with open cases and action to ensure they are completed. I believe the only workable and compassionate option is for Jasvinder and Steve to be asked to do this, because they already have the trust of survivors, the knowledge of their cases, and they are the data holders. There must be fully independent scrutiny which the Church cannot block or interfere with. This must be developed through an open and transparent process with survivors. Some survivors want a suitable professional and fully independent body to be tasked with leading this process.

And Council, please, whatever you do, do not make a hasty announcement today. Do not retraumatise us again. Survivors must be involved in plans for their reviews.

This is not just about safeguarding. This is about love, care and the Gospel. A survivor writes: "I have not heard either of the Archbishops articulate their sadness about the lack of love, compassion or care with which this has been handled within the love of God. That saddens and angers me most and I want to turn my back on the Church".

Synod, do not turn your back on survivors. Thank you.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Jane. Before I invite the Archbishop of York to introduce the presentation of the members of the Archbishops' Council, may I just invite Synod to hold a moment's silence with me on what we have just heard before we proceed, thank you.

*(A moment's silence)*

*The Chair:* We now come to part 2 of this section, a presentation by members of the Archbishops' Council. Can I invite those members please to come forward. I now call the Archbishop of York to introduce this section.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Good afternoon, Synod. Could I begin first of all by thanking Jane for being with us this afternoon. Obviously, for some of us it is painful to hear what she has said, but I do thank her for her honesty and clarity, and it gives me an opportunity to express my own profound sadness of where we find ourselves. This is not where any of us wants to be. We intend this afternoon in the things we share to be as undefended as we can, first of all, acknowledging that we have made mistakes and that there are things we wished had been done differently. But we are in a difficult place, and we also hope, and we are quite inspired by the things Jane was saying towards the end of her presentation about how we are going to move forward.

I also want to take this opportunity - and I cannot see where they are but I think Jasvinder and Steve and possibly Meg Munn are here - of thanking them for the work they have done and for the good things that have happened through the ISB.

You will not be surprised to hear, Synod, that I wish I was not sitting here having to say this, but it is important that we the Archbishops' Council take responsibility for the decisions we have made and you, the Synod, deserve to hear the story of where we have got to and why, and then of course we will receive your questions and answer them as fairly and as honestly as we can. We also hope that what you will hear from us is our determination to move forward, though I fully understand that some will find that hard to believe. We will say more of that later.

These are the three things we want to do in this relatively short presentation. First of all, I am going to ask Tim to tell the story of why we have got to where we have got to. Then

I am going to ask Alison to speak about the important issue that Jane has already raised about interim arrangements, acknowledging that actually in some of the announcements that were made by myself as well as others in the immediate aftermath of this decision were not as clear as they should have been, and, in fact, may have been unintentionally a little misleading, so Alison will share about that. Then we will move to Jamie, who will speak about what we are intending to do next.

I will make a few final comments at the end of this short presentation before we open up for questions, but the other thing I want to emphasise is that we do take collective responsibility for this as the Archbishops' Council. Yes, we wish we were not here, but we have proceeded all along in the knowledge that we are working with people of goodwill and in the belief that we do all want the same thing, but we acknowledge that we have failed to get there. And the decisions that we took in getting here were unanimous.

I want you to know, Synod, though I cannot make you believe me, that the decisions we took were some of the most painful decisions I have ever had to be part of in my life and work, but we took them believing them to be the right decisions for the safeguarding of the Church. Could we have communicated them better? Could things have been different in the past? They are things we will discuss and they are certainly things that we have to learn from, but I do want you to know that our concern has always been for the safeguarding of the Church. Now I will ask my three colleagues to give their short presentations and then we look forward to your questions. Tim.

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark):* Thank you very much, Archbishop Stephen. I just want to concur with everything that he has said.

My brief for this presentation is to share on behalf of the Archbishops' Council a short history of the ISB and provide Synod with a resumé of what has brought us to this moment.

In late 2020, the Archbishops' Council proposed an Independent Safeguarding Board to provide independent external oversight and scrutiny of the Church's safeguarding work. The proposal, put together with survivors, was always to be understood in two distinct phases. Phase 1, which was really a stage en route to stage 2, could be established quickly, for it required no new legal entity or legislation; it offered operational independence but it fell upon the Archbishops' Council to provide its governance. Whereas phase 2, which sought to achieve full independence with full independent governance, would probably involve the creation of a new body which might require powers underpinned by legislation. The Church Commissioners agreed to fund the ISB phase 1 up to December 2023.

The three appointed members of the ISB, the chair Dr Maggie Atkinson, survivor advocate Jasvinder Sanghera and a third member, Steve Reeves, were individually contracted to the Archbishops' Council and contracted then to work together. They were free to choose what aspects of Church policy and practice to scrutinise, and to offer what observations

and recommendations they wished to share. They were also responsible for the development of the second phase of the ISB in consultation with others in the Church.

The Archbishops' Council had the governance responsibility for monitoring and managing the expenditure of the ISB, thus ensuring the appropriate use of charity funds, in this case the funds offered by the Church Commissioners.

From the beginning, the Archbishops' Council were concerned at the lack of collegiality expressed within the ISB's working relationship, and a lack of clarity about the ISB's priorities. The ISB's primary objective was to help the Church improve its safeguarding practice by examining policy and practice across the whole Church. But as time passed the ISB focused more on individual cases and survivor support, both vital aspects of their work, but in doing so neglected the primary objective which was the scrutiny of our national safeguarding system. There were also concerns raised that initiatives were being started or proposed without adequate planning, budget, terms of reference, preparation or clarity of outcomes.

The Archbishops' Council frustratingly found itself focusing more and more time discussing governance issues within the ISB, and relations within and with the ISB, in the five Board meetings (between September 2022 and May 2023) than it spent discussing all other vital safeguarding issues and still without any sign of a rigorously thought through proposal for phase 2.

This was partly because back in August 2022 the Chair Dr Maggie Atkinson stepped back from her role pending investigation of alleged data breaches. In an instant the ISB lost a third of its Board. The subsequent investigation took far longer than envisaged but towards the end of the year the two other members of the ISB refused to meet with the Chair to discuss whether or not she could resume her role, contravening their contract to work together.

It took the issue of a dispute notice by Archbishops' Council to force Jasvinder and Steve to meet with the Chair to see if there was any chance of rebuilding their working relationship. Dr Maggie Atkinson subsequently resigned on 30 March 2023, and Meg Munn, the independent Chair of the National Safeguarding Panel, was appointed acting Chair until the end of 2023.

A large number of survivors were very vocal in their criticism of the appointment of the acting Chair, and although initially Jasvinder and Steve issued a statement welcoming the appointment, it was brought to the Council's attention that both Jasvinder and Steve were now refusing to meet with the acting Chair.

The Archbishops' Council therefore invited all members of the ISB to the Council board meeting on 9 May where they were each invited to present to the Board. The ISB's working relationship was still at an impasse, and so it was agreed that members of the

Archbishops' Council, including Archbishop Stephen, would meet with Jasvinder and Steve in early June to seek a way through.

But, ahead of that meeting, Jasvinder and Steve issued the Council with a dispute notice, criticising the appointment of the acting Chair, briefed the press, before then meeting with the Archbishops' Council's members. Despite further attempts to resolve the dispute, it was agreed by the Council that the breakdown in the relationship was now, sadly, beyond repair. And so, on 21 June the Archbishops' Council released a statement announcing that they were giving notice that the contracts of the ISB members were being terminated.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Tim, thank you very much. I am now going to ask Alison to speak about interim arrangements.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* Thank you and my thanks, too, to Jane. In all of our discussions as an Archbishops' Council, and I think you get a flavour of how very difficult these conversations were, we talked often about the impact on survivors, and we have been concerned to ensure that those survivors who had agreed independent case reviews could be confident that those reviews were being progressed. Our understanding was that there were six of those case reviews. I understand from Jane now that there are ten and this perhaps illustrates one of our issues, our practical problems, that the Council does not, and nor should it, know who those individuals are, and we do not have access to their data.

So, we initially set out some practical proposals, which have been outlined in GS Misc 1341, which you have, to ask the ISB to set in place interim arrangements. We then reflected that to simply offer an option without proper consultation with survivors and their advocates would not be the right way forward. We do understand that our original plan, which had been to ask, in each instance, one of a small team of Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel Chairs to work with each survivor to identify a reviewer from a pool of identified possibilities, would not be acceptable to some survivors, and we want to respect their wishes, and we do understand that we need to find an alternative that they will be content with.

We are, therefore, just beginning conversations to work collaboratively with survivors and their advocates to find a trusted third-party organisation to set up and manage this process independently for those who prefer this option. We recognise the urgency of moving on for those who are waiting for case reviews, but also recognise the need to only move forwards in a way that has the agreement of victims and survivors waiting for reviews. And this is the work that is happening at the moment.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you Alison. At this point, perhaps, could I reiterate my apology that anything that I or others may have said in the immediate aftermath of the announcement was misleading. As Alison, I think, has explained, I think we are now addressing this matter in a way that is appropriate.



Thank you for sharing that, Alison. So, thirdly, I am turning to Jamie who will speak about what we believe needs to happen next.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* First, I need to say, thank you so much, Jane, and also thank you to Jasvinder and Steve, and my deepest regrets that I am sitting here having to make this speech. This is a speech which inevitably will be fairly brief in relation to the future and I think questions will try and help us to dig down a bit more into this, but I want to give you a very brief overview of some of the key issues, I think, which the future has to work with and deal with and sort, picking up Jane's point about this completely independent body, however we define it and design it.

So, my four areas for looking at are what I call pace, or speed, scope, method and independence.

So, firstly about pace. We have talked about ISB 1, phase 1, we are now talking about ISB 2, or phase 2. Now of course it needs to come into being as soon as possible, maximum speed, but equally there must be the time for the full sort of consultation with victims and survivors, as Jane has reminded us, with the NST, dioceses, cathedrals and external experts who can help us to do the designing. So, it is a very difficult balance between going forward as quickly as possible but also going with great care and an extensive process of consultation. Slower, but not too slow.

Secondly, scope of such a board or organisational structure. Now, the leading safeguarding solicitor Richard Scorer recently said "The Church of England needs independent scrutiny and complaints processes in relation to safeguarding", and I completely agree with him - a fully independent complaints and scrutiny process.

Now, complaints, which is a very broad term, will include mechanisms to gather and respond to significant complaints, the power to investigate, to have enquiries, case reviews and other matters of a similar nature, that require change on the ground, but also reflect what has happened and why it should not have happened and what can be done about it. It is what we might call a quasi-ombudsman function. In many ways that has been part of the function, so far, of ISB 1.

But then the term scrutiny, I think, is more complicated and the question that I want to have answered by any external body is how safe is the whole Church today, and then tomorrow to ask that same question, how do I know, can you tell me, as an external body, how safe is the Church today, and how can we, with you, make it safer? So, scrutiny involves surveillance, scanning, auditing, accountability and quality assurance. But I believe it must be a whole system approach; proactive, alert, using what Baroness Onora O'Neill calls "clever accountability", finding what on the ground actually matters rather than what you think might matter. It must be alert to the greatest risk and find ways to do deep dives and monitoring where the risk is greatest.

And we need to note that no national system in health, social care or education gets it completely right, whether you are talking about the Care Quality Commission, which I used to work for, CQC, or Ofsted, which many of you will be familiar with, or other bodies that seek to look at systems and how they fail or do not fail. So, we need to note that these regulation-based systems of inspection alone have significant limitations and are extremely expensive. But that should not stop us considering it, we should not bring finance into the calculation.

Thirdly, method. As noted, inspection regimes have their limitations, and I used to do them. We have got a very large and complicated set of organisations, 16,000 churches, TEIs, cathedrals, chaplaincies and so on, dioceses, there is great breadth and complexity, and what we want to know is that our system is failsafe, not as we sometimes used to call it, mismanagement, the Swiss Cheese effect, where people fall down through all the holes and then it is too late.

Finally, this very difficult word we need to work on today, the word independence. So, I agree completely with Jane and with Richard Scorer, a fully independent safeguarding complaints and scrutiny body, independent from the Church financially, operationally its own legal entity. It should be completely separate, but also will need its own external accountability structures to know that it itself is working properly, and equally to inform us of what is going on, here in the Synod and in the Council. We need to know, but we are not the accountability structure for that particular body.

Clearly, we need good leadership from outside to help us, experts, people who have been there before, people who understand the complexity of systems and how you make them safe. Such a system must engage with culture and leadership and organisational design, business processes, staff skills, as well as understanding complexity of each and every setting in the Church. This is no easy solution, but that does not mean we should not try, and we must try to get it right, to find careful design and testing, but also to avoid a burdensome, bureaucratic process based on enquiries and investigations alone.

I think of the 2013 Francis Report on Mid Staffs NHS Trust, which I had something to do with afterwards, or the 2001 Kennedy Report on paediatric cardiac surgery in Bristol, and yet we still see both of those areas in recent days coming up for very serious scrutiny, and other parts of the NHS, which have failed badly.

When Robert Francis was asked very recently about that, he said “Yes, I could see it happening again”. So, the Church must have a system, it must be capable of being stress tested in real time to answer my question how do I know how safe the Church is today, and how can I make it safer?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you Jamie. Before we open up or return to the Chair for questions, can I just stress three things from what Jamie has said, or from what we have said in this presentation, as we look forward.

First, we have referred this the Charity Commissioners ourselves, which is an acknowledgement that we recognise things have gone wrong and there are things to learn. I cannot remember the date that we did that, but we did that very shortly after the decision was made - 26 June.

Secondly, and this does relate to a following motion that may be before us tomorrow, we think there should be a review of what has happened, an independent review, and a report back to Synod in November, and we intend to put that in process.

But thirdly, I think probably the most important learning for me personally and for us as a Council and I do believe for us as a Synod - this is a watershed moment for us, we cannot get this wrong again – is that we, the Archbishops' Council, we, the General Synod, we, the Church of England, can no longer think that we can deliver these things ourselves. That, I think, is the key learning.

Not only do we need independent oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding, we need independent help in deciding how best to do it, which I think is what Jane was saying to us. I cannot tell you how sorry I am that it has taken this long for us to see it with such clarity. We need independent scrutiny, but we need independent help in deciding how best to do it and implementing it once it is decided, and this is now our determination.

*The Chair:* So, we now come to Synod's opportunity to ask questions of the Archbishops' Council. We will leave it to them to decide which of the panel answers those questions. I will take questions in batches of three, alternately from the room and Zoom, so do be prepared to raise your hand on Zoom, please.

To ensure that we can progress as quickly as possible, and I know many of you would like to ask questions, can I ask those of you asking questions to do just that, and to do so as quickly and succinctly as you can. And also, to remind members of the panel, I encourage you to be disciplined in the length of your answers in the time that we have, thank you. So I would now like to take the first three questions, those indicating, please show.

*The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds):* Do you think that Synod members who have called this a crisis of governance rather than a crisis of safeguarding have a point?

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* I will get straight to the question after I have just said thank you to the panel. This is hard. Our concerns are with what has happened, not with you as individuals and I think that needs to be said. My question is what was the process of appointing Dr Maggie Atkinson, and by that I mean who selected her and who made the appointment, and then what was the process for appointing Meg Munn as interim Chair, who made the selection and who made the appointment?

*Mrs Nadine Daniel (Liverpool):* I want to echo what Gavin has just said: this is not personal. But when you have lost the trust of the room, you need to send it out for an

independent inquiry. My question is, why can you not follow what the L'Arche Community did in similar circumstances, hold up your hands and say we have failed, we have made a mistake, commission an independent inquiry, report - one person who springs to mind is Sir Mark Hedley - and then act as L'Arche did on all the recommendations, accept all the recommendations and act on them. That is my question, thank you.

*The Chair:* Members of the Archbishops' Council to respond.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Thank you very much for the questions. To the first one, is this a crisis of governance rather than a crisis of safeguarding, clearly this has created a crisis for safeguarding, I do not want to underestimate that in any way, but I think it is a point well made. I know hindsight is a wonderful thing, but I look back and think the way this was set up lacked the clarity that it should have had, that in a desire to move quickly I think mistakes have been made and we do need review that and learn from them and do our very best to make sure they do not happen again.

I do not think it could have been foreseen how things became difficult and went wrong very, very quickly with the need for the first Chair to step aside, that was a tragedy that could not have been foreseen, but I think it is a point well made. For the second question about the appointment processes themselves of the Chair and then the interim Chair, I am going to turn to Jamie.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* Thank you, Gavin, as always a startlingly good question. I think my understanding, and I may be corrected so I do not want to be quoted completely on this, is that a group of people including survivors were involved in the appointment of Maggie Atkinson, but I do not know the full details, we would have to tell you later and publish that.

Regarding Meg Munn, who was, as you know, the independent Chair of the National Safeguarding Panel, which was an appointment made with significant survivor input, the feeling at that stage was we were reaching a point where we had to move things much faster forward in greater capacity to go to phase 2. All the time the concern was the slowness of the process, this was adding in extra capacity particularly to do that. In the event it did not work, and we are very sorry about that.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* With the Chair's indulgence, I will ask Tim and Alison to say something briefly about the final question.

*The Chair:* Briefly if you can. Go ahead.

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark):* I hope that you have heard that we also wish for an independent review. We also want to really learn the lessons and we desperately do not want this to happen again.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* Yes Nadine, we have failed, we have got it wrong and we are very sorry and we do not want it to happen again.

*The Chair:* We will now take the next three questions, please.

*The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TEIs):* This is a question for Archbishop Stephen. Archbishop, you spoke a few times using the phrase “the safeguarding of the Church”. Now that could be interpreted as protecting the Church, which is, of course, often how we have been perceived and how we have acted and harmed survivors that way. I assume you mean, I hope you mean, the safeguarding work of the Church in protecting and helping those who need it, but I just thought it would be helpful for survivors here to hear that, to hear you clarify that.

*The Revd Professor Morwenna Ludlow (Exeter):* My question is about governance and whether the Archbishops' Council is intending to reflect on previous theological work that has been done on governance and confidentiality, and I am thinking in particular of the O'Donovan Review on the CNC, where O'Donovan specifically commented on the way in which a group of people can sometimes move from a culture of confidentiality to a culture of secrecy. My point here is that one can think that one is holding other people's secrets when in fact what is happening is that there is a lack of transparency and transparency always lies in the eyes of the beholder.

*The Revd Alex Frost (Blackburn):* Just a straightforward question, I suppose. In an institution that is built around Jesus's words, to put the most vulnerable people first in the words of the Beatitudes, I would like to ask particularly the Archbishop, what do you think Jesus would make of what is going on here?

*The Chair:* Can I remind Synod members the questions are for the Archbishops' Council rather than just to the Archbishop.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I am very happy to answer Alex's question. I imagine Jesus weeps over this situation where we have been. I do not believe there is a payoff between justice and mercy. We humans fail, but God alone is just and merciful, and I look to his justice and his mercy in this situation as I do in all situations, but right now I expect he is weeping, and I know many of us are not far from those tears as well.

But the other thing is, because this is about justice as well as mercy, we also need to find a way forward that will not erase the mistakes, difficulties and challenges of the past but will build a better future, and that is what we are committed to.

Just before handing to Jamie, I think the other question I took as an entirely friendly and helpful question, Sean. I do apologise if what I was saying was misinterpreted. I am absolutely saying that I want our Church to be a safe place and it is the independent

oversight and scrutiny that is needed to hold us to account and enable us to be as safe as we can for all people.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* Sorry, Chair, I am going to say something. Basically, I think we have got three responsibilities or areas of accountability as a trustee body. First and primary is to the victims and survivors of past events. I am responding to the question around governance. We have got huge responsibility to them, we have heard exactly why that is today. We also have a very significant responsibility to all the people who are coming to our churches, across the whole of the Church of England, whether they are members of the Church or visiting the Church or using our facilities, whether it be our dementia cafes or children's group and so on.

And thirdly, we have a significant responsibility to those who work with us as staff members and as people who are in parishes and dioceses working in safeguarding, so I think the issue of vulnerability is really important, but I think we have to know the vulnerabilities across the whole system and part of what we were concerned about was to make sure we understood that and were able to respond to it appropriately.

*The Chair:* I am now going to look to Zoom to see if anybody would like the opportunity to ask a question.

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* Thank you to the members of the Archbishops' Council for taking these questions and indeed to Jane for addressing the Synod, which was really profound and moving. I am glad that Stephen has raised that there will be an independent review into what has taken place and that Tim also referred to that. I am not quite clear what it is, though, that we are exactly looking into, so I would like to know about the terms of reference and the scope of that.

It seems to me that one of the issues that many of us are really concerned with at present is that we have two sets of narratives which are coming out now about the end of the ISB itself, before we get to safeguarding in general. None of us know which one of these to believe and we need a clarification of facts, simply, as members of Synod. That is the first issue.

The second relates also to the issue that I raised in relation to the Business Committee debate about the role of the Secretary-General, and also, given Justin Welby's answer to Sam Margrave's question yesterday, Justin's place in this. It seems to me that there are accusations that the Secretary-General has skewed the facts on one particular level and he needs to have himself cleared of that, but many of us in the chamber feel that Justin may well have lied in Synod yesterday, and that also needs to be clarified.

*The Chair:* Can you ask the question please?

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* That is it.

*The Chair:* Thank you.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* We are hearing that the dismissed ISB members were two day a week contractors with terms of reference to focus on survivor engagement. It is quite important to remember that. We also learned that Archbishops' Council chose not to exercise their power to appoint additional members during the eight months that Maggie Atkinson was stood back; far too long. Do you seriously attempt to blame, or should I say frame, the independent members with the responsibility for delays in conceptualising phase 2 of the ISB?

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Disclosure: I speak as a victim of clergy abuse and abuse in Church, which has ended me in hospital. The nature of abuse is that it involves power and abuse and that is what we have seen, sadly, many of us as survivors, from the Archbishops' Council: a group in power who have taken abusive decisions, or so it feels. For me that then brings up the question of governance, as we have touched on. But my ultimate question is to whom is the Archbishops' Council accountable?

*The Chair:* Thank you.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* If I can just finish, because there is a whole process of events that have happened and if this had had an accountability body, both the ISB and the Council could have gone to that accountable body.

*The Chair:* Thank you for your question, Jayne.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Tim is going to respond to Robert's question.

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark):* Just regarding the terms of reference for the review, one of the reasons why we are so supportive of an independent review is we want to hear the stories of all parties, that all parties can hear, because what we want is for the Church to learn from the mistakes that have been made. That would mean we would want to hear in that review from also Jasvinder and from Steve, from survivors, from the Archbishops' Council, from everybody involved so that we can truly learn the mistakes of what has happened and that, like we have said already, this does not happen again.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* Just to finish that off, I think that will help to inform us as well as we go forward. We must look to the future. Martin, I just want to say that we do not blame Steve and Jasvinder. We thank them for their work, all of which was excellent and good. What became clear was there was a breakdown in our understanding of that work. Archbishop Stephen has already alluded to the fact that their terms of reference were probably not as they should have been and so we found ourselves sort of going on diverging paths. With that, that put a strain on our working relationship which Tim has explained to you. But we are not blaming them. We take the blame ourselves

in that. In any breakdown in relationship there are two sides and so I want to hold up our hands too. I will pass back to Tim.

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark):* I would want to say that in any breakdown of relationship we did not look after you and we did not actually build the relationships that we needed to build. That is a responsibility we all took. The challenge we had, and I talked about this in my reply yesterday, was the tension between governance and operational independence. In response to you, Martin, as well, I would say there were many times we did not get that balance right, absolutely. We either erred too much on governance, and that felt like interfering, or we gave too much operational independence, but we did not get that balance right and that is a governance issue which I hold my hand up for.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I think at this point I just want to reiterate the learning that I think I have certainly taken and I think all of us have taken from this that we need an Independent Safeguarding Board, the phase 2 we always imagined and hoped would be, but we need to stop thinking that we can be the ones who deliver it. That will be the big step change.

With regard to the second part of Robert Thomson's question, I just again want to reiterate something I said earlier. The decision that was taken, painful though it was, was taken because we believe in the medium term it will be the best way of providing what the Church needs in terms of scrutinising and overseeing the safeguarding of the whole Church in its ministry to everyone. But this was a collective decision and it was a unanimous decision. As I think has come out, there may have been some disagreements around timings because this was a sensitive issue, but they were not disagreements about the decision itself.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* Thank you, Jayne. It is a fundamental question who the Archbishops' Council is accountable to. I suppose one answer is, ultimately, the Charity Commission as trustees. I think the other issue which, of course, we are struggling with in governance generally and the review is how does this Synod relate to the Council in terms of accountability? You elect over half of us onto the Council and we have a certain level of functionality there. It is how we work out our relationship with you and how you hold us accountable but, ultimately, I think technically it is the Charity Commission.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* And I simply note there is a debate this evening. It is relevant to this debate that I think many of us realise that our governance structures could be a lot better than they are and all of us, therefore, sometimes find ourselves in places where we are not either sure or happy with how things are being done. I think there has been widespread acknowledgment of that. Why else would be having the debate we are having this evening?



*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Booring is not the culture of listening to valid accusations and poor governance, Synod. You need to act on accusations not dismiss them and so I do not accept to be boored. At Question time, I asked how the Archbishops voted. My question was very clear. The Archbishop of Canterbury responded to the question how did the Presidents vote by saying both Archbishops had wished to wait a bit. This was not challenged by the Archbishop of York. However, after great journalism by the *Church Times*, we found out the vote was unanimous, confirmed today by the Archbishop. I have written to the Secretary-General and Clerk asking them to come before this Synod.

*The Chair:* Sam, can you ask your question?

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* I am getting to my question. And to address Synod today and to take questions. Will the Archbishops' Council arrange this and will you send members of Synod minutes and reports used to make their decision and also commission a report into lying ---

*The Chair:* Sam, that is more than one question.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* --- and take accountability on who will be resigning for the misleading that was knowingly done?

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Firstly, disclosure. I was a member of the Archbishops' Council in 2020 when the decisions were taken and so I bear some responsibility for the early decisions. I just want to say one thing before I ask my question, Chair. I am aware, and I think it is just important for full disclosure because of all of that, that the survivor voice is present in the Archbishops' Council because members of the Council themselves are survivors and I think that ought just to be borne in mind in some of the conversation we are having.

*The Chair:* Thank you.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I asked Tim on Friday about the issue looking to the future about better governance and particularly with the issue that arose of having just three members of the ISB. In ISB 2, what steps will we take to ensure that there is a much bigger and, therefore, less swayable governance structure in the future?

*The Revd Canon Douglas Machiridza (Birmingham):* You did report that Jasvinder and Steve did not want to work with the interim Chair. Were you made aware of the reasons why? Also, secondly, were you given any reasons why also they raised their dispute notice against the Archbishops' Council?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I think we have answered Sam's question, so I am not intending to say any more on that one if you do not mind.

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark):* This is in response to Simon's question. I think when we look back to 2020-2021 when decisions were made, I think we need to take into account the context of coming out of Covid and at the time we were also looking at cuts in the NCIs or the Transforming Effectiveness stream that was happening at the same time of finding £2 million worth of cuts and so there was a pressure on the number of people we could employ on the Board. We chose three. That, I believe, proved really problematic for them and for us because I think for a board of three to function well is dependent on good collegiality.

We became concerned about that good collegiality when there was a vote early on of Standing Orders on that Board that decisions would be made by votes of two to one. Our concern then was the potential of actually splitting that Board into two, the one person and then the two who voted otherwise. So there were concerns about the collegiality. I do urge that in any future board that it is five, six or seven because you need that breadth of voice on the Board so that, actually, every single voice can be better heard.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* I think the Archbishop has already said that we need external advice to advise us as we set up ISB 2 and so I am looking for that, really, to hear from other people how many people should be on the Board.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* As I said, it is vital that we understand from expertise elsewhere how other similar systems have been set up. Normally, if you set up a regulatory body, it is the act of Parliament that sets it up whether it is CQC, Ofsted or General Medical Council and so on, so we were in a bit of new territory trying to do this. I think we proved that it was extremely difficult and we failed and for that we are deeply regretful. But, equally, I think Simon we should not pre-empt what the structure will be. That suggests again we are just closing down options without proper consultation from a whole range of people.

On the question around the dispute notice, I think I answered that question in one of the questions. Obviously, we want to know from the ISB why they did it. We do not really know, but I think it is reasonable to assume that it was around the Meg Munn appointment but, as I say, it is fundamental that the review we set up goes into all these so that everyone can know the answers because we are just giving you our side of this and that is all we can do.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* Point of order. Thank you, Chair, and I apologise for interrupting the flow. May I draw to the Chair's attention that under paragraph 19(2) of Standing Orders if a member wishes to correct an important misunderstanding of fact concerning either that member or what another member has said, the member may interrupt a speech to make a point of personal explanation but may only do so with the consent of the Chair.

May I ask you this afternoon, because many remarks have been made and have named Ms Sanghera and Mr Reeves personally here today, to consider extending the powers of

Standing Order 19(2) to invite them at some point to respond, subject to time limits chosen by yourself, before this Synod.

*The Chair:* I am going to take some advice. I have no power to go beyond what the Standing Order provides. Thank you for raising it though.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* Point of order. With apologies, I have the Standing Orders in front of me. I do not have the number at hand. I am looking for it. There is a Standing Order that allows for the suspension of Standing Orders. Can I propose that we do that in order to give you the power to invite the two ISB members to speak?

*The Chair:* Bear with me. A member does have the right to move that a Standing Order may be suspended with my consent. Do we have a member willing to say which Standing Order they wish to suspend and then we need to vote on that and we will need 75% of the House to vote in favour of that. I am looking to you, I think. You cannot speak again, apparently. Bear with me. You need to call somebody else to speak on your behalf on this matter.

Whilst you are looking into that, we will continue to the next three questions, please. Mindful of time, we may have time for one more batch of questions. We are already running slightly over. We do not have timed business but we do have other business to do.

*Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich):* Thank you, everyone, for what we have heard so far this afternoon. There have been a couple of mentions of a consultation going forward about phase 2 and I wondered if it was possible to hear a little more about that, who will be leading on it, who will be deciding who to consult and how that can be perhaps more independent, getting more voices into that process.

*Ms Jane Rosam (Rochester):* My question is if judges recuse themselves if there is a risk that a reasonable member of the public might have a perception of bias, when 76 survivors objected to the appointment of Meg Munn as Chair of the ISB on the basis of a perceived conflict of interest, did you and she regard those 76 survivors as not reasonable members of the public?

*The Bishop of Birkenhead (The Rt Revd Julie Conalty):* Somebody forgot to tell me that, apparently, Bishops are not meant to ask questions but, anyway, here we are. I am a little concerned we might be losing survivor focus here and so I have a really practical question. For those survivors who feel they have lost hope and are really in a desperate situation now because they had pinned their hopes on the ISB, what exactly is happening, what is available and what more can we do?

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* To Caroline Herbert, again we do not want to jump the gun on this. It needs to progress at pace, it needs speed to work out who the people

should be in the room - and if not in the room on Zoom - to help us to construct this next stage. I am very concerned that we have not done this in the past and we have not done it well. In a sense, that is why I tried to say significant speed but also not going so fast we do not get the right consultation. We have contact with a number of independent organisations; for instance, the organisations that have done audits for us in the past and PCR 2. I think we are already in conversation with a number of people. At this stage, I cannot say who they are because they have not agreed as yet to participate.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* Can I answer Julie's question and then we will come back to Jane, sorry. Julie, I wish I could say to you, yes, we have all got it sewn up, but actually the reality is that we need to take time to have conversations to consult. My understanding is that that is the work that is happening now and I have been talking to Bishop Joanne about that. Some of my colleagues had meetings this week, and I think you might be aware of that, with a survivor group and a survivors advocate group to hear their point of view.

I thank you very much for saying that we have got to a point where we are not being very survivor focused and I recognise that sitting here and I want to say to survivors and to respond to what Jane said that, actually, you must be at the heart of what has happened and it breaks my heart to hear that you do not feel loved by the Church because we must do that work. I feel that you might be looking at me and thinking, well, more mealy words, Alison, you are more talk less action. I do not know what else I can do now, but I hope that you will believe that is genuinely what I feel in my heart and I think all of us together need to work at how we can do that better. As I sit here, I do not know the answer to that now. I know it needs to start with conversations and those are happening, but it needs to move on to something that is more practical and more action focused.

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark):* It is really important to say, Julie, that consultation will be with survivors. That is really important to stress: With survivors. They are going to be involved. That is something we take very, very seriously going forwards. We have failed in that and we need to do that better and so I want to say that to you as well.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Yes, I think the final part of Jane's speech at the beginning is something that I want to own and reiterate that what happens next needs to be set up independently. Once agreed, it needs to be implemented independently and then it needs to operate independently. In the setting up of that, I cannot tell you who is going to do that work now but we are already beginning to have discussions and survivors will be part of that.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* I am going to read the question to you, Archbishop. It was Jane's question about ---

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* No, I was going to come on to it.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* Are you sure?

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Yes, yes. The question about Meg Munn and the perception question. I entirely understand what you are saying and although I did not conclude myself that there was a conflict of interest, actually that is not relevant. If it is perceived as being, then perception is reality in this sense. I entirely understand that. I think one of the things is the Archbishops' Council need to apologise to Meg Munn who has been put in a really, really difficult position. It was not our intention at all.

However, I do need to note that, initially - it gives me no pleasure to say this - Jasvinder and Steve appeared to welcome Meg's appointment and, actually, because we realised perception is everything and that we could not carry on as we are, that was precisely why we were having the meeting - I have not got the dates in front of me - which I believed was going to be a very positive meeting about trying to work out precisely these matters. But, unfortunately, for reasons that I understand is what they felt they had to do, Jasvinder and Steve then took out a dispute notice against the Archbishops' Council about a couple of hours before that meeting was due to take place and it prevented the meeting from happening.

That was part of the final breakdown of communications which led us to conclude that we had to approach this in a different way. As I have stressed and want to stress again, part of that different way is actually to take it out of our hands and ask somebody to independently design it as well as, in due course, implement it.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* Point of order. Under Standing Order 120, the President may invite such persons as they think fit to address this Synod and so I ask the Archbishop of York in his capacity as President to ask Steve and Jasvinder to address Synod, please.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I would be happy to do that, but I think if that is going to happen - and I do it because I want us to learn and move forward - I think Meg Munn is here and Meg Munn ought to be invited to say something as well. I feel in an awkward position, as I am sure you understand, but I am also mindful that we have important business on redress. I think if people were able to make a short statement and then perhaps a final response perhaps from the panel, I will leave that in your hands, Chair, I think then we should conclude this item. That would be my advice and perhaps we could conclude it with silence and prayer.

*The Chair:* Can we just take a moment, please, and just take some advice before we do that, thank you. Thank you for your patience, Synod. Please bear with us. I apologise for the delay. We have been advised that it is unlawful for one of the Presidents and not both to suspend the Standing Orders. I also wish to indicate that that is a regret. You heard that the Archbishop of York wished to allow the non-speaking members to speak.

*Miss Ruth Abernethy (Channel Islands):* Point of order.

*The Chair:* There was a prior point of order over here.

*The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford):* Under Standing Order 39, may I move the motion that the Chair gives consent to Synod to test it on the suspension of Standing Order 152 which is that non-speaking members may not address the Synod. I do not think I need two minutes to explain why.

*The Chair:* We are very fortunate to have so many legal minds in the chamber, are we not? I have been reminded that only those who speak on a presentation may do so, if they are non-speaking members of Synod, if they are invited by the Business Committee. The Business Committee Chair may not do that upon his own accord. This is a presentation, so bear with me.

There is another point of order here, is there not?

*Miss Ruth Abernethy (Channel Islands):* My point of order is that we use Standing Order 35 in order to suspend this session for a prescribed amount of time in order to allow a presentation by Jasvinder and Steve and then resume the session

*The Chair:* Thank you. Bear with us a moment. Thank you for your patience, Synod. If you bear with us for a couple of minutes, we are very much trying to untangle the Standing Order in a way that serves what we are all here to do.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Point of order.

*The Chair:* Bear with us a minute, Sam, we are still in the middle of this one.

Synod, if you could please resume your seats. Synod, in order to give the space for our speakers, I am adjourning this sitting for 10 minutes for the better conduct of Synod business to allow those to be heard who need to be. During this time it will be open to those present in the hall to listen to what Jasvinder and Steve wish to say. The Chair of the Business Committee will kindly facilitate the time on that as we will need to leave as the sitting will be adjourned. The sitting will resume again at 4.25 pm.

THE CHAIR *The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* resumed the Chair at 4.31 pm

*The Chair:* And so we resume Item 11. Synod, thank you so much for your patience throughout this debate. As you can appreciate, we have taken many twists and turns and quite a bit longer than scheduled, but it was absolutely the right thing to have done and I am grateful for your patience, but we do need to safeguard items coming on later in the rest of the day. I would like to thank Jane and Jasvinder and Steve and members of the Archbishops' Council for their contributions to this item and to Synod for the questions. I

will now bring this item to a close by inviting you to join me in a few moments of silence for all that has been heard.

*(A moment's silence)*

*The Chair:* The words of the Grace.

*The Chair* led Synod in an act of Worship.

*The Chair:* Synod, that concludes this item of business. Given how our afternoon has taken a turn I suggest before we continue our next item that those who wish to take a five-minute comfort break do that, and the next item will resume in five minutes.

## **ITEM 51**

### **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (GS MISC 1340)**

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 4.39 pm

*Mr Simon Friend (Exeter):* Point of order. Can I ask that a record of the informal meeting we have just had is attached, perhaps as an annex, to the formal report of this Synod.

*The Chair:* I am advised that that is not really a point of order, however, I am sure the Business Committee have heard and will consider it. Thank you very much. We come now, Synod, to Item 51, you will need GS Misc 1340 for this debate. This item is the Archbishops' Council Audit Committee's Annual Report. I am going to be calling on Maureen Cole to speak to Item 51. She as up to ten minutes.

*Mrs Maureen Cole (ex officio):* Chair and members of Synod, good afternoon. I am sure you are going to love this session after that last one and I am really conscious of Jasvinder and Steve and others and sharing that story and where we are going now, so I am just very mindful of that, and thank you for sharing your information.

At your request, we are here to discuss the Annual Report for the Archbishops' Council Audit Committee. Chair, this speech should be within the ten minutes allotted time, but I hope, with permission, that you will allow me to overrun for a few seconds if necessary because I want to ensure that General Synod receives the full facts and information. I am now into my fourth year as Chair of the Audit Committee and this is my first opportunity to talk about the important work of this Committee.

Some people think audit is boring, but I am blessed with Committee members who would take issue with that. Our Committee comprises of two Council members to provide link

to the Archbishops' Council, that is Ian Paul and myself, and two members elected by this Synod, Clive Billenness and Chris Gill, who provide challenge and scrutiny. And there are two members who are independent of both bodies, and that is Bethany Burrow and Don McClure.

As Chair of the Committee, I am required to prepare an audit and review of the Audit Committee's work during the year up 30 April 2023. Our role, like all audit committees, is to provide assurance to the Archbishops' Council on the effectiveness of management, governance, risk-management and internal controls over the works of the Archbishops' Council.

We also have a key role in ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the Annual Report and financial statements. We undertake the same functions for Church of England Central Services, which is called ChECS, which does not have a separate audit committee. I will talk about three areas: the Annual Report, the management of risks and the system of the controls including internal audit.

Firstly, the Annual Report. The oversight role of the Audit Committee involves satisfying ourselves that the document accurately reflects the work of the Council, that it meets our statutory reporting compliance duties, and that the financial information presented in the accounts is accurate and complete, adopting appropriate accounting policies. As part of the process we also carefully consider the areas of going concern, the particular risks faced by the Council and the mitigating factors to support the Council in discharging their trustee responsibilities.

This year, additional work was needed to be carried out as part of the external audit process, because of the new auditing standards ISA 240. This required us to more clearly demonstrate whether management and those charged with governance have adequately ensured and understood the risks of material mis-statement due to fraud, and what has been put in place to mitigate and respond to these risks. These include a consideration of fraud risks associated with cyber security, which has been a key focus area for the Committee. We have undertaken that work seriously, recognising that resources lost to fraud cannot be used for the mission and ministry of the Church.

In addition, our external auditors received a number of representations in respect of the Independent Safeguarding Board. They undertook additional work to review these, and I am afraid to notify Synod that this resulted in an audit overrun fee. These primarily focused around the appropriateness of expenditure incurred in terms of the use of charitable funds and the arrangements for authorization and budgetary control. However, the auditors found no reason to change the report and accounts. They made one control recommendation in relation to ensuring value for money when using external legal advisers and some general observations.

Second, the Committee reviews the risk register twice a year. We spent time challenging senior Council staff to understand how they are managing and mitigating key risks to



ensure they are in line with best practice. And you can see the results on pages 46 to 49 of the Annual Report GS 2308.

Third, it is the responsibility of the Committee to agree an annual internal audit plan with the Director of Risk and Assurance. In line with best practice, we take a risk-based approach to ensure key strategic risks are reviewed with correct regularity. We also need to prioritise according to risk, because we do have a finite budget, both for the small in-house audit team, which also supports other National Church Institutions, and for an external partner accountancy firm to support us on specific audits.

In November 1022, the Committee reviewed and approved the internal audit plan for Archbishops' Council for 2023. We also noted the audits that could not be covered, because of the internal audit resource constraints. We approved three specific audits for the Council for 2023. These were social impact investments which were deferred from 2022, this is a really innovative programme with £25 million to invest to make a difference in communities across the country, and the Committee wanted assurance of the controls and effectiveness.

Grant management: the Council is now one of the largest grant-making bodies in the country, making grants of around £120 million a year. In the new triennium, we have introduced new processes and areas for investment in mission and ministry across the Church, including racial justice and net zero. So, it was critically important to ensure controls were operating effectively.

The National Casework Management System Project is another high-risk assurance audit. I do not think I need to explain to Synod why this is a high risk. This was a critical aspect of our response to IICSA, and holds highly sensitive data from across the whole Church. In addition, there are a number of audits in the plan which are pan NCI and are areas that we would expect to interrogate regularly as a matter of good practice.

This includes a counter fraud review and review of anti-money laundering arrangements, audit of key control process areas, such as accounts payable and payroll processes through the new People System, and audits relating to data security and disaster recovery.

The audit plan was signed off by the whole Committee at our November meeting. We did consider other priorities but concluded that this work programme represented an appropriate response to our principal risks at that time. I am aware that some concerns have been raised about whether the internal audit plan for 2023 should have included an audit of the governance and arrangements for the Independent Safeguarding Board.

Let me give you the chronology so that Synod has full transparency. The possibility of doing an audit of the ISB was brought up in September 2022 to the Archbishops' Council. They considered this with members of the ISB present but decided not to proceed with this suggestion. As Jamie described yesterday, the Council was trying to walk a very

difficult tightrope of ensuring that the ISB had enough space to be operationally independent, while still discharging their charitable trustee responsibilities. And at the time, just nine months into the life of the ISB, we felt that the balance was in favour of allowing the ISB phase 1 to continue their work without us hampering them and starting to develop proposals for phase 2.

The internal audit plan was then approved by Committee at our November 2022 meeting on 3 November, and an audit of the ISB was not considered to be amongst the highest risk for internal audit focus, given our limited resources and the items I have already described. ISB was discussed and an update from the Archbishops' Council was given at that meeting prior to agreeing the audit plan. However, three members of the Committee did write to me, as Chair, on 17 November, requesting that I again ask Archbishops' Council to consider making provision for an audit of the governance of the ISB.

After discussion with the independent Audit Committee members, I explained to those who had written to me that I felt this should have been discussed at the Audit Committee meeting when we had had the opportunity to explore the issues together, so that we ensured an holistic approach to agreeing the internal audit plan based on risk, rather than considering individual items out of full context.

Obviously, there does need to be some flexibility, as circumstances or risk may change over time, but I believed we had approached the annual internal audit plan in the appropriate way based on the information available at that time. On balance, it seemed that an internal audit at that stage would only have highlighted risks and issues that were already well understood by Council.

There was a further discussion of this point in our March Audit Committee meeting, as we were keeping a watching brief on the situation. The Committee as a whole came to the conclusion that an audit at this point would interfere with the work going on by the Archbishops' Council to resolve the situation, which had, of course, continued to evolve.

You will appreciate that we continue to keep this matter under review, and it was discussed at our recent meeting in June. At the time, we agreed to hold an extra meeting of the Audit Committee to discuss matters in greater depth and consider our response as an Audit Committee given recent events. As will be clear from what I have described there has been a variety of view from Audit Committee members on this matter and other matters too. Of course, this is one of the strengths of a Committee, and I am really grateful for passion and commitment of the members to help us operate effectively in discharging our responsibilities.

It may not be the most glamorous of committees, but we do take our responsibilities very seriously. I would like to thank all members of the Audit Committee for their work on behalf of Archbishops' Council. The Council together with the Church of England Central

Services distributes significant amounts of grant funding and runs many key services for parishes and dioceses and it is right that these are run with proper controls.

*The Chair:* I am sorry, can you wrap up now, please.

*Mrs Maureen Cole (ex officio):* Yes, yes, and with risks managed well. And I move that the General Synod takes note of the paper standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Members, you will appreciate that we are pressed for time so I am going to ask for a speech limit of three minutes from the start. This item is now open for debate. Those wishing to speak, please stand, those who are moving to their seats, if you could do this a bit more rapidly, please

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

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* Chair, I am a member of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee and by trade an accountant. I read the report of the Archbishops' Council Audit Committee with interest and I am pleased that it has been scheduled for debate. The work of the Audit Committee seems extensive and I noted with a slightly raised eyebrow that in paragraph 3.3.2 that the external auditors were particularly focused on the going concern risk.

A few years ago, as a member of the Audit Committee for Oxford Diocese I also heard our auditor challenge us over going concern. It was the first year of the pandemic, the world had been rocked on its axis, and there was, I suppose, unusual uncertainty about the finances of the Church in many areas. I am afraid, however, I firmly told our auditors that if they required qualification of Oxford's accounts over going concern, then, given our relatively financial robust position, every diocese in the Church of England would have to be so qualified. They did back down, although not quite entirely.

This makes me reflect that any going concern issue for the Archbishops' Council is, in fact, related to that of the dioceses, which is why I also noted with interest in paragraph 3.5.1 that the Audit Committee also received a report on diocesan financial monitoring. I would be interested to know more about how diocesan finances are monitored and whether that monitoring is more generalised or more specific to individual dioceses. But I am glad that there is some form of monitoring so that issues can be picked up and discussed earlier rather than later.

We are all interconnected, not least financially. I am grateful for this detailed, careful work of the Audit Committee and its report.

*The Chair:* The lady on my left followed by Mr Drake, and after Mr Drake I will looking for a motion for closure.

*Professor Helen King (Oxford):* I want to just talk briefly on the subject of 3.5.5, the request by the Audit Committee for an internal audit of the ISB, which the Archbishops' Council turned down. Now, if you go back to your records, which you will not, so I will summarise it, in February 2023, Synod, I asked a question about whether the ISB had been subject to scrutiny by the Audit Committee in relation to its formation and operation. I was told in answer to a supplementary on that that the Audit Committee did not have the ability to request an audit. That was then changed. I had a letter from William Nye, including an attachment with a letter from Maureen Cole saying actually that was the wrong answer and the answer was yes, they do have the ability.

So, that was very interesting in itself, but what I am worrying about now is, with hindsight, I would like to ask Maureen Cole, with hindsight, should this have happened? You have outlined the various stages in which it was discussed at Archbishops' Council, should there be an audit of the ISB, but it was felt they should be able to continue because they were quite a new body. Then, in November 2022 it was decided it was not a risk. I would just like to ask, you know, that lessons learnt question. Have you got anything you would like to do in future as a result of what has now happened with the ISB?

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* I would like to make two points, please. The first one is on the same point, 3.5.5. We have been told various reasons for this, and the implication of the report is that the Director of Risk said the risk was low, and yet we seem to be aware that issues to do with the ISB governance was actually quite high, so I think we could do with some clarity over that.

And secondly, I am intrigued when Mrs Cole talked about the auditors questioning the cost of external legal, if we could have some more detail on that, because in July last year, I asked Question 172 about the cost of in-house and externally commissioned instructed lawyers and the response I got from Mr Nye was that the cost of the external lawyers was not readily available and it would be too costly to provide. Now, normally this would be a cost code on the account and it would be very simple to provide, so I would be grateful if more details about the question about the external lawyers could be provided.

*The Chair:* Thank you very much for your brevity. I see no one else standing and also there is no one indicating on screen either, so, Maureen Cole, can you respond, please, to the debate. You have up to five minutes to speak.

*Mrs Maureen Cole (ex officio):* Thank you very much for those questions and they are all important questions. Julie, with regard to ongoing concern, as we all know external auditors have to go through that process and it has been extended. I think, yes, we do have to take diocesan finances into control. It is part of our income as Archbishops' Council. It is not as large as obviously the money coming from Church Commissioners, but it is nevertheless. From time to time, I know the Finance Committee do get reports and we do ask for reports back and we do look at those from dioceses and understand what that situation is because we are intrinsically linked.

Just so that you know, we have also looked at other facts other than Covid. We have been thinking about LLF, diocesan impact finances, et cetera.

Helen, I am just very sorry, I gave the wrong answer at the time. Some people could look at it as a conspiracy theory that it was not then published. It was not. It was an administrative error of which the team apologise. This was about us understanding our remit within the ISB and what we wanted to do and how we did it. As I understood it at the time, we were well within our limits of looking at governance and the set-up of ISB, but actually to go and look at the internal settings up of it that that was not. It was and I apologise, which is why I corrected the answer. Yes, how we get that to the whole of Synod is a difficult one when there are so many questions for this team behind us.

Gavin, I am trying to remember your question, to be honest, and I apologise, but I think the one thing about risk is that in terms of ISB we have to look at it from a number of things. From the legal perspective, Crowe, actually, you will be surprised - and this is from an auditor's perspective but it is not one that I do not think any of us would agree with, actually - that we had possibly used external auditors for ISB rather than our own legal team and it would have been more cost-effective to use our legal team. It would not have been right to have done that and I think I would have had other questions from you about why were we not independent and why did we use our legal team. It was important that that was separate and I am hoping that that answers your question and, Gavin, if it does not, please come and see me and ask me to clarify.

But thank you for your time. I hope that has given you some interest. I thank the team behind me and please do come and talk to us about any issues, because we would be delighted to talk to you about risk appetite, risk and some of the issues that we face because they are quite serious issues that face us all as a Church nationally at diocesan and, indeed, at parish level. Thank you for your time.

*The Chair:* Thank you very much, Maureen. I now put Item 51 to the vote by a simple show of hands to take note of the Report.

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

The Chair: That item is clearly carried. We now move to the next item.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall KC (Manchester)* took the Chair at 5.04 pm

## **ITEM 12**

### **SAFEGUARDING REDRESS (GS 2305)**

*The Chair:* We now move to Items 12 and 13. We are running a bit short of time, but there it is. You will see that Item 12 is a presentation after which there will be an opportunity for questions. After that, there is a motion moved by the Bishop of Truro at Item 13. Let us deal with Item 12 first. I call on the Bishop of Truro to introduce the presentation. You have up to ten minutes.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Synod. Before any of the Project Board speak I would like to give the first word to one of the members of our survivor working group, Jane. You have heard from her already. But, as we do that, let us please hold in our minds the responsibility on us all to speak graciously to and about one another. Some parts of this project are necessarily technical and process based, but the whole thing is an effort to express the Church's deep repentance to survivors and all of our conversations about this should, therefore, be based in compassion, in justice and in love. Thank you, Jane.

*Ms Jane Chevous:* Thank you, Philip. Thank you, Synod, for giving me the privilege of speaking here again today five years after Jo Kind stood as the first survivor to address Synod when she called upon you to borrow the courage of survivors to ensure that safeguarding could be transformed and I will leave it up to you to judge how far you have come in the last five years. So why redress? Church-based abuse is a betrayal of trust that causes moral, spiritual and psychological injury as well as the harm from abuse itself. It ruptures our relationship with our faith community and God and, as Judith Herman says, "If trauma originates in a fundamental injustice, the full healing must require repair through some measure of justice from the whole community".

Survivors need the Church to meet us with belief, acknowledgment, apology and support to rebuild shattered lives. Redress is so much more than throwing money at survivors and hoping we will go away. What does good redress look like? Some key messages from the survivors in the working group and those we consulted in the survey were it should be generous, timely and non-litigious. The process should be survivor-centred, treating us with humanity and compassion and providing independent advocacy and support. There should be risk and needs assessment and provision for any victims rejected by the scheme.

Non-financial redress is also really important to many survivors and we are developing ideas for this. Some of the examples I can give you are at corporate level a truth and reconciliation process, a public apology, perhaps public memorials, knowing that there is a clear impact from telling our stories to improve practice; and, at a personal level, a personal apology, provision of therapy, chaplaincy and spiritual support, securing the practical support that people need and restorative practice. In short, whatever it takes to rebuild shattered lives.

There is a number of problems that we are posing the Board to solve. For example, ensuring the scheme offers redress to all survivors, not just those that reach civil claims thresholds; finding a way to pay for the scheme that is fair and does not bankrupt parishes

but means survivors do not have to go cap in hand to the place of their abuse; creating a process that does not retraumatise, especially for new disclosures; and gaining the trust of all stakeholders, survivors, churches, lawyers and insurers.

It is vital that this is not another project like the ISB where the Church promises much and delivers little, cruelly destroying your hope, because redress represents so much more than the tangible support that is delivered by the scheme. I am going to skip through the next three slides really quickly. To me, it represents freedom from trauma after my abuser told me that this was what God wanted for me, by demonstrating that this was not God's desire. It represents hope that perhaps the Church does care and perhaps I can find healing. It represents justice and restoration not just for survivors but for the whole Body of Christ.

We need a commitment to whatever it takes to repair the rupture and wounds from abuse, for is that not our mission to restore our broken relationship with God and with each other? Is this not work where the Church should be leading the way? I do not have much faith in the Church anymore, but I do have faith in God. I have faith in God to help us to live up to our part of the covenant, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God. As Child Victim C of E says, "Safeguarding is love and compassion in action". I hope he is watching on the feed. Synod, I am asking you to support the development of the scheme. Be ambitious for survivors and for the whole Church. Hold the Board to account for delivering a scheme that is generous, inclusive, survivor-centred and provides a lasting legacy that can change the culture of the whole Church and offer survivors the possibility of life in all its fullness.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Jane, thank you very much indeed. It is really important that survivors have the first word in a debate and discussion such as this. We come to you at a crucial stage in this project before legislation with a motion to test the mind of Synod and help us design a genuine process of repentance which we can all embrace and honour.

We have done an enormous amount of work on this scheme, arguably more in the last three years than other less complex schemes have managed with bigger teams working on them, and we are at a stage where every decision prompts another set of crucial questions to explore. Indeed, many of you have raised those questions with me or with others and we are very grateful to all of those who have spoken into this.

I do not want to repeat the substance of the paper. I am mindful of time. What has, of course, been well-publicised in that is the announcement that the Church Commissioners have allocated £150 million which will help to underpin the scheme and make sure we respond promptly to survivors' applications. I am very grateful for that allocation, but it is really vital to say that this is not a ceiling figure. What will determine the quantum of financial redress that survivors receive will not be the total sum available but the nature of the abuse to which they have been subjected.

Before you hear from Alex Kubeyinje with a reminder of some of the details, I want to outline for you some of the core commitments that lie at the heart of the scheme and have informed the work of the Board. First, that it should be robust and fit for purpose; secondly, that we should deliver that in as timely a manner as possible without compromising its quality; thirdly, that it is co-produced with survivors; fourthly, to ensure that it is about more than money - redress is not simply financial, it is also psychiatric, therapeutic, spiritual and emotional; the vital acknowledgment of wrongdoing on the part of the Church, an apology and support for rebuilding lives.

It is important to say too that we are not providing compensation per se but redress, so this is not equivalent to a loss of earnings scheme, although the financial assessment model, once we have finalised it, will probably include some discretion for aggravating factors. But we are clear that the focus is on the nature of the abuse experienced and that financial awards will be assessed consistently so that people who have had similar experiences of abuse are served equitably.

The paper touches on the biblical concept of covenant which is fundamental to all this. You have read all that already and so I will not repeat it but, as you know with Old Testament covenants, it is not at all inappropriate that covenantal commitment to one another and, crucially, to victims and survivors should be underpinned by law. Legislation will, therefore, be brought forward to clarify where responsibility for redress lies within the multiple institutions of the Church and with the assurance of support from elsewhere in the Church as that is needed.

I hope that in this scheme grace and law will work together. In fact, I do believe there is real grace here because the scheme will provide more and not less reassurance to Church bodies and will decrease rather than increase their vulnerability as we take a whole Church covenantal approach to this. But, above all else, I hope and pray that this scheme will provide at least a modicum of grace to survivors who have been sorely denied it. I am going to pass over to Alex Kubeyinje, who is going to take us through some of the details and then to Bishop Joanne who is going to look at the next steps.

*Mr Alexander Kubeyinje (ex officio):* Good afternoon, Synod. Before I start, I just wanted to say thank you to Jane for her courage and her ability to be here today and tell us as it is. I am going to talk you through some of the steps here with regards to redress. I want to talk about the application of the eligibility and who can apply for redress: survivors of sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, emotional abuse and spiritual abuse. This would be perpetrated by someone who is representing the Church of England. They may be lay or they may be ordained. They may be paid or they might be a volunteer. It could be in England or anywhere else in the world, but they must be working on behalf of the Church of England in those capacities.

How might the scheme work? Survivors would make an application through a third party supplier. We feel that there needs to be independence from the Church and, as a Church, we do not necessarily have the skill-sets to be able to deliver elements of this scheme



and so will need help in that department. There would be a consistent assessment process and this would be based on the balance of probability and there would be other bespoke forms of redress that may be appropriate to a survivor around apologies, acknowledgment of the abuse and any other further action. We have got to understand that for each person it will be different.

We are grateful that we have our survivors who are working with us on designing what this might look like and for that we are truly grateful. The financial awards will be standardised with a series of pay bands which would be used consistently. That will be applied according to the nature of the abuse and other aggravating factors. This version of the scheme will run for five years but there have to be mechanisms that are built in to be able to see where we are, monitor, reflect, learn, do we need to extend, et cetera.

With that, I thank you for listening and look forward to hearing your suggestions, comments and ideas. I will hand over to Bishop Joanne now to take us through the next steps.

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Right Revd Dr Joanne Grenfell):* Thanks, Alex, and thank you, Synod. I have just begun being a little bit involved in this work relating to redress since I began in this role after Easter. I am grateful to the staff and to the Board members and particularly to the survivors on that for the way that they have grappled with the issues and helped me to understand where this has come from and where they would like it to go. We are at a point now where much work is being done, but many questions arise and that is why it feels important to consult you here at Synod before legislation so that we can benefit from your insights for the next steps.

Among the workstreams for the next few months are three main areas. One is the really crucial work with survivors to make sure we completely understand and agree the criteria for forms of abuse that will be recognised here and the forms of redress that should be made available. They are really careful conversations. They really matter. The second part is a comprehensive procurement process to make sure that we find a supplier who can help us with the final technical stages of designing a scheme and then going on to deliver it. But, let us be clear, this is not just about technical competence; it is about attitude and understanding and compassion. Thirdly, finding a way for the whole Church, which is the key concept at the heart of this work, to work together to contribute through insurance but also through other contributions to make sure that we honour the experiences of survivors and apologise fully to them. I will hand back to Bishop Philip briefly.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* To conclude, I just want to affirm that, in taking a whole Church approach to expressing repentance to survivors, we are not creating a new vulnerability for Church bodies but, rather, supporting one another in managing responsibilities which already exist and which are consistent with the response to survivors set out in the House of Bishops' guidance and where there may already be legal liability in the event of a civil claim. This is, therefore, about giving concrete

substantial expression to our core conviction as a Church that safeguarding is everyone's business.

Synod, this is a serious piece of work that encourages our serious engagement with it. We need to have good, open conversation about this but, above all else, this is an opportunity for us to express our corporate repentance. We cannot put right such historic wrong as we have discovered, but we should corporately express genuine repentance for what has happened.

I am sure you do not need me to remind you, but I will, that confession and repentance are not the same thing. After confession, in the Book of Common Prayer, Evening Prayer, within the absolution itself, the priest beseeches the Lord to grant us true repentance that those things may please Him, which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy so that, at last, we may come to His eternal joy through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And may this Redress Scheme be in itself not only a mark of our contrition and our confession but of our genuine and our heartfelt repentance. I think, Chair, with your indulgence, are we having questions of clarification?

The Chair: Yes, people can ask questions. Are there any people who want to ask questions?

*The Revd Mark Bennet (Oxford):* Members may remember that at the last Synod I did not want to take note of the Safeguarding Report because this work had not been advanced. I am very pleased to see it having reached this stage where some decisive action can be taken and I welcome it.

Two questions. Mr X was reported as receiving a kind of care which we did not know was effective or not. What are we doing to research what are the effective interventions for survivors whose experience of being abused in Church will be different from survivors in other contexts to make sure that we understand the range of interventions that are effective and worth supporting and ineffective and not worth supporting? Also, I was very pleased to hear about non-financial redress being a central part of this, what is being done to ensure that we have the capacity as a Church to meet the pastoral demands inevitably involved in that relational work?

*The Bishop of Warrington (The Rt Revd Beverley Mason):* Thank you very much indeed for the work that is taking place here, for the ongoing work, it is very encouraging as we seriously shoulder the responsibility of redress. My question is: is liturgical provision by the Liturgical Commission being sought that expresses lament, confession, repentance, healing and restoration as part of our serious engagement of redress?

*The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS):* I want to speak in favour of the general direction of this scheme and I welcome further work on it and thank you for it. My question is do we have a definition of spiritual abuse?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Thank you all very much for that. Mark, I just wrote down "non-financial redress", I cannot remember the exact substance of your question. Would you mind just quickly repeating it.

*The Revd Mark Bennet (Oxford):* How is that effective or not.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Thank you.

*The Revd Mark Bennet (Oxford):* And how is it ensuring we have capacity.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Capacity, that was the issue, thank you very much. To try and deal with these, the researching of effectiveness of interventions is really helpful and really important. We are doing and we will continue to do research of other schemes which are both Church based and non-Church based schemes. We have a lot to learn from other sources. I think as a Church we are not on the whole terribly good at learning from expertise that is out there and we do absolutely want to do that. The capacity for non-financial redress, given that we will be commissioning an outside provider, my expectation is that the capacity will be there for whatever is needed. We do need to recognise that non-financial redress costs and that clearly needs to be recognised.

Bev, we have begun to think about that in terms of some kind of national service. Whether the Liturgical Commission can take further work on, I think it would be ideal if they could and provide some resources. I would very much welcome that.

Judith, the definition of spiritual abuse. There is, of course, very little kind of case experience about this but I think it is increasingly understood. We are categorising spiritual abuse under the broader heading of psychological abuse and we have, again, been drawing on expertise to help us to develop our understanding around that.

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (ex officio):* I have a question to Synod, but I have some observations as well. I would like to commend the motion to Synod and I, as a Board member, wish publicly to pay tribute to the survivor members on the Board and to the group who work with them. The grace which they have shown in this work to our Church is truly amazing and humbling, to me at least. They are helping the Church in this work. It is hard work for all of us, engaging difficult questions about law and grace, but I ask Synod to note, please, their great contribution to this work.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Two quick questions. First, in the light of earlier discussions on governance and a third party supplier, what will the governance look like and how will the Council, or whoever sees it, look at the audit function so that we get good values? There is a tension between those two things, I recognise. The second thing is about confidentiality, confidentiality about payments. I can foresee some competitive pain emerging when different payments are disclosed and I wonder how we will do our best to ensure, whilst recognising the sensitivities around confidentiality and

secrecy in the survivor community, that we do not end up with that sort of competitive comparison?

*Mrs Emma Joy Gregory (Bath & Wells):* My question is about clarifying where safeguarding begins and ends. Would a person who was a victim of abuse or sexual assault but who was over 18 at the time of the incident still be eligible for redress as part of this scheme? If not, how might we limit further harm to those victims who do not fall within the remit of the scheme?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Thank you very much. To answer that one first, yes, that would absolutely be in scope - without question.

Simon, your questions are very good and very helpful. The work of the Redress Scheme Board is to set the scheme up. We have only just begun to talk about this but we have recognised there will be governance issues going forward once the scheme is set up with a third-party supplier. I think the terms of reference will be different from our terms of reference for setting the Board up but that clearly will need to happen, and there will clearly need to be some kind of audit function which oversees it as well.

I think your point about confidentiality versus competition, as it were, is really well made, and that is precisely why we want to go to an external supplier who has experience of this stuff so they can advise us within the scheme design as to how that would work best. I recognise the complexity of the question.

And Morag, yes, absolutely, I entirely agree with you. We are incredibly grateful. The way that survivors engage with us and the work of the Redress Board is incredibly gracious, and I am extremely grateful to them.

*The Very Revd Joe Hawes (Deans):* We know that consequent upon confession is repentance and consequent upon repentance is action, and part of action is this Redress Scheme. However, I suspect that survivors and victims might also require of the Church that as we all learn that the creation of a healthy safeguarding culture and the creation of a healthy culture in safeguarding training that the creation of a healthy safeguarding culture within institutions is also an imperative. Where will that piece of work sit when we are looking at the abolition of Archbishops' Council and the creation of CENS? It may not sit appropriately in the Redress Scheme but it needs to sit somewhere.

*The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham):* I think in some ways this builds on what Judith asked and, again, I appreciate the direction. It is encouraging and it is good from what I can see so far, but can we be assured as Synod that the Church's use of their exemption from the Equality Act 2010 will not have the consequence of reducing accessibility to the Redress Scheme for LGBTQIA survivors, please?

*Mrs Nicola Denyer (Newcastle):* I am speaking in favour of this as somebody who in a previous life was a nurse, a midwife and a safeguarding training officer for the NHS, so I

have experience in working with survivors, victims and also professionals. My question really is how far are you liaising with charities, the NHS and local authorities about what they do, because I think, as we have heard this afternoon, it might be very difficult for survivors to come and actually tell somebody in church and they might well go to outside agencies. How will you explore or advertise that we can do this so the message can get through to survivors who might not come to church?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Mark Mounstephen):* Clearly the scheme will need to be advertised. We absolutely do not want it to be secret. We want it to be accessible, we want it to be known about, and we are also committed and have been learning from other schemes and good practice elsewhere. There is no reason at all why the Equality Act should impinge upon or limit the scheme in any way.

Joe, I wanted to say something wise and intelligent to your question but I cannot remember what it was. Strictly speaking, yes of course, the proper governance question that you raised is out of the scope of the work of the Redress Board, but it is an important question to which we as a Church need corporately to pay attention, and I thank you for raising it.

*The Chair:* May I just remind you there are two things we are talking about: one is the presentation and the other is the motion. I have to say that nobody has put in to speak on the motion, so it may be that will not take long, but I have to bear in mind there are two things.

*Mr Robert Perry (Truro):* I am happy to support the motion. Any reticence I might have felt at asking my diocesan bishop a question dissipated last Thursday when I learned that he is abandoning us our county west of the Tamar for the sultry delights of Hampshire, but never mind.

Two questions. First, in the paper at paragraph 2.11 there is reference to paying for this scheme and the requirement on various Church bodies to take out insurance to cover that. It just strikes me that for parishes in particular with no recorded history of abuse and no expectation of it (it is misleading to say that but I think you know what I mean) there might well be some push back on that. No doubt you have that in mind that people might feel they are being required to pay for something that is nothing to do with them. That is the first thing.

The second thing is twice in the paper there is reference to using a legal firm as your delivery agent. No doubt you have a reason for appearing to confine it to legal firms. I have got nothing against lawyers, some of my best friends, et cetera, but it strikes me there may well be other firms which could do the job equally well, and I would have thought we would not want to narrow ourselves unnecessarily in the choice of whoever is working with us.

*The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester):* Some of the respondents within the Clergy Discipline Measure regard themselves as victims of that Measure, bearing in mind people like Fr Griffin. I am wondering whether this is a scheme open to some of them

*Mrs Michaela Suckling (Sheffield):* First, I want to thank you so much for all the work you have done. I had the pleasure of meeting someone who is on the working party and she said that survivors really do feel listened to and they do have hope in this, so I am really glad we are debating it and asking questions.

As a parish nurse, I work with a number of people who have experienced trauma and abuse, and I really struggle to find them the appropriate counselling and support that they need, specifically around their trauma response in perhaps EMDR and dialectical behaviour therapy. I just raise a little concern as to whether we are raising hope that we are going to offer people therapy which we cannot deliver because it is just not there because the system is overwhelmed. It would be good to hear about that.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Thank you for those kind words, Michaela. I hear that challenge. The procurement process is absolutely vital to this and ensuring that we make the best provision that we can is really important. This does slightly connect with my friend Robert's question about why we plan to use a legal firm. We do not have to use a legal firm but our advice is that is where the expertise lies. Robert, if you have other suggestions, do please let us know.

The answer to the question around CDM is that the scheme clearly defines both what is and is not within scope and it clearly defines what is abuse. Indeed, I would say in both things it tends to take a broad definition. I clearly could not comment on any individual even hypothetical case because we would need to test it against those things, but do please be assured that that careful work of definition has absolutely happened.

Coming back to Robert's first point, and I am really grateful to you for raising this, the first thing to say is that any Church body, whatever that Church body may be, ought already to have public liability insurance. If you do not have it, please get it.

Secondly, I just want to stress that this is not about creating greater liability. We are already liable. This is about sharing the liability. We are still working on the financial formula but we do not want any body, as in an organisational body, to be hung out to dry in the delivery of this scheme, but to share the responsibility. We must also recognise that we cannot outsource our responsibility to another body and say, "You pick up the responsibility", when the responsibility may lie in a particular body, in a particular place.

I have remembered my wise answer to your question, Joe. A survivor yesterday at our fringe meeting said, "This could be a scheme that changes the culture of the Church". The primary aim is to do the best we can by survivors, but if it changes our culture in the process that will bring joy to my heart.

*The Chair:* Can I consider with you the timeframe because we are due to finish at 6 o'clock, and it would be helpful if you would allow me to propose an extension of the sitting for no more than 15 minutes.

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

*The Chair:* That is carried. We are going to go until 6.15. I am going to think to myself that it is probably more important to ask questions than to debate the motion. Now, if that is right, there we are; we will come to that. Mr Sewell.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* The origins of the Redress Scheme was a Synod rebellion organised by Peter Adams and David Lamming, who are sitting up in the public gallery. The response was they had to do something about it, and I seconded it, so I am heavily invested in the success of this scheme.

I have been asked by one of the survivors to raise a difficult point, not a controversial one but a difficult technical or philosophical point. Are we only going to look at claims that are nailed on legal certainties? I do not think we are, but what I want to ask is, there will be some cases which would not pass muster in law but you just know from a feeling in your water that this person ought to be helped. When it comes to that stage you are going to need discretions built into this scheme, and I hope that when we come to formulate it we have a bit of wiggle room. One of the ways you could do that, of course, is some of the survivors say, "I am not it in for financial reasons", some of the survivors are extremely wealthy, but we might be able to say, for example, "Would you like to have your pain acknowledged by putting your money into this pot here that could be dispensed for somebody who might not be quite able to prove it, but we think is a right person to be helped at this time?" Could we get the balance between rights and discretion built into the scheme in some way? It is difficult I know, but could we try?

*The Bishop of Bath & Wells (The Rt Revd Michael Beasley):* Has the planning group been able to estimate yet how many people this is likely to affect?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* First of all, I am sure all of us in this chamber who remember him would like to welcome David Lamming back to our company. Welcome back, David. It was not long ago that you joined us from a hospital bed so we are very pleased to see you in the pink and in the flesh.

Martin, thank you very much for that very helpful contribution. I just want to say I entirely agree with you. There is one very good reason for using the civil standard of proof, and that is that we are using insurers, and that is what insurers work by, but we are not just using insurers. I think you are absolutely right. I think that that should be our starting point as to whether there should be an element of discretion. By its very nature we know that abuse thrives on secrecy. We are not going to have witnesses often, so we need to make an assessment which is just and which is fair and which is above all gracious.

Michael, the short answer to your question is no, we have no idea of what the quantum might be, and we want to be prepared to respond to as many people as we need to. That is not for want of trying to do some research but we just do not know.

*The Chair:* I am going to look for a final three questions.

*Canon Peter Adams (St Albans):* Chair, I am putting a question instead of a point for debate, so have grace. I want to welcome this and particularly thank Jane for her contribution and underline and ask please, Bishop, can we consider a process of truth and reconciliation? I believe some of the things we have seen this afternoon are results of a growing ill-temper among us that has resulted from a long series of stuff, of abuse.

In the context of our own Diocese of St Albans, as we look at the Soul Survivor situation, I am very aware as lay chair of the diocese of the angst and anger from past stories piling in upon a news story, and again we saw that this afternoon. In order to deal with some of the toxicity in the system, can we please consider very strongly a truth and reconciliation process?

*Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford):* I first of all want to thank you for the hard work that has already gone into developing this scheme and the care that has been taken in ensuring that it is just and fair and generous. I just wanted to raise a query in respect of paragraph 4.3 in the paper which gives a hypothetical example of where abuse is perpetrated by a parish youth worker who is also a swimming coach, and carries out these duties distinctly. What is said is that if they harm someone they meet through youth work and not through swimming then the situation is within scope, but if they harm someone they meet through swimming, then it is not in scope. I would raise a query as to whether something is in scope or not should be determined according to the point at which they meet somebody. I would suggest that if they met someone through swimming first but the abuse happened during their youth work role then they should properly qualify and be within the scheme. It should be determined according to the location of the abuse.

*The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark):* Thank you so much for this. I really welcome this development with the Redress Scheme. Basically when selecting the law firm that we are going to have administer this, which it sounds like it is very likely we will do, I would love to have a commitment to not hiring a law firm which has what we would consider a conflict of interest, for instance, one which has represented the national Church level or a diocese or another church or a related person or priest, in a conflicting way, particularly advising on safeguarding and abuse cases.

Another question someone else asked which I think is a good one regarding children: would parents be able to access the Redress Scheme on behalf of their children? I am sure that is envisaged anyway, but it is worth asking.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* I would be astonished if that were not the case, Mae, but thank you. To take them in reverse order, the point you



made is very well made and any procurement process would need to assess reputational risk for the Church and we have to ensure the evident independence of the scheme. That may well rule out some providers who for other reasons might qualify.

Daniel, as you described that situation, I thought well of course that is in scope. It is always difficult when you have hypothetical situations because of course you cannot necessarily compartmentalise life, but certainly the way you re-described that my instinctive thought was yes, of course that would be in scope.

Peter, the truth and reconciliation idea that has actually come out in a paper that we looked at in the board just last Wednesday and in the paper that the survivors working group has drawn up about non-financial redress. It would be, I suggest, a huge piece of work, theoretically possibly outside the scope of the redress board, but that is not to say it might not be a very important and significant thing for us to do.

I just want to give an absolute wholehearted “Amen” to your heartfelt plea that we change the culture of the Church. Everything that we have been through today indicates how necessary that is. This scheme in itself is not going to do it but if it plays its part in that that would be wonderful.

*The Chair:* That concludes Item 12. We are grateful to all the people who participated.

## **ITEM 13**

*The Chair:* We now move to Item 13. The Bishop is to move Item 13. You have up to 10 minutes, but I will get into terrible trouble if you use it.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* I had two quotations from contributions that survivors have made. One I have already referenced: we need a scheme that changes the culture of the Church. Earlier on Jane said, “Don’t turn your back on survivors”. This it seems to me is one way. It is not the only way or a perfect way, but it is one way that we can look survivors full in the face and say sorry. I move the motion standing in my name. I think that was less than 10 minutes.

*The Chair:* I am very grateful for that. There is a three-minute speech limit. If you are crafty, you could actually ask a question and the Bishop will answer it in his reply. That will actually go back to Item 12, but there we are.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* I am grateful to the Chair for calling me and to Synod for hearing me. I know I have spoken a lot during these sessions, but I speak today as a victim and a survivor who is very concerned about how this will work for victims.

I welcome this motion and I will vote for it, but the stark reality is many of us have been through abuse which we have gone to the police about, or we have been through CDMs (I have done both) but where there was no proof and so the cases were dropped. Those

were often very painful long periods, for me in one case a year and in the other a year and a half, where I got very badly traumatised and burnt. I have not even talked about conversion therapy, which it is impossible to prove, but they have all left their scars. The thought of having to come forward and try to persuade on the balance of probabilities the Church that they should recompense me fills me with dread, because at the moment there is zero trust. I know we have been saying that all day, but if I do not feel I can trust the Church, and I know many of you, how do people who have been far removed feel?

We need to find a system that will really enable people to have some confidence in, I think, a go-between. Asking me to go to a lawyer or speak to someone in the Church is going to retraumatise me. I know you are working with victims and I know Jane has often raised this, and I am very grateful to Jane for her work, but we really do have to see how difficult it is for those of us who have been on the receiving end of abuse of power to take even a step forward into this scheme.

I do hope we will look at creative ways of trying to make it as painless as possible, and also that we will trust them and not think they are just trying to get one over or trying to get some money. I think we may need to have a generosity, as Martin Sewell pointed out, where we may, frankly, end up perhaps having a few cases which are not as robust as we thought because the alternative is to retraumatise victims like myself. Perhaps, Bishop Philip, you will be able to respond to that, but is there a way of having a liaison officer that looks at how we can better look at the balance of probabilities?

*The Bishop of Birkenhead (The Rt Revd Julie Conalty):* I am deputy Lead Bishop for Safeguarding. I want to speak in favour of this motion. Thank you as well to all those who have been working on this scheme. I am hugely grateful. Jesus offered some very challenging words about the spirit in which we should respond to requests for assistance or even legal action. He said, "If anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile". Of course, survivors and victims should not have to sue or beg. We should not need to be forced to respond well. We ought to be generously offering support and the redress that is owed. And I hope and trust - I do still trust - that this is indeed the spirit in which the Redress Scheme will continue to be developed: if anyone wants your coat, give them your cloak as well.

*The Revd Lindsay Llewellyn-Macduff (Rochester):* I think this is my maiden speech if questions do not count. I am in favour of the motion, but I just wanted to step back a little bit. Redress seems the obvious solution to the inheritance that the Church of England is trying earnestly to process but, however good this looks, I do not think this redress will necessarily end the circle of mistrust, grievance and injury that we keep lapping. I do not think it is the solution, because I think there is a deeper problem and we will keep circling this drain until we address it, and because the Church of England has a problem with power.

The writer and chaplain Geoffrey Burn coins the phrase “root sin” to describe a wrong so deeply buried, often generations deep, that a community or an organisation can no longer properly see it, and can no longer act outside it. He says it means that the organisation cannot just draw a line under it and move on, because every attempt to redress it, to fix it or to stop it from continuing is, in fact, shaped by it and destined to compound it.

Our root sin, I think, is our historic and present collusion with power. I think, too, we know that the solution to this is repentance but a repentance that looks at the source of the problem. It is more than just an apology, even an apology with a price tag, because an apology changes nothing about the root. However good this looks, we cannot see straight to know what it will take to set things right, and we do not have the right to determine it. If we are going to do anything about any of the root problems, the abuse of power against the vulnerable, the bullying, the racial injustice, the ageism, on and on, if we are to free ourselves of the root sin that is throttling the life of God’s church and God’s mission, we have to look beyond the symptoms and address the cause.

This outline and proposal of redress does look really good and, as I said, I support the motion, but it may perhaps be the cart and we have as yet totally failed to get ourselves a horse, so I am a little afraid that it will not in fact take us anywhere new.

*The Chair:* I am looking for one more speaker, after which I am minded to test the mind of Synod on a motion for closure.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* I am going to address Jayne’s really interesting and important question, coming from my professional experience as a safeguarding lawyer for many years, now retired.

Following the child abuse and murder of Maria Colwell in 1973, one of the great innovations was to put in a children’s guardian whose job was to represent the interests of the child. The children’s guardian is an extremely experienced social worker professionally regulated. They are self-employed. They are spread all over the country. There are lots of them. They are habituated in dealing with people in distress, people with learning difficulties, with children, with violent adults, and all sorts of things of that kind.

They are trusted by the courts so much that when the children’s guardian presented a report to somebody like me and I handed it into the judge, if the judge disagreed with the recommendation, he had to actually write down why he is disagreeing with the children’s guardian. You are talking about high-level expertise of somebody who actually knocks on your door and says, “Would you like to talk to me? Give me a cup of tea and tell me all about it, and I will get it sorted”.

Now, it seems to me that is a very easy entry level for us to get the sort of genuinely independent expertise to solve the problem mentioned by Jayne. You do not have to go to some lawyer’s office. You do not have to talk to a suit. You talk to somebody who is

sensible and they talk to the lawyer, who will take it to where it needs to go; they get it sorted. That is the sort of model we should think about. I hope that is creative enough for you.

*The Chair:* I am going to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 13 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put a motion for closure on Item 13.

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

*The Chair:* The motion for closure is clearly carried. I call upon the Bishop to respond. You have up to five minutes.

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Thank you all for those very helpful comments. I do want to say this: I do not want to over-promise for the scheme. I understand people's scepticism. I can only say that we are doing as much as we can to ensure, as I said at the beginning, that this scheme is robust, fit for purpose and is put in place in as timely a manner as possible.

Julie, thank you for that reminder. Grace has to be hardwired into the system as it is hardwired into the Gospel and I am grateful for that. That does of course have a bearing on the issue of the standard of proof. As I said earlier, the civil standard of proof works very well given that we are using insurers and that part at least of the settlement of the scheme will depend upon public liability insurance that is already in place, but we must not stick with the letter of the law. We must be willing, I believe, to go beyond that.

Lindsay, I do not want to say for a minute that this is a solution. I would never use that language. I do not think it enables us to draw a line. Survivors do not draw a line, so why should we draw a line? It is not an end to a circle of mistrust, but it might help. I wholly agree that culture change is what is needed, and if this helps change the culture of the Church then I will be very happy, but it will not do that by itself.

Jayne, your heartfelt point about not going to a lawyer and not speaking to the Church, that absolutely needs to be hardwired into the design of the scheme.

Martin, thank you very much for that suggestion. I think that is just the kind of model that we need to explore. I do not want to say anything else. I do want to say, actually, there will be many, many questions going forward and it is right, Synod, that you should ask difficult questions of this, but after the difficulties and challenges that we have been through, I do believe hand on heart this is something we should all get behind and support and do the very best that we can.

What am I supposed to say now, Chair? Do I now move the motion standing in my name? That is what I do then: I move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* It seems to me that it is appropriate that there should be a counted vote of the whole Synod. This is an important matter and, therefore, it will be a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 13.

*The motion was put and carried, 324 voting in favour, none against, with one recorded abstention.*

*The Chair:* The motion is clearly carried. That concludes this item of business and Evening Worship follows shortly.

## **EVENING WORSHIP**

*Br Philip Dulson (Religious Communities) & Sr Heather Crane (Religious Communities)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 8.20 pm

## **ITEM 15**

### **NATIONAL CHURCH GOVERNANCE (GS 2307)**

*The Chair:* Welcome back, Synod, for this evening's session. We come to Items 15 and 16, National Church Governance. Item 15 is a presentation and then Item 16 is a motion for debate. I should tell you that you will need to have GS 2307 handy and also the new Order Paper V, as we do have five amendments for that motion. I would like to invite Sir David Lidington, Chair of the Governance Review Project Board, to address Synod.

*The Rt Hon Sir David Lidington KCB CBE:* Madam Chair and members of Synod, thank you for the invitation to come and speak this evening. I have got to be frank, until I was asked to take on this role of chairing the Project Board I had never taken any particular interest in Church governance; I would just sit in the pew or chair or the choir stalls and trust that the system was working.

But the case for reform, the fact that it was not working particularly well, was set out starkly in the Governance Review Group's Report which was led by the Bishop of Leeds and debated in Synod last year: a confusing lack of clarity over who was responsible for decisions; some governance bodies failing to realise that they had a duty under Church and charity law to take decisions about a particular policy area; others asserting their right to take decisions without any legal authority; scrutiny by the Synod not working well, leading to deep dissatisfaction and frustration amongst Synod members; and, pervading everything, a lack of transparency with a plethora of committees, subcommittees, commissions and boards, a bureaucratic tangle in which it was almost impossible to take even urgent decisions clearly and quickly or to hold decision-takers to account and which soaked up hours of time on the part of hard-pressed Church staff.

For readers of Charles Dickens, it was all reminiscent of the stifling bureaucracy of The Circumlocution Office described in *Little Dorrit* with its motto, "How not to do it". This, let us never forget, has been the system of governance for the stewardship and spending of many millions of pounds of charitable funds and where a failure of governance risks profound damage to the reputation of the Church of England as anyone listening to this afternoon's proceedings will have realised. Things do need to change.

During the 17 months that the Project Board has been working on our proposals and consulting the widest possible range of organisations within the Church, it has become ever more clear to us as a Board that the challenge facing the Church is not only administrative but also cultural. Let me be frank, having never previously been involved in Church governance I have been personally shocked by the depth of resentment and mistrust that pervades relationships between different organisations, traditions and people within the Church family. Governance reform will not on its own deliver the cultural change needed, but it can help. Without governance reform, I believe it will be very hard to overcome mistrust.

At the heart of the Project Board's proposals is our belief that openness, accountability and clarity about who is responsible for which decisions is a vital element in bringing about the cultural change that we need. It is a cultural shift that needs to be embraced by and embedded in the entire leadership and executive of the Church, from the Archbishops to the most junior members of staff and including the members of General Synod. We need an approach that takes to heart the lesson of St John's Gospel that "the truth shall set you free", instead of a culture repeatedly described to us on the Project Board by Synod members as one of Machiavelli and powerplay.

As a Church, we need to be much clearer about where and by whom decisions are taken. For leadership is expressed, yes, through the Bishops but also here in Synod in the gathering together of clergy and laity in counsel with the Bishops. If the motion is carried tonight, there will need to be an intense and candid discussion between Synod and the Bishops about how strategic decisions for the Church are approved. We need to be clear about how a mandate would be given to the Church's national institutions so that they in turn can draw up detailed plans for approval and implementation.

Our recommendations involve reform of those national Church bodies to give each one a clear set of responsibilities: the Church Commissioners continuing to be responsible for the investment of the core of the Church's historic assets and determining the quantum of funds available at any time; the National Society, working under its Royal Charter with the Church in Wales and leading on engagement in schools; the Pensions Board, serving more than 40,000 people in its different pension schemes and continuing to support clergy with retirement housing; and a new operational delivery body, which means abolishing the Archbishops' Council and Church of England Central Services, dedicated to serving and supporting the wider Church through the provision of strategic funding, services, advice and guidance.

The new charity, Church of England National Services, would co-ordinate work undertaken at the national level, allocate resources in line with agreed priorities and ensure effective execution of agreed strategies. It would be responsible for developing policy and bringing such policy for approval through the House of Bishops and the General Synod. We also need to build into our structures better arrangements to ensure a diversity of skills, experience and background among the trustees and Committees of CENS and stronger institutional arrangements for the scrutiny by the Synod of executive decisions. Trustees will be personally responsible in law for the stewardship of very large sums of charitable expenditure and they will also, in practice, be important custodians of the Church's public reputation. Whether they come from the Synod or from outside, we need men and women with the experience, skills and time to take on this heavy burden of service.

At the same time, we have to avoid the dangers of group think. We need the members of boards and of committees in their backgrounds, their Church traditions, ethnicity, age and the balance between men and women to reflect the diversity of the Church and the nation. As Paul Boateng and the Racial Justice Commission have argued, good intentions are not enough. We propose a new specific legal duty to achieve greater diversity with an annual report to Synod so that you can judge progress in terms of action and not just words. Our proposal for a new synodical scrutiny committee crystallised late in our deliberations.

We believe, as set out in our Report, members of Synod could use their existing powers to better effect than hitherto and, indeed, were surprised to hear from some Synod members that they did not know about the powers already available. But such is the depth of mistrust and in the light of strong representations from the Board's Synodical Reference Group, we have concluded that there is also a need for a synodical scrutiny committee to look at decisions taken by trustees and senior staff and to make recommendations. Last night's deep dive will inform further work.

My personal view is that the scrutiny committee should meet outside the rhythm of General Synod meetings and use virtual and hybrid meetings as appropriate. It might also make sense for Synod to elect a panel of scrutiny committee members from which smaller teams could be drawn, each specialising in a specific aspect of Church policy in the way parliamentary select committees each scrutinise a particular topic or department. For this system to contribute to rebuilding trust, it will be essential for trustees and other leaders to welcome scrutiny as a natural part of good governance and, equally, members of that scrutiny committee will need to operate as critical friends and not go in for point scoring or just seeking for somebody to blame.

There are other potential reforms that fell outside the remit we were given. The Board listened to arguments for a review of parochial and diocesan governance before tackling the national institutions and heard calls for the operation of synodical governance to be reviewed across the different layers of the Church and we would support such reviews going ahead.

But it is the Board's view that we should not delay urgent and necessary reform of the national structures while we wait. Our paper is a compromise. I know that there will be some here who believe that we have been far too radical and others who would have liked us to go much further. Every member of the Project Board itself has compromised on one or more aspects of this Report to reach a common position. I would ask all sides not to let the best become the enemy of the good. We need to find a way to move forward together.

If you approve the motion tonight, there will follow an intense period of further consultation as detailed legislation is drafted and a transition plan drawn up. The Synod would play an important part in that work. Afterwards, when the legislation comes, the process will, as always, allow for line by line consideration and for amendments to be debated and decided. If tonight's decision is to proceed, I hope we will also move forward as swiftly as possible commensurate with proper scrutiny and debate. Our indicative timetable is just that, indicative. Others, particularly the Business Committee, will decide on the allocation of time, but my knowledge of numerous reorganisations, in local government, the health service, schools and other public services, tells me that every such shake-up is unsettling for staff and we owe it to our staff that, once decisions have been taken, we try to keep that period of professional and personal uncertainty as brief as possible. If the vote tonight is to reject the motion, then we shall continue with the status quo despite that being a system with which almost everybody is dissatisfied.

Madam Chair, I believe we need to find a way back to trusting one another. Our ambition and our intention should be through clarity of purpose, decision-taking and accountability to begin that work of rebuilding trust and to equip the national bodies of the Church of England to serve, support and enable the mission of the Church to our entire nation.

## ITEM 16

*The Chair:* Thank you very much, Sir David. We now move straight to Item 16 and I would like to ask the Bishop of Guildford to speak to Item 16. You have up to ten minutes, Bishop.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Friends, I am grateful, as I am sure we all are, for Sir David's admirably clear presentation of our proposals as our independent Chair and it has been extremely good having him as an independent Chair. I am really keen to get on with the debate as soon as we can and so I will not speak for very long. But just a few brief points in addition to Sir David's.

Back in February 2022, you may remember you asked us to bring draft legislation back to General Synod for further consideration. But, as we consulted very widely, including with each of the National Church Institutions, the Bishops, our Synodical Reference Group, members of the Faith and Order Commission and most of the principal NCI Committees, it soon became clear that a rush to legislation would be premature.



In particular, as you can imagine, we heard a very large number of ideas and perspectives, many of them mutually incompatible, which needed careful thought and sifting. As a result, we brought a further report to Synod in February of this year which some of you may remember led to a very unsatisfactory and truncated debate lasting about 25 minutes. We have returned with rather more detail five months later along with a number of revisions following further detailed consultation with our Synodical Reference Group, the Racial Justice Commission, the Bishops and others. Synod will have noted that we included a very ambitious timeline in Annex 2 of our paper and apologies are due to the Business Committee for a timeline which clumsily included a possible Synod in November 2024 over which our Project Board has absolutely no control at all - we are very sorry.

New Synod members may not be aware that if we pass the motion tonight, as I strongly urge that we do, that is far from the end of the story. As Sir David has reminded us, the next phase provides plenty of opportunities to shape the proposal further as legislation is brought forward to debate it and revise and go through line by line. We would really encourage those with an interest, including those who are raising amendments tonight, to get involved with that process. Meanwhile, the Project Board has been in something of a lose-lose situation when it comes to the level of detail in this Report with too little suggesting that there is something to hide and too much that everything is sorted and that all we need is to hand Synod a rubberstamp. I hope that it is felt that we have made roughly the right judgment call.

Speaking personally, I may have known a little more than Sir David about the governance structures of the NCIs before I picked up this baton from the Bishop of Leeds at the beginning of last year, but the past 18 months have been a steep learning curve into just how convoluted and complex those structures are, preventing us from being appropriately nimble in the face of our many missional challenges and resulting in regular duplication, frustration and lack of clarity and accountability with all the waste of time, money and relational capital that implies.

Bringing as much coherence as we possibly can to our governance at national level, as I believe these proposals at least begin to do, will not resolve all of our problems, of course, or fully address the issues of transparency and trust that run like a golden thread through our Report. But they will certainly help, provided that the next stage of the process, while improving on the proposals, as I am sure it will, does not undermine their basic coherence. I very much look forward to the debate and move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Thank you, Bishop. This item is now open for debate. The initial speech limit will be five minutes.

*The Very Revd Mandy Ford (Dean of Bristol):* Friends, we have heard much during this Synod about the need for greater accountability, transparency and trust within the

governance of the Church of England. I strongly support the proposals made in GS 2307 because I believe they are a step towards achieving those goals.

I have had the privilege of working inside the NCIs for a year as Interim Director of the National Ministry Team. During that time, I attended Committees and Subcommittees as well as meetings of Archbishops' Council and the College and House of Bishops. I observed the complexity of the institution, or, more properly, institutions and the tendency of papers to move up and down the system taking many weeks or even months to work through the decision-making structure.

In my experience, the life of the Church is well-served by capable and gifted colleagues in the NCIs who work extremely hard but, as the Report comments, the repetition of writing and reporting demanded by the current arrangements are not efficient use of their labour or their gifts. For those reasons, I particularly welcome the desire for clarity in where decisions regarding both strategy and operations should be made.

If I may, I would like to speak as one of the Deans of Cathedrals elected to this Synod. While the College of Deans is grateful for the recent engagement with the Project Team, we note that this has come somewhat late in the design process. Moving responsibility for cathedrals from a subcommittee of the Church Commissioners to the newly established CENS Board recognises the way in which cathedrals as a unique part of the ecology of the Church contribute to the national Vision and Strategy and to the mission of the whole. However, there is some concern that the particular contribution made by cathedrals may get lost unless there is a mechanism to ensure that the members of CENS understand that contribution.

Synod may need to be reminded that the historical resources of Bishops and cathedrals were transferred to the Church Commissioners on the understanding that their work would be supported in perpetuity. That arrangement recognised that the mission of our cathedrals extends beyond the local to the national and the international in their contribution to celebrating our heritage to theology in the public square and in service to civic and national life. In recent years, the voice of cathedrals has been exceptionally well articulated in the NCIs through our Third Estates Commissioners. However, I note some ambiguity on page 47 of GS 2307, which states that the work of the Third Estates Commissioner - that is responsibility for bishoprics and cathedrals - will transfer to CENS but is silent on the role of the Third Estates Commissioner.

For these reasons, I would like to make three suggestions to the Project Board. First, to ask that the Project Board included or involve someone who can ensure that the voice of cathedrals is heard in the development of this work going forward. Secondly, to invite the Project Board to articulate a vision for cathedrals within the CENS trust deed as a distinct and valued part of the ecology of the Church of England and to commit to the ongoing support of cathedrals, recognising the historic obligations of the Church Commissioners and the contribution made by cathedrals to mission. Thirdly, to ensure that a member of CENS and/or the Grants Committee is appointed who is specifically responsible for

representing the interests of bishoprics and cathedrals. Cathedrals make a significant contribution to the mission and life of the Church. Please ensure they are not forgotten in the process of revising the governance of the Church of England.

*The Bishop of Coventry (The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth):* The Report before us helpfully describes the Church more as an organism than an organisation. The Church is a living reality of relationships. It evolves and adapts to conditions of particular times and places. The Church is also, fundamentally, an institution. It is instituted by Christ as a community of witness to proclaim, demonstrate and embody through history the good news of the Kingdom of God that comes to the world in Jesus Christ. As a community of witness through history, the growing and adapting organism, the Church requires organisational systems that continually require adaptation to the time and place in which the Church finds itself.

The question to be asked of the Report is whether its organisational recommendations work with the character of the Church so that its calling can be more fully realised at this point in history? The situatedness of the Church of England in English history makes that task, as we see in the Report, especially complex: our long relationship with the state, the unique features of our synodical life, our stake in the nation's education, the gift of assets that we steward, the lessons we are learning on safeguarding.

I am grateful for a number of features of the Report. First, the way it navigates those historical realities, recognising that the Church of England will never be neat and entirely streamlined. Second, the responsibilities it places on the Bishops to fulfil their calling set out in the ordinal and thereby to do so together in Synod as the House of Bishops as they gather into a whole the community of churches that make up the Church of England. Third, the way the Report conceives CENS serving the Church as "a point of connection, one that joins the local and the national". That is the purpose of the organisation of the Church, points of connection that join, as Ephesians puts it, every ligament of the Church together, to nourish its character and release its calling. Perhaps here the Report touches on a concept that speaks profoundly about the life of the Church in all its forms: the Church itself as a point of connection that joins divine and human, local, national and global, past, present and future, Bishops, clergy and laity together as one community of witness to God's saving purposes in the world.

There is more work to do, of course, as we have heard, on how to exactly configure in our time and place this character and calling of the Church and how it can be most fully and functionally manifested through every level of its organisation and governance. Among much else, that will include, I suggest, heightening the work of faith, order and unity, structuring it carefully into the system and supporting it properly. But the Report lays down a sound foundation to move things forward and I am glad to support it.

*Lt Gen Robin Brims (Newcastle):* Thank you very much, Chair, for inviting me to make my maiden speech, even if it is quarter to 9 on a Sunday evening. But it will be short, I shall not keep you long. I support this Report and its recommendations and the paper

you have produced is really good, both in content and in tone. Of course, improvements can be made and we might do some this evening and I am sure a lot more will be made as we start to implement it. Above all, it gives us an opportunity to reset how we do things, to build trust and confidence in our governance. I have only been on Synod for less than two years but it is abundantly clear to me that we have got a lot of broken work to attend to.

Secondly, we need to meet the ambition and style of our conduct, as set out by the Archbishop of York on Friday. We have got to do that because, at the moment, we are showing a lack of respect to each other and it is very unattractive to anybody outside of this chamber. We owe it to the people in the middle pews whom we represent. If we approve these structures, the next steps will have to include how people are appointed or elected, or a combination of both, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability and then we have got to stick to it. On a detail point, I share - and I declare an interest as a member of the Newcastle Cathedral Trust - that the cathedrals have got to be fitted into this structure clearly. It probably is there, but it is not immediately clear to me and clear perhaps not to a dean, and so there is something we need to do there to put that right. Thank you for hearing me and I will crawl back under my stone now.

## **ITEM 58**

*The Chair:* Synod, I am minded to start dealing with the amendments that we have, given that we have five. Can I invite Mr Sam Margrave to speak to and move his amendment. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Synod, can I begin by thanking the staff and those who have given their time to develop this work. Synod, words matter. This motion in February read as, "Welcome". Words determine what this Synod is deciding. It is not to be pedantic but it is about good governance and us as a Synod being clear about what we are deciding today. In the past, we have confirmed something and been told it is coming back, only for it to happen without any further say or to be told we agreed it because we had previously said we had confirmed it when that was not quite what Synod meant.

My amendment is meant to be helpful and for good governance. If we are to confirm the recommendations they will be implemented immediately even while we wait for legislation, but there is still much to speak about. That is why I am asking for us to change the word to "welcome" and for us to decide whether to confirm within the legislative process. Many say the devil is in the detail, but our role in Synod in looking at legislation is finding God in the detail. We need to wait to confirm these recommendations when we get to the legislation which will come back to us. We can look at them part by part and that is why one word matters so much.

I am worried in particular about the concentration of power, the impact on Synod representation, further centralisation, Synod being side-lined and the Bishops becoming ever more powerful but unaccountable. However, there is a potential for at least many of

these things to be fixed with a fantastic motion such as that proposed by Rebecca Chapman at Item 62 or in the revision process to look at this line by line and recommendation by recommendation.

The question, therefore, that I put to you is are we confirming these recommendations today or are we, as I hope this amendment says, welcoming the recommendations and looking further in more detail in the future as we legislate for new governance over coming sessions?

Finally, I also want to say thank you for the speeches and I really hope that in future these new committees will welcome public participation as in the Localism Act for local authorities and that Synod members will have access to agendas, reports and minutes in a central place so we can have real overview and properly scrutinised decisions. I hope you can support my amendment. It is just one word, but it does mean an important step in saying what we are doing today. I move the amendment in my name.

*The Chair:* Can I now invite Bishop Andrew to respond to the amendment.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Thank you very much, Sam, and we welcome "welcome". We are very happy to accept this amendment. I think you made a good point. I also hope that some of the concerns that you have raised will be put to rest by the end of this evening, but we are very happy to accept your amendment.

*A Speaker:* Point of order. A motion for closure on Item 58.

*The Chair:* I would like to see if anybody wanted to speak, especially against the amendment. No, then I will accept that. We will have a vote by hands. I will put the motion for closure on Item 58 to the Synod.

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

*The Chair:* I am now putting Item 58 to the vote.

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

## **ITEM 59**

*The Chair:* We now move to the amendment at Item 59 and I would like to invite Ian Johnston to speak to his amendment. You have up to five minutes.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* We are all painfully aware of the trust deficit. We all have an obligation to address it. It should be front and centre of everything that we do. The cause I want to focus on this evening is oversight, of which we have heard an awful lot so far. Many new to Synod might not know that, 25 years ago, Turnbull's proposals - and I encourage you to read them, they are very interesting - looked very much like a CENS.

Procedural devices and Church politics resulted in our present structure. "Look on my Works ye Mighty", wrote Ozymandias, "and despair". Well, not because of their mightiness but because of their failures.

External oversight is excellent. If we look at the Church Commissioners and their management of our financial resources, you could not ask for better. Internal oversight is not. We do despair sometimes - we think of safeguarding - but this Governance Reviews gives us the opportunity to make very necessary changes. Reorganisation of our NCIs is long overdue. CENS will be a very powerful committee and it must have commensurate oversight. We cannot risk otherwise. If we do not get it, we should abandon CENS. I do not say this lightly. I am a member of the Reference Group. I have lived with this for 18 months. Just ask my wife. But that is my opinion. Oversight is critical. This oversight can be provided only by Synod. We must create it. We must pay for it and we should do so gratefully. But how?

GS 2307 has many ideas to counter the trust deficit but oversight is not one of them. The Board has handed it back to Synod to facilitate. It must not shrink from this responsibility. It must enable the widest conversation. The amendment seeks to allow statutory change. Why? Let me give an example. CENS will be a charity. Its trustees in extremis will be required by law to pursue its objectives as interpreted by its self-same trustees. We would need the means to ensure in the limit, which is what laws do, that CENS will accept oversight. It will not be just a charity. It will be a Church charity. This will require statutory change, a one line bill. End of example.

We need the widest conversation in looking how we provide oversight for CENS. As with all other matters, any actual proposal will come back to Synod for approval. Let us do what needs to be done. We have all the ingredients here to make an excellent cake. GS 2307 with its recognition of the key important issues, a select committee concept that can be adapted to our needs, and particularly I am thinking of the Chote Report here being an example of process. Finally, we have a Synod eager, I suggest, to have the right thing done in its name. I ask you to vote for the amendment in my name. But, finally - I have not finished - these three remain, faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love. In an organisation, Christian love transmutes to trust and vice versa and we need more of it.

This is a good project. I have worked on it for the last 18 months. It needs support. It has weaknesses, there is no question about it. The major weakness, in my view, is the lack of a constructive oversight proposal, but that can be done if we broaden the discussion out to include statutory change so that we are taking all bars off the conversation. I am convinced that we can come up with a good oversight proposal. We have got a good proposal on CENS. Yes, there are lots of other relatively small things to be dealing with.

*The Chair:* Could you move your amendment. You are out of time, I am afraid.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* I move my amendment, thank you.

*The Chair:* May I now invite Bishop Andrew to respond to this amendment.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* We are very grateful to Ian for the way that he has engaged with our work. As a member of the Synodical Reference Group he has regularly contributed to our discussions, especially in this area of Recommendation 3 and in light of the trust deficit that he regularly highlights, although I am not sure I have heard Ozymandias in that context before.

As Sir David indicated in his opening presentation, we have already set out the range of different ways in which oversight and scrutiny of the NCIs is currently undertaken by Synod and have suggested a realistic approach to developing those further, not least given the frequent observation in our Synodical Reference Group that people are just unaware of what is there already and there is a fair amount there already. Yet, members of Synod will also have noticed the recommendation in our Report that we do need an additional development spelt out in Sir David's initial remarks, perhaps designed along the lines of a House of Lords select committee where members with appropriate expertise can ask incisive questions in the spirit of courtesy, mutual accountability and learning for the future.

Having said that, I am afraid that I cannot accept Ian's amendment which risks being far too prescriptive at this point of the process when there is still so much for us to learn and discuss. In particular, I am really concerned that too heavy and inflexible a statutory approach at this stage could result in the normal business of both Synod and CENS being slowed down further whereas our proposals as a whole are seeking to balance a proper accountability on the one hand with a fleetness of foot on the other. However, I can promise Ian that his voice will be heard as we move to the more detailed consideration of this important area if you allow us to do that and of what will or will not need to be included in primary legislation. So I reject this amendment.

*The Chair:* As Bishop Andrew does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate on the amendment to continue, and for Zoom green ticks, please. Yes, there are more than 25 members standing. This item is now open for debate.

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

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* I want to thank those who have been involved in this work. I think you have done a lot of hard work, but I do not think we are quite there as the suggested amendment probably indicates. The purpose of the proposals, as we have heard, is about greater confidence and greater trust. Confidence and trust do not just happen and I am glad the Report highlights three determinants: architecture, leadership and behaviour. The paper mainly deals with architecture, touches on leadership but says very little about behaviour. It speaks about

principles but I do believe that we need to go further about behaviour, specifically transparency and kindness.

I support the replacement of the Archbishops' Council and the Church of England Central Services. I also support the appointment of the Board to include seven appointed members. However, my most significant concern is, in fact, with the synodical committee. We have been considering these proposals, as we have heard, since September 2019. The synodical committee appeared only within the last two weeks after the paper had been to the House of Bishops for agreement without that proposal in it. I support the idea of increased scrutiny but the proposals have not yet been properly considered. This committee, although mentioned, does not even appear in the proposed structural diagram on page 29. Synod is not a parliament. It does not do the same thing as our Parliament does. Synod means, "Together on the road". That is our ecclesial model. It would be a shame to adjust this model without further and fuller conversation and consideration on the nature of Synod and its relationship with the other governance structures.

I do not support this amendment, but I have grave concerns about the synodical committee in this proposal and I would ask the group to reconsider what it is seeking to do. The original review chaired by the Bishop of Leeds that came to Synod in 2019 recommended that we gave serious consideration to the reform of General Synod and the synodical governance generally. The Report considered that the lack of clarity about the role of General Synod and scrutiny needed to be resolved. Surely, this proposal belongs to a new piece of work which is more widely about Synod and not slipped in here.

We have heard today the cost of proposals that have not been fully thought through. I ask the group to reconsider this proposal, although I will not be supporting this amendment. A final warning. Ian has already mentioned the Turnbull Report of 1995. It had the same diagnosis and the same solution, but the proposals were dismantled during the synodical process. We have to support this but we also have to get it right.

*The Bishop of Blackburn (The Rt Revd Philip North):* One of the fascinating things about the Church of England is that literally every member of it thinks that power is held somewhere else. I have got it. If only. Synod members often get concerned about accountability, but for clear accountability you need to know where the power you want to hold accountable is located. In other words, you need clear and transparent structures that can be easily understood and, thus, scrutinised, and that is exactly what we lack, which is why we get cross and the culture feels so poor. All of which explains why I rejoice in so many of these proposals. It creates far clearer structures which will identify at least where some of the power lies and that will make for easier scrutiny.

However, I cannot accept this amendment precisely because it makes things more complicated again. It will introduce different levels of scrutiny for different NCIs and that is messy. It will create different standards and mechanisms by which different NCIs are held to account and that is messy. The joy of the Governance Review is that it makes things less messy. Every NCI in my mind should have a comprehensive, timely and



effective oversight, not just one. I think we do still have work to do on scrutiny. The proposed group is an important one. I am rather more positive about it, I think, than Bishop Sarah, but there is more to do on working out terms of reference and how it relates to the scrutiny function of Synod. But this amendment will not help us answer those questions. In fact, it will make all of this more complicated rather than less so that, in the spirit of this Review, we will resist it.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* I want to speak in support of what I think is a really crucial amendment at this stage in our synodical journey. I think it is quite interesting we have just heard from two Bishops who have power, or so many of us feel. As a member of the Archbishops' Council in its very early days, I was struck as someone who was completely new to the Church of England just how complex and messy and diverse those power structures were and, where there is that complexity and mess, ultimately what often happens is there is a small cabal who end up guiding everything. Synod, which is the large group, often became the group that we had to manage and get around and navigate and the House of Bishops saw themselves as the ones who ultimately had power.

It was very confusing as a young Archbishops' Council member. Synod was often seen to the side and yet we represent the grassroots. My question this afternoon about to whom was the Archbishops' Council accountable, to which we were ultimately told the Charity Commission, I was expecting the answer to be Synod because that is to whom everyone should be serving - the grassroots. Unless we put in something clearly statutory at this point, I am afraid I for one do not trust that we will end up with something that Synod can have confidence in, that the people in our pews can have confidence in and will stop us just relying on a small cabal of nameless people perhaps who seem to have all the power at the end of the day. Please, at this point, let us support Ian's important amendment.

*Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester):* Synod, we have talked a lot over the last couple of days about mistrust and whose fault it is that we all do not trust each other. I think we have got to be careful that Synod itself does not become a cause of the mistrust. I think sometimes we make it really easy in this chamber to think that it is always someone else's fault. Well, I think sometimes it is our fault. In the conversation that we have already had in this debate, we heard from Sir David and from Bishop Andrew about the consultation that took place before this motion that stands before us and about how that will continue.

I find it interesting that, instead, with this particular amendment, there is not any of that consultation. We are just discussing it in a very short period of time as part of this debate. I would actually ask that we resist this because I think it needs to go further. I think that we need to look at our synodical structures much more broadly and I think it needs to be separate from the governance because, you know what, it is our job to do that and it is not this Project Board's. I will ask that you oppose this amendment.

*The Chair:* I would like to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 59 has been sufficiently debated. I, therefore, put the motion for closure on Item 59.

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

*The Chair:* I now put the amendment at Item 59 to the vote.

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

## **ITEM 60**

*The Chair:* We now move to amendment 60 and so I would like to invite Mr Adrian Greenwood to speak to his amendment. You have up to five minutes

*Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark):* I am coming to you with this amendment on the back of three years' service on Archbishops' Council from 2017 to 2020 when I saw officers and trustees working extremely hard on their duties seeking to discharge them as faithfully as possible in the best interests of the charity which is their fiduciary duty. I also observed a number of dislocations, a number of areas of duplication, all set out in the analysis which Sir David presented at the beginning so lucidly and which are there in GS 2307. I am speaking here to support the main motion going through. The analysis is correct, the work needs to be done and I hope that Synod will allow this to go forward.

At the risk of being accused of salami slicing and doing a Turnbull, or what happened to Turnbull, I am wanting to suggest one relatively minor change. In so doing, I want to thank the Project Board led by Sir David and Bishop Andrew and I want to thank the supporting staff team who have worked so hard and with great patience and perseverance to bring us to this point tonight. They are all sitting there: Stephanie, Harvey, Neela and Maria. We need to thank them because they have spent hours on this stuff for our benefit.

The point I am making is anticipating, that CENS will be set up, it will be reduced from 19 to 15. I am concerned that the loss of four places is four elected places from this Synod. I do think that that balance needs to be corrected and my amendment seeks to do that. The arguments for this are drawn, in fact, from page 38 of the Archbishops' Council Report which we will attend to tomorrow, but it says this, "The Council is not a body of the General Synod", I think that is quite important to understand, "but a statutory body established under National Church Institutions Measure". But the close relationship between the Council and the Synod, not least because the Council and the committees undertake a significant amount of work on behalf of Synod and reports to Synod on their other tasks, is this issue of connection between the Synod and the CENS Board that I am addressing.

We have expressed views on establishing a new scrutiny body. That may come back in a different form. I am suggesting there is a very simple way of dealing with this, which is to ensure that a majority of the new CENS Board is either appointed or elected from members of this house, not counting the Archbishops who are *ex officio*. Now there is

still a balance there between election and appointment. I am not telling the Project Board how to do that. That will come back in due course. It will go through revision and all that stuff and so there is plenty of opportunity to get the balance right. But I would like you to support this amendment just to make sure that we emphasise the strong connection that does exist between Synod and the Archbishops' Council and its successor body. I move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Can I invite Bishop Andrew to respond.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Thank you very much, Adrian. We are really grateful again to you for your excellent work on the Synod Reference Group and thank you very much for this amendment. The Project Board has looked at it. We are very happy to accept this amendment. It accepts the idea of six elected and six appointed members of CENS but the implication of the amendment, as you have probably picked up, is that at least one of those appointed members should already be an elected member of General Synod. Given the breadth of skills and experience within this chamber, we do not think that that is a restriction on the CENS membership and are very happy to go with that.

In shaping the needs of a board to serve and support the mission of the Church, it is clear that individual members of that board will require specific skills and experience. As an example, and perhaps in initial response to Mandy's point right at the beginning of our debate, we can immediately think of how a member might be appointed, say, to champion the vital mission and ministry of our cathedrals within the trustee body and so we are very happy to accept this amendment.

*A Speaker:* Point of order. Will you accept a motion for closure on this item?

*The Chair:* I would not. I would prefer to see if anybody would like to speak first. This amendment is open for debate.

*The Revd Canon David Bruce Bryant-Scott (Europe):* I am sorry - I am a Canadian, you may know that now - I keep on comparing things to my 15 years on the General Synod there. I would just note that a comparable body to the proposed CENS was our Council of General Synod and it had initially - I think they changed it - 30 members, all of whom were elected from General Synod. I speak in favour of this amendment. Regardless of how we conceive through statutes and so forth the relationships of General Synod and the proposed CENS, there has to be a degree of accountability and, perhaps more importantly, there has to be ownership of the actions of this new Church of England National Services body by this body. Representation does not guarantee that that will happen but it certainly goes an awful long way.

I just want to affirm my excitement over the main motion and the proposals that are contained in GS 2307. I am an old ecclesiastical bureaucrat and, after six hours of what was the eight hour debate that we had on LLF, a small group of us gathered in Church

House to hear the proposals such as they existed in February and, you know, simpler, more effective, assisting the mission of the Church, transparent: what is not to like?

*The Chair:* I would just remind you that you have three minutes.

*The Revd Ross Meikle (Oxford):* I think I am resisting the amendment because of accountability. I think if General Synod is being called to hold the Church of England national systems to account, then if we are the majority on one of those boards, are we kind of scuppering ourselves in some kind of way? I had not really thought much more beyond that really. Apart from as well yes, we have skills within this Synod but how do they end up being on that group? How are they chosen? Synod can feel like a battlefield between two opposing sides where people are trying to get someone from their team on to the right board. I do not know if that is what we ought to be. I would much rather that we were able to hold the Church to account, and I suppose I am concerned that we lose the ability to hold ourselves as a good accountable body if we are the ones who are the majority on that Council. So, I think I want to resist, thank you.

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Point of order on a motion for closure.

*The Chair:* I would be minded to test the mind of Synod. I wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 60 to has been sufficiently debated.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. We now move to vote on the amendment. This is amendment 60.

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

*The Chair:* That amendment is carried.

## **ITEM 61**

*The Chair:* I would like to invite Mr Clive Billenness to move his amendment. You have up to five minutes.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* If you dig deep inside the document, which you have to for my amendment then take yourself to page 51 - do not bother I will tell you about it - there are a couple of paragraphs in which the most exciting part of the whole document appears, which is the appointment of the CENS Audit and Risk Committee. Who laughed? At the moment, as the paper stands, the members of that Committee will be appointed, if you follow down to paragraph 139, by the CENS Governance and Nominations Committee.

We are synodically governed and I submit that it is right that the Synod is represented on this Committee as it is now on the Archbishops' Council Audit Committee. However, in my world I like to say better elected than selected, so I ask to maintain the Synod's right to choose its representatives there, and this is what my proposed amendment will achieve. I am asking for two representatives to enable us potentially to have one member of each House, of Clergy and Laity, and also to allow at least one person hopefully to be present at each meeting. Please note I make no proposal for a percentage of total membership because we may be two among ten or two among 20. It does not matter. We wish to be there to serve and not to dominate.

You have heard this afternoon about the range of governance and risk issues which confront any large and complex organisation like the Church of England and CENS will be bigger. Its creation will be complex and it will need a lot of help and support in getting its structures right. I hope you will ensure that your elected representatives can play a full part in the scrutiny of our Church and allow us to serve you.

I beg to move the amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Can I invite Bishop Andrew to respond?

*The Bishop of Truro (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen):* Thank you very much to Clive Billenness for this one. We are very happy to accept this. This is a really good example of something I said at the beginning about how much detail to put in the Report at this stage and so on. It seems absolutely clear that CENS will need a properly functioning Audit and Risk Committee, and absolutely clear that at least two elected members of General Synod should be on it. We have absolutely no problem with this at all. Perhaps it is good to just fill in a bit more colour of this part of the process.

In supporting this amendment, I would also like to say of course there will be other committees which will be answerable to CENS and which will also have elected membership. It is just we have chosen not to put too much colour in, not least so that the basic structural design can continue to be developed.

Just one other thing, we do have elected members of General Synod on our Audit Committee at the moment. It is a very good way of holding us to account and yet very often we do not have elections for those roles. We find it difficult to get people to stand. People do stand and they get on to them, but I think this is an area where we could challenge one another to take more interest in this aspect of the Synod's oversight and scrutiny of what we do.

*The Chair:* Thank you. This amendment is open for debate. I see no one standing. I move straight to a vote.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. Thank you.

## **ITEM 62**

*The Chair:* We now move to amendment 62. I would like to invite Mrs Rebecca Chapman to come and move her amendment.

*Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark):* I hope I do not have Ian's technical difficulties, Synod, but forgive me if I go very fast as I feel very, very nervous. I have not done this before.

Synod, what do you think our national Church structures should look like for the next, say, 50 years? To quote the Spice Girls - it is an evening - "Tell me what you want; what you really, really want."

From all that we have heard this afternoon we are acutely aware right now of the influence, for good or for bad, that our national Church and its governance structures have on the life and on the reputation of our Church. How we structure our governance really, really matters. Thank you for being here for this debate, for caring about our governance. I am aware mine is the last amendment, so thank you for hanging on in there for the whole thing.

For some people, I know, the 68-page Report before us may have felt like a lot. I am so pleased we have this Report before us. There is so much that is good in it. A huge amount of work and time has gone into this Report, and much of it is excellent. I am really grateful for the work done by the staff and the Project Board, the reference group and especially for the focus on trust that we see here in this Report.

I absolutely agree with Sir David that things do need to change. We cannot keep the bureaucratic tangle in place. After today perhaps it feels we have never needed change more, but we need the right change, Synod. We have in the papers before us 17 recommendations. They are quite hefty. We are being asked to send them through here in a single vote. Much of it is good. There are positive proposals for a new scrutiny committee so that our committees will have more clarity about their roles and their responsibilities. Some of us today might be asking questions about the key role of our Archbishops at the centre of the governance, especially when so many demands are placed on their time - their precious time - elsewhere.

There are other recommendations I am a bit less confident about. The unknowns around the new Nominations Committee. There is much here that is unknown. There is still a real lack of clarity about accountability, as Jayne mentioned earlier.

Synod, I want us to openly and transparently debate the pros and cons of each recommendation, to be intentional about this and to understand, each of us, what we are

choosing for the future of our Church so that we can minimise unexpected or unintended consequences.

For me, this is about trust, it is about tweaks, and it is about our time. On trust, Synod, we have heard again and again about the issue of trust. You would almost get bored of it if it was not so terribly important. Some people claim we are being managed. The Report itself recommends a radical response to the levels of mistrust that currently exist.

Given that, I think these proposals about the future of our national Church need more than a nod this evening. They deserve our time and our attention. Synod should be able to scrutinise them each in turn, and I am really grateful for the extensive consultation that has been made reference to this evening, but I want us to make a clear choice on each aspect before we actually approve legislation. As Sir David himself said earlier, good intentions and words are not enough now given the levels of mistrust.

*The Chair:* Could you move your amendment now?

*Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark):* I am sorry. We have been told there is not enough time for this. I think it is important enough that we should make time. Bishop Sarah said yesterday it is important to do things well and not just fast.

*The Chair:* Could you move your amendment?

*Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark):* Sorry, I do move my amendment.

*The Chair:* Thank you. Bishop Andrew, would you like to respond?

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* I am very grateful to Rebecca for the care that she has given to reading and digesting our Report and for her enthusiasm for much of its contents, but I really would wish to resist this amendment very strongly, and encourage Synod to do so.

That is not to say that our proposals are perfect but the process of refining the legislation to support change will itself enable detailed and careful consideration with adequate time for those conversations to take place. Indeed, I would encourage Rebecca to get involved with that stage of the process to ensure that her and others' concerns are heard and reflected in the draft legislation. Were Synod to accept this amendment there would be inevitable delay, certainly as far as to next November, and additional costs, both financially and in terms of staff morale. I think we need to listen to what Sir David said at the beginning, that spinning a process out endlessly is really not helpful at all. There has been, as has been recognised, huge consultation both in the initial paper in the group chaired by the Bishop of Leeds and in the last 18 months Stephanie and Harvey and I and one or two others have been charging round all kinds of different groups and getting different perspectives which have really fed into this. There is a real danger of salami slicing here as well.

There is absolutely no question but that these proposals could be improved on and the legislative process, if you allow it to get that far, will really do that. The idea that we vote on one proposal after another at this stage or in November would really be disastrous. The danger is we just pull apart something which is quite coherent in itself rather than moving forward. We know from previous synodical process, I am old enough to remember not quite the Turnbull Report but certainly the Hind Report on theological education, that is what happened to that. It became really by the end quite a dog's dinner, and I sometimes think if we are going to have a dog's dinner, better the dog's dinner that you know than a dog's dinner that you do not.

Also, this process already has taken three years on our overoptimistic timeline. It is likely to take another three years with the legislative process, and that is quite optimistic. The idea of putting it back with not a lot to do between now and November for those who are working on it I think would be a really bad idea.

Synod, if you are in support of most of what is in here, obviously recognising that there is still a lot of work to be done in which synodical involvement will be very much there, I just urge you not to slow things down at this stage. By the end of this process, for those who are nuanced in it, Synod, you may not know this, we will go through it clause by clause not just proposal by proposal but clause by clause at that stage of the legislative process.

*The Chair:* As Bishop Andrew has resisted the amendment, do I see 25 members standing and green ticks on Zoom? I do see 25 members standing. This amendment is now open for debate.

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

*Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter):* I think with the current agendas that we have had in the previous few years of Synod there has not been a huge amount of oxygen in the room for governance and the scale of it. I am just reminded of how much talk there was before Synod got going with LLF and some of our safeguarding issues, and how all that chatter disappeared and how lightly attended February's session was. I have spoken to several members this weekend who would be struggling to grasp all of the proposals. Then I reflect upon the fact that we talked today about improving accountability, about Synod having teeth, and about us to be urged to be a doing and not just a talking body. I would strongly support what Rebecca is proposing because I think it is about time we put our money where our mouth is when it comes to accountability.

*Mr Roy Faulkner (Leicester):* I detect a hint in Rebecca's comments about the fact that she is concerned that we keep the speed of things going. I think there is a tendency with all of this to suggest that we could come back again in November and February and nothing really more would have taken place to improve things. I want to add a little bit to that, in the sense that I think a lot of us feel that there have been gaps in what is being



proposed in this sort of thing, particularly in the area of diocesan administration and control.

I would very much like to carry on along the lines that Sir David mentioned in his introductory speech. On page 6, paragraph 9, there is some disappointment that diocesan and synodical governance were not considered. Again, page 10, conclusion 24 suggests there should be further diocesan reviews. So, can I ask Synod to act on these recommendations by supporting my Private Member's Motion entitled "Reform of Diocesan Working Practices" ---

*The Chair:* This is not on topic.

*Mr Roy Faulkner (Leicester):* --- with actions in it to become a working group for diocesan reform at the earliest possible opportunity.

*The Chair:* Sorry, I am going to have to stop you, thank you.

I do now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 62 has been sufficiently debated.

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

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Point of order. Can we have a count of the whole Synod, please? Sorry I meant on the amendment, sorry, my fault.

*The Chair:* If I put my question first: I would now like to put amendment 62 to the vote.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Point of order. Might we have a count of the whole Synod, please?

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do.

*The motion was put and lost, 83 voting in favour, 260 against, with 15 abstentions.*

We now return to the main motion as amended by 58, 60 and 61.

*The Bishop of Leeds (The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines):* I just want to make one or two points about this. I totally support the Report and the motion before us, and thank the group for the work that they have done, but a number of things have been said that I think we need to be realistic about. I was around because I am much older than you are, Andrew, through the Turnbull debates, and it died the death of a thousand qualifications because the vested interests all tried to defend their bit. That is why we have what we have now, which we knew at the time was not going to be adequate.

If we are going to do this, we have to have a degree of courage. Nine years ago when we created the Diocese of Leeds we knew that loads of questions were not going to be

answered. We knew that some of this stuff was a bit bonkers and there was lots we did not know, but at some point in this Church you have to have the courage to change, and if we will not do it ourselves, even in radical ways, we should not expect anyone else to take us seriously.

The Bishop of London referred to culture. It seems to me we need a few definitions here and I thought of it this afternoon in relation to the word "independence". I think people use it to mean different things, and so a definition would help. My definition of culture which I just scribbled down while sitting down there is "the collective behaviours that are derived from decisions made according to criteria that are rooted in particular values". That is what culture is. It is not some amorphous mass of stuff. It is not something that descends on you. It is not the pool you swim in. It is the decisions that we make and the way we choose to behave. That is why if we want to talk about trust - and Ian Paul mentioned this yesterday - we choose to trust. I have clergy who let me down all the time, I am very familiar with the CDM, but I still choose to trust the clergy. Trust is a choice. It develops as we do the work together. It is not a product or a commodity that can simply be engineered before we start the real work.

Finally, I have three cathedrals and I have a trinity of deans who all would endorse what was said earlier about cathedrals. That is part of the iterative process that this Report has set up. Let us have the courage to go ahead.

*Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds):* Change is always first experienced as loss. I came across that phrase when I was doing my Masters in change management. That is how sad I am.

I declare an interest: I have been on the reference group only for a year and it has been hell. There have been times when the discussions have been difficult, but I fully support this motion. There have been times when we have had vested interests, protectionism and fear. Just a few months ago I would have voted against this motion. The improvements, even in the past weeks, have been significant. There has been a huge amount of work, so thank you, Stephanie and Harvey - sorry I was so rude to you - it has been phenomenal. I am delighted with the amendments that have been passed and those which have been lost.

This Report faces head on some of the issues that prevent change. Trust - we are finally admitting it. Scrutiny-- not yet defined but it is there, the door is open. I do not think this Report is brave enough. I want a fully appointed board with no *ex officio* members not even Archbishops - sorry, your Grace. I am prepared to give way and not die in that ditch because what we have in front of us now is a significant improvement on what we were looking at six months ago. Please vote for this. Let us take it forward. We have got time to sort it out clause by clause if there are things we do not like. Change is always first experienced as loss but sometimes change is just the opportunity we need.

*The Chair* imposed a two minute speech limit.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I want to express my profound gratitude to Bishop Andrew and the team for all the work they have done. It was to my profound relief that that final amendment was lost. When I was persuaded three years ago to stay on for the final two years I am legally permitted to do, it was in the expectation that this work would be completed and enacted as I left, and we are already two years away from it. Meanwhile, I have continued taking papers to different committees three, four and even five times for debate. I have sat on up to 14 boards at a maximum level. We just need simplification.

On this piece about trust, some of you were here nine years ago when I spoke in the women bishops debate. Thirty two years ago when I lost my eyesight I had three things. I had my wonderful wife Yvonne, who stays with me; I had faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that stays with me more than ever; and I had trust in my fellow humans. I say to my dear friends, very rarely in that last 32 years has that trust ever proved to be misplaced. We are wonderful people. We love each other. We love Christ. Let us trust each other and walk together.

*The Revd Sonia Barron (Lincoln):* "To serve, support, encourage and enable the whole work of the Church across the nation" is the strapline for this paper. I want to emphasise and welcome this motion. I support it with its amendments.

As a black woman in our Church, I have to say that it has not felt that the whole work of the Church has been as inclusive as it could be. I know there are others who may feel the same for other reasons of difference, so I stand to speak to welcome the Diversity Charter recommended in paragraph 94. The first sentence of the second paragraph of the paper says, "This proposal seeks to give greater confidence and build trust in the National Church's decision-making processes". Veronica Hope Hailey, who has done a lot of work in the area of trust, speaks about the importance of the breach for the individual that has to be repaired before trust can be restored.

There are many people in the chamber here today, as we have heard from the previous speeches and questions in other sessions, who understand the importance of this. In the *Lament to Action* Report of April 2021 it says, "Our mandate flows not from identity politics but from our identity in Christ". This is our primary identity..." In the same Report, we have talked about culture change and I really do believe that this motion will give us that. The Report also says we have damaged the image of God, we have damaged the Church and, most of all, we have damaged those we have victimised, unconsciously very often.

The breach needs to be repaired and I believe, and hope, that the Diversity Charter, if it is not just treated as window dressing, might go some way towards repairing that breach. As a Church we have said and written many words about diversity in all its forms, including racial justice, and a key driver for the Taskforce Report was to see action instead of more words.

*The Chair:* I would like to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 16 has been debated sufficiently.

*A Speaker:* Point of order. (Inaudible)

*The Chair:* That is not actually a point of order. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 16.

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

*The Chair:* That is carried. We now move to Bishop Andrew to respond to the debate, please. You have five minutes.

*The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson):* Madam Chair, Synod members, thank you so much for a really helpful and good-natured debate. Thank you very much to those who have taken the trouble to read the Report and to move amendments. I think those have each resulted in some really fruitful conversations. Thank you for some really helpful theological input from a number of people: from Bishop Christopher Cocksworth, and from Bishop Nick. Trust is a choice. It is really important for us to reflect on that. John Spence gave an immensely inspiring contribution on trust. "Change is just the opportunity we need", that is another phrase that will stick in my memory from this debate. Thank you very much for those.

Thank you for the varying experience that has been brought to bear on this debate. Mandy Ford's experience of working with the NCIs and as a cathedral dean, that joint experience is really, really helpful in Mandy's contribution, and, Mandy, we do recognise we need to do more work on the cathedral side, and we look forward to continuing to discuss that with you and the Deans.

Thank you very much to Robin Brims for giving a great maiden speech and speaking about his experiences as a new boy in General Synod and some of the issues that he has faced, and again emphasising that issue of trust that has come up very regularly.

And to David Bryant-Scott for comparing the Synod here with the Synod of the Church of Canada.

Thank you even to those who are critical of aspects of the Report, which I totally understand, and we can certainly make it better, but those who are critical of certain aspects have also spoken very positively about a lot of what we have sought to do, and that is brilliant and really helpful.

Thank you very much for a number of excellent suggestions that have come up. Obviously, as you know, this work is balancing a whole number of different aspects, and balancing power among different aspects of Church life. We are very conscious of Bishop Nick's challenge towards the end of our debate that we do not want it simply to die by 100

amendments. At the same time, we do recognise that it is, in my view and I hope your view, a good Report that can become better, and the legislative process will really help that.

There were lots of other really helpful contributions. I probably cannot name many more, but thank you very much. Particularly towards the end, Stephen Hogg and how does this actually relate, how has the reference group contributed and Stephen's own reflections, which I think others would share that there have been a lot of frustrations along the way for those who have worked on this work, and yet we have found a way through.

I want to pay tribute, as Adrian Greenwood did so helpfully in his amendment, especially to two people behind me, to Steph and Harvey, who have done absolutely magnificent work and those who work with them. I also pay tribute to Sir David Lidington. You have seen him in action tonight and just how helpful a perspective he brings as someone who is certainly independent of the governance of the Church. That has been immensely helpful. At one stage it was thought that I should be chairing this but then someone said, "But you have got a vested interest," and I had to say, "Yes, I suppose I have got a vested interest". We have all got vested interests in this and I think it is really helpful to have that example of bringing in a really experienced person to be an independent Chair of that body. We have hugely valued your wisdom, David, thank you very much indeed.

I want to say thank you, too, to the Project Board, who have worked pretty hard, and to the Synod Reference Group, we have been meeting most months for the last year and a half, we have been working hard as well. This merry-go-round of different committees and groups that Steph and Harvey have been working round, each of which have engaged in different ways with this process, we are really very grateful to the hundreds of people who have contributed one way or another.

Synod, a chastening day like today has sharpened awareness of the challenges that surround our existing governance and the urgent need for greater transparency and clarity to help rebuild trust, so that safely, and together, we can release the full energy, creativity and fruitfulness of the Body of Christ in parishes across our nation. It is clear that we are going to need to do more work to scrutiny, and we absolutely pick up some of the concerns around that, especially the relatively late way in which that has been introduced in this particular form into our Report. We acknowledge that and I am sure there is more work to be done on that.

These proposals as a whole are not perfect. Quite a number of them, as we have said, have not been fully coloured in yet, and even over the past hour and a bit we have heard many suggestions which I think could further improve them. I would ask you please to approve that this work goes through to the next legislative phase. As Sir David mentioned in his opening speech, let us not allow the best to become the enemy of the good, but, rather, give us the green light tonight so that this vital work can continue to be refined. Did I get that the wrong way round? I did, didn't I? I have got a red light. I will shut up. Please vote for it.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 16 to the vote.

*The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield):* Point of order. Please may we have a counted vote of the whole Synod?

*The Chair:* Yes. Just to remind Synod we are voting on Item 16 as amended.

*The motion was put and carried, 328 voting in favour, 17 against, with 10 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* Therefore this motion is carried. Thank you, Synod.

Before I ask Archbishop Stephen to give us a blessing, I would like to let you know that there is a service of Compline in the Berwick Saul Building at 10.10 pm.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell)* dismissed the Synod with a blessing

## **Full Synod: Fourth Day Monday 10 July 2023**

### **WORSHIP**

*The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

THE CHAIR *The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 9.17 am

*The Chair:* Good morning, Synod. Before we begin Item 17 and our business this morning, I am going to invite Robert Hammond, the Chair of the Business Committee, to come and address you.

### **VARIATION OF BUSINESS**

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* Under Standing Order Item 9, I would like to propose a variation in the order of business. The Business Committee met this morning and because we have two items of important legislative business that we have not been able to take so far to fit in to our time, I would like to propose some reordering of this morning's business.

After Item 24, the last of the budget and allocation items, we would like to take Item 25, which is the farewell to John Spence. Then I propose that we take those amendments to the Standing Orders that were proposed by the Standing Order Committee at the last group of sessions, and those are, on our Order Paper, Items 33, 35 and 36. I then

propose that we take the Faculty Jurisdiction Amendment Rules, Items 507A, 513, 514 ad 507B, and then I propose that we bring the Electronic Service Report item that we could not take on Friday afternoon, that is Item 501.

Then we will return to any remaining items under the Standing Order item. That is the proposals for the change of business that I am proposing for this morning. We still need to deal with the Safeguarding Code of Practice and I propose that we bring that to tomorrow morning's business.

We have put together, I think, a slide that makes that clear, that we may be able to show in here, I am not sure, but hopefully downstairs on the screens, so you can at least have some idea of where our thinking is going and what we have proposed.

*The Chair:* That has my consent. Does it have the consent of Synod. Those in favour, please show.

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

## **ITEM 17**

### **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT (GS 2308)**

*The Chair:* So, we now come to Item 17. It is worth mentioning to you that we have timed business at 10 am and there is a following motion to take before then with an amendment also, so we are up against it this morning. For Item 17 members will need GS 2308 for this item. Please also note that there is a financial comment on this item, so please do look at Notice Paper 11, paragraph 2, for that. I would like to invite Reverend Charlotte Cook, Canon Jamie Harrison and Maureen Cole to come and begin this item with a presentation.

*The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio):* Chair, members of Synod, it is our pleasure to present the Council's Annual Report for 2022. This is our first annual report ordered under the Council's new objectives, to support the Vision and Strategy for the Church in the 2020s. These seven objectives are on page 7 of the report as well as on the screen. I summarise them as focus on a younger Church, a more diverse Church, revitalising parishes, new Christian communities, missionary disciples, safety and dignity and sustainability.

During the year we increased our focus on supporting work on becoming a younger Church, recognising our goal to double the number of children and young active disciples by 2030. We began the practice of focusing the first main item of business of each of our meetings on children and young people. To mirror that, we will now have a video on the subject.

*(Video played)*

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* I want to pick up a few key themes for our responses as a Council. First of all, dioceses. A key part of what the Council does is to provide funding through diocesan support, to support parish mission and ministry as well as growth and transformation projects. So, in 2022, this included funding streams planned for the triennium of 2020 to 2022, continuing with the Lowest Income Communities Funding supporting that mission and ministry in at least 28 of our least resourced dioceses. Funding to support curacy, new curacy posts in 25 dioceses. Transformation funding, STF, for 25 dioceses. And yet we are very conscious of the pressures in the system and how we can respond to those over these last couple of years.

We are so grateful to the Church Commissioners for providing funding for grants as well as their flexibility in agreeing to change their spending plans, to allow the national Church to fund certain things. In particular, new grants, £15 million for energy costs support, to help PCCs and TEIs with the challenge of increased energy costs. £3 million of ministry hardship funding to supplement diocesan discretionary funds, helping clergy and other ministers with the challenge with the cost of living. We granted £4 million to 19 dioceses to help funds of first responsibility, usually incumbencies for those completing their curacies and trying to make sure that none of our ordinands do not have a curacy to go to.

And then looking forward, looking to the future. It is great to work so closely between the Council and the Church Commissioners, a great partnership together, and together we have been able to finalise the spending plans for 2023 to 2025, and then even beyond that for a further six years. This national funding aims to enable the bold outcomes and strategic priorities of the Church's Vision and Strategy, which has been so well laid out for us in the Synod, to look beyond the 2020s to see how our local communities can have investment in their local ministries, so there is significant support in transition to net zero carbon emissions, the work on racial justice and how so pleased are we that we have Guy Hewitt now as our first Racial Justice Director, and also to help parishes with their management of buildings.

So, what about other national Church functions? Well, particularly, and in the light of yesterday's discussions and conversations and other things, safeguarding. The National Safeguarding Team continues to work on delivering the key and important IICSA recommendations. We have seen some significant progress in the last year on delivering the National Safeguarding Case Management system, and, by the end of 2022, 13 dioceses and the national team were using this system, which we aim to roll out to other dioceses this year and next. We have now very clear and helpful information sharing agreements with the Church in Wales and the national police.

Following a successful pilot, we worked with partner Churches to secure a new provider for Safe Spaces. I am one of the trustees from the Church of England on the board there, and that is really helpful work, to offer a free and independent service for anyone who has experienced abuse in relation to the Church of England, the Church in Wales and the



Catholic Church for England and Wales. So the NST, the National Safeguarding Team, continues to deliver enhanced safeguarding training and guidance, as we seek to promote the highest standards of safeguarding across the whole Church.

But, although there has been some progress, we know there is much more to do. And again, as we reflected yesterday, we need to listen very carefully to victims and survivors who are such a key stakeholder in all that we choose to do. The NST are developing a set of national standards to improve and measure safeguarding practice across the Church and involving stakeholders in that.

So, what other key issues in safeguarding can we note? Well, one particular has been, and we talked about it yesterday, the National Redress Scheme, and how good to see the direction of that and the support the Synod was able to give it. And we need to continue to commission independent organisations or an organisation to conduct safeguarding audits of dioceses, cathedrals and palaces, to redo those audits and to plan again, as we said yesterday, how we work on the independent oversight of the safeguarding of the Church of England, and also to implement the regional training model which came out of the IICSA recommendations.

I suppose before I finish, I just need to note what we did discuss yesterday in relation to the ISB and a review process. As the Archbishop of York announced yesterday, the Council has clearly agreed and wants to agree to an independent review of the events leading up to the formation of the ISB and the consequent situation with the ISB and its closure at this stage. We want to focus on a rapid response to that, again in partnership with stakeholders, to come back to the Synod in November.

This is quite different from the proposal in the following motion, which suggests a different approach, one which will take quite a lot longer and which involves the whole Church, and I might reflect in the debate, if I am called, around how that fits in with IICSA's review of what we have been doing, and also the sort of pace that we need to follow. I am very grateful for your attention to this key issue of safeguarding.

*The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio):* As the Archbishops state in their foreword to the Report, 2022 was in many ways a historic year for the Church, the nation and the world. We were privileged to provide materials to help the Church celebrate our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June and to commemorate her life of service following her death only three months later.

Before the end of the year, detailed planning for King Charles' Coronation service began, led by our Archbishops and their staff. The Council staff supported the Lambeth Conference, which brought together Bishops representing 165 nations, to pray, share challenges and deepen relationships. One of the challenges raised was climate change, which is already impacting some parts of the Anglican Communion. During the year, the Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030 was published, providing detailed guidance and

practical steps to encourage cathedrals, churches, schools and TEIs to make further changes to their day-to-day activities to reduce carbon emissions.

I could say much more about the wide variety of Council activities, such as the Growing Faith initiative, developed by the education team and national society, to develop better relationships between schools, churches and households to better support our young people to grow in faith; or the development of our social impact investment portfolio, which invested in a fund helping social sector organisations provide homes and support for vulnerable people, and the investment in Charity Bank, which provides loans to charities and social enterprises working to benefit people, communities and the environment; or of the continued provision of a weekly online service reaching many who are unable to attend the service in person.

We are privileged to support all parts of the Church of England in following all in the calling to worship God and share the good news. But I want to leave adequate time for your questions, which Jamie, Maureen and I will be glad to respond to.

Just before I conclude, I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their support and engagement in the work the Council does on behalf of the Church, and finally, on behalf of us all, I thank William and the staff for all their support, advice and hard work in support of the Council, this Synod and the wider Church.

*The Chair:* Members are now invited to ask questions. As usual, I will take these in groups of three. So, if you wish to indicate you have a question, please do so.

*The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TEIs):* The Report, on page 36, notes that the reserves policy for the training for ministry fund should be at least £1.4 million. That reserve fund currently holds £2.7 million, up from £2.5 million at the end of 2021, so this is all money that Synod has voted towards training of ordinands, and it something that hopefully, if I am called later, I would like to say a bit more about in relation to the 2024 budget.

*The Chair:* Question please.

*The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TEIs):* So, the question is what consideration has the Council given to the level of reserves in relation to ensuring that enough funding is reaching the TEIs which need it for that training?

*The Chair:* A reminder to keep questions succinct so that we can have some succinct answers, before we need to wrap this item up. Go for it, Mae.

*The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark):* Chair, you will be pleased with mine. On page 7 of the Report, it notes that we would like a more diverse Church. Could the Council confirm why diversity of sexuality and gender were not included?

*The Revd Christopher Blunt (Chester):* As I ask a question, I need to declare an interest. I am the Rector of Stockport and Brinnington, Stockport and Brinnington is in Chester Diocese. Chester Diocese has not received any LInC Funding and Stockport and Brinnington as a parish is 120 out of 12,000-odd in the Church of England's parishes multiple deprivation index. We do not have the capacity to do this, so would it be possible for the Archbishops' Council to be able to seek out those poorer parishes that do not have the capacity to do that themselves to direct funding in areas that have been neglected up to now?

*The Chair:* Archbishops' Council members to respond. I will be looking to Zoom for the next three questions if you would like to prepare for that and raise your hand.

*Mrs Maureen Cole (ex officio):* I am going to take the two financial questions and my colleagues will do the other ones. Sean Doherty, the reserves policy is between one and three months' expenditure, so that is the reserve, it is within there, and we have to have that for expenses and any unforeseen expenses that may come through, so it is within the boundaries.

Chris, your diocese does not receive LInC support funding, but there are two things. One, your diocese can apply for SMMIB, and that can include things like supporting areas of deprivation, but also within the dioceses, I think there is something about mutual support amongst parishes and I think most dioceses do look at that and consider how they provide that support amongst each other.

*The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio):* Mae, thank you very much for your question. It was not our intention to exclude, we need to be more intentional about naming that in future, so thank you for bringing that to our attention.

*The Chair:* I am looking to Zoom for any questions. I see none, so those in the room, next three questions. Yes, thank you, and Penny Allen at the back.

*The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe (The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes):* One of the sub committees of the Archbishops' Council is the Council for Christian Unity. I may have missed it, but I do not see reference to ecumenical activity and work in the Report, and I wondered where that figures in the ongoing priorities of the Council's work.

*The Revd Canon Sally Gaze (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I am the leader of the Growing in God in the Countryside SDF project. This project is not on the map on page 4, and I just wondered whether it is possible for it to be added in future online editions.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* I am someone who does trust in God and I call him to be one body. Can I just ask about the digital worship? I would like to see an expansion of that. It is continuing, as I can see, to improve both in its podcasts and its daily prayers and in other ways, and I would like to know if we have enough staffing for that now, and

enough budget, because I think we need to expand the giving that goes with the receiving of support in that kind of way.

*The Chair:* Thank you, so we had your question, thank you

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* Could I ask another one, Zoe?

*The Chair:* No.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* To my good friend Robert Innes, the answers apparently are that Lambeth Palace now has taken the staff through the Transforming Effectiveness process in relation to ecumenical work, the staff are based at Lambeth, so that is a question, I suppose, of where we sit, between the Council and Lambeth. But you will note from Vote 3 some significant sums are granted to things like the World Council of Churches, a whole range of ecumenical bodies, and, again, if there is an absence of contact it is not because of a lack of desire and concern, it is just that is the way the system is working at the moment, but the grants must continue.

*The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio):* Sally, thank you for your question, and I am delighted to serve in the same diocese and be blessed by the Growing in God in the Countryside project. Yes, is the answer to your question, and apologies that we missed that. Penny, thank you also very much for your question. The digital team are doing a piece of strategic work at the moment and they will be looking into that as part of it. So, again, thank you for your question too.

*The Chair:* We do not quite have time for three more questions but I think we can sneak one in, as long as it is prompt. Fiona McMillan, thank you.

*Ms Fiona McMillan (London):* I note that £35 million went towards a More Diverse Church, but are you able to give an indication how much of that went towards disability projects?

*Mrs Maureen Cole (ex officio):* We cannot give you that answer directly because of how it is counted, but we did give a grant. We can get more information to you but it is not detailed in there. Thank you. We will follow that up.

*The Chair:* That concludes Item 17.

## **ITEM 63**

*The Chair:* We now have the following motion to turn to and I remind members that we have timed business at 10 o'clock, so we are going to need to do what we can with this. I call on Gavin Drake to move the motion, the text of which can be found on Order Paper XI. You have up to 10 minutes but if you could be briefer that would be good.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* Thank you, Chair. I am going to speak very fast, with apologies to the signers and people hard of hearing.

Members of Synod, I prepared a very lengthy speech full of examples and facts, figures and anecdotes but I tore that up this morning and I intend to be brief. Time is short and I know we have heard a lot about safeguarding and safeguarding failures over these past few days. It can be traumatic and I do not want to add to the trauma.

Before saying what this motion is, I want to say what it is not, because it is important that two things are understood. First, this is not a vote of no confidence in the Archbishops' Council. As I drafted this motion and consulted with a range of Synod members, some people urged me to table a simple vote of no confidence. Such a motion would have generated a shedload of headlines but it would not have achieved anything, and I am not convinced that the majority of this Synod is in a place where it wants to pass such a vote of no confidence, so this motion is not that.

Secondly, it is not calling for a wide-ranging inquiry into every safeguarding body in the Church of England. Passing this motion will not result in every diocesan safeguarding team having to explain themselves to the person appointed to conduct the inquiry. This is not calling for the equivalent of PCR 3, or anything close to that. There is a small technical amendment which I fully support which hopes to make that clear. It is about the structures.

So let us look at what this motion is. The original draft motion contained only clauses 4 to 8 of the present motion. It was tabled as a following or further motion to yesterday's presentation on the disbanding of the ISB. It was ruled out of order on the basis that that presentation was freestanding and not linked to a report. Really? What is GS Misc 1341 if it is not a report by the Secretary-General on behalf of the Archbishops' Council on recent developments relating to the Independent Safeguarding Board? GS Misc 1341 was mentioned several times by the panel in the presentation yesterday. But it was ruled out of order so it was necessary to find another way to table the motion, and to do this we added the preamble to make the motion relevant as a following further motion to the Annual Report of the Archbishops' Council. It is this motion that is before us today.

The people that I consulted over the wording of the motion include lawyers, both a solicitor and a barrister. They (and I) do not accept that the original motion was out of order, but the legal team ruled it was, I believe in an attempt to prevent debate. Yesterday we witnessed the Registrar ruling out of order various procedural points of order that had been moved to allow Jasvinder Sanghera and Steve Reeves to address us. This included overruling Archbishop Stephen's decision to use his powers to invite non-members to speak, on the basis that it was unlawful to do so, as the power in the constitution fell to the Presidents plural rather than President singular. I think such a ruling contravenes the standard English legal precedent that the singular should be construed to include the plural and the plural should be construed to include the singular. But the Synod prevailed and we did hear from Jasvinder and Steve.

*The Chair:* Mr Drake, can you please keep your speech to the details of your motion, please.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* The Synod prevailed and we did hear from Jasvinder and Steve and we heard how their narrative differed significantly from the narrative we have been given by the Archbishops' Council and by the Secretary-General in his Report. Yesterday's presentation painted a picture of the ISB which was being micromanaged by the Archbishops' Council. Independence of thought and independence of action seem to have been something the Archbishops' Council could not tolerate and was met with petty actions such as cutting off their telephone lines.

Where does the truth lie? I do not know. My guess is the truth is on both sides. This motion is not about getting to the truth about what happened with the ISB. Yesterday and again this morning we heard that the Archbishops' Council is commissioning an independent review about that to report to us in November. I welcome that but that is not what this motion is about either.

Synod, we need to understand that while the ISB was not working for the Archbishops' Council, it was working for victims and survivors, many of whom, far more than the ten who are having their cases formally reviewed by the ISB, felt that with the ISB the Church was finally listening and understanding. The original language used by the Archbishops' Council to announce the disbanding of the ISB used the language of a "reset". You cannot simply reset relationships with victims and survivors. Their journey is not a straight line from A to B. It is a journey that goes from A to G to Z to R to K, and back to G before heading back to A, and it is not going from A to B in a straight line, it is going up and down. It is a messy journey to recovery. It is not a flat linear line. It goes up and down, forwards and backwards, and it is a journey with multiple axes. The disbanding of the ISB and the manner in which it was done has done untold damage to many, many people, and we as a Church have got to stop hurting people.

This motion at its core calls for an independent inquiry led by a senior lawyer, a judge or KC, into safeguarding bodies' functions, policies and practice. As I said earlier, this is not PCR 3, nor is it a review of individual cases. It is an inquiry into our structures. We have until recently had the ISB. We also have the National Safeguarding Panel, the National Safeguarding Steering Group, the Lead Safeguarding Bishop and the Assistant Lead Safeguarding Bishops, the National Safeguarding Team, the diocesan safeguarding advisory panels, the diocesan safeguarding advisers and officers and the House of Bishops, who are responsible for drafting safeguarding guidance.

It is too complicated. As somebody said at Question Time this week, if we in the Church do not know where to go, how can we expect people outside the Church to understand? An independent inquiry would shine a light on these complex structures and make recommendations for a simplified, more effective structure, and improve our safeguarding. Yesterday the Archbishops' Council said they need outside help. They

acknowledged that they cannot bring about reform by themselves. An independent inquiry will provide that outside help.

They also expressed concern that the size of the ISB meant it was ineffective because it did not have sufficient internal challenge. I think the same could be said of the Archbishops' Council structurally. This is why the motion calls for the report of the inquiry to come back to this Synod so that we can make decisions about the future of Church of England safeguarding. The central structures of the Church of England do seem to be reluctant to fully embrace good safeguarding, as we saw yesterday with the efforts yesterday made to stop us hearing from Jasvinder and Steve.

Synod, please approve this motion. It will put us on the start of a journey to a wholesale root and branch reform of our unwieldy safeguarding processes. Today we can start to make the Church a safer place. I move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* This item is now open for debate. The speech limit is three minutes. I remind Synod members that we have six. I call Peter Adams to speak.

*Canon Peter Adams (St Albans):* I share many of Gavin's concerns. Members will know that I have spoken on them on many occasions over the past few years. However, I am afraid I cannot support this motion, and I would ask other members to vote with me against it. It is clear the Church of England is in a deeply troubling place around safeguarding. That is the concern behind the following motion. We must as a matter of urgency do something about it, but this, I suggest, is not what we need. We need to address the abuses that have been perpetrated in our midst and the re-abuses that have taken place by the continued unwillingness to address it, or the ineffectual handling of it, and the consequent deep distrust and toxic attitudes, not least in this place.

What happened yesterday as we discussed the ISB was the result of those attitudes. I am sorry, Gavin, and others who have worked to bring this motion, many of whom are friends, but I do not believe this will do that.

In a question yesterday relating to the redress motion, I asked for a truth and reconciliation process to look at the handling of abuse in the Church. We need the truth, we need justice, I agree, but we need to do that together with grace and mercy. As a bottom line for the new start we need, we need to approach this in a deeply Christian and restorative way. So as not to test our schedule further and this Synod's patience, I have not introduced any amendments, but can ask our Archbishops, along with the House and College of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council, to commit, in openness and accountability to the Synod, to make this journey a matter of urgency. We owe this to the survivors of abuse in our Church. And we owe it to the Gospel that we represent.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* Apologies if you have got something in mind, but we are up against timed business, so under Standing Order 34(1)(c), I wonder if we can adjourn the debate and resume it after the timed business.

*The Chair:* Mr Wilson has moved a motion that the debate be adjourned and resumed at a later date. If the motion for the adjournment of the debate is carried, the debate will be adjourned and then resumed in accordance with that motion. If it is lost, the motion for the adjournment of the debate will not be moved again, except with the permission of the Chair.

*A Speaker:* Point of order. The point was for it to be returned after the timed business.

## **ADJOURNMENT OF DEBATE**

*The Chair:* Yes, that fits. I need to call you as the mover of that motion for the adjournment to speak to it and move it. You have two minutes, which is, ironically, exactly what we had left until I was going to adjourn this anyway. Go ahead.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* Apologies, Chair. This is an important amendment that has come forward. It is quite a lengthy one and I think it is something which we really need to debate. We do not want to just adjourn it and have it come back two or three or four months' time. We need to deal with it today. That is the reason for moving the motion to have it returned after the timed business.

*The Chair:* I will ask Gavin Drake to respond to that.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* Apparently I have to move it, so I do move it.

*Mr Gavin Drake (Southwell & Nottingham):* I fully support that motion; it is good housekeeping.

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

*The Chair:* That motion is carried. That item is adjourned. If you stay where you are for one moment, please. We now move to our next item of business, thank you.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall KC (Manchester)* took the Chair at 10.01 am

## **ITEM 18**

### **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL BUDGET 2024 AND PROPOSALS FOR APPORTIONMENT 2024 (GS 2309)**

*The Chair:* And now for something entirely different: the budget and the apportionment. You will need GS 2309 and you will see that the format of this item of business is Item 18 which is a take note debate, followed by Items 19 to 24 which we might deal with a bit quicker.



What I am going to do is call John Spence to speak to Item 18. He can have up to 15 minutes on the basis that I know he will want to only formally move each of the separate items and that will then be open for debate. So we are going to have John Spence for up to 15 minutes on Item 18.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I feel slightly overdressed by the standards of York Synod, but I felt it very important that Synod had a last chance to witness Mrs Spence's choice of ties.

My purpose this morning is to bring to you the expenditure plans of the Archbishops' Council for you to note and for you to vote on the apportionment, Votes 1 to 5, and to approve the apportionment table and the pooling adjustments.

As each month goes by we are getting a clearer picture of just what the impact of the pandemic and the consequent squeeze on real incomes has been. I think it is very important that I give you a quick snapshot of the state of Church of England finances.

If I look at total Church level, between 2019 and 2020, Church income went down by 14%, expenditure went down by 7%, and, while there has been some recovery, both income and expenditure continue to run well below pre-pandemic levels. Parish income, similarly, fell across the period.

Interestingly, between 2012 and 2021, if you look at it cumulatively, parishes have seen a surplus of around £320 million, but in 2020, 56% of parishes and in 2021, 46% of parishes ran deficits. That will tell you both that the pressure is getting greater and that there is a considerable dichotomy between some wealthier parishes and the poorer ones.

It is really at diocesan level that you see the real impact. The aggregate deficit of dioceses in 2019 was £19 million. Across the current five-year period (before sustainability funding) that will aggregate to over £200 million. If you think about it, around 55% of diocesan expenditure is stipends. They have an awful lot of obligatory things to do around safeguarding, administration, HR and all the rest. There are only so many surplus houses and investments that can be realised without cutting into that stipendiary priest number. A real worry.

The scale of the challenge is then highlighted when we look at parish share, which in 2017 was £334 million and in 2022, £308 million. If it had just stayed flat across those five years that would have eliminated three-quarters of the diocesan deficit. If it had gone up in line with inflation since 2017, we would be seeing £90 million more per annum. I regret to say I have always been clear that the ongoing squeeze on real incomes will continue to have impact and at 2023 to date, we have seen a further 0.9% decline in that figure.

Underlying that we see a bigger issue. The regular givers, which across 2012 to 2019 were falling at about 2% to 3% per annum, and who were compensating for that by increased levels of generosity which meant that the number stayed flat or growing, fell between 2019 and 2021 by 15%. A 15% fall in regular givers and no increase in generosity will compensate for that, least of all when inflation is where it is.

There are two ways to answer this. The first is for us to get on with all the mission proposals we have. Money is never the end game. Money is the by-product of missional success. It is one of the signs for me of the commitment of a Christian pilgrim that they give.

Secondly, and more currently, I think there are things we can do if we learn from each other about where success lies. If I look at the Giving in Generosity programme - just look at this - the percentage of Church members who are regular givers varies between dioceses from 30% to 64%. The level of giving ranges from £8 to £26 and there is no correlation with deprivation. Engagement in digital giving and generosity ranges from 18% to 64% between dioceses. Use of the Parish Giving scheme, the means by which you get some insulation against inflation, is, again, varying from low figures to virtual saturation.

There is clear evidence that where diocesan giving advisers are working hand in hand with the diocesan leadership teams, we are seeing significant progress. I would warmly invite to you that the 13 dioceses which do not yet have a diocesan giving adviser take up that funding. If we all focused on matching the best figures in this table, we would see a substantial improvement in the short and medium-term finances before all the other things we are doing have their impact.

Turning on then to 2023 to 2025, we have the Church Commissioners' distributions. Amazingly, if you look at it, the amounts available in 2023 to 2025 for core and strategic distributions are more than double those in 2017 to 2019. If you look at the key elements here which you saw previously in GS 2262, you will see what those key elements are: £288 million for the Diocesan Investment Programme and for People and Partnership funding. If you look at the bottom, there is £152 million from previous programmes - SDF, STF and all those acronyms I could keep on mentioning - that have been allocated but are yet to be spent: over £400 million available for investment. We must work and I commit the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board to work with dioceses to enable you to bring forward as quickly as possible the means by which that £288 million can be allocated. It will not be spent in this triennium. In fact, we ought to be over-allocating in this triennium so that the spending is spread out across the nine years. Please accept every bit of help we can give you in bringing that forward.

Let us come on to apportionment, the core of this session. Apportionment has been held flat again. The result is that in 2014, 90% of all Archbishops' Council's spend out of Votes 1 to 5 was paid for through apportionment. This year it will be 53%, and I must thank the

Church Commissioners, particularly around safeguarding, the Corporation of Church House, benefacts and dioceses for enabling us to get these numbers in balance.

Stunningly for me, the total of apportionment this year will be £25 million less than the total spend. That is a subsidy going in to help dioceses for expenditure they would otherwise have to meet.

I deeply regret to say that on Vote 1 we will spend less in 2024 than we have done in 2023. Between 2015 and 2019 our focus on ordinands saw that number grow until between 2019 and 2021 we had 1,375 people going through ordination training. Next year it will be between 1,000 and 1,100. We are hearing reports of a lack of confidence among candidates that there will be long-term posts for them and among dioceses about their ability to fund those long-term posts. Again, we come back to the importance of taking forward the Ministry and Mission work so we can ensure we once again have a growing number of ordinands to refresh, renew and rejuvenate the priesthood which is so critical to us.

The increase in Vote 2 is modest at 24, compensated for by the savings we have had made on Transforming Effectiveness, which has fully achieved its financial goals. We have reduced the footprint in Church House, we have remote teams, more posts in York and so on.

The key elements in the increase in spend, although they are on your Order Paper, let me highlight a couple to you. Safeguarding - the roll-out of the regional model. Shared services going up because of two things, first, increased demand for the technology services team, and the need to pay them more in central London, and, secondly, the fact with the People System now complete, we have to pay depreciation on it.

I am delighted that the ministry development costs are going up because that, for the first time, includes a dedicated budget for lay ministry development and training.

And you will note the VAT increase which is a reflection of a change in accounting policy required by the auditors.

On Votes 3, 4 and 5, on Vote 3, grants maintain the previous levels but with inflation for the inter-Anglican piece.

On Vote 4, the spend will go down because of the decrease in pension contributions, but will actually be funded in 2024 only from reserves because we had moved into a surplus reserves position on that number.

On Vote 5, again, a commitment we made to a 5% increase per annum. But I should tell you that out of the triennial funding we gave a further significant grant in respect of retired clergy housing earlier this year as they cope with greater demands, inflation and higher costs of borrowing.

So, ladies and gentlemen, your apportionment figures are there in what you are approving. We have held the total flat but for the last four years we have not adjusted, as we normally do annually, to take account of the latest statistics. We felt we really must do something about that because we were moving further away from fact. That has been done but all increases are subject to the 1% cap so there is no significant impact on any diocese. I repeat again £25 million less than the total spend.

So, the recommendations before you which I will formally move after the questions are for you to note the spending, for you to approve each of the Votes 1 to 5, and for you to approve the apportionment table and the pooling adjustments.

My dear friends, this is not the budget I would have wanted to present to you on my last time before you. It is not the budget I would have expected to present as recently as 2020. There is no doubt that the pandemic and subsequent shocks to the system have had a big impact upon us. But we know what we can do. We have proven what we can do in all the work we did around leadership training, the wonderful digital investments with all the impacts, those ordinand numbers and the brilliant projects and bonfires that have been lit across the country. We can do it again.

It is often said that in this world there are valley people. They are good people. They live in the village in the valley. They work hard, they go to school, they have ordered lives. They have picnics underneath those willow trees whose dappled leaves frisk upon the lazy river. And they are good people. There is nothing wrong with them: all virtuous.

And then there are the mountain people, and they are the people who strike out from that village and start going up the rugged arduous path up that mountain, and as they do so they are assailed by rock falls or even avalanches, storms, blizzards, and they keep going. They reach the top and it is only the mountain people who look across the mountain tops to see the glories of God's creation. It is only the mountain people who are reminded that they can do anything that they really want, and we still have the burning heart of the risen Christ in us. We still have the Holy Spirit pouring through our veins, and only those mountain people will be able to look into the adjoining valleys to understand where Christ is not yet present, where Christ needs to be reinforced, where Christ needs to be welcomed. I say again I may present this budget to you; the finances are merely incidental, it is the mission which matters.

*The Chair:* Item 18 is now open for debate.

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

*The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TElS):* Thank you, Canon Spence and your team, we will miss you and we will miss your ties. My interest is the principle of one of the theological education institutions to which the Vote 1 funding will be paid in a member of the Principals' Steering Group, so speaking as a representative of that group and to

follow up on my question earlier. This time last year and in the February, Synod showed its warm support for the RMF proposals which aim to bring much needed improvements in stability and predictability to TEI funding.

Synod knows I am always so humbled and grateful for the conversations I have with Synod members, because you know that good theological study and healthy ministerial formation make a vital difference and we are immensely grateful for your support. However, major challenges continue. It is great to have predictability, but at the moment it just means we can predict considerable deficits. Price rises, especially energy prices, we all know about. The Lichfield Pay Scale this year recommended a rise of 5% for TEI staff in line with stipends which we have made in good faith, but just recently we were told that our fees would go up next year by only 3%. That is the third year in a row of a very low rise, nowhere near the inflationary rises in prices that we are seeing.

As you have seen from answers to questions earlier in this group of sessions, TEIs will experience an exceptionally low intake again this year for the second year in a row. Whilst we receive now block funding which covers 80% of the fees of our more typical numbers of students, the marginal cost for each student is nowhere near 20%. The per capita price per student will become higher and, of course, our core cost of paying our hardworking and immensely dedicated staff and maintaining our sites, none of that goes down.

To follow up on my question earlier, we know that budgets are tight everywhere but the budget proposes just under £15 million for 2024 based on 500 people entering training, but we note from answers to questions that only 395 people will be through stage 2 BAPs by the end of August. Page 4 of the Report projects a further £1 million increase in reserves, which will actually take us to exceed the maximum reserve amount and that is even before you take into account that lower number of ordinands.

We would ask the Archbishops' Council and the Finance Committee to consider whether the fee level increase really needs to be set as low as 3%. The Church invests so much money in TEIs and we are so grateful for that, but make sure that we have got the capacity to take the higher numbers when they come through. Adequate funding now when we have the reserves will be cheaper than a more expensive bailout later on.

*The Revd Canon Joyce Hill (Leeds):* I declare an interest as a member of a governing council of one of our TEIs. I could easily repeat, but will not, the statistical information that Sean Doherty has given to us: 3% in a context of 5% staff salary rises and other costs rising even faster, some dramatically so. For example, the necessary residential period that students spend when they are part-time students is well into double figures in inflation.

My question is what is the evidence base for the Vote 1 figure given that the paper we had in February on Resourcing Ministerial Formation stated that information about the true cost of provision was sought from principals, and provided, but the answers were

deemed to be too difficult to work with? The new formula, which we are now operating with, proceeded with historic assumptions which have not recently been tested against current realities. Realities do change, not just because of inflation but also because of changing expectations on the parts of students and the Church and also because of changing requirements and also because the different component elements of training change their relative costs over time. That is just how the world works.

My question is, I repeat, what is the evidence base and if the evidence base is not sound - and my argument is that it is no longer sound - should we not be doing something to put it on a more secure footing with an honest assessment of the true cost of training, because if we do not where will we be?

*Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark):* I would like to start off, Synod, by thanking you for confirming my appointment as John's successor on Friday evening. Whilst there will be time later to say thank you to John, I would like to express my personal thanks for his visionary leadership, clarity, honesty and openness. The Finance Committee, I believe this Synod, the NCIs and the whole Church owe him a huge debt of gratitude. In speaking in this debate, I clearly support the budget which has been diligently constructed and thoroughly challenged and scrutinised by the Finance Committee.

In succeeding John, whilst my style will inevitably be different you will find that the underlying substance of my approach and, indeed, my perspective on the financial headwinds facing our Church are wholly aligned with those of John. The probable difference is that I am not quite as soft and cuddly as John is. We do need to be realistic about the headwinds that we face, as John has outlined. As I have said to Synod previously, the answer to the challenges that we face lie primarily in matters spiritual rather than matters temporal.

Mission and evangelism are fundamental. We need to pray for the re-evangelisation of our country, focusing on bringing our friends and neighbours to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and in building His Church and reversing the decline in the number of missionary disciples. Focusing on bringing the good news to children and young people through our schools, parishes and worshipping communities will go a long way to address these headwinds. This is why I will continue to ensure that the SMMIB funding is focused on projects which focus on tangible growth through mission and evangelism with a particular emphasis on children and young people. In addition, a key component of discipleship is giving and we will be paying close attention to whether dioceses have an effective focus on giving in their plans.

I am also committed to ensuring that we prioritise projects which focus on areas of greatest need across urban, rural, coastal and estates' contexts. Whilst the funding from the Church Commissioners is fundamental to being able to make these intentional investments, we have to work hard across the country to get our dioceses and parishes focused on the implementation of Vision and Strategy. To this end, having considered the issues yesterday of the Committee-go-round in the governance debate, a key priority

for me in the next 12 months is going to be addressing the money-go-round amongst dioceses and the Archbishops' Council. In my view, diocesan apportionment is no longer fit for purpose and LInC is ripe for review.

Accordingly, in the coming months we will be considering the best way forward for diocesan support in the context of a more detailed understanding of the financial condition of each diocese. I anticipate that this will give rise to significant change in the basis of funding flows across the Church. The Synod has heard much about accountability, transparency, openness and trust and I assure you that I will strive to be direct and clear and open. No change from John. I have no concern about speaking truth to power but also believe in collegiality. No change from John. I very much look forward to working with you all in the years ahead.

*The Chair:* I think maybe, Mr Hughes, you will have to collect some new ties.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Is it all right, Chair, if I respond? We do it in groups of three, usually.

*The Chair:* Sorry, John, you want to respond to them in three.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you, Carl, for your piece. No, he is not as cuddly. I would just say we all recognise there is a need to move on from the apportionment. It will time well with the ongoing work around governance.

Just to answer the question from Stockport earlier during the AC Report, we need to look at future of the LInC formula and just how that can be improved. It is a good practice to do when it has been in operation for six years and I have heard much from diocesan bishops about where it may have worked before better than it is doing now.

I just wanted to say to Sean and Joyce, firstly, we do all value the TEIs, you know that, which is why the new funding mechanism was to reduce the risk that you face. Secondly, we are dealing with emerging news, Sean. The number that you quoted was not a number that was expected a month ago and so things have to be developed. You are entering into some of the detailed work that went on with Ministry Council. I do not want to take the time of General Synod here, but, if you think about it, our calculating the cost of training per head is very difficult if there is a difference between a cohort of 20 people or 80. I will always say to TEIs, wonderful as you are, I do hope that you can always think about how you can change and how you can move forward to meet the needs of the next 50 years rather than that we preserve the brilliance of the previous 50.

*The Chair:* I am sorry to John that I did forget that he does reply to things in sections because that is the way it is.

*Mrs Catherine Butcher (Chichester):* This is my maiden speech. Thank you, Canon Spence, for your passionate endorsement of the Gospel. It is inspiring. I welcome the

aim to become a younger and more diverse Church and the significant expenditure planned. I have one plea. It is an easy win, a free win in our objective to double the number of children and young active disciples in the Church by 2030. When we have a worldwide audience of millions for state occasions like the Coronation, we would pay millions of pounds for that media coverage but why can we not use contemporary language on these occasions?

I have brought a visual aid. It is a feather. You will not be surprised that I did not use it to write my speech. I leave quills to Shakespeare. As a journalist, I trained to use contemporary language to write about the Christian faith. I know that our late Queen and our King and many in this House love the rich language of the Book of Common Prayer, but it is not understood by the majority and especially those young people we want to reach.

The Talking Jesus Report found that 80% of people in our churches have graduate level education so can probably understand what is said, but what about the vast majority of people who watch our worship on state occasions, especially the children and young people we want to involve? Change is unpopular but it will not add to our expenditure if we use contemporary language. Coronations were once in Latin. They were changed to the language of the day. On our state occasions and by the next Coronation, if the Church is still in the lead, please can we use contemporary language that can include people of all generations and educational ability? I know that the Liturgical Commission do provide contemporary language liturgies, but let us not squander our media opportunities by using language that makes us seem irrelevant and out of date.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark):* I am a member of the Ministry Development Council, which is one of the important committees of the Archbishops' Council and also of the Lay Ministries Advisory Group, which is a task group reporting to that. I am standing to welcome the fact that I think I heard John say that spending on training for lay vocations and ministry will form part of Vote 1, although it is not actually mentioned on page 9 of the Report. Spending on support for staffing costs for the Lay Ministry Development Programme is included in Vote 2 and that is referred to on pages 12 and 13. But this is a very significant step forward, members of Synod. I hope you are aware that you will be voting for lay ministry training through Vote 1 I think for the first time. Thank you so much, John, for ensuring that that is there.

*Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester):* This is really a long question rather than a speech and, ironically, it is on a subject where we appear to be going to spend less money, not because we want to but because of circumstances. That is with regards to the point you made and it is mentioned in page 9 of your Report about a notably lower level of people coming forward for ordination. I can remember with the Renewal and Reform agenda that one of its great successes was that for a few years there were more people coming forward for ordination. You touched upon the fact that you thought it might be concerns that people considering ordination were worried about the situation in dioceses. Is that not the great problem that we face where the considerable financial help - and we are



hugely appreciative of this - is coming from the centre, but when you go back from this place we go back to our dioceses, we see the financial realities that we face and this is a massive disconnect. How do you think we can address this so that the number of ordinands does not fall further which is going to be a massive issue for us? Finally, do you think that modern society is sucking the life out of us?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Catherine, thank you, well done on your maiden speech. Coronation wording, well beyond my pay grade you know. But the point you make, if we are going to be successful with our strategy of bringing more young people we have got to talk to people in the language. I come back again to digital, I continue to say you must keep the focus on building the digital relationships with our young people in the ways that they understand.

Adrian, actually the latest stuff is in Vote 2 not Vote 1. Sorry if I misled you there. It is Vote 2, but there will be further funding coming through in the people and partnership stream. There are very clear pieces of work under the Ministry Council now to take this forward in a way I had not seen hitherto.

I utterly agree with you, Robin. You told us in 2014 when we surveyed every diocese that we need about the same number of priests, but we need priests who can unlock and set on fire the gifts of the laity. I think that is still the same. That is still the correlation we see between going to church and having great priests and so, as I have said to you, my words have had to be changed in the last week, that is how current this information is coming through, and in the light of that conversations will take place within the governing bodies in the coming weeks. Yes, we need to rehearse this and action will be taken.

*The Chair:* It is still a three minute speech limit. I have got to do some juggling here on the basis that Items 19 to 24 have got to be dealt with. Does anybody want to speak specifically to any of those items as opposed to the general debate? Well, that is helpful.

*The Revd Marcus Walker (London):* There are many things about the budget which are going to be discussed later in the day, but actually here I would rather like to discuss the point which John Spence raised about the underlying spiritual reality that these figures talk of. We have seen the collapse in money that has happened in our churches since the pandemic. That talks of a serious reduction in the number of people coming to church since the pandemic. We know that during the pandemic a number of decisions were taken and a number of statements were made which were highly controversial and which led to a number of people thinking that the Church was not there for them. A number of people heard us say you can worship God as well at home as you can in church and I fear that they heard us and believed us and have stayed at home.

If we are going to draw people back who decided to leave during that very dark time, we need to think about what we do as a Church and seriously to consider how we can revitalise people's faith in God and people's faith in God that they find in the Church of England through the light of acknowledging our own mistakes at that time. I have seen

nothing about that over the last two years and, if we are going to boost the money, we are going to have to reignite the hearts of people who felt their faith doused by their Church at that time.

*The Revd Barry Hill (Leicester):* A conflict of interest: I do various parish focused SDF programmes. John, thank you for your ministry over these years. Many, many more people have come to know the Kingdom of God come near because of the investments you have supported and we are eternally grateful.

One of your early slides talked to the long-term trend in the decrease in the number of givers and you spoke about some of the causes behind that, but a fall from 600,000 regular givers to 400,000 in just a decade. We know that very few people leave the Church of England unless we count a death in that category, which I think many of us would feel uncomfortable with, and yet we have an issue seeing faith passed across the generations. It is why the Archbishops' Council, of course, have put it front and centre. It is why Synod has put it front and centre. It is why you have put seeing faith take amongst new and emerging generations at the heart of the investment.

Whilst you cannot speak for the Church Commissioners - I fully understand - you have a unique vantage point to be able to comment on the wonderful investments of the Church Commissioners over recent decades and particularly the encouraging growth and the £10.6 billion for which we give thanks they have recently reported.

We are very grateful for the money that has been released and the huge increases in that, but often the reason given for not increasing that further is not wanting to damage intergenerational equity. I wonder at what point in your mind do we pass a tipping point that by not releasing more money in the here and now we do more damage to those in future generations than we do by holding on to it? You have a wonderful and unique vantage point to be able to comment on that and it would be wonderful to hear a few words, if you may.

*The Bishop of Dudley (The Rt Revd Martin Gorick):* I would like to thank you, John, for your clear and concise Report and for all your work and leadership over the last years. You are always honest about life in the valleys but you always lead us to the mountaintop somehow when you speak and I thank you for that. Rich Johnson and James Treasure have been able to develop resourcing churches in Worcester and the most deprived part of Dudley through SDF investment. Again, I thank you for that encouragement. Lots of people here do not know where Dudley is, as they often tell me, but it has a population the size of Cardiff and is an area often of significant deprivation.

We were delighted with the offer of funding for the next round of urban renewals through SMMIB and the sense of partnership in mission flowing through this new programme. I am sure you would like to commend the local people who work to support that programme in Birmingham and the West Midlands. I note the challenges of renewing ordained ministry, but am glad to say we now have record numbers going for selection and

ordination this year in the Diocese of Worcester, many coming through our new pathway for locally focused ordained ministry and currently at no cost to the centre.

The centre of our Church is not in Archbishops' Council or even General Synod. For safeguarding or anything else, the centre of our Church is, and always has been, on its periphery in our parishes and in our chaplaincies. Thank you, John, and for all who work with you for all that enable that mission and ministry to thrive.

*The Chair:* Mr Spence to reply.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Marcus, thank you and understood. In a world without precedent, as the pandemic lockdown was, things do get said out of all good reasons and then you look back and see did that cost something. I do think, actually, there has been a lot of thought about how we coped with that unprecedented event and we just hope we never have to cope with it again. Yes, there is a lot of rebuilding to do and, as the Bishop has just said, that starts from the place that we all serve, which is the parish; the community I like to call it, being the parish, the school, the chaplaincy, all those elements that make up a Christian community.

I am much heartened by the Worcester experience, Bishop. It was a great project for you to bring to the Investment Board, the first two being Worcester and Bristol where we have really seen schemes developed locally, no sort of sense of external revitalisation, local schemes being developed for major investment.

Barry, there is no black and white here and there is no hard line about intergenerational equity. The fact I was able to point to a doubling of the distribution for core and strategy funding since 2017-19 tells you that we talked with the Church Commissioners and had a discussion about could we relax some of the assumptions around intergenerational equity, and that they have done and to the benefit, and they have also announced some other sums being released. All I will say to you is that if the money that the Church Commissioners now hold with their responsibility for intergenerational equity had not been so hard to access, it would have been spent decades ago and would not be here at all now.

*The Revd Charlie Skrine (London):* John, thank you very much for your ability to give us bad news with grace and with hope. My question is - and you may have said this, apologies - could we have all your slides and, if possible, could we have some of the data behind? I was particularly interested by your comment that generosity in giving is not correlated with deprivation and I would love to understand how that can be. I have then got a question about the total number of planned givers which I do think is the most alarming thing you have shown us today. You showed us up to 2021, is it your view that that includes the full pandemic effect or will 2022's numbers be worse? Could you give us the sense of the total amount given? You gave it to us by person but the amount given by planned giving, is that now coming down and, if so, how fast?

*The Revd Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Liverpool):* I would like to begin by endorsing what Sean and Joyce said about the funding of TElS. I am very grateful to Canon Spence's introduction with that really helpful detail on diocesan finances and the reality of the challenge we face. I want to focus on those two stark headline figures. There is a £200 million cumulative deficit across diocesan budgets and £400 million available for investment for which bids are welcome.

I represent Liverpool which has fairly healthy figures in all of those indicators: membership of the parish giving scheme, average giving and so on, despite being very deprived. But we are the most struggling diocese financially and the difference lies in the distribution of historic assets which, as we have all rehearsed many times, we know is pretty random. Most dioceses have investment income as a significant element of the income side of their balance sheet and we do not. There is £400 million available for distribution, there is £200 million diocesan deficit in SDF and SDF projects which are ongoing, but the amount of staff time and energy that goes into constantly having to develop plans for bids for new things is a huge inefficiency built into this capitalist approach to funding.

A large part of the Church Commissioners' money for distribution comes from things like Queen Anne's Bounty, which was designed to subsidise, in perpetuity, the incomes of poorer clergy. So, I beg Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners, and anyone else who might listen, to rebalance the way that £400 million is distributed to give a long-term, sustainable and stress-free stability to diocesan finances.

*Professor Helen King (Oxford):* I hear what my old school classmate Catherine Butcher is saying about language and about our public face, but I am also aware that many younger people, people from working class backgrounds, people with less education are also attracted by the mystery of our faith, by the mystery of God, by the God-ness of God, the mystical, the beauty of older language, the beauty of older buildings, even Taizé in Latin. People are not all the same, basic point. But my question is this: as we look at those slides, as we look at the decline in the number of people giving, and this is a serious question which has not been raised, is there a point where we start to ask whether the poorer church is what God is calling us to? Is anyone thinking about this, or are we just asked to put our fingers in our ears, hum and pray?

*The Chair:* Mr Spence, do you want to reply to those contributions?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I am struggling to hear names. Do you know, it is bad enough being blind but I am losing my hearing as well, so it is just as well that I am giving up really.

On the first point, you asked for a few statistics and I think the easiest thing would be that we will distribute some of the numbers in a form that makes sense with some narrative, actually, that would be the best thing to do.

On the second point, I hear what is said, the challenge, what we have to accept is that the old Darlow formula was a funding formula which rewarded decline, and the longer you allowed subsidy to continue - well, to put it another way, if you improved your financial situation, you got penalised with what you got.

I know that people will be listening to what is being said here, because we are in an emerging situation, I have made that clear this morning, and discussions will take place because clearly we recognise the challenge. It is very difficult but we equally know that there are some dioceses - and the Bishop of Liverpool, it is no secret, has written to us on this - that are just financially unsustainable. So, as hard as you try in all your giving and generosity, there are dioceses which have a geography which makes them very hard to be sustained and that is something which, again, is for longer term consideration. I note the last comments, thank you, I do not think there is anything to add on that.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 18 has been sufficiently debated, and I therefore put a motion for closure on Item 18.

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

*The Chair:* We move to vote on Item 18. This is by a show of hands and green ticks on Zoom.

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

## **ITEM 19**

*The Chair:* We now move to Item 19, and Mr Spence is going to formally move Item 19.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I formally move Item 19.

*The Chair:* This matter is now open for debate. There is a three-minute speech limit. Are there any desires for anybody to speak on Item 19?

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

*Ms Sarah Tupling (Deaf Anglicans Together):* Good morning, everyone. I am representing the three Deaf Anglicans Together, there are two of us here and one watching on Zoom this time. Thank you very much for your Report and all you have said on finance, John, and I do agree that you have got a wonderful tie.

Okay, so on to my serious point. I just wanted, when we were talking about training for ministry, to make a brief point. Just to give a little bit of background, I am actually a lay Reader, licensed in Derby, and I did my training for that in Derby and I was very fortunate that Derby Diocese was happy to fund me to do that. I am very grateful. Just looking at the national picture, what seems to be happening for training for ordained or lay ministers

to work with the deaf community, people who are deaf themselves, is really not happening, there is not much training money available for that or focus on that.

Also, I am in a group of lay Readers, and some of us would like to go to further training in our own localities, but interpreters are always a problem because that has a cost and there is not provision for that for those who are deaf in ministry to get access for further training. I think that is probably all I need to say, rather than take my full three minutes. Really it was just to make a point and ask a question about is there any future consideration for funding for deaf people in ministry for 2024 in relation to your Report.

*The Chair:* I see no one else standing, so, Mr Spence would you like to reply to the debate on Item 19?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I would like to thank Sarah for telling us that story and Sarah, for all the conversations that we have had. We wish to be a Church that is diverse and inclusive and we need to think about how we address all the different challenges of disability. Tim Goode, my great colleague on Archbishops' Council, will note that we have sometimes gone to venues where it has been really hard for him to get to the meeting room. Sarah shared the issue with deafness. I would just share with you, my dear friends, that in my ten years, hardly ever have I been offered some support with worship, where you all look at screens and the deaf people have signers, but the blind people are just left out. So, let us keep always understanding, however brilliant I think we are, we can always be better, and Sarah, I know people will continue to work on how we can be fully inclusive.

*The Chair:* I put Item 19 to the vote.

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

## **ITEM 20**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 20, John to formally move.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I formally move, Chairman.

*The Chair:* The matter is now open for debate, there is a three-minute speech limit.

*The Revd Jack Shepherd (Liverpool):* I am very grateful for Miranda Threlfall-Holmes' speech highlighting some of what John Spence was saying about discrepancies between dioceses and I am very grateful for Pete Wilcox's recent work at General Synod to be able to challenge some of that and to provide some helpful ways forward. I really do agree with John Spence that we cannot be rewarding where there is decline. However, what I see as a member of clergy in the Diocese of Liverpool is not decline. I am seeing people explore faith and come to faith, I am seeing new churches generated, exciting projects that have been funded by SDF as well as traditional stipendiary provision.

I am seeing parishes revitalised, chaplaincy ministries growing. This is not about rewarding decline. And I would disagree about this being a long-term thing to consider. We urgently need this to be addressed. I will be voting against number 20 because I think this is an issue for the whole Church to feel as our responsibility. 1 Corinthians 12 says that where one member of the body is ill-resourced, where one member of the body is weaker, it is the responsibility of the whole body to suffer with it.

We are not to be led by economic factors, economic situations reflecting our wider currency. But we are to be seeking the Spirit of God. Can we please stand together? I would hope that this motion will pass because I see the necessity of it, but I will personally feel the need to vote against unless clear solutions, clear strategies are offered to overcome this issue of diocesan discrepancy.

*The Chair:* The person up there, I could not see you before, and I think there was somebody over here, yes, and you too, and after those, John will reply to those three.

*The Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield):* Before I start, I apologise, I am going to traumatised people in the south east, particularly looking at you, Lee, up there. You mentioned, Canon Spence, when you were talking earlier about how in London, obviously, you need to pay people more because of the cost of living in London. Looking at the cost for accommodation for the Synod in November in London, it is extremely expensive.

I am just wondering whether, as we look at the economic situation we are in, we need to think about whether we come away from London because of its expenses? I know that is a bit shocking. I would like to make a suggestion to Synod, the new City of Doncaster. We are on a mainline train, an hour and 45 from London.

*The Chair:* Be careful, be careful, I am a Lancastrian.

*The Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield):* Imagine the levelling up we could start if we looked at Doncaster. Thank you.

*The Revd Jo Winn-Smith (Guildford):* I declare an interest as a former member of NCI staff. Having worked across five different NCI departments from 2002 to 2014 - I obviously started as a child - I remember the move of the Church Commissioners from Millbank to Church House and the stress on staff and the hard work needed on bringing together the different cultures of the Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council. When we look at the budget, we see £0.4 million extra being spent on meetings, but a £1.2 million accommodation saving, and I think that these are related.

My concern is the continued squeeze on staff. The mantra of much financial budgeting across the Church seems regularly to be do more for less. This is not the same as efficiency. It is a real risk to staff wellbeing and a risk of exploiting staff goodwill and

sense of vocation and service. I have seen this as a member of the Pastoral Guidance Sub Group to the LLF Implementation Group where, once Eeva had gone, focused resource was much diminished and yet the work and pressure and the calls for more work continues.

We have heard in the last few days, multiple calls on the Liturgical Commission to do project after project, let alone their day job. Please can we be cautious with reducing accommodation, as I am sure such savings will be raised once again in the future, as it is seen as an easy win. It puts pressures on staff practically and emotionally, and we lose the synergies of working together when staff are required to work from home for a number of days a week, yet when together are squashed up with little room, noisy space and insufficient meeting rooms.

I have yet to attend a National Committee meeting actually in Church House, and therefore we are putting money into the pockets of London conference centres. I recognise the need for trimming budgets, but we need to recognise this cannot happen year on year in this way when our resources are our sisters and brothers, and doing more for less involves them carrying a considerable burden on our behalf, for whom we actually have a duty of care in our overseeing.

*The Chair:* Canon Spence to reply to these items.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Brilliant stories thank you. You have heard Carl say that he is determined to work with dioceses around the money-go-round and we recognise, as I have said already, the challenge that we must make sure that the Church of today can flourish while the Church of tomorrow continues to evolve and develop and plan.

I am really sorry to the final speaker, I really struggled to hear what you were saying. If we could catch up after, I would be very grateful, so that I can answer you in detail.

But Eleanor, from Doncaster, well, who could fail to be attracted by Doncaster. It is a fabulous place, actually, and I will confess to having had a very good night out in Doncaster some time ago. I know you find this hard to believe of me, but it is a good party place.

The serious point is that we are absolutely dedicated to reducing the footprint in London. We did look at potentially moving out of Church House altogether, but we could not find an economic route to do so, while recognising that we would always have to keep some people close to Parliament, given the amount of work that goes on over there. But your point about future locations for Synod, I know the Archbishops' Council will hear. I think Glasgow is great as well, but that might be a step too far.

*The Chair:* The Archbishop of York. I was going to move to closure, but after you have spoken, Sir.



*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* John, just to ask you to make a brief comment, if you may. As you and I know, I served for ten very, very fulfilling years as Bishop of Chelmsford and that diocese was probably the biggest loser with the removal of Darlow, and found it hard to recover from that. However, I want to say very clearly, I do not want to go back to Darlow, even though I know how hard that was. I do not think that is the answer.

But I do hear the cry which comes from different bits of Synod on this issue, of how we support parishes, and the one thing that we have not mentioned yet in this debate, which is why I am raising it, is yes, we have the SMMIB money, but we also have Lowest Income Communities Funding money, and that is subsidy, as it were, according to real economic need, nothing to do with whether your parish is a so-called success or a so-called failure, language I do not like to use about the ministry of the Church.

So, I just wondered whether you might want to comment on do you think over the coming years, maybe a baton to pass to your successor, we do need to just have a conversation about getting the balance right between money for strategic investment in new things so we pioneer new ways of being Church, which I completely support, but also one of the ways we could also use money is to think again about have we got the balance right with that low-income support, which I know, since I have moved back to the north, is such an issue in so many dioceses in this Province. I simply ask the question.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you Stephen. As you can imagine, ladies and gentlemen, having been on Diocesan Board of Finance Chair for Chelmsford, and leaving that role to take on this one, and then taking Darlow away when they received £2.6 million did not make me a very popular person back home. But seriously, it was the right thing to do and we put in transitional funding and I have no doubt, absolutely no doubt, it was the right thing to do.

Yes, Stephen, we did mention LInC funding. It is a critically important part that we ensure that Christ is visible to all and we should remember that need can happen in very wealthy places as well as poverty, in fact everybody needs Christ, but, yes, the feature of parishes in more deprived areas is it is likely there will be a lesser structure of informal voluntary support, that would be the thesis behind it.

The LInC funding has been in place for six years. We have worked very hard with dioceses. We are still at the point where they are only able to attest that about 80% of it goes to the poorest communities, but meanwhile, other dioceses are telling me that their previous opportunities for cross subsidisation within the diocese, and we heard from Stockport earlier, are diminishing.

It is absolutely right that we look at LInC funding to determine its scale, its focus and how we can apply it better in the future. Let us remember that the Diocesan Investment Programme, the schemes that we are improving now, very much on a relationship basis,

are not SDF projects, they are whole ministry and mission plans for part or all of a diocese and that must include young people, it must include areas of deprivation, it must include those people with disabilities or minority ethnic groups, global majority ethnic groups. It has got to have all those elements in it if it is truly going to be the piece. So, my fundamental belief would be that with this funding the amount of funds going to the most deprived areas will increase.

*The Chair:* I need to test the mind of Synod as to whether this item has been sufficiently debated, Item 20, so those in favour of the closure of Item 20.

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

*The Chair:* We vote on Item 20 by a show of hands or by a green tick on the screen.

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

## **ITEM 21**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 21, which Canon Spence should formally move.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I so move.

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

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* I was referred to the other day as the man in the blue shirt. Well I have a pink shirt on today but my name is still Ian Johnston. My question is about SDF or SMMIB, as we now call it, and LInC, and they do not appear to be anywhere within these five votes, as far as I can see. That being the case, other than burying them in the depths of the budget, Synod does not get a vote on these items. The question is, is that the case?

Secondly, I do ask - and again, this is an innocent question from someone who is quite new to Synod - what the significance of these votes is, because we do not seem to be able to amend them or change them in any way. We can comment on them, we can vote against them, but it seems, I would not say verging on pointless, but it is not the most significant of interest, as far as many are concerned.

Lastly, if we are reviewing LInC and SDF, which I absolutely applaud, I think it is definitely overdue on both, can we please take account of the work that the Save the Parish Finscrute is doing, and it does not include me, I have to say, but we have a lot of extremely knowledgeable people on that, they are producing some very interesting numbers, and I think Synod really does need to be aware of them.

*Canon Lucy Docherty (Portsmouth):* I was not going to stand to speak but on this item, I want to pick up on two earlier speeches, one by Bishop Robert, when he asked where

was the evidence for the funding for ecumenical issues and was pointed to this vote, and to the fact that everything in that area has now moved to Lambeth and so that is why it was not figuring much. Also to pick up on the lady who spoke about the staffing issue in general. It was a really good speech actually, I am very sorry you could not hear it, John, because she was pointing out how difficult the situation had been of late for staffing in both Lambeth and in Church House and I think we need to be aware of that because it impacts on them, of course, first of all, but also on us and the work they can do.

But I just wanted to say that when someone says, oh, it has moved to Lambeth, and you think, well, okay, so what? Where in Lambeth? What? How? Can we know anything more about that? Rather like my colleague Ian said, it is buried somewhere in the Report, but there is no background information. So, I would just really like to know what does a move to Lambeth really mean?

*The Chair:* Canon Spence, can you reply please?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Ian, thank you. This debate is for you to approve the apportionment which totals £33 million this year, and so, no, there is nowhere for Synod to vote on these sums which have been agreed between the Church Commissioners, the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops through the Emerging Church Steering Group. So, that is where that lies. Synod's voice is very much heard, Ian, in that space, and, yes, we have said that with the governance review will come the time now for us to look at apportionment and all the mechanisms of it.

I think it was Sue, was it, about ecumenical pieces. We give the financial grants out and the ecumenical work is very much - and I think this makes sense if you think about it - led by the Archbishops, which is where the reference to Lambeth comes in, with the Anglican Communion office and they are in the best place to receive, listen to and be given the ear of those leaders of churches. I would be in no doubt that the Archbishops would be quite happy to explain the scale of their activity. We provide valuable support, as you heard in the AC report earlier, in the Lambeth Conference, huge, huge commitments by the House of Bishops and many others across the piece, but we are providing the support. That spiritual conversation, that missional conversation, I think is rightly led from the offices of the Archbishops.

*The Chair:* I am going to move for closure on Item 21 to test the mind of Synod about this being sufficiently debated.

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

*The Chair:* We move to Item 21 to vote by a show of hands.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Sorry, I so move.

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

## ITEM 22

*The Chair:* So that is Item 21 dealt with. Item 22. Canon Spence, you can formally move Item 22. You so move?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Sorry, I do apologise, I have just been told that I was briefed slightly incorrectly on an answer I gave a minute ago. If it is alright, I shall ask that the corrected answer about the Council for Christian Unity is published with your papers for today. I now so move this motion.

*The Chair:* This is Item 22, so the matter is open for debate. I see no one standing so we can proceed to the vote on Item 22.

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

## ITEM 23

*The Chair:* Canon Spence, can you formally move Item 23?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I so move.

*The Chair:* Item 23 is open for debate.

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

*The Revd Christopher Blunt (Chester):* Many people may not have got to the end of the question paper but Questions 233 - 237 related to the CHARM housing scheme. I have been contacted by a group of CHARM-ers who are all obviously tenants in the housing scheme wanting this issue to be highlighted, because obviously they have had a 10% increase, where even the Government for social housing have limited it to 7%. The answers given were very clear in the Question Paper that the funding is very different, obviously for CHARM housing as it is for Government social housing and an emergency grant from the Archbishops' Council was also received by the CHARM scheme.

In the budget it seems that the CHARM scheme is receiving a 5% increase, which obviously, we all know, is a real terms decrease at the moment. So I wanted, for the future, just to highlight the fact that if the grant from the Archbishops' Council is going down and the rents are going up, the losers here are the people in CHARM accommodation, people who do not get very much of a voice, actually, in this kind of setting. If that could be looked into in the future that would be very much appreciated.

*The Chair:* Penny Allen, and then I am going to go to Clive Mather on Zoom, if we may.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* I fully support the previous speaker. I think it is very important that someone from the House of Laity actually speaks to clergy pensions and clergy housing. We value our clergy, we value the lifetime of work and experience that they have, and if we want to support them properly, then we will have to look at these budgets frequently. We have to acknowledge the rise in their cost of living and we have to make sure, as fellow Christians, we take care of them.

Just to say, and thank you for calling me and I fully support the previous speaker in asking for a review of this, and it is probably going to be necessary annually that we look at the CHARM housing budget. I very much regret the increase in people's expense on their housing.

*The Chair:* Now, I am hoping the technology works and Clive Mather can join us on Zoom.

*Mr Clive Mather (ex officio):* Yes, good morning. Thank you for the questions and the comments, which I understand and, in many respects, fully support and I am glad that the answers we gave to the written questions were helpful. I mean, if we backtrack just a little bit, it was apparent to the Board even a few years ago that the current CHARM housing model would be difficult to sustain for the future at the current subsidy levels. So, we began to look at the options. That process has been accelerated as a result of Covid, and, if I may dare say so, the so-called fiscal event that Prime Minister Truss brought about. And, of course, we all know that inflation has rocketed, not least, I have to say, in terms of acquiring the trades and other skills necessary to repair and maintain properties.

Interest rates have more than doubled, demand has accelerated in the short term for various reasons and as a landlord we are facing ever greater responsibilities from Government and regulators, and all of this not taking account of our commitment at Synod to reach net zero by 2030. Frankly, we are in a perfect storm, which is why we had to go back to the Archbishops' Council to arrange for emergency funding whilst we bring forward options to replace CHARM.

Now, we are quite clear as a Board, we can continue with the current CHARM model, but, as the previous speaker has said, we can only do that on the basis of a very different apportionment. And let me be blunt, it would be a great deal more expensive than the current Vote 5 formula allows. Very, very much more expensive. In order that people should have some sight of other options, we are developing and will be consulting through the rest of this year with employers, with dioceses and with all of the central agencies, other ways of offering housing support which can give people much earlier in their career advice and access to help, and we will give more choice and take better advantage of partnerships that we can engage in.

Now, this is not straightforward, but we will be welcoming views on that to see whether we cannot bring something forward which is a more sustainable financial model for the Archbishops' Council and for the dioceses and for Synod as a replacement for CHARM. If not, we will certainly be faced with much, much higher bills.

*The Chair:* Canon Spence to reply.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I thank Clive, who has partially answered the first two questions. Can we just remember we entered in for a further five years to an agreement to increase the funding for CHARM to the Pension Board to run it by 5% per annum. When we did that, historical inflation rates were such that these were real term increases. Even at the start of this year when we did the stipend consultation, the expectation was that inflation would be back down to 3% or 4% by the end of this year.

Life has moved on. So the 5% was right, it was a real terms increase, we were right earlier this year to give the Pensions Board several million pounds, £9 million from memory, I apologise if I get that wrong, to cope with the increased demand, the increased inflation and the increased borrowing costs. We will look forward to receiving from the Pensions Board the proposals. I know my colleagues on Archbishops' Council have and will continue to take very serious regard of the importance of this offering for retired priests who have worked so brilliantly through their sense of occasion over many decades. So, when we receive the proposal, I know my colleagues will give it the most serious consideration.

*The Chair:* Can I call Simon Butler? I am aware he is the Chair of the Clergy Support Trust, and after his speech I would be minded to move a motion for closure, subject to what Mr Spence has got to say.

*Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I declare an interest as Senior Treasurer and Chair of the trustees of the Clergy Support Trust. The charity continues to rejoice in its ability to help more and more clergy, but, Synod, we are now helping one in five serving clergy, and the situation we have as a Board is that we can continue to do that, but increasingly we find ourselves, when asked as trustees to continue to do work, asking this question: surely the Church of England should be doing this work, surely this is the work that they need to do to look after their clergy?

We are continuing to be able to develop ways of doing that, but we do find that we are increasingly worried that in the rush to grow and develop the work of the Church and its mission that there is increasing pressure on those who serve and those who continue to need help in retirement, and we have to get the balance right. I do not believe, personally speaking, I am not speaking on behalf of the Trust, that the balance is quite right at the moment.

It is all very well talking about advice for people on housing during their ministry, but if people have not got the money to spend on what they need for their day-to-day, how on earth are they going to be expected to pay for their housing in retirement, so we do have to think about this much more seriously. Let us try to help the clergy at this time, and not just think about growing the Church for the future because we will not grow the Church for the future if the clergy are demoralised, poor and worrying about their lives day to day.

*The Chair:* Canon Spence, would you like to reply to that?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* I am very happy just to say well said.

*The Chair:* I am going to test the mind of Synod on closure of Item 23, that this item has been sufficiently debated. I move the motion for closure on Item 23.

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

*The Chair:* I move to the vote on Item 23 by a show of hands or green ticks.

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

## **ITEM 24**

*The Chair:* So, Mr Spence, finally, for the last time, can you move Item 24 standing in your name?

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Just before I do, as this will be my last opportunity, I just want to give a very personal vote of thanks to Jo, to David and the entire finance team who have given me such superb support. David White, who you will often see, is my guide and mentor round this place and his patience, his courtesy, his dedication, have been utterly phenomenal and well beyond the call of duty. Having made that remark, I now so move.

*The Chair:* This matter is open for debate.

*Dr Rosalind Clarke (Lichfield):* This morning we have had many expressions of gratitude to Canon Spence, which I wholeheartedly endorse, but as he moves this last amendment standing in his name, I also want to express the deep sense of shame which I know we must all have felt following his earlier comments about having been excluded from Synod worship and no doubt in other ways. Synod, I think we owe Canon Spence an apology and a commitment to do better for all our members and all those who serve us at Synod in the future.

*The Chair:* Julie Dziegiel, and I probably do not need a motion for closure after that but we will see.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you. It was not intended as seeking an apology. It is just that we can all learn how to do things better, and I can do them much better too, so thank you.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* I am a member of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee and the Mutuality and Transparency in Finances Group. I hope to be able to thank Canon John Spence for the joy of working with him some time later in the year.

We are talking about the table of apportionment of the Archbishops' Council's budget in this item and I look at it with a smile. You see, this Darlow formula (and I heard somebody behind me say, "What's that?") used to be used to allocate money to dioceses to support them, based on various factors, and was previously used to apportion the money granted. It was retired quite a while ago now, and that was quite right, I have no dispute with that, but it is actually alive and well and it is being used here in the apportionments, just as a shadow of its former role.

The Darlow formula, bless its cotton socks, did help address the inequity of financial endowments that we see between the dioceses which have been mentioned today, particularly by Liverpool. Coming from Oxford Diocese, I am very aware of our relative wealth and conscious of the struggles of other dioceses; the hard decisions they have taken and the hard decisions they will need to take.

The use of the Darlow formula in the apportionment of the Archbishops' Council's budget does not do very much to balance this. We know that. These costs are only a relatively small part of the budget of any diocese and it cannot make a significant difference. However, the Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure recently received Royal Assent and is therefore ready to be used. I would like to heartily encourage the more well-endowed dioceses to take this inequity into their own hands and put generosity to other dioceses on the agenda for the meetings of the trustees of their DBFs.

My own DBF has made such a decision, and I hope and pray it will make further gifts to other dioceses in the future, but Lincoln, Coventry, Ely, Gloucester, Norwich, Peterborough and Worcester could also look, and look hard, at their capacity to do this, and perhaps London too. The apportionment rightly takes into account the financial inequity between dioceses but is limited in its capacity to address this. Right now generosity can do that little bit more.

*The Chair:* I see no one else standing. Canon Spence to reply.

*Canon John Spence (ex officio):* Thank you, Julie. You have long been a champion of inter-diocesan generosity. You will be aware there is legislation going through the process which will make this easier. I would also commend to those who are not doing it going on to a total return basis, which will increase the fund flow for your own use and for use elsewhere. But I am very happy to note, Julie, what you say.

*The Chair:* I am going to put Item 24 to the vote.

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



*The Chair:* The motion is clearly carried. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 11.33 am

## **ITEM 63**

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* Point of order. Madam Chair, I am here to raise a benign point of order to avoid the risk of you ending up keeping a disorderly house.

*The Chair:* God forbid.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Lichfield):* I hoped you would say that. We have a problem and it is a problem of cock-up and not conspiracy. The problem is the way we are set up at the moment is if we continue the business we will only have 30 seconds, I am told, in order to discuss the following item.

*The Chair:* I am going to explain that now before we get any further but thank you very much. We will now return to Item 63 and I will now explain what the position is. During Item 63, the further motion, Mr Wilson moved under Standing Order 34 that the Synod do adjourn the debate after the budget, which has now been completed. Synod voted in favour of that motion. Standing Order 8(1) provides that where the motion is moved by a member, the time allocated for it to be debated is subject to the time allowed. At the time Synod voted to adjourn this item there was under a minute remaining, as you said, for that to be debated. Accordingly, unless Standing Order 8(1) is suspended pursuant to Standing Order 39, the remaining time for this debate is under one minute. We are now resuming the debate.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Lichfield):* How long have I got?

*The Chair:* Are you raising a point of order?

*Mr Martin Sewell (Lichfield):* Yes, how long do I have to raise a point of order?

*The Chair:* The clock is stopped. Point of order. Go ahead.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Lichfield):* It is very simple. The clock is stopped. What we would like to do is under Standing Order 39 suspend Standing Order 8(1) for the duration of the debate on Item 63, which then means that we can actually have a proper debate on the substance. The substance is very important. Can I just say what the options are?

*The Chair:* You will get an opportunity to do that. You have proposed that. I give permission for that motion to be moved, so I call on you to explain the reasons for it. I am sorry we are procedurally following what we need to do. Go ahead.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Lichfield):* It is awful for us all and especially for you, Madam Chair. The point, it seems to me, is that we are at a crossroads here. We have to make a fundamental decision as to how we proceed. We either proceed with an independent route of an inquiry, which is what the following motion is saying, or we are saying to Archbishops' Council, "You organise this." I think that is a really important ---

*The Chair:* Can you just speak to suspending the Standing Order, please. You have up to two minutes for that. Less would be good.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Lichfield):* We have to debate this following motion, otherwise we will get back into the problems that we had last night. It is as simple as that. So, I ask that we suspend the Standing Order. It will then run for as long as the Chair in her discretion thinks the debate should be. We will have aired the issues and we will have made the decision in a clean and uncontroversial way. That must happen, it seems to me, and that is why I move this motion.

*The Chair:* I do not consider that the matter requires debate on that. Before putting the motion on 8(1) to the vote I wish to just explain to Synod the following, and I do so under the power afforded to me under Standing Order 39(3). For a motion to suspend a Standing Order to be carried it must be carried by at least three-quarters (75%) of members present, including those online voting. If the motion to suspend the Standing Order is lost, the debate on this item will end, and it may not come back. If the motion to suspend the Standing Order is carried, the debate on Item 63 will continue, but this may mean that other business on our agenda, including legislative business, may not be taken.

I now put the question that Standing Order 8(1) be suspended for the remainder of the consideration of this item of business. I order a counted vote of the whole Synod.

*The motion was put and lost, 175 voting in favour, 69 against, with 17 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* As the motion was not passed by three-quarters of the House, the motion is lost and we move to next business.

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 11.46 am

## **ITEM 25**

### **FAREWELL TO CANON JOHN SPENCE**

*The Chair:* Good morning, Synod. We now come to Item 25, Farewell. I would like to invite the Archbishop of York to deliver the farewell to John Spence.

*The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Dear friends, on my very first day as Bishop of Chelmsford, the diocesan secretary resigned. I do not think there

was a connection. Faced with the challenge of a critically important appointment and still only a few hours into the job, I looked around for help. Everyone I spoke to pointed in the same direction, the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, a certain John Spence. I had not met him before, though on the previous afternoon, as I had been installed in Chelmsford Cathedral, I had met his wife Yvonne, who had masterminded the splendid buffet that followed the service.

John did, indeed, help. He persuaded me to hire professional head-hunters, which I was not too sure about but I followed his advice. As we have all discovered in Synod, it takes a brave person not to follow his advice. However, what this meant was tons of paperwork. Not just forms and references but psychometric tests and other bits of analysis. When it came to the shortlisting meeting, half a dozen of us struggled into the room weighed down with box files full of paper. But not John. Already, and amazingly, all the information was somehow in his head. The one person without any paperwork in front of them had the greatest command of the paperwork. Synod, we have all noticed this but just for a moment think about what we have just seen: somebody eloquently and effortlessly going through a PowerPoint presentation with none of the slides in front of him and yet in his mind.

John helped me make an outstanding appointment and in those days before the national Church poached both of them (it was John Ball now at the Pensions Board) it was a hugely exciting few years. Here, let us as well as giving thanks to John, give thanks to Caroline. Caroline is his reader and the Synod papers she has had to read for John, which he has so amazingly digested, qualifies her for sainthood.

Born and brought up in Edinburgh, attending university in Dublin and then the Harvard Business School, a very successful career in banking was followed by another long and hugely fruitful gift of time, energy and expertise in the Church, local government and many charitable initiatives. In all of these John has brought wit, candour, expertise, vision (and dodgy jokes) to everything he has been involved in. He is a charmer. A raconteur. He has the most phenomenal memory and he has a zest for life.

John does not do things by halves. In fact, I am not sure that John knows what a half is. John is always looking to multiply things, to grow things, to find the potential in things, and, as well as those other gifts I have mentioned, he is therefore a huge encourager, and that has been true for me personally as it has for many of you.

John has not always been blind. He was diagnosed with sight problems in the late 1980s. The diagnosis anticipated a slow deterioration of his sight, but it all happened much more quickly and by about 1990 John was virtually blind. This blindness does not of itself make John a more remarkable person, because I am sure that the astonishing gifts of generosity and wisdom that we see in him were always there. Ah, but the way John has dealt with and the way that he works with his blindness is truly astonishing and probably the greatest witness to the one thing I have not yet spoken about, which is John's Christian faith.

Although he had to make what for most of us is an unimaginably difficult journey into darkness, John, what we see in you is dazzling light. It is the light of Christ that we see in you that can illuminate every darkness, and shines most brightly in those who know their need of God. So whenever John gets up to talk about the finances of the Church and throughout his service as Church Commissioner, Chair of the Audit Committee - it is a great long list I will not read them all out - in all these things John speaks of the Gospel. He knows that we do not have financial problems but spiritual challenges. He knows that the money is there to serve the mission, and that having money and being financially viable, though important, is not even half the story. Once again, John is not interested in halves. He wants to grow the money so that we can grow the mission. He wants to see Christ, as he so often says, shining brightly in everyone's life as we see it shining so brightly in his life.

As well as the personal challenge of blindness that John has had to overcome and live with, he and Yvonne have also known heart-breaking personal tragedy in their family life, the sort of thing that would defeat many people. But like in those glorious closing verses of the prophet Habakkuk, John is one of those Christians who - okay, maybe not dancing, but who radiates Gospel hopefulness even when there is loss and difficulty. Why? We know the answer. Because first and foremost John is a disciple of Jesus Christ. Such a disciple of Jesus Christ that somehow he is beyond Church tradition: simply a witness to the servant heart of Jesus.

Because most of us only see John here in this chamber and in synodical business, I want to tell you about the other contexts in which I have known him and have come to call him a friend.

When I first visited him in Chelmsford for a meeting over lunch he cooked me fish pie. There was no one else in the house. It was delicious by the way (perhaps a little bit too much pepper). I do not know how he does that, okay, I do not know how he does that. Like I do not know how he rides motorbikes, but he rides motorbikes. He and Yvonne live life to the full. They have an amazing gift of hospitality. The doors of their home are always open. There are places around their table. John has a very comprehensive collection of single malt whiskeys. I have done my best to sample all of them. It is a tough job that someone has to do.

But one thing more than anything else sums up John for me. Back on that afternoon when I was installed as the tenth Bishop of Chelmsford and met Yvonne, who had organised all the food, John was present but we did not get to meet. Why? Because he was in the kitchen, as he is on many social occasions at Chelmsford Cathedral, in the kitchen, up to his elbows in the sink, doing all the washing up.

John exemplifies and embodies three things from which we can all learn. First, the clear focused stewardship of his gifts, offering to God, and to the Church, the wisdom, experience and knowledge that only he has. But, secondly, even though God has gifted him in exceptional ways, and, goodness, he has used them to the full, John has never for

a moment thought of himself as anything other than a servant of the Gospel. It is that servant heartedness, with his hands in the sink, that I remember with the greatest thanksgiving. And, thirdly, on several occasions, I have heard John say this: "You don't need sight in order to have vision."

John, my dear brother, we do not know quite how you do it. We love you very much and we are in awe of you, and we esteem you.

You have served the Church of England so very faithfully. And, Yvonne, we also know that John could not have done it without you. You are always at his side and I know that you have done and do so much in your own right, and give so much.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you both. I cannot quite imagine the two of you resting for very long, since you give so much energy to your work in local government and charities, as you do in the Church, and that will continue. But good and faithful servant, we are lost for words in knowing how to express the gratitude of a very, very grateful Church. May God richly bless you, and give you the replenishing you need. May the Lord hold you and guide you and bless you.

John, we are amazed. Quite simply, you are one of the most remarkable human beings many of us have ever met, and we thank you for your vision and your service.

Hopefully John can still hear this. Thank the Lord for small mercies: speeches have no right of reply. We are both blubbing wrecks anyway.

*The Chair:* Thank you. That concludes this item of business. We move to the next item on the agenda.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 12.02 pm

### **ITEM 33**

#### **AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING ORDERS (GS 2292 Revised)**

*The Chair:* We come now to Items 33, 35 and 36. Members will need GS 2292 revised and Notice Paper 1 for these items. I now invite Joyce Jones to speak to Item 33. You have up to 10 minutes.

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* Chair, Item 33 is actually consequential upon Item 36, so I do not know if it would help if I spoke to Item 36 at the same time. I will just move 33.

Synod, I am standing to move this item as the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee. Sometimes people think that Standing Orders are boring and technical but they do

provide the framework by which a body of over 400 people can work together in an orderly manner and produce legislation with sufficient scrutiny for it to be approved by Parliament. We have seen sometimes the complexities of that in this Synod but without them, we would be reduced to chaos.

The Standing Orders Committee meets regularly to keep them under review, to propose amendments where necessary; to make Synod work more smoothly. Any member of Synod who thinks amendments are needed is welcome to approach or email myself or another member of my Committee, as listed at the top of our Report, to ask for them to be considered, and we will report back to Synod upon our consideration. That allows us to advise Synod of the effect. At every group of sessions the Committee produces a report on what it has considered and proposes amendments that it thinks necessary. That is what you will see in the 61st Report of the Standing Orders Committee. This enables us to consider all the implications of alterations that are proposed in the Standing Orders because they may well have effects beyond perhaps what is initially seen.

Often these are uncontroversial technical amendments which the Committee may list as deemed business, but if there are more substantial amended which may affect the way Synod members engage with business, they are put on the agenda for debate, as these amendments which we are going to consider now have been.

Synod members do not have to accept the Business Committee's judgment on whether amendments should be deemed or debated as five members can give notice of their wish for an amendment to be debated, as has been done with one of the amendments which we will consider later if there is time to do.

I hope that the Report is something which is helpful to you and gives you all the background to these things. I know it seems very long, but it considers all the things we have been asked to report on, although they may not need to be brought to Synod. Some people have expressed their appreciation for the paragraph on the use of Latin in Standing Orders, which some of them found quite light relief, so thank you to the staff who produced that.

We come to Item 33 which is consequential upon Item 36. This amendment concerns the process by which Standing Orders are amended. Item 36 is an amendment to Standing Order 127 under which the Standing Orders Committee is constituted. The Standing Orders Committee is obliged to report to Synod on its own proposals for amendment of a Standing Order, and also proposals for amendment of Standing Orders made by any member of Synod. This is so that all the implications of such an amendment can be considered, and legal advice can be taken, to enable Synod members to have all the information they need before focusing on such an amendment. A Synod member may propose such an amendment with three days' notice, and it is very difficult for the Standing Orders Committee to meet and give proper consideration in that timescale.

Item 24 therefore proposes that members should usually only propose amendments to the amendments which are proposed by or reported on by the Standing Orders Committee in its Report.

The normal procedure for members to raise concerns about the Standing Orders is for members to approach the Standing Orders Committee, who will consider the proposals and report on them. Several people have done that during this group of sessions. You can say to me or to other members of the Committee if there is something that you think would be a useful amendment, and you can obviously email and do all those other things.

However, there may be an exceptional case where an amendment is needed due to something that was not known or had not happened at the time that the Standing Orders Committee prepared their report, in which case, according to this amendment, the Chair may give permission for such an amendment to be moved. Item 33 makes the necessary consequential amendments to Standing Order 11 relating to notice periods.

Item 36 is the substantive amendment explaining why this is needed and the new procedure for members to bring forward amendments to Standing Orders and Item 33 gives the consequential amendments to the notice periods.

The Standing Orders Committee hopes that this provision will ensure that Synod members are as well prepared as possible when they debate amendments of Standing Orders, that they have all the information in front of them.

I now propose amendment 33.

*A Speaker:* Point of order. In my Order Paper amendments 33, 34, 35 and 36 are all actually identical, so could we have the full text please?

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones:* If you look at the First Notice Paper, you will see the full text.

*The Chair:* Please refer to Notice Paper 1 for the details. Item 33 is now open for debate. I see no one standing and on screen there is no one either, so we will move straight to the vote by a simple show of hands.

*Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely):* Point of order. Would the Chair please explain how we can vote on this when we do not know the outcome of the vote for Item 36?

*The Chair:* We have to respond in the order of the amendments, so if you do not wish to vote for this then that is a decision you make, but you will have to wait until Item 36 comes to respond to 36.

*Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely):* Might I ask another point of order? Could the Chair explain what happens if this vote is passed?

*The Chair:* That is not a point of order, that is a point of explanation, I am sorry. Can I respond and say if 36 is not passed then 33 will also fall, but at the moment we have to consider them in the order that they come.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Point of order. I wonder if we can facilitate this problem by adjourning Item 33 until Item 36 has been determined and then immediately return to 33 after that?

*The Chair:* Synod, Mr Scowen is proposing that we adjourn Item 33 and move to Item 36 and then after we vote on Item 36 we will later come back to Item 33. So, in effect, we will start with Item 35, then move to 36 and then come back to Item 33. Does this have your approval?

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried.

## **ITEM 35**

*The Chair:* Thank you. We are now going to move to Item 35. May I call Canon Jones to speak to Item 35? You have up to ten minutes

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* Thank you, Chair. Item 35 concerns following motions. We have heard something about these this morning. As you know, these are motions which can be moved by any member following on from debates on reports to Synod and presentations under Standing Orders 105 to 107, as listed in the Notice Paper. These matters cannot be amended but only taken note of. Any member of Synod may move a following motion and does not have to have the support of any other member to do so.

The Committee has noted that this is inconsistent with the practice relating to amendments which have to have the support of two members in addition to the mover of the amendment, and if the proposer of the original motion does not accept the amendment has to have the support of 25 members standing or otherwise indicating to be debated. So, the amendment at Item 35 would require 25 Synod members to indicate that they wish the debate to continue. If the relevant person defined in paragraph 3 (usually someone involved in the preparation of the report or presentation, that is the person bringing it forward, who might not be a member of Synod) indicates they do not wish it. This gives Synod members a say in whether such a motion is debated, to avoid debating a motion which has no or minimal support. It is about giving Synod members a say on whether a following motion should be debated or not, rather than taking up a lot of time on something which Synod members do not support.

I move the motion on Item 35.



*The Chair:* Item 35 is now open for debate.

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

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* It is complicated, is it not? You have already noted that this is not quite what you need. You need Notice Paper 1 and also you could benefit from GS 2292. We have already seen that Gavin's attempt at a following further motion has been frustrated, first by a time-out and then trying to get it back on the agenda just now.

There is already a mechanism to move on from this sort of motion, it is called next business, so I see this as just being an additional hoop to jump through, and that is the same as the next one which I will hopefully speak to later. Please, Synod, let us resist this and give members power to put forward following motions and not give them further technicalities to comply with and more hoops to jump through.

*The Revd Chris Moore (Hereford):* It might be helpful for us as Synod members to know from the proposer of this change whether any such following amendments will be emailed around us all so that we are aware of them, because obviously when we stand in the chamber when something is being debated, we are here, so we know about its existence. I may have missed it because I may have got myself confused, I appreciate, but it would be helpful.

*The Chair:* I see no one else standing, so I am going to call on Canon Jones to respond. You have up to five minutes.

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* Thank you for those comments. In response to Debbie Buggs, I would say that asking for 25 members to stand just gives parity to the position on amendments. It does not create an extra hurdle. It means that the rest of you in Synod have a chance to say whether you wish this to continue immediately or not, rather than someone having to move a motion for next business. It is the same way as we deal with amendments, so it just giving parity there.

As far as communicating following motions, that happens. There is a Notice Paper listing motions and amendments which is sent out to Synod members as soon as we get them. Obviously it is quite short notice but that is where you find it. I hope that is helpful.

*The Chair:* We now go to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried.

Members of Synod, in order to get through the next Items 36 and 33 in time, it is my view that it is for the better conduct of the Synod's business that we extend the sitting for 15 minutes, so ending at 12.45. For that I need the general consent of the Synod.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried.

## **ITEM 36**

*The Chair:* We move to Item 36 and I call on Canon Jones to speak.

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* I have already spoken to Item 36, in effect, that it is about the process through which Standing Orders are amended. It asks that members of Synod who wish to propose an amendment to Standing Orders should give notice to the Standing Orders Committee of those amendments which they think should be proposed so that the Standing Orders Committee can report upon them and give full advice to Synod before they are debated. It restricts the ability to bring amendments at short notice, except in case of emergency where something different has happened. I hope that is clear.

*The Chair:* Thank you. This item is now open for debate.

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

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* Currently, members can suggest to General Synod new Standing Orders or changes in the Standing Orders relatively easily, and you can see this on the Order Paper you have in your hand, for instance, Item 70 on page 8 from Mr Gavin Drake. He did not need to get the Standing Orders Committee's permission to put that in, so it is great that we can get things directly to you members.

The changes make this much more difficult. The opportunities are restricted and you have some more hoops to jump through and some additional restrictions, which just makes it difficult. I think we should keep members with the rights that they already have. Let us not remove powers of individual members, even when they are pedantic, picky and maybe persistent. We need people like that on the floor, do we not? Maybe I am even one myself.

Further, as a Chair I would be uncomfortable having this decision-making role. It could lead to perceptions of partisanship and unfairness, and, besides, the Chairs really do not operate outside of the chair that they sit on, so I think this is misconceived that Chairs have this right to decide. I think it would lead to confusion and discord and therefore I urge members to reject this item.

*Mr Nic Tall (Bath & Wells):* I want to speak in favour of this proposal because we need to think through what Standing Orders actually are and how important they are. They are the rules of the game and they are the goalposts. We can change the rules of the game, we can move the goalposts, but we need to do so in a way in which we can use them and really be well informed on how we do that. We are very much in the hands of the expertise of the Standing Orders Committee to be able to advise us on that.

I would be very reluctant to really push through changes on the basis of how we conduct ourselves in Synod without the Standing Orders Committee being able to give a full written report for us to consider beforehand. It is very important. We have seen throughout this set of sessions what happens when we get into issues with Standing Orders. We really need to take that clear advice from those we have on our Standing Orders Committee. I would encourage you all to support this proposal.

*The Chair:* I will be looking for a motion for closure immediately after the next speaker.

*The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham):* I am new to Synod, as you know, because I have made lots of mistakes previously by getting all this stuff wrong, but I am so grateful for being in a room with people to help guide me through this. As someone said when we were thinking about this, if we cannot get 25 people to stand for something, we probably should not be discussing it, and it is a waste of our time. I think it is really concerning that one person can derail or dominate a conversation constantly. We have to learn to read the room and we are here to read the Church. We are representing the national Church and we are wanting to be more accessible and inclusive.

If we are serious about wanting to encourage young people, as someone with quite severe ADHD, my concentration is easily lost and I am more engaged if I can get involved. I like standing up every now and again. It just seems practical and sensible to me that we are seeking more voices and hearing support on this, so please vote to support this.

*The Chair:* Can I test the mind of Synod on a motion for closure?

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. Canon Jones, can you respond, please?

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* Thank you for your contributions. I wish to make it clear in response to Debbie Buggs' comments, it is not about members having to get the permission of the Standing Orders Committee to produce amendments. It is just giving the Standing Orders Committee a chance to advise on the amendments. When we have very short notice, as we have with Mr Drake's amendments in this session, we have just had a very short meeting to look at them, but we really need more time to consider the full implications, and that is what I will be saying if we get round to having a debate on them.

As far as the Chair making a decision as to whether amendments can be brought at short notice, this will be just on the basis of whether the situation has changed or something else has happened since the Standing Orders Committee's report was published.

A response to Nic Tall, yes, thank you that you value the explanations in the Standing Orders Committee's Report and the consideration given to them.

Thank you, Chantal Noppen, for your comments. I think you were responding to the other amendment but thank you for saying that Synod members should have a say in these things, so thank you.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 36 to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried.

## **ITEM 33**

*The Chair:* Thank you. We now return to Item 33 to continue the debate which we started. I see no one standing, therefore, I move to the vote on Item 33.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. I now move to the next item. Thank you very much, Synod.

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 12.30 pm

## **ITEM 507A**

### **SPECIAL AGENDA I:**

### **LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

### **FACULTY JURISDICTION (AMENDMENT) RULES 2023 (GS 2310)**

*The Chair:* Thank you, Synod. In our extended time we come now to Item 507, the Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2023. In addition to the Order Paper, members will need the amended Rules themselves GS 2310 and the Explanatory Notes GS 2310X.

I will just explain how we are going to proceed. First, Morag Ellis, the Dean of the Arches & Auditor will move Item 507A, the preliminary motion that the Amendment Rules be considered. This will provide members with an opportunity to make general comments about the Amendment Rules, or to raise specific points which do not relate to the amendments on the Order Paper. If the preliminary motion at Item 507A is carried, we

will then move to the amendments set out on the Order Paper at Items 513 and 514. What happens after that I will explain when we get to it.

I call now on the Dean of the Arches & Auditor Morag Ellis to move Item 507A, "That the Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2023 be considered". The Dean may speak for not more than 10 minutes.

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (ex officio):* Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Synod, many of you will I am sure remember Lord Boateng's address to us in February 2022 which received a standing ovation. In the speech he challenged us to act to address racism in the Church, which he described as a "gaping wound in the Body of Christ". He called for policy and good intentions to be put into the effect.

This proposal gives Synod the opportunity to put some of those good intentions into effect. I will explain why. Last July, Lord Boateng met with the Commission and with Synod members to listen and discuss the findings of the first Report, which included recommendations calling for change and progress in many areas of the Church's life, including various aspects of Church law, specifically, the faculty jurisdiction.

Last September, I was privileged to be invited to meet the Commission formally to answer their questions and to discuss proposed changes to how we do our work in the faculty jurisdiction in particular. One specific and important issue relates to what is often called contested heritage or, as the Church Buildings Council in their Guidance define it, "memorialization in tangible form of people or events connected with racism and slavery". That is the definition, as I say, in the current guidance of the Church Buildings Council and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission. Those organisations have also responded to the Commission, working on revisions to that guidance, assisted by theologians who have reflected deeply on the issues involved, which are complex. This work has been accompanied by the setting up of a new racially diverse committee which will give case-specific responses on faculty petitions concerning contested heritage.

I told the Commission about this work and how it relates to the determination of petitions, as well as sharing with them the ways in which the ecclesiastical judiciary is developing into a body more representative of the society which we, as part of the Church of England, seek to serve. They were pleased to hear of all these developments but were keen for the new guidance and the inputs of the new Committee to be secured by legislation.

With that introduction by way of background, I turn now to the amendments themselves. As explained in paper GS 2310X, they will do two things: one, require intending applicants for a faculty, in formulating proposals relating to the movement, et cetera, of a contested heritage item - I am going quickly here - to provide an explanation of how they have had due regard to guidance issued by the CBC and to demonstrate that they have done so; and two, require Chancellors, when giving reasons for granting a faculty or for dismissing

a faculty petition, to state how a decision has taken the statutory and case-specific guidance into account.

The way that this is proposed to work is that parishes who intend to seek faculty permission for removing or modifying such an artefact would need to read and consider the application of the CBC Guidance to their situation, and they would need to explain in their submission to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) how they have done that. The Committee would be required to state in its advice to the Chancellor whether or not that explanation was adequate, stating why if not. This does not mean whether or not the DAC agrees with the conclusions of the parish's process, so they are not being required to sit in the Chancellor's seat, nor does it mean that the DAC therefore is determining the petition. Rather, what it would do is provide the Chancellor, who would be determining the petition, with an indication as to whether or not the parish has engaged with the guidance, which is of course there to help people approaching this complex and sensitive and important topic.

The guidance contains and will continue to contain a helpful framework for decision-making. The key part runs to some seven pages, so it is not immense but it is very practical and sets out the kinds of issues. I will mention only a few of them as we are very short of time. It points out it should be considered from the perspective of the church itself and those in the congregation and the wider community, including tourists and others in certain parts of the country. What is the level of negative impact on those detrimentally affected by the object? How does it affect the church's ability to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom? A series of practical but sometimes deep questions.

The new Rules would also require the faculty petition which goes to the Chancellor to set out the same matters, and, finally, a Rule would require the Chancellor to identify any relevant guidance, general or case specific, from the racially diverse specialised committee, that the Chancellor has received and be obliged to state how the Chancellor had taken that material into account in determining the petition. That was the thing which the Commission was very keen so that Chancellors would, in their words, "hear the voices of colour" speaking on this topic.

While we were doing all this work and head scratching and looking at the Rules, we identified a very minor error that existed in the current Rules and the final proposal here would amend that and tidy it up.

Synod, I commend these provisions to you.

*The Chair:* Thank you. The motion is now open for debate. In view of the extreme pressure on time, I am going to set a speech limit from the outset of two minutes.

*The Revd Andrew Mumby (Southwark):* I cannot believe I am standing to talk about faculty jurisdiction, but I really want to thank the Dean of the Arches for this work. I was privileged to hear a lecture in the Koinonia series between Westminster Abbey and St

Paul's Cathedral by Dr Renie Choi, which I deeply commend to us all, on contested heritage. In her research Dr Choi asked people of global majority heritage to give her a tour of Southwark Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, and I think one more place, and what they spoke about was the effect of being in a worshipping space with a 12-foot statue of, for instance, Lord Palmerston and other contested figures, some of whom profited from the trade of enslaved people, in worshipping spaces, for veneration, for glorification.

One of the other examples that really deepened this was she said one of the participants who gave her a tour said when Anglican missionaries came to us, they told us, "No statues in your spaces of worship. Then we come to Westminster Abbey and not only are there statues but they are not characters from the Bible, they are not the Saints; they are very controversial figures".

I am grateful for the idea of keeping the voice of people of global majority heritage in this conversation, and particularly encourage us to think very creatively about cathedrals and other spaces where tourists visit. If we cannot get to the decision quickly to be working on contested images, can we just cover them up in the meantime, for instance? Can we be creative?

I really welcome this motion. I welcome the fact that it is helpful and constructive to parishes.

*The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich):* I welcome this idea and this motion before Synod. I think it is an extremely good idea. There is a choice we face, Synod, between whether the Church of England acts like a museum to keep heritage alive, heritage that is often contested, or we act as a Church that is welcoming to all of God's people, regardless of what ethnicity or race they are.

I really support this and I think that we need to be mindful of our spaces of worship and how welcoming they are, because racism and the Church's complicity in that is a boil on the Body of Christ. It is something that we should be repentant of. And repentance is not just about saying sorry, it is about action too, so let us take action on this as quickly as we can.

*The Chair:* As members will have noticed, we do not the time available to continue with this item of business so there will be an adjournment for lunch and then the Chair of the Business Committee will be addressing us immediately after lunch on variations of order of business. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR *Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 2.00 pm

### **ITEM 3**

#### **ADDRESS BY AN ECUMENICAL REPRESENTATIVE**

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, Synod. As we resume our business after a slightly shortened lunch break, we need to start this afternoon's business before we get on to the agenda with yet a further variation of business to be dealt with by Robert Hammond in his capacity as Chair of the Business Committee. I invite him to come to the podium. No, I was off, but clearly you are not.

We will start then with reverting to where we would have been on Friday because we are very pleased to be able to welcome now the right Revd Daniel Gutiérrez, Bishop of Pennsylvania, who will deliver an address to General Synod on behalf of the Anglican Communion. You will remember that we had hoped, but were not able, to welcome him on Friday as one of our earlier items of business. We are very delighted to be able to welcome him now.

*The Bishop of Pennsylvania (The Rt Revd Daniel Gutiérrez):* Good afternoon and thank you for the kind invitation. I bring you greetings from the Compass Rose Society and I say the best diocese in the Communion, the great Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania. I know you will not agree, but I do. I love my people. I want to just start, and I say this to all my clergy and laity, that I am grateful for you, your devotion to Christ, your willingness to step into something you fear, to have those difficult discussions and walk out of here as siblings in Christ, so my deep gratitude for you.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and I were speaking the other day and my talk has changed a bit because I would like to tell you about my diocese. It sort of mimics what is happening throughout the Communion and how we have transformed by the power and love of Christ.

I came into a broken diocese. As a matter of fact, when I was going through the process, someone said, "The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, destroying bishops since 1789". I looked at my wife and I was like: God, really? To tell you, the Canon in the Episcopal Church for removing a bishop was named for my predecessor and so it was a challenge. But I want to tell you about me. Violence and poverty defined my life. All I knew were gangs; addiction of my cousins; prison for many of family; drugs, and it was horrific.

*A Speaker:* That was only (inaudible).

*The Bishop of Pennsylvania (The Rt Revd Daniel Gutiérrez):* Yes, that is what I thought, I heard all of that. That was my life. It is good. It is the good news that is left. This should be the Church. I did not seek beauty outside of my community. I sought beauty within. There were various instances where I saw the beauty of the people and the neighbourhoods and even of the challenges. When I was elected Bishop of Pennsylvania, as I said, it was broken. I came from the western part of the United States, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, New Mexico to Philadelphia, from poverty to a great colonial, second oldest, fourth largest state. We decided together that things had to be different, different from the world.



I think it is because of my upbringing that I had that hope, hope in people, hope in the possibility and that deep trust in Jesus Christ. One good thing about being raised as what we call Hispanos in the United States is that faith is not something that we do. It is who we are. It was part of our everyday. Getting back to the East Coast, we had to come back to Jesus because there is nothing else that matters. The Church cannot be a social club based on a religious ideal. There has to be Jesus. I call them what I call a revolution of the heart.

My favourite passage in Scripture is John 13:23. It is when John leans his head on the heart of our Lord. If you think about it, anyone who has ever been created can lean their head against the heart of God and discover who they are and what their future can be. That just should spend a shiver down each one of our spines. I am reminded of this. We had to go back, because I think going back to where it began helps us remember where it will end. Him. It is through my trials and everything else that I believe passionately in hope: hope in the Church, hope in our future and hope for society.

Think about it. We say the creed every week, right, and then we get so worried about budgets and money and everything else, but if we believe what we say in the creed I say bring it on. Nothing can beat us because we have that power of Christ. This is what I call my diocese to do. I kept trying to tell them go for the heart of Jesus because we spend too much time trying to get into the head of Jesus rather than seeking his heart and I wanted to call them again and again back to the heart of Jesus. What does that mean, that we have to be different from the world, different in every way? Throughout the Gospels, we see where Jesus created communities where people could flourish rather than fade. All the time. It does not matter who they were. Often, we get it wrong.

I am not trying to be, but I have heard of thousands of stories and all of you have about people leaving the Church because of the fighting, the judgment, the marginalisation, the isolation, but never one person leaving because we were too compassionate, too loving and too merciful. If I had a magic what we call canon, because I really hate the slogan of the Episcopal Church, "The Episcopal Church welcomes you". Throughout the Synod, I have heard you speak about language and the use of the words we use and it is important because what does welcoming denote? This is my house, you can come in but you can be made to feel unwelcome. We changed it in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. It is a place where you belong because belonging denotes something different. If you are not at the table, there is a seat missing. If your voice is not part of the discussion, it is incomplete. It does not matter who you are, where you come from or what you look like, no condition is like the love of Christ. This is where you belong because no one should have to fit in at Church.

We then decided that we are not going to say what we do, we are going to do what we say because the time of talk has passed. We have to enter into the world with our hearts. I also want to remind our diocese and our Church that we are no longer the establishment Church. Get over it. Let us be. Let us claim the title of a developing Church. There is

some liberation in that. We can do those things that we were afraid to do. We can be daring. So what we are now and we are calling ourselves is a Church of the poor, the compassionate, the merciful and the loving. Poverty, I remind them, is not only economic. There is spiritual poverty. There is relational poverty. There is physical poverty. There is mental poverty. So everyone is included.

Mercy, we have forgotten because I know many of us will know that the place that seems to be lacking in mercy is the Church. We are calling that. That is our diocese because I want us to be a gritty and messy Church, revolutionary, not afraid to take risks, not afraid to fail, not afraid to love, not afraid to belong, not afraid to step into the world with the love, mercy and hope of Jesus Christ. That is what we have called our diocese to be. When people hear that, they will say they fed the hungry; they welcome the immigrant; they clothed the unclothed; they healed the sick; they did those things like Jesus, and we created a place of belonging for everyone. After eight years, it is hard to believe, I am getting old, I am like one of the senior Bishops in the House of Bishops now and I thought 60, consecrated since my time. Since that time, we have opened three churches during Covid. We are planning 12 more in the next year.

We are doing those things that the world says we could not do and it is because we leaned against the heart of Jesus together. We welcomed one another. It is not to say we do not have our differences, whether theological or whether personality, but we are taking time by leaning against the heart of Christ and through that transcendence seeing one another as Christ sees each one of us. That is the message that the world needs to hear. I know it, because when I look at you because of my profound faith in Jesus Christ I do not see laity, I do not see clergy, I see Christ as if he was right in front of me.

Let us do that together. Lean against his heart and do those things no one expects us to do. That is what the good news really should be. I know I am probably over my time because I see the eyes. That is the way my wife looks at me when she is (inaudible). I ask her how often do I preach and she says to her about ten times a day. But thank you for blessing me with your ministry, your faithfulness and your love. The Church of England is a very special place for me and I hope to see you often. God bless you and know that I love you.

## **VARIATION OF BUSINESS**

*The Chair.* Thank you. Now I call upon Robert Hammond as Chair of the Business Committee to propose a variation of business.

*Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):* This is feeling like my second home standing here, Synod. We need to try to make sure we can get through as much business as possible and so I would like to propose a slight variation to this afternoon's order of business. I am sorry if your agendas and your Notice Papers are beginning to look like a map of Spaghetti Junction with all the arrows that you have probably got. I would like to propose that we resume Item 507A, the Faculty Jurisdiction item, immediately; that we

then take Item 508, the Draft Clergy Conduct Measure; we then take Item 501, the Electronic Services Register item from Friday afternoon; and, then, when that is complete, we progress through the Order Paper as it is laid out.

*The Chair:* We need to see if Synod approves of that.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried and so that will be the change in the order of business. Might I ask from the Chair, will there be a notice of that anywhere available? No, because that was so much simpler than what we were told this morning. So we are not, that is fine, thank you. That closes that item of business.

We will proceed to the next item which is to pick up where we left off when we adjourned for lunch which is the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules. There will be just a change of personnel on the platform apart from me and we will proceed with that then.

## **ITEM 507A**

*The Chair:* We resume our debate on Item 507A. You will recall that we were in the middle of a debate when the adjournment occurred and the speech limit was two minutes. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?

*The Revd Kathryn Campion-Small (Bristol):* I had not planned to speak but, as the rector of a Church in central Bristol where I am told the west doors would be opened and the ships departing on their journeys would be blessed in time passed and with a church full of monuments connected to families who were involved in that trade, I felt I would just add my words of thanks for what is in front of us. These are very live questions in my parish. What is on offer will make it much easier for us to take positive action in how we address the history that is embodied in our building.

We in the Diocese of Bristol are hugely blessed with a joint project with the University of Bristol where somebody is doing some research into monuments in churches that may have historic connections with the slave trade and so, at the end of that process, my church and others will be presented with some excellent research that we can use in faculty applications. I was surprised to hear from one of my colleagues in the diocese though that some churches declined the invitation to participate in this research. It must be because for them they feel it is opening a can of worms and dealing with what comes out is just too much and too overwhelming. That is clearly an attitude that needs to be challenged and these changes by making the process simpler and more focused on mission and justice will enable church communities like mine and like those who are too overwhelmed to touch this with a barge pole to move forward more confidently in buildings that speak of God's liberating love.

*The Revd Timothy Edwards (Rochester):* I wanted to add something that was coming from a slightly different angle from some of the speeches that we have had. We have had a number of speeches on this point helpfully making the point about issues of justice and the impact on worshippers and potential worshippers. We have observed a couple of times during this group of sessions what we are here for as Synod and that is primarily to be here as a legislative body not sort of as a body to make gestures or protests but, happily, in this case those two are not opposed to each other. This is an Act which would make for better and more efficient law and, therefore, I urge us to vote in favour.

*Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford):* I made reference in a previous intervention to the complexity of our sessions and I would say that, on this particular issue – faculties - it is not always as black and white as it seems in our haste to apply justice and sensitivity to racial history. The people to whom these monuments were put up were not always black and white. I would just urge that in the interests of education, for instance, for our children it is not always the solution to remove a monument, but to explain. Some of these people have done great things of good in the field of education or hospitals or other kinds of provision and I would urge that, rather than just remove these monuments, we use them as an opportunity to educate and warn and guide. It is just a comment to redress the balance, if I may.

*The Chair:* I see just one person standing. We will have that and then I will be minded to put a motion for closure on this item.

*Dr Chris Angus (Carlisle):* With reference to the last speaker's point, I think I would point out that the guidance from the Church Buildings Council actually covers these points really quite well, so please do look at the guidance.

*The Chair:* I see no one standing and so having announced the motion for closure I now need to put it even though there is no one standing. I put the motion for closure on this item.

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

*The Chair:* I call upon the Dean of the Arches to respond to the debate.

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (ex officio):* Thank you, Synod and a special thanks to all who have spoken. I am going to reply very briefly and take the last two contributions first from Chris Angus and Mary Durlacher. More than once in my opening statement I described this as complex territory and, indeed, it is for the reasons that Mary articulates: that mix of good and bad, to use very simplistic terms, that we see in the lives of some of our forebears and the complexities of history. The guidance really engages and helps other people to engage with that kind of complexity. That is part of the reason why it is so important to be making sure that conversations and decisions about this are done in the light of the guidance.

Timothy Edwards, I would agree with you about the importance of the legislative role of this body and I am glad that you see no tension between the roles of Synod with regard to this piece of legislation. The work with the University of Bristol that Kathryn Campion-Spall spoke about again is exactly the kind of careful work which the guidance recommends and it is very good to hear that that is being done in collaboration with the University in Bristol.

Graham Kirk-Spriggs spoke about being mindful in places of worship of the harm that can be done by the presence of memorials and the importance of taking action as well as saying sorry. Well, this legislation is intended exactly to do that, legislatively to take action.

Andrew Mumby, who was the first contributor to our debate, spoke of the excellent work of Dr Renie Choy, with whom I know that the Church Buildings Council officers who have worked on the guidance have been in touch as well. It is good to have her work acknowledged here in Synod. Andrew also spoke about covering memorials as an interim measure. Again, that is one of the options considered in the guidance and that step is being taken in some places. Thank you to everybody. Thank you also to everyone who has worked to enable us to get back to this debate and I apologise to those whose items have got put down the list. I move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 507A to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried.

## **ITEM 513**

*The Chair:* That means that we now come to amendments at Item 513 and 514 on this morning's Order Paper, that is Order Paper VI - not this afternoon's Order Paper because the material is not on there. We come now to the amendments at items 513 and 514 and I call upon the Right Worshipful Peter Collier KC, Vicar-General of the Province of York, to move his first amendment, Item 513. He may speak for not more than five minutes.

*The Rt Worshipful Peter Collier KC (ex officio):* I will not need anything like that, thank you, Chair. On Saturday, when Synod passed the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure, clause 13 amended the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure that will enable diocesan chancellors to vary their Church regulations to allow memorials to be introduced into churchyards without the need for a faculty. That part of the 2018 Measure is mirrored in the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules and so, to achieve what Synod wanted to do on Saturday, we also need to amend the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules, and my apologies for not having spotted that when the Revision Committee were doing their work. The first of my amendments will simply do that and, if you pass that, the second will deal

with the timing of it coming into effect which will be not immediately but when Parliament has finally approved the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure. I beg to move Item 513.

*The Chair:* I call upon the Dean of the Arches to respond to Item 513 to indicate whether she accepts or not.

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (ex officio):* Thank you very much, madam, yes.

*The Chair:* Splendidly brief. The matter is open for debate. I see no one standing and, therefore, we can proceed directly to voting on this.

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

## **ITEM 514**

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried and so I call upon Judge Collier to move Item 514.

*The Rt Worshipful Peter Collier KC (ex officio):* I beg to move it.

*The Chair:* Thank you. I need to call upon the Dean of the Arches to indicate whether she accepts the amendment.

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (ex officio):* Yes.

*The Chair:* You cannot be shorter than that, thank you very much. That matter is now open for debate. I see no one standing and, therefore, I can put item 514 to the vote.

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

## **ITEM 507B**

*The Chair:* I now call upon the Dean to move Item 507B, "That the Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 202 (as amended) be approved". She has up to ten minutes.

*The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (ex officio):* I shall not take that amount of time. The voting of Synod has really said more eloquently than I could what I think all of us, or very nearly all of us, want to say about this. This is a small but important piece of legislation. Now, thanks to Peter Collier, it is also perfectly formed and for all the reasons I set out in opening and in responding to those who have contributed to the debate, I move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* This matter is now open for debate. I see no one standing and there is no one indicating a wish to speak from Zoom and so I put Item 507B to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. The Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2023 will now be laid before both Houses of Parliament pursuant to the Statutory Instruments Act 1946. That concludes this item of business and we now go on to the Clergy Conduct Measure as indicated in your Order Paper VII for this afternoon's business.

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 2.35 pm

## **ITEM 508**

### **SPECIAL AGENDA I:**

### **LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

### **DRAFT CLERGY CONDUCT MEASURE (GS 2311)**

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, synod. We now come to Item 508, the Draft Clergy Conduct Measure. For this you will need GS 2311 and the Explanatory Notes which are GS 2311X. I would like to call on the Chair of the Steering Committee, the Revd Canon Kate Wharton, to move Item 508, "That the measure entitled, 'Clergy Conduct Measure' be considered for revision in committee". Canon Wharton may speak for not more than ten minutes.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* Synod, you have before you today for First Consideration the draft Clergy Conduct Measure. You will, I am sure, recall that last July Synod endorsed the proposals contained in the Implementation Group's Report under "Authority Revisited". This draft Measure has been produced as requested by Synod to reflect those proposals. It will not be possible in this speech for me to go through every clause in detail, but I will highlight the major changes that the Measure proposes.

Before I do so, I would like to make two general points. First, the aim of the Implementation Group was to design a system based in the rules of natural justice that provided a swift, proportionate and efficient way of dealing with a wide range of complaints whilst also defending the integrity of the Church and clergy from frivolous, malicious and vexatious accusations. This draft Measure sets out that framework but it is not a complete picture. Central to the operation of the system will be the Rules that will accompany the Measure. Much of the detail about how the system will operate on the ground will be contained in these Rules. The Rules are secondary legislation and can only be made once the Measure has been finally passed. It is not possible at this stage, therefore, to provide the Rules in draft form to Synod as the system may yet change as a result of amendments at the Revision Stage.

At the end of the Explanatory Notes, GS 2311X, an illustrative outline of the structure that the Rules will take has been provided to help you to see what they might look like. As the draft Measure progresses through Synod, more detail will be added to this outline.

You will, of course, have the opportunity to debate, amend and approve these Rules when they are eventually brought before Synod.

Secondly, this is the start of a legislative process which will include meetings of the Revision Committee and at two further Synod sessions there will be opportunities to amend and debate the draft Measure. The Steering Committee intends to hold a fringe event for members when the Measure returns to Synod and we hope that you will join us for this event. There will also be further consultations with survivors facilitated through the NST.

Synod, turning to the detail of the Measure. The principal feature of the new system is that complaints will be allocated as a grievance, misconduct or serious misconduct. This represents a major change from the CDM which is designed only to deal with serious misconduct. A grievance being a minor complaint that does not amount to misconduct will be dealt with at a local level in a relatively informal way without the imposition of any penalty. Responsibility will lie with the bishop to appoint a designated person to attempt to resolve the grievance.

The Measure does recognise, however, that inevitably not all grievances can be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved. A complaint of misconduct is classed as an allegation of wrongdoing that would not result in a form of prohibition or removal from office or revocation of licence. These complaints will be investigated by assessors operating regionally across the Church, but from outside the diocese where the complaint arose. In a case where a finding of misconduct is made, the bishop will impose a penalty but will not be permitted to remove the cleric from any office, revoke the cleric's licence or prohibit the cleric from ministering.

Complaints of serious misconduct will be referred immediately by the bishop to the investigation and tribunals team which will be located within the legal office of the NCIs. This team will oversee and administer an independent investigation and, where complaints are referred to a tribunal or court, conduct those proceedings. This team will also give general advice and guidance about the Measure to those operating the system. It will be possible for a complaint allocated to one track to move to another if during the investigation it transpires that the subject matter is either more serious or less serious than had been first thought.

These are some of the particular features of the new Measure:

- i. Self-referral. Regardless of the level of complaint, clergy will be able to self-refer into the system in respect of their own conduct, but they will not be under a duty to do so.
- ii. Pastoral support. When a complaint is made to the bishop, a new statutory duty is proposed which will require the bishop to consider and offer appropriate pastoral support to the parties, the people in the parish or place of ministry of the respondent and any other person with an interest in the complaint.



- iii. Limitation. Currently, under the CDM all complaints must be brought within one year of the last instance of the alleged misconduct taking place. There are exceptions to that rule in relation to complaints involving sexual conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult. Implementing an IICSA recommendation, the draft Measure abolishes this limitation period for all complaints of serious misconduct. Complaints that do not amount to serious misconduct will still need to be brought within the one year period, although where there is a good reason why the complainant did not bring the complaint sooner permission from a judge may be sought for the matter still to proceed. Grievances will need to be brought within one year and there will be no opportunity to extend that period. We hope that, in setting the framework in such a way, a balance is struck between providing access to justice for those who have suffered serious wrongs and protecting clergy from having minor matters hanging over them for many years.
- iv. Protected parties. New procedures have been proposed for certain vulnerable and protected parties. Where a child or a person who lacks capacity wishes to bring a complaint, it will be possible to appoint a litigation friend to conduct the complaint in their place.
- v. Clarity. In order to provide clarity as to outcomes, it will no longer be an option for a bishop to take no further action as an outcome to a complaint.
- vi. Tribunals. The administrative burden of convening tribunals can be a significant cause of delay in the current system. To address this, the draft Measure provides that tribunals and courts will comprise three members, less than the current five within the CDM, and have a dedicated clerk to oversee their administration. The number of persons that may be appointed to chair a tribunal has also been increased.
- vii. Vexatious complaints. The reputation and integrity of clergy are a vital part of their credibility as ministers. Sadly, though, this means that clergy are sometimes vulnerable to malicious complaints. Whilst it is obviously a fundamental principle of justice that those who need to have recourse to this system should be able to access it, there must also be robust procedures in place to protect clergy. The Measure provides that where a person has habitually and persistently and without reasonable grounds made complaints, applications or requests which are vexatious or totally without merit, then a complainant, a bishop or the investigation and tribunals team may apply for a restraint order against that person. Where granted, this will prohibit the person, unless they receive prior permission from a judge, from making any further complaints, applications or requests and any ongoing procedures would automatically cease. Such an order would either last for a set period or indefinitely.
- viii. Suspension. Presently, where a cleric is suspended they may not exercise any function of their orders without the permission of the bishop. Whilst in some cases that is right and proper, in other cases it would be more proportionate to restrict the person from carrying out certain specified acts without imposing a total ban on their ministry. To achieve this aim, the Measure introduces a power for the bishop to impose a restriction order as a lesser step than suspension. Additionally, an

order to ensure that clergy are only fully suspended when that is really needed, a new threshold test of necessity has been introduced.

- ix. Sanctions and penalties. New provisions have been made for the imposition of administrative sanctions as opposed to penalties in the form of written warnings and advice for lower level misconduct. Two further IICSA recommendations have also been implemented. The first is the abolition of the requirement for a respondent who has admitted misconduct to agree the penalty, currently known as penalty by consent. In cases of misconduct, a tribunal will impose a penalty. In both cases, there will be a route of appeal. The second is the reintroduction of the power to depose a clerk from Holy Orders following a finding of serious misconduct. While the Church holds that those who have been admitted to Holy Orders can never be divested of the character of those Orders, it has always been possible through a legal process to depose a person from them.
- x. Finally, to ensure fairness a robust system of appeals has been built into the process. There remain a few areas still under discussion. No doubt there will be improvements and refinements to the draft Measure which members of Synod in due course can offer.

In the hope that Synod is content that the draft Measure proceeds to Revision, I would encourage members to submit their proposals to the Clerk so they may be considered by the Revision Committee. Discipline is, by its very nature, not an easy task. It requires us to balance competing interests. Scripture though teaches us the way. It reminds us that while those who teach will be judged more strictly, those who live by the Spirit should restore a sinner gently. This is the challenge for any modern disciplinary structure and even more so for the Church. This new proposed system seeks to meet that challenge. It seeks to be fair to all interested persons, to provide swift access to justice, to ensure a robust response, coupled always with compassion; and to ensure that all clergy can go about their ministry with the assurance of the Church and that by their calling, their training and their ordination they are trusted.

With apologies to Synod, I commend this draft Measure to you and I beg to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper. Thank you.

*The Chair.* Thank you. This motion is now open for debate. I should just mention that no amendments to this motion are in order. Your speech limit is five minutes.

*The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford):* Thank you for calling me and for five minutes, which is longer than I expected, but, as I wrote my thesis on this, I am sure I can spin it out a bit. In fact, I shall stick to some main points because I am sure I can chip in on the detail as the Revision Stage proceeds.

There is a lot of good in this draft Measure, and I commend it to you and I want to encourage Synod to support it. The triage system, the different categories and also very reassuringly, I think, the ongoing exclusion of doctrine, ritual and ceremonial and all the risks they would bring are the key points.

But I want to caution Synod I feel we have to reassure ourselves this is not going to solve the problem of clergy discipline. I think with a degree confidence that this is the sixth piece of legislation on clergy discipline in the last 200 years, since the Church Discipline Act of 1840. One thing that is good about this one is it is not a kneejerk reaction to particular cases, as that one was and in some ways the 2003 Measure was. I use “kneejerk” in the ecclesiastical sense in that they closely followed cases within the preceding 20 years which influenced the drafting.

But if I can try to be serious, and I am not very good at it, my major concern in the conceptualisation of the Measure is about the nature of the standards which it presents; the definition of misconduct - I think it is section 3 - and the place of written standards in the draft Measure. There is reference to the Canons and to the Acts of Convocation and in a note it explains the among the Acts of Convocation of course are the guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy.

That sounds good and like we have a body of stuff we hold the clergy to, but, and I know I have said versions of this before, there is a gap between that and perhaps the real areas of concern. I would like to give a more serious example than I have sometimes before. The Canons say that the clergy should say Morning and Evening Prayer, meaning Morning and Evening Prayer according to an authorized Church of England liturgy every day. They should attend and receive Holy Communion every Sunday. Those are good and wholesome standards, and I commend them to the ordinands and curates with whom I work, but I am not sure they are matters, when people are no longer holding to them in times of personal or spiritual stress, of misconduct. What standards are we holding people to? The Acts of Convocation, the guidelines for Professional Conduct are good, although they may need revision to be used consistently in conduct processes, but there are other Acts of Convocation which are hard to research. Some of us who study this have a little book entitled “Acts of the Convocations of Canterbury and York”, published in the 1960s. When you read it, you discover that many of the resolutions passed were not in fact formally Acts, including one that was cited in a clergy discipline case. We do not want the clergy to be held to standards which require historical research to discover.

I think what needs to be built in somehow, and this is the tricky thing, and I am running out of time, is the fact we have to work to things people do complain about, and that reasonable people think need to be complained about. I think we need to build a pool of wisdom about what the standards are as the Measure and the Rules are developed.

*The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE):* Thank you for calling me. I also want to thank everybody who has contributed in the reform of the Clergy Disciplinary Measure both those here, but I also know that they have consulted with a whole range of people across the Church of England, for which I am grateful.

As somebody who receives complaints against members of the clergy, and as somebody who is a recipient of complaints made against myself, I know that the Measure is long

overdue. One of the reasons why I think reform has been long overdue is that, as somebody for who hears complaints, I often reflect I am not really trained to do what I am doing. Part of that relates to the measurement of the standards against which I am measuring, so I do echo Neil's comments. There is a bit me that feels I am glad to pass it over, particularly in cases of serious misconduct, but Neil raises a very important point as to whether we are really clear either whether it is a bishop or somebody else who looks at it.

There is much to commend in this draft Measure. However, particularly I would like to focus on the attention that has been made to making this Measure pastoral - as pastoral as possible. I realise that some of these points may well be made in the Rules, but I do not want to assume that and miss the opportunity of mentioning them.

First, a comment about timescales. I do wonder if those involved can take back the need to check all the timescales of those different parts of stages of this process. There are one or two timescales mentioned in the Measure. Therefore, if you are suggesting they all relate to the Rules, I wonder why some are in the Measure and some are in the Rules. It is absolutely true that as a Bishop, or as a president of a tribunal, we may be dealing with many complaints, but it is the only complaint that a complainant has made and that a respondent is dealing with (that is if they are lucky). However, for them every minute counts and they reflect on it. Therefore, if we are making more steps in the process, can we be absolutely clear that rightful consideration is given to the timescales of those sections, and also what happens if those timescales are not met?

Secondly, we need to ensure that there is appropriate defined and trained pastoral support available, given to the complainant, the respondent, even Bishops, and also the congregation, and while I note that the Measure has begun to address this, I do think the Rules need to specify what the pastoral support looks like and defines it. We are responsible for providing appropriate training. We are fortunate in the London Diocese that we now have a cohort of trained companions who operate to a defined role, and that has improved the support that we seek to give.

Thirdly, a comment about divorce. Section 53 requires the notification of divorce. Why? What for? What does it mean? Divorce is difficult, it is complex, and it costs individuals. Does it relate to a complaint? Maybe it does, and sitting within this Measure it clearly does in one form or another, but maybe most importantly, we should be supporting marriage, we should be supporting our clergy and their spouses, and when things go wrong we should give them trained pastoral and appropriate support beyond the bishop's visitors. While that may not be an issue for this Measure, it is for us as a Church.

Finally, I am grateful for the new grievance stage, but, if this is going to work, we need to ensure the process in itself is clearly defined and that those undertaking the process are clearly trained.

Can I thank you again for the work that you have undertaken on this Measure.

*The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester):* I declare an interest. I am a member of CECA, a Unite Faith Workers' Branch representative and also a member of the respondents' Community on Sheldon, the Sheldon Hub. In some ways, I am speaking on behalf of quite a few people here today.

I am bringing to this a very simple matter which is concerning the nomenclature of one of the penalties in section 35 on page 19 of the proposed Measure in which (a), which is the least severe censure, is called a reprimand and (d) is called a rebuke, which is a written notice of serious misconduct. I understand that because that was the least severe penalty available under the CDM, which was designed originally for serious misconduct but has, actually, been the only mechanism for dealing with all manner of misconduct. Therefore, there are hundreds of people who have consented to rebukes because that was the only censure available to them. I would like to suggest that calling a rebuke, a censure for serious misconduct and thereby using that term different differently in the CCM is confusing. It also does not fail to separate the two Measures sufficiently.

I have looked here and under English Canon law of the Church of England it says, "A rebuke is a censure on a member of the clergy. It is the least severe censure available against clergy in the Church of England, less severe than a monition". It could be possible to swap (d) and (a) and make rebuke the first and reprimand (d). That is a suggestion I make. I will write in with this. Another idea would be simply to replace that term rebuke with another one such as monition, censure, reproof, reproach. There are many terms which are feasible for this. I have discussed some of this with some of our legal support staff. I really ask that that be done not as a form of amendment in a later stage but, please, built into revision right now, so that we could move forward as a separate issue.

I also want to say a big thank you on behalf of so many people to all the Ecclesiastical Law Society people, our ecclesiastical law advisers here, the members of the Unite Faith Workers' Branch and all those on this Committee who have brought forward this much better Measure.

*The Chair:* I would like to change the speech limit to three minutes now. I am first going to call Carl Fender who is on Zoom.

*Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln):* Three points. The first one very briefly just to repeat some of the things that have already been said about avoiding delay. Attending the fringe meetings that have been arranged from time to time around the new model of clergy conduct you get a chance to sense where temperature is at its highest. I sense that where it is at its highest is over delay in disposing of complaints. Delay is demoralising for the accused and the accuser, so I would hope that in this new model, and perhaps in the Rules, there would be some robust Rules around timeous disposal of complaints, whichever track they are assigned to.

The second point relates to self-referrals. The benefit of this is that a cleric who has a complaint hanging over them can self-refer to call out a complainer who is dithering about whether to make a complaint formal themselves.

There are time limits that apply in relation to grievances and to ordinary misconduct, but I wonder if, in the rare case where there is a self-referral, whether in the event it is out of time or would be out of time if the complainant made that complaint themselves in the Measure that needs to be tidied up and thought about, because I cannot see there is an answer to that. Can I leave that with the Committee, and I will write to them?

The third point is a drafting point on clause 21. An assessor has four outcomes laid before them. The first is assignment to the grievance track, the second is misconduct, the third is serious misconduct, and the fourth is a summary dismissal of a complaint. The threshold is one of “vexatious or totally without merit”. I wonder whether that is too emphatic. I wonder whether an alternative formula of no case to answer would be a better way of meeting the summary disposal test in that part of the Measure.

That is all I have to say, so thank you very much.

*The Ven. Luke Miller (London):* This long-awaited legislation has much to be welcomed, especially by the clergy whose lives and work it will order. Life in the ministry in the Church catholic is, of course, a life led and not a job done, and, therefore, this will touch every aspect of the lives of those who come under its clauses.

Thank you to those who have worked very hard on putting it all together.

The House of Clergy, and if needed the Convocations, will surely wish to engage deeply. This now is a synodical legislative process and it has been explained to us how important it will be that that process itself develops the legislation that lies before us. Synod, it is crucial that laity and clergy together get this right, digging into the detail and engaging with the stages of the legislation as it goes forward, and I enjoin us all to do so, because we cannot afford for this to go wrong again. The lives of the clergy are touched by it so deeply, and therefore also the life of the whole Church.

Neil Patterson has already mentioned the need for a clear definition of misconduct. Documents on which definitions rest must have a robust enough legal architecture to support the Measure and those complaining and those responding under it.

The papers refer to the guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, which when brought before this Synod were explicitly not to bear the weight of discipline which they have come to carry. Therefore, we need to be sure that the various documents which will define our conduct, including those which will come out of the LLF process, are designed in order to bear the legislative and legal weight which they will need if they are going to be used in formal discipline processes. There may be other documents beyond the two

that I have mentioned, and Neil mentioned the Acts of Convocation and others, that we will need to ensure do that work.

I welcome the proposal to work out the means to prevent vexatious complaints. We will need that to be well worked out and well run so that it can be a trusted process which will determine between what is a vexatious complaint and what is a brave attempt to challenge repeated bad behaviour. Both of those things happen.

Ordered life is a key to personal holiness and that itself is a key to effective mission, for we are called to bear Christ in our own persons into the world. This Measure will help us to order our lives and, as the old hymn says, "Let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace". Let us work hard at it, hard into the detail, Synod, and let us welcome it and let it be ordering us for peace.

*The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities and TElS):* I spoke this time last year in support of *Under Authority Revisited* and the request that we draft this legislation. There is loads I welcome in it, but for reasons of time, inevitably, I will focus on the areas where I have still got concerns which I mentioned last year.

Grievance, misconduct and serious misconduct are rightly separated out, but the beginning of the process is still the same for all three. This takes away potentially autonomy from the complainant in determining what kind of process they would like to pursue, and it puts the clergyperson in the very scary situation of not knowing what level of process they will be subject to, with all the potentially lifechanging outcomes of a complaint of serious misconduct. Hopefully, that should not lead to wrong outcomes because the regional lead assessor will hopefully make the right decisions, but the aim here is not just to get right outcomes but to reduce clergy trauma and stress while they wait. We know of course that processes are not always as speedy as they should be.

As far as I can understand the draft, it seems only the complainant can appeal what kind of process it is going to be rather than the respondent. Much is up to the regional lead assessor, which brings me to concerns about their role.

Section 12 does not say anything about the qualifications for the assessors who will run the middle track, the misconduct that is not serious misconduct. Presumably, that will be covered by the Code of Practice, and I could wait for that, but then I heard the Bishop of London say she was not waiting for that, so I thought I would follow in her footsteps. Personally, I think these people need to be suitably legally qualified but the Implementation Group felt this was not a prerequisite. They will be making findings of fact, interviewing people, taking witness statements and making adjudications. These things require great skill and they need appropriate qualifications, training and support. I am also deeply ambivalent about the idea they would act as volunteers rather than being remunerated for the provision of a demanding professional service.

Again, there is a question about appeal processes here because the bishop has to accept the findings of fact unless there is a good reason for them not to do so.

Finally, publication. At section 59 - this is more of a question - it says, "Judgments, orders and other decisions must be published". I hope that is only in relation to questions of serious misconduct. There will be times when that will absolutely need to be published because they are a danger and it is in the public interest for everyone to know what has happened, but at the moment any finding of misconduct or conduct unbecoming is put on the website and you never know why it is there, and it could be hugely prejudicial.

*Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield):* I am very grateful to the team for all the work that has brought the Clergy Conduct Measure to this stage. As you will know from last summer, I have a personal interest in this Measure because of the trauma I suffered, and, sadly, continue to suffer because of my husband's experience of three CDMs - badge of honour.

There are three issues that I wanted to raise. Two have already been called up. My husband's was accused of misconduct which was based on somebody who was feeling upset. We want a clear and objective definition of misconduct. As Neil Patterson noted, the current list given is neither clear nor comprehensive, so, please, more work and clarity on standards of behaviour of the clergy.

Our experience was affected by an unsuitable assessor who was a property lawyer. As Sean Doherty mentioned, we want regional assessors who are properly and suitably qualified.

On vexatious complaints, I was really pleased to see that section. We are very familiar with that as well. It is very important that any grievance which enters a reconciliation process facilitated by a diocesan bishop cannot be hijacked by a vexatious complainant, who may then try to escalate the complaint in that process. That designated person must be trained in recognising vexatious/malicious complaints, and both parties to that reconciliation process will need to be confident in that person who has been chosen - an impartial person, somebody who does not previously have a view on either party. They must be able to therefore decline the proposed designated person in the reconciliation. It is my prayer that anyone involved in clergy conduct proceedings in the future is suitably qualified and able to ensure that truth emerges and justice is done, for the benefit of those who complain, and those who are complained about.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Synod, we will soon have 10,000 lay-led churches so I wondered about lay church leaders and ordinands, should they be subject to this Measure? If not now, when, and why has this Measure been limited to clergy? Could that be changed? It is really a question because it is such a large piece of work to do that that I felt that Synod needed to raise it rather than just send a letter in to the Revision Committee.



I also would like to see more support to those who make complaints. Someone vulnerable would have real difficulty in finding a litigation friend. We need a process of providing independently commissioned advocacy and support like other bodies in the complaints process.

On the issue of independence, the NCIs are not independent of the Church, so what alternative was considered? Have survivor groups and those supporting vulnerable children and adults been consulted on whether we are doing enough to help complainants to bring forward a complaint? Finally, I would ask for further theological work on discipline within the Church and that we are witnessing to Christ in this area so we do not just say what we expect but why we expect professional standards and the ordering of lives in Christian ministry.

*The Revd Julian Hollywell (Derby):* I hope I am not jumping the gun, I know we are at the start the process, but I would like to add to what Bishop Sarah has said about that little sentence in section 20(4), "... the diocesan bishop considers appropriate pastoral support for all those involved".

First, I wonder if it is possible, either by expanding section 20 or under the Conduct Rules, to incorporate some national benchmarking and co-ordination of what that pastoral support actually looks like and how someone might seek independent assistance, either regionally or nationally, if that local support is inadequate or breaks down. It really should not be a diocesan lottery.

Secondly, might consideration be given to granting clergy the right to perhaps request different support if there is good reason? These situations are always sensitive and relational, with complex power dynamics. For instance, as Bishop Sarah indicated, dioceses could establish a pool of appropriate people duly qualified from whom to draw, not necessarily relying on a busy and already over-pressed archdeacon who perhaps does not have the time or the independence to be as pastoral as they want or think themselves to be.

Thirdly, may there also be clear guidance as to the mechanism of how the decision is reached as to who the clergyperson concerned and their primary partner may or may not communicate with, and the timescale of any such stipulation. Too often in the current system under the CDM the person is anathema, with catastrophic consequences for them and their closest relationships.

*Professor Lynn Nichol (Worcester):* Yesterday, Stephen Hogg - and I think that is the right name, sorry, if it is not, but you know who you are - suggested that change is always first experienced as loss. Although I generally agree with Stephen, I am not so sure in the context of the existing CDM Measure. There will be many who will see its passing as a loss, so I encourage you to support the development of this new legislation.

I want to make one small point about transparency. It is about timeliness, and to some extent it has already been covered by the Bishop of London. I think we all recognise that for any party, whether the complainant or the accused, such a process is stressful and is detrimental to wellbeing, and that stress only increases if both parties do not know how long it is going to take.

Like the Bishop of London, I saw in this draft legislation that timescales were allocated to some parts of the legislation, so particularly in section 24 when the case is being investigated, but I did not see that at the beginning of the process, particularly in sections 20 and 21, the referral and allocation of a complaint.

At the moment I think anybody who puts in a complaint or is waiting to hear about one does not know if the Bishop is going to take two hours, two days, two weeks, two months or two years. I think it would be really helpful if we set out some reasonable timescales for that front end of the process.

*The Revd Jack Shephard (Liverpool):* As someone who has been raising concerns recently about the need to review HR and complaints procedures in dioceses, I am pleased with the direction of travel with this piece of legislation. You could even say it has been a reassurance at a difficult time.

I would like to highlight that the list of people with proper interests in a complaint against a priest or deacon, “if the priest or deacon holds office in a parish”, should include other deacons and priests and authorized lay ministers holding office in the same parish (see clause 15(2)) and the quality of this legislation hinges on the form specified in the Rules and the procedures set out in the Rules (see clause 16(1)) for a complaint to be made. Is it clear how it will be possible for any person who experienced or witnessed the conduct alleged in the complaint to make the complaint with confidence that this will not exacerbate the situation further?

Finally, I wonder, although it is perhaps beyond the scope of this legislation, if it is possible to refer in this legislation to how this relates to review processes including ministerial development reviews, and enabling steps to raise concerns confidentially about conduct before the need to raise a complaint. I would be very happy to converse with those involved in the development of this legislation about my recent experiences.

*The Revd Stephen Corbett (Blackburn):* I have four points to make. I cannot recall any of them being mentioned so far in the debate. Back in 2020, when I first joined this Synod (it was February 2020), we voted for replacement, and I am mentioning this because I understand that 60% of the Synod elected in autumn 2021 are in fact new, and in the intervening three years I have heard a lot of talk of reform. I would like to see the headline on this legislation, it is only a small point, state something like, “This Measure repeals and replaces the Clergy Discipline Measure 2023”.

The second point, this is really for the Rules which will no doubt accompany this Measure in due course. If you look on a number of clergy wellbeing forums, the Sheldon website, there arises from time to time, with monotonous regularity, inappropriate behaviour of previous clergy, be they retired or having moved on to another parish, and their involvement in the parish that they have retired from. That causes a lot of pain and disagreement within parishes and I would like to see that specifically addressed in the Rules which will accompany the Measure.

Thirdly, there are also concerns expressed in a paper that is currently circulating which has been written by a diocesan registrar. I am not a lawyer and I cannot comment on whether they are accurate or not, but I would like to see those concerns in that paper addressed.

Finally, fourthly, for this Measure to be effective, we need a Code of Conduct for lay officers and lay ministers. There is a PMM in the name of Mark Ireland, who is sitting over there, down in the foyer and I see that the list of signatures is increasing. If you have not signed it, please do after this debate and let us bring that on.

*The Chair:* Please keep to this motion.

*The Revd Stephen Corbett (Blackburn):* Point taken, but if we could bring that on as well that would be a good thing.

*The Bishop of Leeds (The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines):* It is an interesting debate. I remain to be convinced that this will be an improvement on the CDM. The reason is this: the main problem with the CDM is in its implementation, not the CDM. This is what we keep hearing. It is about delays produced by bishops or registrars not doing things in a timely way. Carl Fender mentioned earlier that we will need Rules to do with the timing. We already have them. So, what reassurance can we be given that if the problem is in implementation, that it will be any different with what replaces the CDM. I have not heard anything that convinces me at the moment that it will be an improvement.

If I can just say one further thing, the great thing about having a large diocese with an area system is that you can always give episcopal pastoral care to people who are being complained about, and it is a real gift.

*The Revd Brenda Wallace (Chelmsford):* I fully support the intention of these proposals to improve the way we deal with clergy complaints. I have seen the anguish and damage caused by long drawn out investigations. I want particularly to bring to Synod's attention the impact of clergy disciplinary procedures on clergy marriage and families. Sometimes the pressure of a long-running investigation can put an impossible pressure on a relationship, but, equally, the events which caused the allegations to be made can be the very events which lead directly to clergy marriage or relationship breakdown. You do not need me to spell out the factors which this might include, but adultery, desertion and physical or emotional domestic abuse are among the common causes.

As the Bishop of London mentioned, section 53 sets out a legalistic requirement for a clerk to disclose divorce or a separation order to their diocesan bishop within 28 days of that being enacted. Under divorce legislation that could be two years or more after the events, particularly if the spouse is encouraged or persuaded to suppress the full reality of the situation. By this time it is rather late to offer effective pastoral support and it opens the way for collusion between the clergyperson and diocesan authority for the sake of damage limitation in the parish or the diocese. The primary focus on the priest and the parish in such disciplinary contexts means that the needs of the spouse and partner and the family are often side-lined.

In 2021, the Bishops issued an agreed national policy for supporting separated and divorced clergy spouses, a policy which was previously available on the Church of England website, but was mysteriously removed only a couple of weeks ago. Information about the support available is hard to access and information about the bishop's visitors who are appointed by the bishops in each diocese to support separated and divorced clergy spouses, is almost universally invisible on diocesan websites.

May I therefore urge Synod in general, and Bishops in particular, to be mindful of the impact of any disciplinary procedures on clergy households and to ensure that where the breakdown is the result of the complaint or the events leading to the complaint, proper information and support is signposted and resourced to the hidden victims in clergy households.

*The Revd Martin Thorpe (Liverpool):* I too welcome the work done and the consultation process undertaken, including hearing from clergy and their families who have been seriously harmed by the CDM process. I have also been on the wrong end of a vexatious CDM complaint that was found to be without merit and as a CECA rep have supported union members going through similar things. I was also through an accident of history on the Terms of Service Implementation Panel, which introduced a raft of the HR-type policies including competencies for clergy and things like that. So, I have plenty of skin in this particular game.

I believe that 20 years ago, when people drew up the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003, they did not intend the great harm that has been done in the last 20 years by that Measure. So, my first plea, Synod, is that we build in a review of the Clergy Conduct Measure after three years and that a report comes back to this Synod in terms of how it is working out. I know having been on Committees that have drafted similar Measures and schemes that things have unintended consequences. The CDM is certainly one of those, and here we are 20 years on. I am also concerned that the Measure as it stands gives fewer opportunities for appeal in particular than employees have when allegations of misconduct are made.

Finally, Synod, surely the assessment of cases that can lead to deprivation of living, livelihood, home, family home are too important to be left to volunteers. Surely we need

paid experienced professionals. We cannot do this on the cheap. It is too important and surely it will be quicker to employ paid professional HR or legal professionals to do the assessor work as lead assessor and case assessor, rather than trying to find volunteers who have the necessary skills and experience.

*The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* I welcome this draft Measure and hope that everyone will vote for it to go to the Revision Committee. It seems to me that the principles of natural justice run throughout it. Contrast that, however, with some safeguarding processes, where the principles of natural justice quite often seem to be thrown out of the window. The cleric concerned does not know who is on the core group, the cleric has no right to appear before the core group and he is not represented on the core group.

Safeguarding matters are part of clergy conduct, and should we not be addressing safeguarding matters in the Measure or a parallel Measure so that natural justice applies in the case of safeguarding matters?

*The Revd Joy Mawdesley (Oxford):* I support this Measure but just have some observations about process and practice around the allocation of a complaint as a grievance and a minor complaint at that end of the spectrum. Prior to ordination, I spent over 25 years in children and family social work and I spent four years as a complaints and resolutions manager for children's social work and, as sad as it sounds, I loved that job.

One of the principles of that statutory process was that it should secure effective links with other procedures in local government. Making a complaint did not also automatically instigate a disciplinary procedure against the social worker concerned whereas here in this matter before Synod, anyone making a complaint is instigating a disciplinary procedure too.

I would suggest that this is not the case in other organisations with such a public-facing role, as it was not in children's social work. Of course, it may be that what begins as a low-level complaint clearly becomes a matter of discipline, and that is when effective links with other procedures kick in.

The reality is that those in roles such as ours are liable to be complained about. It may be that with publicity around this reform complaints actually increase. My view is that although stressful, painful and time-consuming, complaints are also the sign of a healthy church where power can be challenged, where there is an opportunity for learning and reflection and restoration, and our process needs to allow for these things.

Another principle of the Children Act complaint guidance I managed is that it should make sure that as many complaints as possible are resolved swiftly and satisfactorily at a local level. I note this too of grievances in GS 231X. Complaints of this nature are always best dealt with at the level of those who know the Church best and the situation best.

I am not sure about the term "grievance" to speak of minor complaints. When it comes to the Code of Practice to go alongside this Measure, I would like to see complaints from the start have a strong outcome focus: what is the complainant seeking through this complaint? Another part of my role as complaints manager was to grow restorative practices and meetings into complaints management. It is about restoring, about relationship, about being able to learn and grow and, surely, these should be a grant part of our toolbox in this area of Church life, speaking as they do of values of the Kingdom of God. Here endeth my maiden speech.

*The Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* Thank you for bringing these proposals to Synod. It seems to me that CDM has been a bit like using the hammer of Thor to crack the nut smaller than the one in the palm of the Mother Julian. There was a time when we thought, Lesley-Anne and I, that we might be empty nesters at our four bedroom vicarage and so we explored the option of foster caring. It failed because our 36 year old and his wife were moving back in the autumn.

But, as we were going through this process, the social worker assigned to us sat us down and said, "Has anyone ever made an accusation against you?" Me as a vicar and my wife as a care worker, and we said yes. She said, "Thank you, because in the work you do if someone has not made an accusation against you, you are probably not engaged with it fully". We live on the borders of pastoral care. We are dealing with people who need healing as much as we ourselves need healing.

A couple of points. Whatever complainant comes to us, can we try not to use pejorative language? Their complaints might feel vexatious but it is how they feel and they need pastoral care as much as those complained against do.

Also, as we go into the finer detail of revising the Measure, can we please check about recordkeeping. How many times does a letter go into a cleric's blue file, their permanent record? If every time a small grievance is entered in there, you could have a very big file but for doing your job well. Maybe within the detail of it, let us put how long a record is kept and when it can be removed or if it should be kept permanently.

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

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* My points have mostly been covered by Sarah Mullally and Sean Doherty, but mostly by Martin Thorpe who spoke in relation to the professional nature of what case assessors are actually asking to be done. I have had a CDM against me, but I have also sat when I was an elected representative on a local authority on discipline and appeals procedures and have chaired many meetings in relation to that. It seems to me that case assessors have been asked to do an awful lot more on their own than either I was asked to do as a member of the local authority in a similar position, or magistrates are asked to do.

Magistrates never sit alone. They sit with at least two other magistrates and they always make decisions together. They also sit with a legal advisor, as we did on a disputes panel of a local authority, and yet here we are actually asking a case assessor to do more than a magistrate does because we are actually asking them to do some of the preliminary work that only police would do or lawyers in terms of investigating complaints and actually taking witness statements. These are actually incredibly professional areas that need a lot of training and expertise and yet we are expecting them to be done by volunteers simply for expenses without anything in this paper which indicates what training we are going to put into it. That is a whole area that I think I would like us to look at as we move forward.

The other issue in relation to that for me about a singular case assessor making an assessment is that some of the issues that CDMs are brought against - and this was certainly the case with mine - are areas touching on our national life which are contentious and in which there may be conflicts of interest. For example, in my own case my own diocesan bishop was not able to hear it because of a conflict of interest and yet we are a small community as a whole in the Church of England and so I think in terms of dealing with conflicts of interest we also need multiple members on an assessment panel rather than a singular case assessor.

*The Ven. Paul Ayers (Leeds):* I just wanted to respond to what I think the fourth speaker before me said. I did not catch the name, was it Ms Mawdesley, who had experience in conflict resolution. I think a very valuable piece of advice there about keeping outcome focused. As an archdeacon, I am often involved in people's complaints and a question that is often in my mind is: what do you actually want, what would a good outcome look like? It is a question that Jesus asks in the Gospels, "What do you want? What do you want me to do for you?" It could apply, if I may say, to some of the things that have been going on in Synod in recent times. Sometimes, what people want is simply to be heard. Sometimes, there is no outcome that will satisfy them because people are just angry and, sometimes, let us be honest, people quite enjoy being angry. So just that question: what do you actually want, what would a good outcome look like should there at front and centre. I hope we can incorporate that.

*The Chair:* As we have had a fair debate, I would like to test the mind of Synod on a motion for closure on this item.

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

*The Chair:* Canon Wharton, if you would like to respond to the debate.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* Thank you, Synod, very much indeed for everybody who has contributed. Thank you, Neil, Sarah, Lisa, Carl, Luke, Sam, Amanda, Sean, Julian, Lyn, Nick, Stephen, Nick, Jack, Brenda, Martin, Paul, Joy, Robert and Paul. Thank you for your comments which we have taken on board. Just a few things. I am not going to try and mention all of you, that is why I just scooted through your names, but thank you

to those who have talked about qualifications for assessors. That will be within the Code of Practice.

Thank you, Sean, for your point about legal qualifications. Clarity about confidentiality, we have heard your questions around that and will ensure that that is provided within the Rules. As regards training, the Clergy Conduct Commission oversees standardised training. We have heard the need for training as a key theme and we will take that on board.

Sam, you talked about lay leaders. That is outside the scope of this Measure, but if Synod decides to take that forward in a different way then that may be something they wish to do. Amanda, thank you for sharing your own difficult personal experience. From you and from others, we have heard the need for clarity around our language and our definitions. We have heard much, indeed, about language both in the tone of the complainants and the type of the grievance and so thank you for that.

Martin, thank you for your suggestion about review. That is not part of the legislation but, again, if that is something Synod wants to take forward we would be happy to support in facilitating that. The practical details, some of the questions around that will appear in the Code of Practice around pastoral support and timing and so thank you to those who have mentioned that.

Bishop Nick, thank you for your comment that this is only as good as its implementation. We hope that the three track system will mean that it can be more timely and more efficient. Stephen, you asked about repealing. Section 67(1) of the Measure does state that the CDM is repealed. I do encourage all of you to engage in this process as it goes forward and to write with your comments to the Clerk by 8 September. Thank you, Lyn, for your reminder that change is not always lost. There is a sense in this particular process that will not be the case. We know that we need to get this right for everybody involved and so please do vote to allow us to go forward to the Revision Stage and help us to get the right.

*The Chair:* I would like to put Item 508 to the vote by a show of hands and a tick on Zoom.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. The Measure now stands committed to the Revision Committee. Any member who wishes to submit proposals to the Revision Committee must send them in writing to the Clerk to reach her no later than 5.30 on Friday 8 September. That completes this item of business. Thank you, Synod.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Dr Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 3.42 pm

## **ITEM 501**



## THE ELECTRONIC REGISTER BOOK OF SERVICES FORM AND CONDITIONS 2023 (GS 2291)

*The Chair:* We come now to Item 501, the Electronic Register Book of Services Form and Conditions 2023. Members will need copies of the Instrument, GS 2291, and the Explanatory Notes, GS 2291X. I would now like to call on Mrs Julie Dziegiel to move the motion, "That the Electronic Register Book of Services Form and Conditions 2023 be approved". You may speak for not more than ten minutes.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* Synod, you may have heard of HMRC and MTD. Just in case you have not, that is His Majesty's Revenue and Customs and Making Tax Digital. You may be a bit concerned that we are about to discuss the C of E and MCD. Let me reassure you. This is not the Church of England making Church digital. This is the C of E MCABMDIYLTSTOT - so making Church a bit more digital if you like that sort of thing.

In November 2020, the amendment to Canon F 12 that Synod had voted for to allow service registers to be kept in electronic form came into effect, so it has taken a while and a while actually to stand up here, but the staff at Church House have, in the meantime, been working very hard to design and test the online system to enable electronic service registers to come into use.

By way of background, there were three main reasons behind creating the electronic system for the keeping of service registers. The first was to give a parish the benefit of quick and easy access to the data instead of having to trawl all your way back through hard copy books. The second was to increase security around that data. The third was to enable the automatic collation for the purposes of exporting it seamlessly when parishes complete their statistics for mission returns each year. For those churches that use the electronic register, the figures will be automatically repopulated into the annual return for that church when a church offers their logs into the parish returns website to complete their annual return. Is that not fantastic?

Before we turn to the form and conditions before Synod for approval, I wish to stress two important points. Firstly, the decision to move to an electronic register is entirely optional, very much if you like that sort of thing. For those parishes who love the sound of a pen dipped in ink touching the hard paper of an old-fashioned register, that is entirely permissible. There is no requirement to move over to this system.

Secondly, where a church decides to use an electronic register, it is not an irreversible decision. In accordance with the conditions, a decision may be taken to revert back to the paper form at any time. You can decide you do not like it anymore. Synod, there are two elements for approval. The first is the form of the electronic register. The register must be kept in a form or form substantially similar to that prescribed in the Schedule. The Schedule sets out the fields that will appear online. Those that are mandatory will be clearly marked. The electronic register will be made available as an online facility

available at [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com). The website is owned by the Archbishops' Council administered by the Digital Communications Team at Church House.

As members will know, A Church Near You (ACNY) has a page for every church in England and the incumbent or priest-in-charge of each church can claim the right to administer the page for their church and assign logins for up to five other people. If for whatever reason your church or chapel does not appear on the website, the team here are working on a facility for you to alert them to the fact and request the required changes. Members will see at the end of the Explanatory Notes there are some screenshots to show how the online system will look. It has been designed to be intuitive so that potentially even the most technophobic of churchwardens will be able to complete it, if they like.

Five conditions are proposed. The first is simply that, "An electronic register book of services may only be kept according to the form approved by General Synod under Canon F 12.3". The second provides that, "In the case of a parish church, a parochial chapel, a chapel of ease, a chapel of conventional district, a guild church or a cathedral church [the variety is joyous] an electronic register book of services may be kept only where the PCC, GCC, DCC or chapter, as the case may be, has passed a resolution to that effect". The third condition provides that the Church may go back to the paper format but only when the relevant body has passed a resolution. The fourth condition is perhaps a little picky but for the avoidance of doubt it provides that, where a resolution under conditions 2 or 3 is passed, it must state the date. The fifth condition ensures that, "Personal data may only be recorded in an electronic register book of services if to do so is in accordance with data protection law". Churches will need to ensure they are compliant with this.

Synod, we hope that this will encourage those churches that wish to move towards an online system for the keeping of service registers can do so. The system is ready to go. I had rather hoped it might be used at the Minster on Sunday, but that was not to be. Next year. MCABMDIYLTSTOT, making Church a bit more digital if you like that sort of thing. I rather hope you do like it. I beg to move the motion in my name.

*The Chair:* The motion to approve the Instrument is now open for debate.

*The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich):* Point of order. This seems to me to be a relatively simple thing and I request a motion for closure on this item.

*The Chair:* I am afraid that does not have my approval. I would like to have a couple of comments.

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

*Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln):* I cannot pretend to repeat that row of acronyms but I am right behind it, Julie, definitely. I only wish to raise a relatively small point to ease the implementation of this. Condition 5, as you referenced in the Instrument, states that

personal data can only be recorded in an electronic book of services if doing so is in accordance with data privacy law. I fear that the lack of more specific guidance may lead to confusion and inconsistency in connection particularly with the occasional offices when, say, it falls to a churchwarden to fill in the record. When the electronic register is released, can some specific guidance be issued as to whether or not the names of those being baptized or married may be entered into the notes section for the relative services?

*The Chair:* After Eleanor, I am happy to have a motion for closure.

*The Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield):* I am right behind this. I do not think the internet has quite reached my parish yet, but it is a great thing to happen. One confession I have to make is that I am a real church register nerd and I do like to look back at things and look at the handwriting and see where somebody has written something in the place to explain something that happens. I just wonder, in the future is this data going to be available for people to, like me, look back with kind of misty eyes and enjoy seeing the stuff because it would be a shame if we lost that ability to see what had happened? It encapsulates just a moment in the life of a parish and I think it is just a special thing.

*The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich):* Point of order. I propose a motion of closure on this.

*The Chair:* I am going to test the mind of Synod and we will pretend we did not hear the gentleman just now because he is not allowed to because he has spoken already, so he did not speak. I am going to test the mind of Synod. If you would like us to close this debate, can you indicate.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. I would like to call on Mrs Dziegiel to respond. You have up to five minutes.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* Thank you, Nigel and Eleanor. Nigel, yes, we will be issuing guidance and that will be available so you will know whether or not you can put in the names and whether or not that actually complies with the law. Eleanor, yes, you will be able to see the records and you will be able to go back with wonder and I do actually understand the joy of looking in old minute books, in my case. Thank you very much, Synod.

*The Chair:* We now put Item 501 to the vote. This will be simply by a show of hands and if you are on zoom a green tick will be in order.

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

## **ITEM 26**

## **ELECTIONS REVIEW GROUP: REPORT FROM THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (GS 2312)**

*The Chair:* We now move to Item 26. Members will need GS 2312. You will also need Notice Paper 4, which is the Financial Memo and you will need Notice Paper 11 as there is a financial comment on the amendment at paragraph 3 on Notice Paper 11. You will also need to have Notice Paper 12 which has amendment 78. This was accidentally left off Order Paper VII which contained the first amendment. I now call on Mr Scowen to move the motion. You have up to ten minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* First, a couple of personal apologies. My computer has died so I am going to try to read this from my phone and so that may be a little tricky. The other is I have a persistent cough. I am hoping to get through this without dissolving into coughing, but if I do not I hope you will excuse that.

At the beginning of each quinquennium, the Business Committee establishes a group to review the immediately preceding elections to the General Synod to see if any improvements can be made to practice and procedures and whether the Rules and guidance need to be amended prior to the next elections.

Imaginatively, this body is known as the Elections Review Group. Its members for this quinquennium are three from the Business Committee, Fr Paul Cartwright, Nic Tall and myself; two Synod members appointed by the Appointments Committee, Prudence Dailey and Catherine Stephenson; and also a diocesan secretary appointed by the Appointments Committee who is the York Diocesan Secretary, Peter Warry. In addition to the main task I have just described, the practice has grown up of referring other issues relating to elections and voting, APCMs and PCCs to the Group to keep us busy for as much of the quinquennium as possible.

Before Synod today is our first Report which deals with the main task, a review of the 2021 elections and also some issues referred to the Group concerned with PCC elections. Turning then to the review of the 2021 elections, the Group consulted all Synod members, diocesan secretaries and presiding officers and Civica Election Services who ran the electronic elections. Many of our recommendations seek to address issues mentioned in those consultations. Later on, having agreed provisional recommendations, we consulted again with the diocesan secretaries by Zoom and in writing to try to ensure that we were not proposing anything which they would find impossible or difficult to implement. As a result, we are confident that our 25 recommendations are broadly accepted by them as feasible.

I am not going to go through the recommendations one by one. I trust that members have read the Report or at least the recommendations which are set out together in Annex 2 to the Report and so I will just highlight the main themes. One of the additional tasks of the ERG in the last quinquennium was to oversee the introduction of the new electronic

voting system in collaboration with Civica. As with any complex system involving computers, unforeseen problems occurred which were exacerbated by the fact that Civica has a separate contract with each diocese who each manage things slightly differently and to different timetables and they were seeking assistance from Civica on different issues at the same time.

We make a number of recommendations for improvements which, hopefully, should avoid those issues in future. We are suggesting that, instead of 42 contracts between Civica and each diocese, there should be one national contract between Civica and the Archbishops' Council. Although the dioceses would still fund and deliver the elections locally, those parts of the process which do not have to be managed at diocesan level should be considered for transfer to the national level. At present, there is an indicative timetable published nationally but dioceses are entitled to vary it in some respects, resulting in potentially confusing and conflicting information about deadlines appearing on the Church of England website and diocesan websites.

We recommend that a mandatory national timetable should be introduced so that there is no confusion caused by conflicting information on websites as to closing dates for nominations and voting, et cetera. Since the anticipated date of the next elections is 2026 when new deanery synods will just have been elected and since APCMs can now take place up to the end of May, more time will be needed to prepare the diocesan electoral rolls for the laity and to make preliminary contact with electors. It is suggested that dissolution of the old Synod should be delayed a couple of weeks to enable that to be done. It normally takes place immediately after the York Synod in that year. It also recognises that it would be desirable to brief electors early on about what to expect, how to vote and so on and that a user-friendly document or video be produced outlining the election process and seeking to encourage people to be candidates.

Similarly, we recommend delaying the close of nominations by a week into mid-September and better signposting for candidates and electors wishing to access a paper-based system. We want to ensure that the ballot paper or electronic form shows the proposer and seconder of each candidate and the parish on whose roll they are enrolled or the ecclesiastical office held in the case of clergy. The election statements of all candidates should be on the diocesan website for the whole election period and those of successful candidates we recommend should be kept available there for the whole of the ensuing quinquennium or at least for as long as they remain on Synod. Whilst hustings will remain at the discretion of the presiding officer, we are proposing that they should be encouraged to offer a written question and answer process with candidates free to decide whether to answer questions or not. We plan to develop a YouTube tutorial on how to use the voting platform and to seek advice to ensure that the online voting platform is fully accessible to visually impaired people.

We recommend that the system should send reminder emails to voters who have not yet voted seven days before the close of poll. The results of the election should be posted

on the Church of England website in a consistent form in addition to what the dioceses post on their own websites.

Finally, there were recommendations concerning diversity suggesting that if the next General Synod elections do not produce a higher proportion of elected UKME/GMH members, consideration should be given to repeating the co-option exercise we did last year and also that promotional materials for the elections should involve a diverse range of people.

We recommend that Synod decide whether it wishes to find a new way of co-opting young participant observers. Well, that has been rather overtaken by what we voted on on Friday. Synod has decided that it does wish to do that.

This Report also contains recommendations regarding elections at APCMs arising from issues raised by Mrs Amanda Robbie in a debate here last year. Occasionally, a candidate will be nominated by family members who enjoy no support from anyone else in the parish but, nevertheless, get elected to PCC or deanery synod because there were not enough other candidates to require a vote. We are recommending that, in those circumstances, it should be possible for the APCM to decide to have a yes/no vote on each candidate nominated. We also recommend that those elected to a PCC should be required to sign a declaration that they have not been convicted of relevant offences and are not otherwise debarred from office.

Finally, the group was addressed by Mr Clive Billenness on his proposal for automatic postal voting at APCMs both on elections and other matters on which votes are taken. The Group felt that, although he had raised some important points, more reflection and consultation was needed on his suggestions than we had time to do before producing this Report. We will, therefore, consider this matter fully in the next tranche of our work and make recommendations in our next Report which we hope and expect to be at this time next year. Chair, I move that Synod receive this Report and agree the recommendations contained within it.

*The Chair:* Item 26 is now open for debate.

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

*Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham):* I warmly welcome the Report from the Elections Review Group. It is obvious that you have thought through the complexities carefully and, importantly, the nuances of the election process to General Synod. Overall, therefore, I applaud the recommendations. It is wise to have recommendations which focus on each stage of the process and in chronological order. However, I would like to draw our attention in particular to Recommendation q. For clarity and simplicity, I would like to suggest, therefore, that there is a single closing date for the receipt of the ballot papers and, then, as a consequence, that the count takes place two days later to allow for logistics, for instance the input of paper ballots. After all, we all desire the greatest

possible participation in our elections, so being more clear and simple throughout the process benefits us all.

*Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester):* Thank you to the Group for the extensive work you have done and the very helpful Report and recommendations. I am going to make three brief points. The fact that we had to co-opt GMH members onto the Synod very soon after the elections I think really must be taken as an admission of failure on our part and I wonder how we can better do that next time. How do we encourage GMH members? How do we encourage those under 30 to be here? I would suggest that probably the best people to do that are those of GMH heritage and those who are under 30 who are already in this chamber so that they encourage people to see that this is a valuable service, that their presence is very welcome and that their input from the outset is equal to anybody who is here. I, as a retired white male professional, am not the best advocate probably to do that and so it probably sits with those people from those backgrounds who would be best.

The second point I want to make is that to some extent I feel I am here by chance. I received an email as a churchwarden and that was the first realisation that I had that I could be part of the process, even though I was not on deanery synod. There was no other advertising or any other means by which I became aware of that. I think that does call into question the way that dioceses have promoted and publicised this exercise ahead of the election. I would encourage greater engagement by all dioceses over this. Maybe one of the mechanisms also to help candidates achieve an adequate application is Recommendation m, which is about putting the statements on the website and keeping them there until the next election, which I think would be a very valuable thing.

The third thing I want to say, briefly, is the aim of the process is to produce a balanced representation of the Church of England. That is how I understand it and I wonder if we are achieving that. As someone who put forward their candidacy as an independent candidate, not attached to a party ticket, I do wonder if we could encourage more those who have a contribution to make over a wide range of issues not just single issue candidates. I wonder if one of the ways of doing that is to try and encourage greater competition in dioceses. In Chichester where I come from, we had five lay candidates for each place. I know of other dioceses where it is less than two. There is clearly a disparity there and I think we should encourage more candidates to come forward so that it is a more democratic process. Overall, I am very encouraged by the Report. I thank you for it and I just think better work from the dioceses could help the process hugely.

*Mrs Emma Joy Gregory (Bath & Wells):* I am going to start with an apology. I was out having a comfort break and I did not realise this debate had started, so I hope nobody else has already made this point - sorry if they already have. My contribution relates to Recommendation l, part (b), that the ballot form should show, for candidates for election to the House of Laity, the names of the electoral rolls in the relevant diocese on which the candidate's name is entered and for clergy elections the ecclesiastical office by virtue of which the candidate is qualified for election.

My concern is that this might unintentionally result in an increase in the electorate voting based on the reputation of a person's home church rather than the qualities of the person. As a lay person, my speech will particularly focus on the impact this would have on the laity elections. To illustrate my point, now when it comes to local government elections I must admit that I am an extremely lazy voter. Rather than actually finding out about the characteristics of the person standing, I simply go to the polling station and just vote for whoever represents the political party I usually side with. Maybe you do the same.

My fear is that if we print the name of the church where the candidate is on the electoral roll, the same effect may happen. Rather than read the election address supplied where they might learn of the candidate's experience, qualifications, talents, whether they are a young person or a UKME person, instead they might go for the path of least resistance, become a lazy voter and just cast their vote based on what they know or what they think know about the church printed beside their name. Another unforeseen consequence might be that, once people realise this, they might do whatever they need to do to get on an additional electoral roll so that they might have a broader appeal to voters. I ask the Elections Review Group to reconsider this particular idea and its potential effect on deepening the divides of our Church.

*Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich):* I want to echo what previous speakers have said with great thanks to the Elections Review Group for all their work on this Report, for its clarity and all the recommendations which, hopefully, mean that next time round things will go even better than they did this time.

I want to focus on a very specific point. Paragraph 39 talks about the underrepresentation of people on Synod such as disabled people and those from low income backgrounds. Recommendation x, to address this, says that there should be materials to promote the elections, encouraging people to stand, and accessible advice available on how to be a candidate. I would urge that this advice would also include advice about what it is like to actually be on General Synod. I am sure people would be wanting to know what accessibility arrangements can be made, what it is like and for those from low income backgrounds how do they actually pay for this.

That is perhaps a question more for dioceses than the Elections Review Group, but if this advice is going to be useful it would need to explain how to claim expenses and what to do if you are unable to lay out in advance perhaps hundreds of pounds for a London Synod for transport and accommodation. Low income people that I know would really struggle with that and it would seem completely beyond them. I think we need to think about the whole package as well.

## **ITEM 71**

*The Chair:* I would now like to call Miss Prudence Dailey speak to and move her amendment. The speech limit is still three minutes.



*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* As you will have seen, I was a member of the Elections Review Group and it has been a pleasure to work with all of you and I thank the Group for indulging me on various points that I made as we were going ahead with our discussions. Indeed, the Group did initially take up the proposal that I am putting before you today but then it subsequently got rejected at a meeting which, regrettably, I was not able to be present at and so I am taking this opportunity to test the mind of Synod on it.

My proposal will require dioceses to contact all electors by post as well as by email with basically a warning letter at the start of the proposal. The reason for that is because I do not believe that email alone is a sufficiently robust means of communication. For one thing, it is very difficult to maintain accurate lists of email addresses. I know great work goes into this at the start of the election but you are relying on a lot of volunteers and people change their email addresses frequently and do not always let people know. Even if you have got the right email address, we all know the significant danger of something going into spam so that you simply never receive it. Even if it does not go into spam, if you are not expecting it and you do not recognise it - I know many electors, for example, who were not expecting an email from CES - you might simply treat it and think nothing more of it. Finally, there is a group of people, particularly elderly people, who may have an email address but actually very rarely look at it. It is true that electronic voting has increased the turnout and that is great, but that does not mean that there are not some people who have also been excluded, creating a democratic deficit in the system.

I know that dioceses have objected to this proposal for a few reasons. First of all, they say they no longer have the capability to do that kind of mass mailing and also it imposes additional cost and it could delay the timetable, but there are external mailing houses that can turn that kind of thing around very quickly.

Finally, there is the additional cost, but I would say to Synod: Synod costs money. The cost of doing this is but a tiny fraction of the cost of bringing us all here multiple times a year. I think if we are going to do democracy, we need to do it as robustly as possible and maximise access and I would, therefore, beg Synod to support this motion, which I do now move.

*The Chair:* I call on Mr Scowen to respond.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* First, I am a little alarmed to hear Prudence saying she "was" a member of the Elections Review Group. I very much hope, Prudence, that you still are. Yes, I did not want a resignation, certainly not from you because, as you said, you have made some really very helpful contributions which have shaped our recommendations in a number of respects. However, I am going to resist this amendment.

Prudence is right, we did originally include it as one of our provisional recommendations, but when we came to talk to the dioceses they said this just is not going to work. Many dioceses, apparently - well, some at least - no longer routinely collect postal addresses. Where an elector has provided an email address, that is all they have got and so, actually,

for some dioceses, what Prudence is asking for would be impossible. Of course, where an email address is not provided, then there is a postal address but it is the exception rather than the rule. There are clearly people who either do not use email at all, in which case they can do everything by post, or only look at it rarely.

I can understand why there is a concern. But if you put that alongside the impossibility of doing this in many dioceses as well as the very considerable cost involved in sending letters to everybody when the vast majority of them will be able to see the email, I suggest, particularly in the financial situation that many dioceses find themselves now, that that would be disproportionate. When we, as Synod, make these Rules, we really do need to have regard to what is possible and what is realistic for dioceses to do. With some regret, all of the Group apart from Prudence agreed to remove that part of the Recommendation.

Prudence does make a very good point about the name, CES, and how some people do not recognise what that email is. That is precisely the reason for sending out this preliminary email which will not come from CES, it will come from the diocese, which will alert them to the need to look out for CES emails when the election period opens or nomination period opens. That is actually what we are seeking to do with this recommendation as it stands. I do resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* As Mr Scowen does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate on the amendment to continue and a vote to be taken on the amendment. I, therefore, now invite members to stand in their places or, if unable to do so, otherwise indicate. For those on Zoom please use the green ticks to indicate if you wish the debate on the amendment to continue.

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

*The Chair:* We do have 25 standing and so the debate on the amendment continues. The time limit is still three minutes.

*The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich):* Synod, I urge us to reject this amendment. I for one know about the stretched budgets within our diocesan departments. I for one know of staff cuts and difficulties within diocesan house and, to be quite frank, I would much rather the valuable time of our diocesan staff is spent on supporting and encouraging our parishes rather than on administrative tasks like this. It is unfeasible, it is expensive and, quite frankly, it is unnecessary and so I would urge you to resist this.

*The Chair:* After the next speaker, I will be testing the mind of Synod on closure on Item 71, the amendment.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* Please resist this. In our deanery synod, for those members who are not on email we print off the papers and take them to them. They are not even posted. They have someone who lives nearby who helps them. Most deanery synods

are operating in that way for those who do not have access to computers or who are not able to cope with the technology. I think the onus is on deanery synods here to help to provide the information. I would say to you all, as the previous speaker has, that the cost of doing that to our diocese is nothing because the people who are printing the papers off for them live locally and can deliver them. It is a much more sensible way to cope with this problem and I think, as we all know, budgets are very tight and what we have is, actually, efficient.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of the Synod on whether Item 71 has been sufficiently debated. I, therefore, put the motion for closure on Item 71.

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

*The Chair:* We now vote on Item 71.

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

## **ITEM 78**

*The Chair:* That is clearly lost. I would now like to call Mr John Wilson to speak to and move his amendment, Item 78, which is on Notice Paper 12. You have up to three minutes.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* Synod, this is a very simple amendment. The Elections Review Group, under Clive Scowen's chairmanship, carried out an important and detailed review of the elections to General Synod in 2021. In this motion, we are being asked to receive the Report and agree the recommendations contained in Annex to GS 2312. There are 25 recommendations listed in the Annex that each need proper scrutiny and examination.

Whilst the majority of the recommendations are sensible, some cause concern as is the case with Recommendation v under further work following paragraph 39. It says, "The effect of the global majority heritage co-options on the diversity of representation should be evaluated after the next election. If there is no improvement there should be consideration of repeating the co-option process". Synod, we have a democratic process in place to choose who should represent us at General Synod. It is called an election.

It is in the nature of elections that they do not always produce a perfect demographic representation. When that happens, where a particular grouping is perceived as being under-represented, we are on a slippery slope if we attempt to adjust the balance by co-opting additional members. We must work harder to try to redress the balance through the proper means to inform and encourage candidates from these demographics to put themselves forward for the electorate to decide who should represent them at General Synod.

I should say, Synod, that my motion is in no way an attempt to limit the number of global majority heritage members or any other constituency. I would bring this amendment irrespective of the constituencies involved. While the recommendation says if there is no improvement there should be consideration of repeating the co-option process, an unintended consequence of the motion, if unamended, while not explicitly indicating the repeating of the co-option process, is that it leads us along the path that Synod has already accepted that the co-option process should be employed again. This is likely to be used in future in discussions and debate to indicate that Synod has already agreed to, or at least given strong support for, the co-option process. Likewise we will be told that the co-option process was used to redress the balance following the 2021 elections. That does not make it right. It was not democratic then and it is not democratic now.

We need to discuss this. In a moment, Clive will be asked if he is willing to accept the amendment. If he does not, the only way we can continue the discussion is if 25 members stand. I am sure, like me, you want to see the membership to General Synod is being chosen by a process that is free, fair, equal and democratic, and not circumvented because a constituency is thought to be under-represented. Whether you agree with my amendment or not, now is the time to stand so we can have that debate. I beg to move the amendment that stands in my name

*The Chair:* Mr Scowen, will you please respond. You have up to five minutes, but I am not sure you will need all that.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Thank you, Mr Wilson, for raising this issue. Yes, co-option is not the ideal way of getting to the desired position. Those who were not on Synod in the previous quinquennium may not be aware that there was a report *From Lament to Action* which focused on the many warm words the Synod has spoken over the years about redressing or addressing the problem of the way GMH people have been treated in our Church, and their representation on Synod in particular. It recommended what we actually did, the co-option of members in the Houses of Clergy and Laity, to bring the number up to a more representative proportion of those in the lives of our churches.

It is my profound hope that, having done that, and having now got at least ten people with real experience of serving on Synod, that those people will stand for election next time and be elected. But we cannot guarantee that that is going to happen. In my diocese we regularly have a significant number of global majority heritage people standing for election, more than were elected this time than last, but it still is more difficult for them, it seems, than for others. I believe we need to keep open the possibility of repeating the co-option if the next election does not do what I hope it will and enable a good number, an appropriate number of UK GMH people to be elected by the normal method. This recommendation simply says “consideration should be given”. That is not committing the Synod to anything, still less the next Synod. It is simply keeping it open for us to consider in the light of the next election, so I really do urge you to resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* As Mr Scowen does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate on the amendment to continue and a vote to be taken on the amendment. I therefore now invite members to stand in their places or, if unable to do so, otherwise indicate. For those on Zoom, please use the green ticks to indicate if you wish the debate on the amendment to continue. We clearly do not have 25 people standing so this lapses.

We now continue the main debate on the motion as it stands. You have two minutes.

*Dr Diana Tremayne (Leeds):* Thank you, I will not need that long. I would like to echo the thanks for the work of the Group. I think it is incredibly thorough. I just wanted to come back to the point Simon made earlier. I was not an elector, so I did not receive any information about the elections in 2021, and if I had not been prompted to find out more, then certainly I would never have known or found out about what was going on. The recommendations that have been given are about transparency and they are about ensuring greater representation, including the last amendment which was resisted. I think that is crucial. People need to see themselves represented in all sorts of ways and not just be people who are already electors and established members of PCCs and deanery synods and things. I really hope that we will take on board these recommendations and they will lead to change as we move forward, so I am fully in support of the motion.

*The Chair:* After the next speaker I will be testing the mind of Synod on whether we close this motion.

*Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham):* I welcome the work of the Review Group and hope that we will move towards greater consistency, with openness, and support and help for dioceses in mind.

There are two particular points I wanted to make from my own (as a fairly new member) recent experience. One is on paragraph 29(n) about a written questions process for the next election. Hard questions are fine and we should be open about what we think, but just imagine there is a deluge of questions, perhaps some with a particular bent and perhaps some with unfortunate phrasing; is there going to be an editing process? Who would have the right to do that? Do they need guidance to do it?

Then on paragraph 32, candidates are able to watch the count process, and I was told I had a right to observe the count. I wonder how meaningful that is now if what it means is that I can see the “enter” button pressed to activate the computer program which then springs across the screen with the result. I wonder whether that right has been unavoidably lost and perhaps something needs to be looked at there to see if we can know more about exactly how the count has been run.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of the Synod on whether this item has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on this item.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. Mr Scowen, can you please respond to the debate. You have up to five minutes, but I am sure you will not need all of that.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I am very grateful for all the comments and the warm welcome. It is nice to be told we have been thorough. I hope we have. It really is the work of all six members of the Group, assisted very ably by the staff, which has brought that about. I want to thank them. Sometimes we were meeting monthly on Zoom, which is not always what people wanted to do, but they did do it, and I am very grateful, especially because we have still got a lot more to go, and you will hear more about that next year.

Rachel Jepson mentioned Recommendation (q). The reason the postal ballot has to close a day earlier than the electronic one is a technical one to do with the very nature of the system. It is not possible to input extra votes once the electronic portal is closed. It has got to be done before closure. That was a real problem last year. There were folk in dioceses at 11 o'clock at night trying desperately to get it all in before midnight came. So that is the reason: it is to make life more tolerable in the dioceses and to work with the system as it is.

Simon Eyre, I absolutely agree with you about encouraging GMH members and young people to stand for Synod. I think Synod agrees with that, particularly with regard to young people in the light of what we decided on Friday.

Thank you for your agreement about keeping election statements on the website. I do think our electors are entitled to know what we said when we were elected. But let us not expect too much of the diocesan operation in terms of encouraging people to stand. Yes, they will, but they have to tread a careful line not to appear to be in any way other than impartial, and you can see there could be a risk in saying we want X type of person to stand in appearing to be impartial. There is just a bit of a balance there. It is much easier, frankly, for the centre to do it than it is for the dioceses.

Emma Joy Gregory, I understand the point. I just believe in openness. It seems to me and to our Group (because we all agreed about this) that it was an important piece of information for people to have, not least because some people might feel that they do not want to vote for too many people from the same parish, and sometimes you get a lot of people standing from the same parish. Other people might think that parish is fantastic and their people must be good. I take Emma's point that that might be lazy and people not reading the election addresses. My impression is that those who bother to vote at all usually take it pretty seriously and do read the stuff because they care about what the people say, and I think most people recognise the fact you go to a particular church does not guarantee that you hold a particular set of views.

Caroline Herbert, thank you for your encouragement. Advice about what it is like to be on Synod? I do wonder whether that serves the purpose of encouraging people to stand, but certainly information about accessibility and clarity about expenses, and I think you make a tremendously important point about people who cannot afford to pay upfront for accommodation in London, and whether we ought to a better system for that. That is not something we have considered. I dare say some people will ask us to, but somebody certainly needs to consider that.

Thank you, Diana Tremayne, for your support. And Ian Boothroyd, a written questions process, we talked a lot about this, especially with the dioceses. We originally recommended making it mandatory, but after consultation with the dioceses we recognised that that was not a fair expectation of every diocese. So, it is for the diocese to decide whether it wants to have a written questions process, but you are right to say it does give rise to some interesting practical problems which they will have to think through. This is an aspiration and it is for dioceses to decide what they want to do.

I see I have taken my five minutes. We think the right to attend the count should be preserved even though it is not as exciting as it used to be.

*The Chair:* Thank you. We now put Item 26 to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* Item 26 is clearly carried. We now move to the next item of business. Thank you, Synod.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 4.45 pm

## **ITEM 509A**

### **SPECIAL AGENDA I:**

### **LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

### **CHURCH REPRESENTATION RULES (AMENDMENT) RESOLUTION (GS 2312)**

*The Chair:* Good afternoon, Synod. We now come to Item 509A, the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2023. Members will need GS 2313 and the Explanatory Notes GS 2313X and of course Order Paper VII. First, I shall call on Mr Clive Scowen, on behalf of the Business Committee, to move Item 509A, the preliminary motion that the resolution be considered.

This will provide an opportunity to make general comments about the resolution or to raise specific points which do not relate to the amendment on the Order Paper. If the preliminary motion is carried, we will then move to the amendments. We will take Item 516 before 515 because that is a substantial amendment. Members who wish to

comment on the amendments should not do so during the preliminary motion debate but should reserve their comments for the debate on the amendments. Once the amendments have been dealt with, Mr Scowen will move the approval motion at Item 509B. In order to be carried, Item 509B must be passed with a majority in each House of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting.

I now call on Mr Clive Scowen to move Item 509A. He may speak for up to 10 minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* This resolution gives effect to the three recommendations in the Election Review Group's report which were not concerned with General Synod elections. Two of them are to do with the matters raised by Mrs Robbie last year. The first of them, in paragraph 2, provides that where at an annual parochial church meeting the number of candidates for the election of parochial representatives of the laity does not exceed the number of places to be filled, anybody entitled to attend the meeting may seek a vote to confirm the election of each candidate. If the resolution is passed by a simple majority, a vote is then held, in the case of each candidate, on whether that candidate should be declared elected.

It is my anticipation that in the vast majority of annual meetings this will not be needed. Sadly, however, some churches do experience the problem of people who have very little support, shall we say, in the parish who get themselves elected to PCCs and deanery synods simply because there is nobody to stand against them. This can cause an enormous problem for the functioning of the PCC, and often for the incumbent who has to chair that PCC. So, we are dealing with a serious problem that only occurs occasionally, but is sufficiently serious for us to seek to provide a remedy.

Originally, it was suggested that we should have a prohibition on close relatives proposing and seconding candidates, but then when it came down to trying to define what a "close relative" was that became very difficult. We have gone for a different approach which simply gives an the APCM, when it decides to do so by a simple majority, a right to vote on each candidate. That seems to me to be right and proportionate. As I say, for most parishes this simply will not be an issue but where it is it really matters.

Then paragraph 3 requires a person elected as a parochial representative of the laity to make a declaration that that person is not disqualified under the Church Representation Rules by virtue of being an employee of the National Church Institutions being included in the barred list under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, being convicted of a violent offence against a child, or being disqualified as a charity trustee. A failure to make such a declaration would result in the person losing his or her seat.

Again, one hopes that the problem that this is seeking to deal with is a rare one, but the fact is that people who ought not be on our PCCs do sometimes get elected. At the moment we have no ability to insist on DBS checks for ordinary PCC members, or so we are advised, and all we can do at the moment, in the current state of the law, is to ask them to complete a declaration. If you have read our Report you will see that we are also



suggesting to the National Safeguarding Team that they might like to pursue this issue of whether there ought to be a mandatory DBS check for folk serving on PCCs, but that is certainly not a matter that Synod can deal with. This is a partial solution to that problem, and, of course, in any event, DBS checks do not flag up disqualifications from serving as a charity trustee.

This is the showstopper really. Paragraph 4, Mr Mark Williams, being an eagle-eyed person, spotted that Form M1 in the Church Representation Rules, which is the form used to give notice of the annual parochial church meeting, continues to refer to the report on fabric, goods and ornaments. It should not do that because of the effect of section 50 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdictional and Care of Churches Measure 2018 which has changed the name of the report, so we are taking that opportunity to make that correction. I am trusting that will not lead to too much debate.

Chair, I move the motion standing in my name, “That the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2023 be considered”.

*The Chair:* Thank you. This item is now open for debate.

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

*Mrs Alice McIlwaine (Armed Forces):* Thank you for explaining the reason for the changes. I had not quite got it until I heard Mr Scowen’s speech, so thank you for that. As I was reading through the amendment, what it replaces is a very simple sentence, I believe, that reads, “If the number of candidates does not exceed the number of seats to be filled, each candidate is declared elected”. I am an army wife and I have been a member of many parishes, and it is, I believe, often the case that people are elected under those circumstances. We are often lucky to get someone to come forward. It would be helpful if the amended language made it clear that that can still be the case. Perhaps it is in the word “may”. My reading was that for any election to go forward, the new process would need to be gone through. If that is not the case, and I would hope that it is not, is it possible for the drafting to make that clear?

*Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield):* Thank you to the Elections Review Group for taking on board my representations last summer. It is a delight to be making legislation in this way. In the 1980s, radio news bulletins on Radio Nepal almost exclusively described the activities of the Nepalese Royal Family. My dad worked for the BBC as head of radio training and made 16 visits to Kathmandu in the 1980s and 1990s to deliver training on journalism and broadcasting, and he used to say that he was there, going to Kathmandu, to make Radio Nepal less bad. He was going to make small changes to encourage a better approach to journalism and news in that place. I have a similar approach to my time on General Synod. We are often overwhelmed with huge issues that beset our Church, but in this proposal I believe we are making small but significant changes and that we can make the Church of England less bad.

The two main proposals in this motion originated in our church, Holy Trinity West Bromwich. We followed synodical process but I was able to leap in last summer, and many thanks to Canterbury Diocese for their motion which I was able to hijack. We have indeed had problems with a disruptive member who took an unopposed place on the PCC and as PCCs increasingly struggle to recruit members this possibility, I think, will increase, so I am very grateful for clause 2.

Clause 3 was developed because our assistant pastor Helen Morrow spotted a clash between safer recruitment rules and what was actually possible. I wholeheartedly commend clause 3 to protect PCCs to have made the largest possible investigation into ensuring that PCC members are appropriately recruited.

Please join me in voting for this Measure in making the Church of England less bad, and maybe there is someone else here who can contribute to the next small adjustment to the Church Representation Rules to help our Church work better for the glory of God.

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

*Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter)*: I have got two comments about the ACPM aspect of what is being proposed. The first one is about the struggle in some parishes to actually get engagement with ACPMs, so just urging caution if we are adding any levels of bureaucracy to them. It is already hard enough sometimes to get people to engage with them.

The second point I would make is around the joyful insanity of parish life in some places. Some vicar's job is to keep the rival factions of the parish together, this is probably very politically incorrect, but almost like a dictator in a very tribal Middle Eastern country. I will strike that one from the record maybe. But maybe some people will relate.

The problem that comes with this Measure is, actually, sometimes different factions within certain parish settings may try to weaponise those sorts of votes, and we need representation from different groups, not just cliques who can garner enough votes at what might be an unrepresentative APCM, at a time inconvenient to everybody. So, I would urge some caution about unintended consequences and how it might end up affecting parish life in some of our more challenging parishes.

*The Chair*: After the next two speakers, I will be testing the mind of Synod for a motion of closure on this item.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)*: We are talking about amending this document, which you might have noticed is the same colour as Clive's shirt today.

I just want to check that I heard Clive correctly because I cannot see the supporting stuff in what is written. I support this, and you said it applies to the election of PCCs by ACPMs. You also said, I think, Clive, that it applied to election of deanery synod reps, which of

course happens every three years, but I cannot see that in the paperwork so could you just clarify that? Perhaps if it is not there, it is something to be added in a future amendment.

*Canon Dr John Mason (Chester):* My comment is also about paragraph 3. I am all in favour of the declaration about disqualification. I just want a bit of clarification. The way I am reading it, it would appear that you can get elected before you have to make the declaration and I just would have thought it would be more sensible to have to make the declaration at the time you put your name forward for nomination and then proposing and seconding in the same way that a churchwarden does. I just envisage a situation where somebody gets elected at the APCM and then, as I read it, they could not actually then take part in the short PCC meeting which usually occurs immediately after that to elect officers without signing that declaration and I am aware that people might at that point suddenly say, "Oh, I did not realise", and they might be concerned and so on and I just wonder if at the very least people could be encouraged to make a declaration at the time they are nominated.

*The Chair:* I will now move a motion for closure on this item of business.

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

*The Chair:* That is carried and so I call on Mr Scowen to respond, please. He has up to five minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Thank you for that debate and taking an interest in what might to some appear a little dry - I cannot imagine why. Alice McIlwaine was concerned about the clarity of the drafting. We think it is clear from a legal point of view and this is drafted by parliamentary counsel. However, there is an important role of interpretation to be done and I do think that when, assuming you pass this, it is promulgated there needs to be some accompanying documentation that help people to understand precisely what the words mean. Thank you for raising the point. I do not think there is a legal problem with the drafting but more explanation is always welcome.

Amanda Robbie, I share your ambition to make the Church of England less bad and I guess that is probably why most of us are here. Thank you for your support and welcome for this and I agree with you that it does make a small contribution to doing that.

Luke Appleton, engagement with APCMs is difficult in some places and, again, thought needs to be given imaginatively at a local level to how to engage people. When you have the meeting, for example, whether you enable people to join online in a hybrid meeting, all those things are things that can be thought about. I do not think that this is in any way bureaucratic. It is simply giving a right to an APCM to decide that it wants to proceed in a particular way to ensure that someone with virtually no support does not get elected. I take the point about cliques and factions.

I do not know how you can ultimately avoid that. The reality is that, if you have a contested election, if there is a majority clique at the meeting all their people will get elected. This is a problem whatever happens at the APCM if that is what you have got in the parish. I think the solution to that is to pray hard and love people and that might actually help to address that, but perhaps I am naïve. Adrian Greenwood, yes, I am relieved that the publishers of the Church Representation Rules had the foresight to bind it in a colour that matches my shirt but, otherwise, I think you were supportive and so I do not think there is anything else to comment on there.

John Mason, the timing of the declaration. This sets a standard that you have got to sign it before you take part in the PCC but, yes, there is no reason at all why candidates could not be encouraged to do so earlier and it may well be that if there is some accompanying documentation to these Rules that that will help that to be thought about. But I do think it is important that that declaration is signed before they act as members of the PCC.

There was also the question about deaneries. I do not know whether it was John Mason who raised that or somebody else but, anyhow, somebody did. We think that the election of parochial representatives of the laity includes deanery synods. It was certainly drafted with that intention and so that is what we think it means. If for any reason that were subsequently found not to be the case, then we can correct it in the next resolution which will be brought certainly in the lifetime of his Synod and certainly before the next deanery synod elections.

Thank you for the contributions and I hope you will now vote by a two-thirds majority in each House to pass it.

*The Chair:* At this stage we are just looking for a simple majority by a show of hands and it is the two-thirds majority later. I put item 509A to the vote.

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

## **ITEM 516**

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. We now come to the amendments and, as I said, we will have a look at Item 516 first because that is a substantive amendment. The 25 member procedure applies. That means the mover of the amendment will have not more than five minutes to speak to it. I will then call on Mr Scowen to speak for not more than five minutes in reply. If the amendment is not supported by the Business Committee via Mr Scowen, it will lapse unless 25 members indicate by standing in their places or, if unable to do so, otherwise indicating that they wish the debate to continue and the amendment to be voted on. I call on Mr Clive Billenness to move his amendment, Item 516. He may speak for up to five minutes.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* You have just clearly shown that you do support this way forward to protect democracy and to protect the welfare of our parishes. Synod, as it

stands, I am concerned that the legislation - which I voted for as well, by the way - lacks two vital safety precautions. First, as it stands, in a parish with an electoral roll of say a thousand people at an APCM attended by 30 people - and there is no quorum, do not forget - the unopposed election of a churchwarden could be challenged by one individual and then the candidate's appointment prevented by a group of 16 people, 1.6% of the electoral roll.

Luke Appleton very carefully explained some of the risks that can occur. Ah, but everyone could have turned up and voted you say. Well, the trouble is with increasing sizes of parishes, journey times to AGMs are increasing as well. I live in an extreme example where you can live 250 miles away from the venue and not everyone has access to Zoom and, even if they do, their computer might not support it. It might be in use by a child doing their schoolwork at that time. Technological poverty is real. These people lose their democratic right to participate in a confirmatory vote. All the flowery words you have, for which I am deeply grateful to the Legal Department for helping me to draft, fundamentally say everyone gets a vote and the candidates get a say and they can explain themselves. That is what it is all about.

If only there was some way to address this problem of people not being able to participate. Well, how about a confirmatory vote as a postal vote. I am sure someone is going to say this is going to be expensive but, why, because blank voting forms can be sent out by email; they can be put out at churches; they can be downloaded from websites, because they are not personal to individual people. They can be returned by post or they can be hand delivered, they can be gathered up. There are lots of reasons, I am not sure, not to do this but I am going to submit to you, Synod, there is overridingly one reason to do it which is to increase participation by the whole congregation. A study that was conducted for the British Parliament showed that postal votes do substantially increase participation. I will give an example of this at work in my own parish.

In 2020 we applied universal postal voting and we used a vote to approve our accounts and more than 60 people took the time and trouble to return a ballot paper in various means compared to the 30-odd who actually attended an online AGM. Universal ballots tend to bring out reasonableness. Mr Scowen has spoken about the possibility of a small cabal turning up at the meeting and then dominating it. It cannot happen with this. It will actually prevent it. They tend to bring out all sorts of reasonableness. You do need to prevent hijacking by small, unrepresentative pressure groups, which brings me to the second safeguard I am proposing to you today, which is to give any candidate who is subject to a confirmatory vote the right to address their electors and explain why they wish to be elected.

If you have a four or five church parish - and it is not unusual now - you have a risk that not everyone will know each other terribly well. If a decision is to be taken on whether to confirm somebody in office, give them the right to introduce themselves and my amendment, if you approve it, will give them that right. Just look around this chamber. If we had to have a confirmatory vote on an unopposed Synod election, say for example

the recent unopposed election of Canon Robert Hammond as the Chair of the Business Committee, an email would have winged its way to all of us from Synod Support to get us to vote. Members, surely if it is good enough for us at Synod, is it not hypocritical not to say it is also good enough for the members of our parishes?

Chair, I beg to move the amendment which stands in my name and also to thank the Legal Department that have helped me to create the words. Behind the words, it is two things: let everyone have a say and let the candidate have a say as well. I beg to move this amendment.

*The Chair:* Mr Scowen, please. You have up to five minutes to respond.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* Thank you, Mr Billenness. The first thing to say is that this Rule does not apply to churchwarden elections. Many would think it probably ought to but, because of the way the legislation works, you cannot apply this to churchwardens via a Church Representation Rules amendment. It would require, as I understand it, an amendment to the Churchwardens Measure.

On the substance of what Mr Billenness is asking for, I ask Synod to resist this. You will recall that I said in my speech on the Report that we had heard from Mr Billenness on Zoom at one of our meetings where he made a case for universal postal voting at APCMs both on elections and other matters subject to vote. He was asking for a very big change and that is why we said, "Well, we want to think more about this and we will report on it later". We are going to do that work. I think it would be utterly premature to apply that approach to one particular thing that happens at an APCM rather than taking an holistic view. If we decide to recommend to Synod that that should be adopted in the future, then clearly when that is implemented this new Rule can be amended to take that on board.

He also asks for election addresses. Well, again, we do not have election addresses for elections at APCMs at the moment. Some might think we ought to, but that is not the current system. At the end of the day, there is a question of proportionality here because there is the freedom to have postal votes at APCMs if the APCM wants to do it, but in many parishes I think that would be thought to be disproportionate and in many parishes it might be thought to be unaffordable. I really think that this ought not to be considered now. Let us go away as a Review Group and bring back some considered recommendations which Synod can consider as a whole.

*The Chair:* As Mr Scowen does not support the amendment at Item 516, it will lapse and, indeed, Item 515 I think falls away as well, unless at least 25 members indicate that they wish the debate on the amendment to continue, either be standing or green ticks or otherwise indicating. If you wish the debate to continue and a vote to be taken, please do stand or do your green ticks now. There are not 25 members standing and not many green ticks either and so I am afraid that means this item lapses and I take it that you do not want to move the next item.

## ITEM 509B

*The Chair:* I now call on Mr Scowen to move Item 509B, "That the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2023 be approved". Clive, you have up to ten minutes.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I am fairly confident I shall not need that. I remember one thing that I should have said before with regard to the question about when the declaration is signed. One reason for not doing it before the election is that, as the Rules stand, people can be nominated at the meeting. It is unlike churchwardens who have to be nominated in advance of the meeting and so that would be impractical to insist on that in the Rules, although, as I say, encouraging it as far as possible would be very sensible.

Chair, we have already had a debate on the broad merits of this resolution. We have decided not to amend it and so all that I really need to do is to urge you now to make this amendment and, as I pointed out before, but rather prematurely, this will now need a two-thirds majority in each House, so can I invite you please to give us that.

*The Chair:* Sorry, Clive is not calling a vote, that is my job. This item is now open for debate. I can see no one indicating that they wish to speak and so we do now move to a vote. I order a counted vote by Houses and to be passed we need a majority in each House of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting.

The vote on item 509B: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 18, against none, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 115 in favour, two against, with two recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 137 in favour, five against, with two recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

*This motion was put and carried.*

*The Chair:* That clearly reaches the two-thirds majority in each House and is passed. The resolution will now be laid before both Houses of Parliament pursuant to the Statutory Instruments Act 1946 and that concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall KC (Manchester)* took the Chair at 5.27 pm

## ITEM 27 REVITALISING THE PARISH FOR MISSION (GS 2314)

*The Chair:* Synod, we have a challenging opportunity. We are due to finish this item of business, Item 27, at 6 o'clock, which you all know is something like 35 minutes away. I have to allow the speaker to speak for ten minutes. There are some six amendments. I have to have a response from the main speaker to each of those amendments. We then have a concluding debate. It is a challenging opportunity and the first thing I would like

to do is to ask for an extension of time, probably for about three hours but I cannot do that. The maximum I am allowed to ask for is 15 minutes.

Now I say it is a challenging opportunity, if we are going to get anywhere near the end we are going to have to be very disciplined but it probably does not matter because the opportunity is we can talk about the parish. I am going to call on Kate Wharton to speak to Item 27. She may speak for up to ten minutes, but she knows how I feel about time. It might just help if she were to indicate if there were items in terms of amendments which she could tell us about how she might like to view those, I do not know. Well, that is a matter entirely for her. Kate Wharton, please.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* Friends, I am so sorry to be back with you this afternoon at a time when you want at least your dinner, if not your pre-dinner gin. I sort of hope that there is a video introducing this item.

*(Video played)*

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* We are this evening particularly concerned with one of the six bold outcomes from our Vision and Strategy, a parish revitalised for mission so churches can reach and serve everyone in their community. I hope we would all agree that this is an outcome we would like to see. After all, this is what we are all about, each one of us, laity, clergy, bishops, seeing our communities transformed, seeing people reach for the good news of Jesus Christ, the Church mobilised, empowered and equipped in every place.

I have a friend who has led a free church for most of his adult life. He has done that extremely well and his church has been fruitful, but he regularly tells me that if he had his time over again he would have been an Anglican. I do not think it is because we have better biscuits. It is because he recognises the extraordinary missional opportunities which the parish system presents. However, much as we might all agree that this is an outcome we would love to see, it is also pretty clear that this is indeed a bold outcome. It stretches us practically and spiritually. That is a good thing. We ought to be stretched. But as we seek to work towards this bold outcome, it is good for us to spend time thinking, planning and praying about what that might look like in each of our parishes and contexts.

This motion calls us to do five particular things. First, to welcome this emphasis on the revitalisation of the parish. The word "revitalisation" is key with all that it conveys. "Vital" speaks to us of life and energy, of something which is necessary. Making something "revital" is to acknowledge that perhaps some renewed effort or some different focus is required because there has not been as much life as we would have hoped. Of course, we do not seek the revitalisation of the parish for its own sake so that there is life and joy and energy focused merely inwards. No. We seek the revitalisation of the parish for mission. All of us in this place are united in our desire to see more people come to know the saving love of Jesus. Our parishes and churches are, of course, not the only way that will happen but they are certainly a very significant way.



Secondly, this motion calls us to affirm the parish as a central component of our mixed ecology. This is one of our three stated priorities. In 2023, we are recognising the need to become all things to all people that by all means we might save some. Mixed ecology is the language we use to express some of that variety and creativity. If our Church is to grow younger and become more diverse, as surely it must, and as we have made another of our key priorities, then the mixed ecology will be vital as we seek to meet people where they are, to reach out to people who would not ordinarily come inside our church buildings, to present the timeless story of God in new ways. It is vital that the parish system is at the heart of all this. It provides a framework within which we can work. It exists not so that we can be territorial and protective of our patch and work only in our own silos, but so that we can ensure every single soul in the land is held within a system in which they matter and can be known.

Thirdly, we are called to note the research of, among other things, *From Anecdote*, to how churches grow and flourish. To be clear, talk of growing churches does and must mean being interested in numbers because numbers relate to people and people are who Jesus died for. But it does not and must not only refer to numbers. Growth is also about depth and breadth. It is about life and health. It is about flourishing in every way possible.

Fourthly, the motion calls us to welcome the commitment to sustaining clergy numbers and to encourage lay ministry. We know that some sort of focused leadership is necessary if churches are to be mobilised for mission. This will mean clergy and so it is vital that there is ongoing investment into stipends and increasing vocations into ordained ministry. It will also mean lay leaders, both licensed and not, and it will require them to work together. If such ministry is to be supported and encouraged, then there will need to be a focused and sustained emphasis on clergy wellbeing at local, diocesan and national levels. Revitalised parishes will need clergy who are cared for, pastored and invested in as they lead their churches and communities.

Finally, we are called to encourage some sort of local planning for mission. As we look around each day in our homes, communities, workplaces and churches, we constantly seek to discover what God is doing and attempt to join in. As we seek to revitalise our parishes, we will need to pay attention to what God is calling us to and make plans which help us move forward. For each parish, and indeed each diocese, this will look slightly different as all kinds of different factors will come into play. For some, they will adopt a structured mission action planning approach. For others, their planning will be more informal and organic, but some sort of process of discernment and planning and vision setting will be needed if our parishes are truly to be revitalised.

It is important how we view this process. This is not about survival, somehow bringing in enough people and enough cash to ensure we can keep going. It is not about doing the box ticking exercise which someone out there has told us that we must do. It is not about doing more and more stuff or finding that magic bullet that unlocks the success. Rather, this is about a community of believers coming together to dream dreams with God about

what might be possible in his perfect plan for their future. It is about celebrating all that God has done in the past, valuing and affirming all that he is doing in the present and being inspired and excited for all that he will do in the future.

*The Chair:* I think I need to move my proposed extension to 6.15.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried, so until 6.15. I am looking for a couple of speakers to start the process.

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

*The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson):* I very much welcome this motion, particularly to see the parish system as a central component of our mixed ecology, but in order to do that we do need to have clergy who have high morale. I reflect on the use of language that we must take great care with if we are to sustain that morale for those dedicated clergy who serve so wonderfully in our parishes. I remember when I was a parish priest at the time the Fresh Expressions movement became very popular and I was led to believe that I was leading a stale expression of Church.

We have to be careful of language that I have heard used frequently: that to support standard parish ministry is to subsidise decline. We have to be careful about the distribution of funds, as we were from the Strategic Development Fund where actually for many of us, particularly leading rural parishes, we did not need expensive new projects, we needed money to sustain existing levels of clergy. In order to sustain morale, we also need to give attention to clergy remuneration.

For my sins, I am the Chair of the Remunerations and Conditions Subcommittee of the Archbishops' Council - I must have done something very wicked in a former life - but our commitment and the commitment of the Archbishops' Council was to sustain the clergy stipend in line with CPIH and, as we know, high levels of inflation have established themselves and that is going prove to be a significant struggle. At the moment, diocesan boards of finance are having to make very difficult decisions between increasing stipends or sustaining numbers of clergy and they cannot do both.

I was speaking to one of my clergy a few weeks ago who during Covid buried 10% of his electoral roll. They did not die of Covid but they died during Covid and that is a reflection that outside our urban areas the average age of our congregations is about 70 - certainly half of the congregation numbers in Hereford are over 70. The current financial model to do these things is unsustainable. I leave by challenging the Church Commissioners to consider how they distribute their funds between new projects and sustaining existing ministry.

*Mrs Sandra Turner (Chelmsford):* It is amazing, is it not, that the local church is at the very heart of God's mission. Paul describes it as "a pillar and buttress of truth". That is an awesome responsibility, people, and it is even more amazing that we should be called God's fellow workers, saints indwelt by the spirit, equipped by our wonderful pastors for the work of ministry and to build up the Body of Christ. Yes, there are challenges but it is God's Church. There is no panic in heaven. The Lord is sovereign and He has given us all we need for this work, but sometimes His work does not look that impressive from the outside.

I love my small, local, rural church. We have no loo, no running water, poor heating, no wi-fi, no staff team and just one faithful minister. We are an insignificant church whose strength lies only in the Lord Jesus, but God has been at work revitalising our parish. We have a faithful vicar and God has blessed us with gifted lay people. Together, we work as a Body of Christ. Mission and discipleship are our priorities. By God's grace, we have ten home groups for all ages and stages. We pray and eat together. Our youth groups are thriving. We are not just a Sunday presence in our village. We own the village shop and we offer our primary school, Christian school clubs, assemblies, RE lessons and mentoring. Elderly villagers hear Gospel messages at our lunch and afternoon tea clubs. New parents are offered free meals for two weeks and invited to our rather boisterous All Age Services and our Little Fishers Group. Women bring their friends to our ladies' pudding evenings where they hear a Gospel message along with the chocolate roulade.

We do not have a written plan. We do not qualify for extra funding. Frankly, our numbers have not grown much but they have not declined. We have grown. We have grown in our unity in Christ, in maturity, in our love for the Lord, for each other and, most of all, for the lost. So please support the motion for revitalisation and let us support our clergy who equip us for the ministry. Let us not be daunted by the challenge but depend on the Lord Jesus, people. It is God's Church. He gives the growth to God be the glory.

*The Chair:* Michael Bryden to make a maiden speech and then I am going to make a pathetic attempt to try and go through the amendments.

*The Revd Dr Michael Bryden (Sodor & Man):* "The Church of England's glory and its essential life", that is how Malcolm Guite described the parish system in Friday's *Church Times*. It has been an enormous privilege to be a parish priest. There has been all that nurturing in Word and Sacrament, but with the help of so many faithful lay people we have served a whole community. It could be the pre-school group, a weekly coffee shop, community pantomime or just basic pastoral care, the people who have helped me do it have done it because simply they were baptized Christians and they were living out that life. I may be dressed today like an Agatha Christie vicar, but that does not mean I do not know about innovation in parish life.

I ought to be in favour of any motion supporting the parish, especially when it has been supported by someone whose contributions to Synod I normally rate, but I am not sure I can back this motion. "Revitalising the Parish" is its title. If something needs revitalising,

it is lacking vitality and it is a source of sadness to me to see the fading of parishes I once knew to be full of vitality. Sometimes they have been unlucky, square peg in a round hole but, often as not though, it has been a withdrawal of resources or the increasing stretching of resources. You know, the sort of parish I have worked in, not particularly glamorous, we think we have done wonderful things locally, we could have done more if we had not had to spend so much time and energy raising the parish share. We were never going to attract attention for external funding.

I think this motion does not go far enough because it does not request any more tangible resources for parishes. It largely maintains the status quo. We are committing ourselves to what we have already got and that seems odd when we say that our parishes need revitalising. The status quo as it stands is not allowing all our parishes to be the Church of England's glory and its essential life. I think we should offer more than just worthy words of encouragement.

## ITEM 72

*The Chair:* Can I call Mr Robert McNeil-Wilson to speak to Item 72. Sir, you have up to three minutes. If I tell you that the Bishop will support this - apparently, I have elevated you, I am sorry. But, anyway, you know the Bishop is going to support - once you do something wrong you do it wrong for a long time. You know that Canon Wharton is going to support you. Three minutes, and please do not be so mischievous.

*Mr Robert McNeil-Wilson (Gloucester):* Thank you, Chair, that is clear. I welcome this motion. This very concise amendment is important because the parish system is not just a central component but because it is the central component of the mixed ecology. It is not to pretend that parishes are the font of all good in our Church. There are our chaplaincies. We heard on Saturday, prison and probation chaplains are vital to rehabilitation and are bringing people to faith. It is to parishes that they turn when it comes to giving former prisoners somewhere they can worship and belong.

We need parishes to step up and sign up to the Welcome Directory. We need to hold parishes accountable for being the central component of our mixed ecology. There are our new start-ups and other exciting initiatives like those in my own Diocese of Gloucester - sports based mission and modern day monasteries - but no other component of our mixed ecology is on a par with parishes in terms of their centrality and enduring presence. With suitable encouragement and support, our parishes are well-placed to try new things and nurture the mixed ecology within their own well-established and well-proven framework. The parishes' role in our calling to become younger is the most central by virtue of those hundreds of parishes with schools in which many hundreds of our parish priests and volunteers build powerful links to our Church and are bringing young people and children to faith.

As Kate said, it is more than about just drawing people in. Our mixed ecology must be much more than about putting posteriors on pews. As my own Bishop Rachel said, and

she said it to me, the parish is not just there for those who attend our services. It is there to care for the whole parish, every parishioner, every blade of grass as Bishop Rachel puts it. As a former infantry soldier, I see powerful possibilities on our frontline, new start-ups and parishes working together to grow our Church in its mixed ecology. Like the cavalry and infantry in action, both can take ground but only the infantry can hold that ground. The parish system is our infantry. I move the amendment in my name.

*The Chair:* Kate Wharton to reply briefly.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* I am but the Revd Wharton. I am going to accept this amendment, mostly because I cannot bring myself to quibble about a definite versus an indefinite article. It helpfully places the parish at the heart of mixed ecology but does not say it is the only way of doing so. So, yes, I accept it.

*The Chair:* I just wonder whether we could test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 72 has been sufficiently debated.

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

*The Chair:* We proceed to a vote on Item 72.

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

## **ITEM 73**

*The Chair:* The amendment is clearly carried. Let us move to Item 73.

*The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield):* With your permission, Chair, if I could speak to all three in three minutes to save time.

*The Chair:* Yes, by all means.

*The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield):* I hope that will be helpful. Thank you, Bishop Kate by acclamation, for what you have brought. Three things to help to clarify this amendment. First, to provide this Synod with all the evidence that is needed to see where we are as a Church and to see the growth and to strategize for where that growth will be, drawing it together and bringing it to us so that we can understand it. Secondly, for Item 75 removing paragraph (d) might sound very, very scary to some but we cannot just sustain parish numbers. We need to increase them exponentially to see the growth of our nation, both of ordained and lay leaders up and down our country to help support the deficit in clergy numbers like my Diocese of Lichfield at 19%.

We have got to have these creative ways up and down the country with lay and ordained and I would like to commend all of those ways in every parish and for those creative ways like the Caleb and Peter Streams that we are seeing. For the last one, missional mapping,

I would really like us to encourage each one of us to map where we are, to see the six "bold outcomes" be the forefront of our prayer, practice and prophetic calling as a Church, to draw people to a lively faith in Christ. It is not enough just to have a plan but to be reviewing it annually, to keep it sharp and enable it to be adaptable to a changing missional climate which will ensure that we as a Church of England remain at the heart of every community.

I beg to move the first amendment, Item 73.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* I thank my former friend, Matt, for his helpful amendments, all three of which I am happy to accept.

*The Chair:* Shall I test the mind of Synod on whether Item 73 has been sufficiently debated.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. I put Item 73 to the vote.

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

## **ITEM 75**

*The Chair:* I am going to take them out of order. Item 75, Kate has already said that she does support. I am going to test the mind of Synod as to whether this item has been sufficiently debated.

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

*The Chair:* The motion for closure is clearly carried. Now I put Item 75 to the vote.

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

## **ITEM 76**

*The Chair:* I am going to look at Item 76, which again Kate has said that she supports. Again, I am going to test the mind of Synod as to whether this has been sufficiently debated.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. I put Item 76 to the vote.

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

## ITEM 74

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. We come back to Prudence Dailey, Item 74.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* I very much welcome the proposal in this motion to increase emphasis on lay ministry and the number of lay ministers because it is clear from the Report, *From Anecdote to Evidence*, that increasing lay involvement helps to promote church growth. But I would be worried if that were to lead to a shift towards lay ministry away from clergy because the motion as it stands talks about increasing lay ministry but maintaining the number of clergy. There is a problem with that. In, I think, 2016 the Church commissioned a Report called *Going Deeper: Church Attendance, Statistics and Deployment*. That Report said, "We find that the number of clergy per church has a significant effect on church growth, in particular, the change in the number of stipendiary clergy per church between 2005 and 2011. An increase in clergy is associated with the likelihood of growth in attendance while a decrease in clergy is associated on average to a decline in attendance. There is no significant difference in church growth with different numbers of churches in a benefice".

It does not say ministers, lay ministers or focal ministers. It says clergy. Therefore, I would like this Synod to commit ourselves to revitalising the parish not only through growing the number of lay ministers and expanding lay ministry, but actually increasing the number of clergy and especially stipendiary clergy in our parishes. I beg to move this amendment.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* Point of order. In moving Item 75, which asks to leave out paragraph (d) and insert the wording in that particular amendment, we have now another amendment that says "leave out paragraph (d) and insert" another.

*The Chair:* Yes, I have considered this. I do not think that they are inconsistent.

*Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield):* Okay.

*The Chair:* Because they are not inconsistent, I think it is appropriate to deal with Item 75 before Item 74 and it is not going to create an inconsistency. That is your point of order. Kate to deal with Item 74, please.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* Thank you, Penny. With great respect to Prudence, I am going to resist this amendment. We would all agree, I am sure, that we would like to increase the numbers of lay and clergy ministers, but it is something I believe is better covered in the amendment that we have already approved and so I resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* Because Kate does not support the amendment, 25 members need to stand or green ticks. There are 25 members standing and so the debate will continue. Can we have perhaps one person in favour of the amendment and one person against.

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

*Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester):* I think we need at this point to accept the reality of the current situation. In the Leicester Diocese, there are parishes that are sustainable and working very well that are currently being threatened by this super-parish model such that active and sustainable parishes will be losing their vicar. I cannot see how we can justify this kind of behaviour against what is being suggested and what Prudence has been proposing. I would urge that this allocation of funds through SMMI and what was the SDF Fund should be looked at not just with regards to increasing the number of vicars in intergenerational churches and resource churches, but also into the more traditional parish sustainable churches which exist already.

*Ms Mary Talbot (Europe):* I simply resist it because, as Kate has said, we have already agreed it in the increase of lay and ordained vocations in the previous amendment.

*The Chair:* I am going to test the mind of Synod as to whether this item has been sufficiently debated and, therefore, I am going to move a motion for closure on Item 74.

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

*The Chair:* The motion for closure is clearly carried and so we now vote on Item 74.

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

## **ITEM 77**

*The Chair:* That is clearly lost. We now come to Item 77. Revd Marcus Walker to speak to his amendment and, Marcus, it would be really helpful if you could be no more than three minutes. I know that is a lot to ask, but there it is.

*The Revd Marcus Walker (London):* Synod, as our Lord said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also", and I will tell you where our heart is not right now and that is with our poorest parishes. How do we know this? We know this because of the numbers. We know this because of the reports that have been commissioned. The *Church Action on Poverty* Report that came out only in February this year was clear. Our key significant finding is that significantly more churches have closed in low income areas than in more affluent areas.

In Cornwall, the ratio of priests is 1:14000 in the poorest areas and 1:5000 in the richest areas. Across our whole nation, the question of how our Church engages with the poorest parts of our nation is live. We know why this is. If you are the spreadsheet person in the diocese looking at where cuts must happen because a budget is over-running, you will cut the poorest parishes that do not send in the full parish share. We know how it works. First, you shrink the number of clergy. Then, you merge the number of churches and



then those churches one by one shut. Sacraments stopped. The Word of God is available only if you have a car that can drive you there. We know from the reports what happens when we do this.

In *From Anecdote to Evidence*, we did not hear this little segment of that Report. The findings show that single church units under one leader are more likely to grow than when churches are grouped together. *Going Deeper* tells us that stipendiary ministry is vital to the growth of parishes. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also", and we have a lot of treasure and where we put that treasure tells us where our heart is.

I want to suggest that we invert the way in which the diocesan spreadsheet managers look at the churches in their diocese. I want the last church to be cut to be the poorest church. I want the Lowest Income Communities Fund, that Sir Robert Chote revealed was so often skimmed off at the top by the diocese or in other dioceses, just put into the general funds to be targeted parish to parish, I want the £100 million that has been earmarked for the SMMI to go into that. Most of all, Synod, I want us to decide this next year, not the Archbishops' Council but you and me. Please vote for this amendment which I place on the table.

*The Chair:* Kate to respond.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* Thank you, Marcus. I am going to resist this amendment. We absolutely do need to support our most deprived parishes and communities and I have spoken in this Synod a number of times about urban mission and ministry, my great passion for and commitment to it. My heart is in the inner city of Liverpool, but I do not believe this amendment is the correct way to achieve that aim and so I resist it.

*The Chair:* Kate having not supported the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand or show by green ticks if they are online. Yes, there are 25 members and so the debate continues. Can I just let you into a little secret and the secret is that if we adjourn it is very unlikely that this item of business will come back, not because I am not here tomorrow - because somebody else could take the Chair - but I gather that the pressure of business is such that that is not likely to happen. I am going to ask for one speech in favour and one speech against.

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

*The Bishop of Blackburn (The Rt Revd Philip North):* You might expect me to support this and, indeed, I admire what lies behind Fr Walker's amendment. The current system for funding parochial ministry, especially in income deprived communities, is broken and unjust. We need a proper debate about an unfair and dysfunctional method or we will become increasingly a Church for the rich. But this amendment will not help us to address any of those complex issues.

In fact, it will be do the precise opposite. Urban parishes take pride in being able to take responsibility for their own life, but this amendment will reduce urban parishes to dependency, a dependency that they will find it very hard to break out of. It will create hundreds of unfillable posts, hundreds of tiny urban parishes that do not justify a full-time priest. It will take us back to the bad old days of Darlow, which saw so much money used unproductively. In seeking to address an injustice, it will create many more and will lead to huge resentment, especially amongst parishes that are just outside whatever we decide constitutes deprived. In addition, it will take away from dioceses the funding they need to invest in long-term mission initiatives. It misunderstands LICF which is not an exhaustible sum of money. It misunderstands the helpful role that SMMIB plays in supporting dioceses.

As someone who is completely passionate, drivenly passionate, about the health and vitality of the urban church and who steered through Synod's commitment to have a Church on every estate, I am afraid I have to say this amendment will not help. In fact, it will do the very opposite. What we need is intelligently focused investment in growth and in buildings that enable us to have strong entrepreneurial churches in deprived areas, free from dependency, forming their own lay leaders and able to sustain a healthy life. Fostering a short-termist, dependency mentality, which this amendment, will do will not achieve that. Please vote down this specific amendment but, please, also do not forget what Fr Walker and others are trying to do which is to start a debate to build a juster Church.

*The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* Currently Blackburn, but given that my Bishop is shortly to become available ... Because it concerns the dioceses and not the central bodies of the Church of England, there is no facility open to Synod members to ask this question. How much has been spent cumulatively by the 42 dioceses of the Church of England on preparing bids and monitoring Strategic Development Funding? Some dioceses have full-time specialist staff working entirely on such bids. In other dioceses, preparing such bids is a core component of the working hours of a number of central diocesan staff. We do not know and we cannot have the answer to that question but I suspect that it is in the millions of pounds every year.

This amendment that we are considering is definitely a blunt instrument. It is far from perfect but so, as we all acknowledge, is SDF and so will be its successor. Yes, some of the money that would be redirected through LInC funding direct to the parishes this amendment proposes will be spent poorly and unproductively while much will be invested wisely and effectively, again just like SDF. But one advantage of this amendment is the savings that it will deliver to the dioceses themselves by cutting through the massive diocesan bureaucracy involved in the competitive bidding process.

*The Chair:* Now, Archbishop, can I say this. I will willingly call you, but I remind myself that everything the Chairman says is right, so I can tell the time and define the time but there it is. Two minutes.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* It is a ten second speech.

*The Chair:* Good.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Which should be longer, which is just to say, nobody's fault, not yours, certainly not Robert Hammond's, I lament again the fact that when we come to discuss Vision and Strategy things the time is always squeezed where it is not for other things. I blame no one.

*The Chair:* I might agree, but there it is. I am going to move to closure on Item 77.

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

*The Chair:* Closure is clearly carried and so we vote on Item 77.

*The Revd Jack Shepherd (Liverpool):* Point of order. Please, can we have a vote by Houses.

*The Chair:* Only if 25 members stand and you will understand the consequences of doing this, but do I see 25 members standing?

*The Revd Jack Shepherd (Liverpool):* Can I cancel my point of order?

*The Chair:* Yes. Thank you very much indeed. So we move to vote on Item 77.

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

## **ITEM 27**

*The Chair:* Now to come back to the main motion, Kate. First of all, I should say that I think that I should test the mind of the Synod on whether Item 27 as amended by Items 72, 73, 75 and 76 has been sufficiently debated and so I move a motion for closure on that.

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

*The Chair:* The motion for closure is clearly carried and so we move back to the main motion. Kate, you have a short time.

*The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool):* Thank you so much for engaging in this debate at the end of a really long day. I so wish we could have heard more stories. It was such a joy right at the beginning to hear those wonderful stories, Sandie, about the village hall and the meals. Let us start a Twitter thread, shall we, of the ways in which Jesus is changing people's lives in our parishes. I will kick it off. Join me later this evening. Thank

you, Philip, as always, for your passion and your challenge. Amen to all that you have said. Sandie, I will leave the closing words with you. There is no panic in heaven. God is sovereign. Thank you.

*The Chair:* Just before quarter past 6, we vote on Item 27 as amended by Items 72, 73, 75 and 76.

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

*The Chair:* The motion as amended is clearly carried. Thank you very much.

*The Revd Jake Madin (York)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 8.20 pm

*The Chair:* Good evening, Synod. A notice: there are 15 cars between West and South outside James and these are at risk of parking violations, so you are either not hanging your thingamajig right, or you are parked where you should not be parked. If you think that that is you, please speak to the information desk downstairs. Thank you.

## **ITEM 28**

### **REVIEW OF THE MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE (GS 2315)**

*The Chair:* We come now to Item 28. Members will need GS 2315. You will also need Notice Paper 4 which gives the Financial Memo, as this item has a financial impact. You will also need Order Paper VIII, which has the motion and the amendments.

I now call on Flora Winfield to speak to and move the motion. You have up to 10 minutes.

*The Revd Flora Winfield (ex officio):* Good evening. Thank you for being here. It is late in the day and in these sessions. There have been deep, serious and challenging conversations about matters which are critical to the life and future flourishing of the Church. We have heard much about trust and transparency, accountability, reducing complexity, increasing agency and making our collective life easier to understand and to navigate. We have heard in these days how complicated processes can encourage mistrust and erode respect, and how easily process becomes something that creates barriers and makes relationship harder, and the impact that can have on fragile places.

I was struck by all these things because these themes have been at the heart of our work in the review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure. The Measure provides a legal framework which enables mission and the cure of souls: supporting worship, mission and ministry and enabling the Church to adapt that provision as circumstances change over time.

The Measure sets out the ways to change and consult on pastoral and ministry arrangements, and to prepare buildings for their future ministry. What you have before you tonight in our draft document is at least the 40th draft - that is four zero - in nine months of these proposals, and perhaps that gives some understanding of the listening and attention we have tried to bring to discover, understand and express consensus around this work.

That listening was important because of the issues I have just mentioned. We have travelled from Exeter to Carlisle, from rural churches, through former industrial heartlands, seeing the Measure in action. We have visited BMOs in city centres and rural areas. We have visited parishes who have experienced reorganisation, and heard their stories. We have visited deaneries, who are finding ways to address challenges together, and met with archdeacons and bishops and patrons and members of diocesan mission and pastoral committees in wide and rich conversations. All these people gave their time and their wisdom with generosity and grace and we are so grateful. The overwhelming message we heard in all these conversations was that how this work is done matters as much as or sometimes more than what is done, and that trust was a key issue.

So, we are proposing a new spacious legal architecture which will provide the best conditions for a proper mission and pastoral environment for conversations and consultation, even when those conversations are really difficult, and that will take into account room for future growth and development.

We also recognised in our travels the reality of fragile places and the need for something like a fallow time emerged. This is not a fully developed idea at this point, and we welcome Synod's wisdom on how you would like to see these ideas progress further, as we work through the legal and financial details.

In the proposals, we emphasise the importance of being able to talk earlier, and in a more open and collaborative way, about pastoral arrangements, ministry matters and the future of buildings, enabling ideas and innovation to emerge from all parts of the Church and to give people a sense of agency that they can use the new Measure in a way that will help them fulfil their mission.

Three years ago, the Church Commissioners were asked to review the Measure by the Archbishops' Council. In July 2021, the Synod supported the initial ideas and voted overwhelmingly for this work to continue. A summary of the massive response to the public consultation which followed was then presented to Synod in February 2022. In those responses we heard many important things, but particularly that more listening was needed before the proposals were developed further.

In February 2022, we established our General Synod Reference Group so that members of Synod themselves could contribute directly to the proposals. The members of the Group are listed at the back of our report, and I want to pay particular tribute to them this

evening, as they have shown such commitment and care to this work, as we have identified together the consensus for where change was needed, and what that change could look like. These were candid considerations and not everyone will agree with everything we have set out. But, it was important that we modelled an approach that was focused on listening: on listening together and on finding the consensus in a way that was respectful and considerate.

The Mission and Pastoral Measure is a legislative framework which has its roots in the 19th century, and which was designed in a very different context from the 1960s, and which has not changed substantially since, although it has been consolidated and amended. We agreed it needed to be updated and used the consultation responses directly to guide our work. For example, you asked for a Measure that would be simpler and easier to understand, with processes which would enable the building of trust and more collaborative relationships. We have proposed this legislative change, shaped around a new Measure with more accessible and much simpler statutory guidance, and a new legal architecture, which will encourage a cultural shift to build greater trust through transparency and accountability.

You asked for a way of doing strategic thinking together. We have proposed the introduction of mission and pastoral diocesan frameworks, which would articulate your shared understanding of how the Mission and Pastoral Measure functions would be delivered in your diocese.

You asked for a more collaborative approach and greater agency for parishes. We have proposed changes which encourage a co-design co-production approach which is genuinely inclusive.

You asked for more attention to be paid to clergy wellbeing. And we agree that the mission and pastoral process and decision-making needs to take much more account of the impact of proposals on clergy and volunteers. You asked for a focus on the needs, traditions and characteristics of the parish to remain, and we have kept that focus.

You wanted to ensure that the protection of the life of parishes and Church buildings was a commitment. And we have said that structural changes in these areas would still require legal schemes and retain the right to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

You were concerned about long suspensions of presentation. I think the Church of England record is 42 years, but if anyone has more in their diocese, I would love to know. We have proposed a fixed term limit for suspension and a new terminology of “pause” rather than “suspend”, and are pleased that the House of Bishops supported these proposals.

You wanted to see a greater recognition of the issues parishes and dioceses face together, for realism about that. We have developed the fallow time idea, and will explore

the possible legal, administrative and financial changes which might help those parishes who are fragile and in need of time for regenerative recuperation, as we all will be after this set of sessions!

It is important to say that in our conversations, we gave careful thought to finding the balance between the need for the Church to be more nimble and agile in its decision-making so that we can address our shared challenges together. We are conscious that in some areas there is more work to be done to finalise the shape of our recommendations and establish consensus. We need to work together to support the cultural change for conversations under the new Measure, not just in terms of the process but for the experience of all those involved.

I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Item 28, review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure, is now open for debate. The speech limit will be 25 - I mean five minutes. I would like to call Mark Wallace for a maiden speech and Ric Thorpe also for a maiden speech.

*The Revd Mark Wallace (Chelmsford):* Thank you, Chair, and I am busy cutting 22 minutes out of this text. Before I begin though, I do need to declare an interest as a CPAS patronage trustee. I thank the MPCPC for their work on GS 2315 and especially for the fringe meeting they hosted on Saturday evening. That meeting was a helpful opportunity to explore informally some of the nuances of the Report and the Third Church Estates Commissioner and her team helpfully clarified a number of areas of concern. Thank you.

To be clear, I support the motion and I urge Synod to do so as well. I am particularly pleased to see the proposal that the often misunderstood terminology of parishes “being suspended” is replaced by the more neutral language of “pause”. Being suspended has always sounded rather punitive whereas being paused sounds rather more hopeful, and, to be frank, a little less painful as well.

I would like to address the section on changes to patronage in the Report, and if you are still conscious at this time of night I am referring to pages 57 and 58 in the document. Now, I am aware that for many in this Synod patronage will be a bit of a pain in the neck. Patrons tend to insist on due process. They usually take the long view, thinking in terms of decades, not months. Patronage is also independent to the diocese and parish, and that can be a frustration to those who want to push things through. Perhaps even now the snipers in the gantry are getting into position, I do not know. But we are all aware that we serve at a time when concerns are being raised about power and how it is used, and, sadly, this is often the case around the appointment of clergy into parishes.

Might I therefore encourage Synod members to be cautious of any attempt to reduce the historic and legal power of patrons. Making things easier is not always making things better. The patronage system has acted as a check and a balance on the use of power

in parish appointments as patrons can bring experience, expertise and, yes, independence to the process.

I am well aware, of course, of cases where patrons have failed to engage appropriately. To that end, as we talked on Saturday evening, I would invite the MPCPC to consider a use it or lose it approach which, with safeguards, might help break any deadlocks.

I am grateful to Flora and to her team for agreeing to engage with patrons in the ongoing process of refining all of this, and I hope I can explore these issues fruitfully together in the very near future.

*The Bishop of Islington (The Rt Revd Dr Ric Thorpe):* I welcome this Report and all the amazing work that has been put into it. It is just astonishing. I think it was 1,000 connections and communications that you have had with people. I welcome a move toward a greater simplification of the framework for pastoral reorganisation. This has been a long time coming, as you acknowledged, and I also want to affirm the emphasis on a more humanised approach based on good conversations which should underpin our processes.

There is so much good here: clearer consultative processes, trimming back on the multiplicity of orders and schemes, the abolition of the word “suspension”. I do, however, have a fairly major concern that the Report largely focuses on the status quo: that is, it is more pastoral than mission in its orientation.

There are many wonderful stories of revitalisations and new church plants around the country that have done really well. They have been done well in collaboration with parishes and their stakeholders. St Paul’s Haringay in London was revitalised from a parish plant from Christchurch Mayfair. St George’s Gateshead which I was involved in supporting revitalised with a team from St Thomas Sheffield, or of course the Fresh Expression Lightwave, mentioned in the Report, in Suffolk. Amazing story after story. There are literally hundreds of stories that I could tell you that have been started in the last few years, freshly planted, growing dynamic churches and new worshipping communities that are bringing new life to their parishes and seeing new people coming to faith in Jesus.

Synod now has more people than ever involved in this kind of work directly. But our legislation needs to enable the implementation of our Vision and Strategy for the 2020s. If we are, as we say we are, committed to a mixed ecology of church then our legislative framework needs to reflect those priorities. I am concerned that these proposals in their current form are not necessarily going to help bishops make the changes needed to develop the mission and financial health of the Church across the nation with the fundamental and financial challenges it faces after decades of decline. We are in a serious situation and our mission and pastoral framework needs to help us address that.



A few comments on where this bites for me and for church-planting colleagues. First of all, the requirement for dioceses to produce MPM frameworks could be a good thing, but could be constrained by the statutory guidance, and the time taken to adopt a framework in a diocese could hold up innovative planting and new worshipping community proposals. The guidance needs to be light touch and flexible.

Secondly, the fallow concept and the proposals for shared or temporary governance are a really good idea, but can we make space for parishes which need support to be able to grow lay-led communities or to receive a plant or to receive governance oversight from a Resource Church as part of these temporary arrangements.

Thirdly, I welcome the simplified approach to the reuse of closed buildings. Bringing buildings back into use for planting purposes would be much easier under this set of proposals.

I regret the approach that is taken towards Bishops' Mission Orders, or a part of that approach. There is a lot of evidence that these represent a major growth area in the life of the national Church, but in a mixed ecology church to subject to them to a statutory five-yearly review process rather than the Bishop and Local Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee deciding the frameworks, seems arbitrary and centralising. We do not, after all, impose five-yearly reviews on parishes. Perhaps we should.

One final suggestion: may I propose the group tasked with drafting this legislation includes someone with the experience of the intricacies and challenges of the legalities of enabling BMOs and the proactive side of church planting to be part of that group so that that perspective is included from the start?

Chair, I do not want Synod to retreat from its mission. Candidly, you could not really tell from reading the Report that the Church has severe mission and financial challenges. I have a concern that the Church will become inoperable in some parts of the country if it is prevented from making the changes needed to prevent its extinction or, more positively, to help it thrive. I wish this revision process well, but let us make it a tool for the re-evangelisation of England.

*The Revd James Pitkin (Winchester):* I am not able to be with you in York because a pastoral scheme has just come into effect with me becoming the incumbent of two additional parishes, and this is my first week as their new vicar and rector.

I start with a declaration of interest: I have been a member of the General Synod Reference Group since its inception in May 2022. I also hosted a visit by the Commissioners to Romsey Deanery in Winchester Diocese which is reflected on page 32 in the Report.

Invited to that meeting during that visit were both clergy and laity. They had experienced both good and bad times with the current Measure. We were listened to and our

experiences were reflected in this review, so thanks for that go to Flora Winfield, Wendy Matthews and their team. I am also a workplace representative of the Church of England Employee and Clergy Advocates (CECA) as well as being its vice-chair. In my time in that role as a workplace rep, I have seen that the current MPM has often been misapplied. It has often been experienced by parishes as a painful and sometimes bullying process. The process has often been misapplied by bishops and diocesan staff.

Adopting this review will ease the experience of parishes and deaneries. It will also enable parishes to make helpful changes. It clarifies the processes and sometimes streamlines them. Individuals and parishes can offer opinions on any scheme and the interested parties are involved in both orders and schemes. The new MPM which I hope will emerge from this review is one to be welcomed. More flexibility will be available and yet the rights of the parish and its clergy are retained. I believe that this review can be weighed in the balance and found not wanting.

*The Revd Canon Darla Delap (Gloucester):* I have a number of declarations of interest. I am Chair of Gloucester DAC, I am a member of the Church Buildings Council and I am a team vicar in a group of 11 small rural parishes.

I am delighted with the work so far, thank you. A new Mission and Pastoral Measure that focuses on trust and on listening and on wellbeing and working in partnership sounds great. I recognise the current problem that the Report speaks about when church buildings are seen in such a binary way. The current Mission and Pastoral Measure does not recognise either the way that churches are a focus for small communities, especially if they have no shop, no pub, no other place to gather like a hall. These small communities cannot sustain regular weekly worship but really, really want to use their churches at Christmas. They are less than festival churches but more than fallow churches. Village churches already share governance and mixed-use arrangements and, although I love that phrase of churches being fallow for a time, I wonder who is going to pay for their upkeep, because the money has to come from somewhere, even to clear the gutters, let alone to put a new roof on.

I also wonder whether the CBC is the place to look at those new uses. It is used like that now, but surely local knowledge is more important to how those buildings might be used. I would hesitate to say that even the DAC does not have the knowledge that the area dean, the parish themselves, the clergy and maybe even the archdeacon have.

A simplified process for alternative uses for buildings sounds marvellous to me. I want to be able to return fallow churches to worship use and alternative use when somebody comes up with a bright idea. I am excited about this renewed Measure as the DAC Chair and as a member of CBC, but I am especially excited as a rural priest. This is - or could be - simpler, humbler and bolder.

*The Chair:* After Jonathan Baird I am going to be calling on Dr Ian Johnston to move the first of his amendments Item 79.

*Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury):* There is one impressive thing about this Report: it has rather attractive coloured photographs. In the public consultation on GS 2222, 1,600 people wrote in about its horrors. Such horrors continue to haunt us. This Report fails to address them. The terms of reference have been far too prescriptive and it has been driven through with unseemly haste. We members of the Reference Group have been unable to address two central matters: first, the high universal collapse of trust in the Church; secondly, the misuse and abuse of episcopal and diocesan power. There is nothing in this Report to address the chronic imbalance of power and resources between bishop and parish. There is no defence against the parish being steamrollered. There is no way to stop the latest ill-advised scheme being forced through. Look at the wreckage of Truro, Leicester and Winchester.

This Report is impressively underwhelming. There are too many platitudes. Much of it is difficult to understand. It is riddled with such statements as “could include” and “consideration could be given”. In the trade, these are known as “double doubtfuls”. They will do nothing to restore trust. The Report does propose an iota of redress for parishes; however, it is too little and would come far too late. There are practically no mandatory powers or protections. In coping with pastoral reorganisation, there is a huge imbalance of knowledge and experience between diocese and parish. This needs to be put right. Parishes need early redress and fairness. They need legal support. They need to be granted stronger powers of self-determination, otherwise fragile parishes will wither and die. Let us fight to preserve parishes. Give them vicars. We have the money. Let us stop pulling down the shutters. This Report is a charter of surrender. I urge you not to welcome it.

In order to avoid the ecclesiastical nuclear winter of Wales, Scotland and the Methodist Church, we need to go back to the drawing board, with this time powerful and meaningful terms of reference. And any statutory guidance must form part of the draft legislation, with full and rigorous scrutiny by this chamber.

The MPCPC could be most effective. Certainly it has a dedicated and diligent staff. However, to be so, its apolite independence needs to be set in stone. It requires beefing up and it needs to have early, robust and invasive powers. To put all of this in secular terms, the roulette table requires the attention of a spirit level. If we were to welcome this Report we would be sounding the death knell for swathes of parishes. Please do not welcome it.

## **ITEM 79**

*The Chair:* I now call on Dr Ian Johnston to speak to and move the first of his amendments, Item 79. You have up to five minutes.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* With respect, could I put 79 and 80 together because they are intimately linked?

*The Chair:* You can speak to them both together but you can only move the first Item 79. You have five minutes to speak to both.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* For those of you who were here last night you will notice I have left my computer at home. I have my speech. Declaration of interest: I am a member also of the Reference Group, a group which I have to say has worked extraordinarily hard over the last 18 months.

We are all painfully aware, as I said last night, of the trust deficit, and references to it during the Business Committee debate were not well received, and that is not an encouraging sign. We all know the causes of this lack of trust and indeed many of them have been mentioned already tonight. We all have an obligation to address them. It should be front and centre of everything we do. I have to say I am very proud of the governance review which has done just that. The MPM should affect the parish in every way imaginable. If we look at the existing MPM 2011 it says this: "Those using the Measure will have regard to worship, mission and community as central to the life and work of the Church of England, and to the traditions, needs and characteristics of particular parishes" and it refers to pastoral supervision. So in updating the MPM, we must consider far more than just redundant churches and parochial boundary changes, and clearly today's situation is screaming out for a more holistic attitude to be taken regardless, and we heard a lot of that from Mr Baird.

GS 2315 addresses some generally welcome, but relatively minor issues. It is superficial. It actively avoids the matters that actually affect our parishes looking to the future. And this is a key point. It uses statute excessively, while avoiding delegation and subsidiarity, and this is hardly a declaration of trust. It goes nowhere near the need for effective oversight. I have to say Turnbull did not either, but that is no justification for it. It does not address the widespread power imbalances, again that Mr Baird has just referred to, and it avoids commenting on representation at all.

GS 2315 disappoints because, as has been said, it is restrictive in its terms of reference. The future wellbeing of our parish, in my view, is not being taken seriously by the Church governance. Remember *Candide*: Pangloss encouraged a complacent attitude to all that is wrong in the world because God created it in this way so it was the best available. Well, Pangloss, well, Governors, everything is not rosy in our world, but neither is it clear how Synod should respond to 2315.

We have two options. Either we can redirect the work, as my amendment proposes, and this is I accept a maximal approach, in which case we would need to consider at least a parishes commission. For those not aware of it, I would be very happy to explain it to you. Enlightened diocesan management that really does involve the parishes. I am delighted to say there are some around, but there are also an awful lot that are not.

Effective oversight. Not only is this critical in the governance review, it is absolutely essential also in the MPM. And the Synod both willing and able to hold our dioceses to account. I notice the Eleventh Notice Paper has assessed the cost of mine as being between £1 million and £2 million, and I am under no illusions that the amendment I am proposing will not be cheap.

The second option we have is to stop it, take the old MPM and make it better by updating the Code of Practice and encouraging everyone, and I mean everyone, to use it. This is a minimal approach. The problem I suggest with the old MPM, because you can ask people who have experience of it on the MPCPC, and they say generally it works quite well. The problem is that the Code of Practice is not well understood and it is not known by our parishes generally. Our senior management teams might be well aware of it, our parishes generally are not, and that is a major weakness.

One thing we could do on this minimal approach is take that old Code of Practice and really scrub it up, give it a good new look for the future, and offer it to all of our parishes and our senior management teams to use with the old MPM. This would be really quite a simple way forward. We heard from James Pitkin of the abuse of the MPM 2011, and I suggest to you that it is not so much an abuse of the MPM but more of its Code of a Practice and a lack of knowledge is. That is where the problem is. That is a fixable problem.

*The Chair:* Can you move your amendment?

*Dr Ian Johnstone (Portsmouth):* I move the amendment in my name, number 79, on the basis that that is necessary in order to pause the work.

*The Chair:* Thank you very much. I now call on the Revd Flora Winfield to respond to Dr Johnston. The Revd Flora is going to speak to both the amendments as he has spoken to both, but we are only going to be voting on Item 79, which is one that he moved, and he will move them separately. We have got up to five minutes.

*The Revd Flora Winfield (ex officio):* Thank you so much, Ian, for your amendments and for your careful attention to these issues and your commitment to the General Synod Reference Group, which is much appreciated. We are going to resist both these amendments and I will explain why in a moment, but before that I want to say that we recognise the issues that you have raised, and we echo your concerns about trust and relationship between parishes and dioceses. They came up strongly in our work both with the General Synod Reference Group and in our wider consultation and engagement. However, the task the Commissioners were set by the Archbishops' Council in 2020 was a legislative review, and it was appropriate for the Commissioners to focus on recommendations in relation to our responsibilities, and not more widely; that is to stick to our knitting. Synod overwhelmingly voted for this review work on the MPM in July 2021.

Ian, I would just like to say that your assertion that GS 2315 does not address consultation or representation is slightly confusing because Annex B transparently sets out an illustration of that representation and consultation, so it is there in the document and we did discuss it quite fully in the Reference Group.

As I hope members of Synod can see, we have placed trust at the heart of our approach to the recommendations about change in the Mission and Pastoral Measure, which is why we have put such an emphasis on a cultural shift to a more pastoral and collaborative approach in GS 2315, and have deliberately proposed a new legal architecture which will help facilitate and enable that cultural change. That new legal architectural would increase transparency and accountability; critical elements to creating and building the better trust between parishes and dioceses that I know you want as much as we do.

From a Commissioner's perspective there are many different ways in which we can actively seek, all of us, to build trust in the Church. And we have worked to do that in the task of this review which was entrusted to us, and would encourage others to follow in this path.

So Synod, I encourage you to move forward with an approach which will better facilitate our shared ministry and resist these amendments.

*The Chair:* As Flora does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate on the amendment to continue and the votes to be taken on the amendment. I therefore now invite members to stand in their places or, if unable to do so, otherwise indicate. For those on Zoom, please use the green ticks to indicate if you wish the debate on the amendment to continue. We have 25 people standing, so the debate continues on the amendment on Item 79. You still have a five-minute speech limit.

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds):* I would like to give a view of this from a parish point of view and to speak against the amendment. I welcome the review of this Measure in an attempt to make it simpler and more pastoral in its application. I speak from the point of view of a parish priest where the parish did decide to petition for the closure of a church. I would say in our diocese parishes have to agree and have to petition if they wish for a church building to be closed. It is not initiated by the diocese. I would recommend that to others well. My experience of that is not that it happens too fast but it generally happens too slowly.

I hear the suggestion of a fallow time to give more power to stabilise, and I see that might be right in some circumstances, but I would hope that this Measure would give more flexibility to recognise that there may be situations which are more straightforward where the wishes of the parish are to get the job done so they can move on to develop their mission and their ministry in different ways. I know of others who have had a similar experience.

I was the vicar of a parish where one of the church buildings, which was 20th century and not listed, had a problem with the porch roof that was so unstable, the building could not be used. There were insufficient funds to repair it. It was difficult to get grants. There was no community use and after much time exploring different options the PCC petitioned for closure.

This was particularly unfortunate because it was January 2020, so before a survey could be done the pandemic hit and everything stopped. There was a year where nothing happened except the building was visibly deteriorating before everyone's eyes. Even when a video survey was eventually agreed to after a year, and things started again, the process still took a very long time. It is a difficult decision for a PCC to decide that a church building has to be closed and in a case where everyone is in agreement it prolongs the agony if it takes many months before the building can be handed over to the diocese and the PCC can be relieved of responsibility for it. If the building cannot be used, it is hard to have to continue with maintenance and perhaps more expensive insurance and to try and keep it safe will. If worship is still taking place in the building it is disheartening for a dwindling number of worshippers to have to continue over a long period of time.

So I welcome the Measure. I resist the amendment. I am hopeful it will give more flexibility to consider the wishes of parishioners and adapt to them, and I hope it will provide that flexibility adapting to particular circumstances.

*The Chair:* After this next speaker, I shall be looking for a motion for closure.

*Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester):* Well, Synod, we have been going 20 months now in the current quinquennium and this is quite a significant day. It is, I think, the first day that we have debated parish and the ministry of the Church of England in this way. Before dinner we had a wonderful motion to revitalise the parish but now we have a motion that will disempower it. It is rather like the paralysed man has taken up his bed to walk but now we are clobbering him with a mallet.

I am afraid the paper before us is a flawed half-baked document and I think we should support the amendment and regroup the work. We can do that because the existing MPM has worked perfectly well over many years and it can go on a bit more. I know the paper that we are considering only too well having been on the Reference Group myself, where certainly everyone was sincere and trying their best, but I think Synod may be beginning to sense that there are certainly some members of the Reference Group who are not entirely happy with the way it has gone, and the outcome just does not seem to be good enough.

The document boils down to 13 recommendations all about process, and it is a document full of questions. Sadly, there is no overarching vision defining the direction of travel. The sheer vagueness spawns concern that this motion is just another stepping stone on the path of diminishing parishes. Actually, it is the same concern that caused 1,600 people

to write in with objections to its forebear GS 2222. We had better be careful. This document is not going to rebuild that trust.

I think I should say just a few words about what overarching vision would one like to see? I think you have to say the starting point should be the parish perspective. With churches throughout our nation, we have a God-given asset that we should cherish for ministry, and we should listen to what they say if we are serious about bringing Christ to all God's people, wherever they are. We need a Measure that gives empowerment and agency to those parishes so that they can be relevant to their communities, in nurturing Christian faith certainly, and also in performing new more modern rules in the wider secular community. The dioceses for their part should stop trying to control and instead give practical support for grass-roots initiatives. Let the Holy Spirit get to work in a thousand different ways and we might be surprised.

Let us remember that in the countryside village parishioners think the church is theirs. As one wrote to me, "The church was paid for and has been maintained by the community for 150 years. Actually, we the community have as much right, if not more, to claim the church as belonging to us". Above all, we need a motion that grants parishes proper rights and legal representation and yes, which is in this document, the possibility of fallow status schemes and partnerships.

In conclusion, I ask Synod to celebrate the sense of local ownership, to see it as the wonderful opportunity that it is, and to recognise that it is through nurturing it and empowering our own local parish communities that we will revitalise it for the future. Please vote for this amendment because it does address the concerns I have expressed.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 79 has been sufficiently debated.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. So I now will put Item 79 to the vote.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Point of order: might we have a count of the whole House, please?

*The Chair:* If I see 25 members standing then I will have a count. We do not have 25 members, thank you. I put Item 79 to the vote.

*The motion was put and lost on a show of hands*

## **ITEM 80**



*The Chair:* That was clearly lost. I am going to ask Dr Johnston once more if you can come and move Item 80. The Chair is feeling a little bit generous and so I am going to ask you to complete your statements from where you left off.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* Thank you, Chair. Trust has a funny way of manifesting itself sometimes. I very much appreciate it. You will be pleased to know that I am very nearly finished anyway.

So, the work that we have done so far, and I know this more than anyone I think, or as well as anyone, good though it might be in itself, and I accept there are some good points in 2315, is incomplete. In particular, it does not look forward enough. It does not set the parish in the 21st century. It is a small increase on the old MPM. It looks at the boundary changes and the church closures, and that is it. It does not look forward.

Legislation based on 2315 would, in my view, be neither cost effective, nor, I would suggest, even effective in the use of resources, and the question as to whether any further work on it is justified is completely moot. Do we spend some small amounts on questionable ends finishing off 2315, but then what will we have at the end of it, or a lot more in the grander plan? It is in my mind far from clear actually how to take this forward. Going to legislation now, I think, would be a mistake because we would not have anything of substance to what we had. Upgrading the Code of Practice on MPM 2011 would make a huge difference. So, I would recommend that Synod pauses the updating of 2011.

Please support the amendment in my name and thank you, Chair, thank you very much indeed again for your discretion.

*The Chair:* Can you formally move?

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* Please will you support the amendment in my name.

*The Chair:* You are formally moving Item 80.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* I beg your pardon. I formally move the amendment in my name.

*The Chair:* Can I invite the Revd Flora Winfield to formally respond, having already spoken to it.

*The Revd Flora Winfield (ex officio):* Madam Chair, I do so formally respond to Item 80, and I urge Synod to resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* As this is not supported I need to see 25 members standing to indicate that they want the debate on Item 80 to continue. I see 25 standing. The item is now open for debate.

*The Revd Jane Palmer (Salisbury):* I have been struck over the last few days by all of the discussions around trust and it seems to me that lots of the language around power and mistrust seem to be coming not with the desire for a future of unity and truly shared power, but the relocation of power to another base with another agenda. I asked a friend yesterday if we are called to preserve the parish or to build a kingdom. Let us not be arrogant enough to believe we are the only builders out there.

The parishes that I am blessed enough to serve are communities. They are not buildings, although we have several beautiful ones. More people do not attend our building or support our traditional structure, but we love our worship and our buildings and people give up huge amounts of time and energy to serve it. Since I was appointed, four years ago now, it has been hugely challenging to appoint lay officers. We are just about to finish becoming one legal parish which frees us up for meetings for mission. We have energy to go to our local pub at Christmas and do a nativity, to share the Gospel with people who would never come through our door and we cannot do that unless our processes become simpler, humbler and bolder.

I urge you, Synod, not to stop this work because, let us be honest, our parish system is not functioning in the way that it needs to for the future. If we want people to know the Lord, to make Jesus known as we say in Salisbury, then we need to change things and it is painful and it is hard, but the Lord will be with us. We pray a prayer in our benefice that we wrote asking us to trust in God even when the future seems uncertain and, you know, the Lord is providing for us.

We paid our parish share in one of our parishes this year, the year just gone, even though we know that our regular giving covers just 50% of that share and that share is about £30,000. That does not mean we have not got challenges, but we can do this because the Lord is on our side and we cannot have a language or a system that talks about us. It has to talk about mission and the people that we are there to serve and that is not ourselves.

*Dr Chris Angus (Carlisle):* This is not a planned speech. I think we have two things here. We have the recommendations for a Measure to handle our mission and pastoral affairs, but we are also faced with a clear breakdown of trust in many areas. I actually think that the work that has been done by the Reference Group and particularly by the people who have been involved in drafting it, by Wendy and Flora, is a really good piece of work but it cannot solve all our problems. You cannot legislate for trust and it is clear that in some dioceses there is a breakdown of trust between the diocese, as we call it, but I guess in many cases that is possibly the bishop, and the parishes. It certainly does not happen everywhere.

In Carlisle, we actually work well in partnership: the parishes, the deaneries, the diocese and our bishop. It is a diocese in good state and in good heart. We do not actually have some of these problems and so we have to think why. One is that we do not impose things from the centre on our parishes. If we are going to be closing churches, their

closure actually only comes from the parish and usually with some reluctance. We do not close many churches and quite often if the church closure process begins we manage to reverse it at some point.

I think delaying work towards the new Measure to do some work separately on trust will get us nowhere. I think we need to vote against this amendment and also I think we will need to vote against Marcus's amendment because those are things that we can take when we look at the legislation. Let us have some trust in the process. We have a superb starting point so let us just get on with it.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 80 has been sufficiently debated. I, therefore, put the motion for closure on Item 80.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. We now vote on Item 80.

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

## **ITEM 81**

*The Chair:* That is clearly lost. I would now like to call the Reverend Marcus Walker to move his amendment, Item 81. You have you have to five minutes.

*The Revd Marcus Walker (London):* Thank you very much indeed, Madam Chair, and, much more importantly, thank you, Flora and Wendy. This piece of work is, to my mind, excellent. There is so much that is so good about the work that is found in this review. There is much that could, if all the "coulds" that are in the Report are turned into teeth at a later stage of legislation, actually really help to bring parishes and dioceses back together. I have found myself to have been profoundly entrusted, perhaps to use the word. Oh, no, entrusted is the wrong word, profoundly moved by the amount of trust that was built up in the conversations of the Review Group of which I was a part.

I would really like to flag up some of the positives of this Report, of the fallow time that we have heard about discussed, of the ability to bring in a sort of flying squad of people to be able to help a PCC with fabric questions when they do not have the expertise or to support them financially, that might stop a parish getting to the point of closure or merger. I really think that the simplification and clarification of the powers of the bishop over the parish are really good and if they are turned into real legislation with teeth will help hugely in the rebuilding of trust.

There were two areas in our conversations which, when we were talking, both Flora and Wendy would say we feel that the remit given to us by the Synod before the last synodical election and by the Archbishops' Council meant that if they were to take them forward

they would need to test the mind of Synod. That is what my amendment is here to do because I think that we are very close to an actual landing zone here, to use that phrase.

There were two aspects that really came out of the huge response to the original review when 1,600 people wrote in, the largest response to any Measure proposed by this Synod. That was that people were very concerned about a reduction in rights of representation and in rights of appeal to the Mission and Pastoral Committee of our Church Commissioners and then on to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The people were very concerned about the actual equality of parishes when dealing with their dioceses. That is what this amendment seeks to do and seeks to test your mind. They are very simple and I do not think they should be very controversial. The first is just to establish that it is the same line in the future as exists now in terms of representation and in terms of rights of appeal. It just says let us not reduce them and let us just keep them as they are.

The second is perhaps the most important because it is, in fact, something that builds on what is in the Report itself, which on page 40 quotes the Bingham principles of the rule of law, that the law must be accessible to both sides and at the moment there is a great disparity between the parish and the diocese. When the diocese is looking to consider a pastoral reorganisation or a closure, they have all the resources of the parish share to draw upon. The parish, which is already in a weak position if it is being considered for that, has nothing. All I am asking for is that we look at ways of equality of access to justice so that parishes can seek legal advice properly and that we just leave the rights of representation and appeal where they are and I would love on the back of that to be able to support this review. I move the motion that stands in my name.

*The Chair:* I call on the Revd Flora Winfield to respond. You have up to five minutes.

*The Revd Flora Winfield (ex officio):* Thank you, Marcus, for your amendment and for your kind words, which I very much appreciate, and also for your commitment to the General Synod Reference Group and for your wholehearted participation in its work. I do this with a heavy heart because I think we are only separated on some of these questions by a matter of sequencing and timing and synodical process rather than matters of substance, although that is not true of both of them.

The Commissioners do want to resist this amendment. We think it would be best if Synod works together through draft legislation when a text is ready, with the usual processes of legislative scrutiny to decide where the balance should lie on the specific details of the new Measure particularly in relation to rights of consultation and representation. As I said earlier, what the Commissioners have sought to do is to find the balance between the need to modernise, update and streamline the MPM processes but at the same time to do so in such a way that the checks and balances within the MPM are maintained appropriately.

We hope and expect that this balance will continue to be considered with real seriousness and care if and when the legislative process proceeds. In relation to the second point, the Commissioners agree that it is important that the decision-making processes are fair and should be accessible for all. However, as I said before, we do want to avoid the whole process becoming dominated by an adversarial approach. This is absolutely the opposite of what we are trying to achieve in building agency and participation. That is important because that kind of adversarial approach would not be the pastoral context, the missional context in which we hope the new Measure will operate.

Our proposals are by design intended to reduce the need for legal support. A simpler, clearer Measure will make it less likely that legal support is needed. But we are grateful for this challenge and we will reflect further as we work on more detailed proposals if Synod agrees that we should take this forward as part of the next stage of our work. I ask you to resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* As the mover of the main motion does not support this amendment in Item 81, it will lapse unless 25 members stand to indicate that they want the debate to continue on this amendment. We do have 25 members standing and so the debate continues on Item 81.

*The Ven. Luke Miller (London):* Good fences make for good relationships and I really welcome this review and all the work that has gone into it. The collaboration and the consultation has been I think exemplary and, as Marcus has just said, there is some fantastic stuff within it and it seems to me that we should all be supporting it, however these amendments work through. I do think Marcus has a point here about the need for fairness of access to resources should things, in fact, come to that point.

I would like us to put a marker down that that really needs to be looked at very seriously indeed as the legislative process goes forward. Why? Because, ultimately, one of the things that builds trust is a framework of law. In a legally structured Church, law provides one of those places. One of the things that law does is to provide a safe place for adversarial processes when agreement cannot be found. Therefore, in that structure, everybody needs the levels of support which are required properly to be able to access those legal frameworks.

Sometimes, it might be that the boot is on the foot of the parish, if that is very wealthy and the DBF is not. Sometimes, the parish may have access to somebody who is able to have Legal Aid and the DBS as a corporate entity might not. More normally, it would probably be that the parish would need some support. I think there would need to be built into this some way of ensuring that things cannot just spiral through a whole series of appeals and counterclaims as sometimes happens. I know that in the Diocese of London we have occasionally had that experience when an outside and very well-funded party has been able to take many more steps than seemed sensible. And so the framework needs to be one in which there are good exit strategies well built in. The legislative

process in detail can look in detail at how those principles might be applied and formed, but it seems to me that these things are needed.

Too often, we have had things go on too long. I am sure that both the Chair and the Second Estates Church Commissioner will be delighted to know that I am looking forward to an induction in September at a church of which they have both been priest-in-charge and which has not had an induction since the 1950s because, following a very long incumbency, there has been a rather - for some good reasons and some less good reasons - slightly over-long period of what we are no longer going to be calling suspension.

We need to address these issues for the benefit of the whole Church, for its mission and growth, for its mixed ecology and for all that we try to do to proclaim the Gospel. But we do that within a framework of law and a framework of trust which will be helped if we can enable equal and fair access at each level and in each way, but with clear limits to stop us going down rabbit holes that are not necessary. I hope very much that you will support this amendment in order to put a marker down for those who will take the detailed work forward.

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

*The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn):* Following on from what the Prolocutor has said, Madam Chair, you may know that I am a former diocesan registrar and I still have a practising certificate as a barrister. I am quite often consulted by parishes and churchwardens about issues going on. Sometimes, it is just explaining the process of the Pastoral Measure as it now exists, but sometimes it is more serious. Now, generally, I give that advice pro bono without charge, but if you are a wealthy parish and you want my advice please do come to me because some of you will know my wife and she needs to be kept in hats.

*Mrs Debbie McIsaac (Salisbury):* I very much hope that Synod will support both parts of this amendment. I think it is important that people know that they can get the kind of help that they need when they feel that their rights and entitlements are at risk or when they just get confused. I belong to a group of churches in Salisbury Diocese. Some of them are really quite small and they struggle. This is exactly the sort of support that will give them confidence that what is happening is fair and being dealt with to advantage all parties concerned. At the end of the day, there are legal rights and entitlements and processes to be followed. I do not think we should be afraid of that sort of reconciliation being found sometimes through legal processes. I think the improvement is great, but I think that Fr Walker's amendments enhance the position and will make it very palatable to both parishes and to dioceses and to churches and to the national Church.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of the Synod on whether Item 81 has been sufficiently debated. I, therefore, put the motion for closure on Item 81.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. We now vote on Item 81.

*Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry):* Can we please have a count of the whole Synod, please.

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 members standing for a vote of the whole Synod? No, I do not. I now put Item 81 to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* It is lost. We now return to the main motion, Item 28, and the debate continues.

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

*The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Southwark):* I wish to declare an interest. I am a trustee of the Churches Conservation Trust. I would like to focus in particular on this new idea of the fallow concept and especially at the Commissioners' desire to explore options to avoid prematurely closing churches when a fragile church could have been saved if there had been some safety nets to help the parishes in need.

The Churches Conservation Trust would welcome the opportunity to be such a safety test, supporting historically important churches that are presently in active use, trying to prevent their closure and avoid the possibility of them then being vested with the Churches Conservation Trust. For over 50 years, the Churches Conservation Trust has been looking after historic Grade I and II staff churches and supporting communities to keep them in use. We would be pleased to bring this experience to bear, subject of course to be being provided with the resources and funding to do so in support of keeping churches open, alive and in continued use; liberating then PCCs to focus on what so many PCCs wish to do, which is engage in the ministry and mission of their Church and build up the Body of Christ.

The CCT has the specialist staff in conservation, maintenance, interpretation and community building, a breadth of knowledge and experience that could prove invaluable for PCCs struggling with the challenges of maintaining Grade I and Grade II\* listed buildings often without the expertise to deal with leaking roofs or rising damp. But the CCT also recognises that there are many others working towards the same aims and that we alone are not of the scale to assist all those who may require it. The CCT, therefore, would, however, welcome the opportunity to work alongside friends and partners with similar aims working together in support of churches that are vulnerable or fallow.

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher):* I declare an interest as a diocesan bishop and as a Church Commissioner who is a member of the Mission Pastoral and Church Property Committee, so I have seen first-hand the current Measure in action and

worked with its processes both in the diocese I serve and my role on Committee. Whilst there is much that does work well in the current Measure, there is undoubtedly room for improvement.

I support the recommendation to replace the existing Measure with this new legislation and the other recommendations which flow from that. I do want to pay tribute to the very careful way Flora Winfield, Wendy Matthews and the whole team have given to this work: listening, consulting and creating a wide tent of support. To use one of Flora's words, you have been quite "splendiferous". I support the emphasis on a more pastoral approach and methodology which puts the emphasis on partnership and collaborative working. When I have sat in hearings, I have often felt that it is this pastoral approach that somewhere has been lacking. We need to have those conversations but we need to do them better.

In Norwich, we delight in 658 church buildings - I am slowly getting my way around them. 95% of them are listed but each of them is a treasure trove of memory, their architecture creating the beauty of holiness, locations of God's many miracles and places of answered prayer. Many, of course, were built so that their benefactors could get years of purgatory. The problem is we are still keeping them out of purgatory. Some in tiny, tiny hamlets now have no local support or they have been left stranded in fields as the population has moved. I am getting local parishioners asking for some solutions to these problems.

What we have established in the diocese under my predecessor is the Diocesan Church's Trust which allows some of these buildings into a season of hibernation and I pray desperately that that season will not last long and the winds of the Holy Spirit will blow on the embers of the faith in that place. But any change in the Measure needs to work for parishes, for patrons and for dioceses and I can see immense benefits from the Report that has been brought to us, so I wholeheartedly commend the motion to Synod.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 28 has been sufficiently debated. I, therefore, put the motion for closure on Item 28.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. I now call on the Revd Flora Winfield to respond. You have up to five minutes.

*The Revd Flora Winfield (ex officio):* Thank you, Madam Chair, and I know that both you and I rejoice with the Archdeacon of London at the great news that the Church where we were both privileged to be priest-in-charge will shortly have a new priest-in-charge in the person of Bishop David Urquhart and a new incumbent.

Thank you, Synod, for your stamina and for your resilience this evening and for all your thoughts and comments which we will take away, clearly thinking through everything that you have said and reflect and consider further. This has been a very rich conversation



this evening. Jane from Salisbury, I especially treasure your phrase, "We cannot have a language which is about us, it must be a language about mission". I really appreciated hearing the stories about where the Measure has worked well, where dioceses and parishes are working well together and in the way that the Measure envisages.

Thank you, Joyce. Thank you, Dana. Through our experience of the long consultation process, we know that there are many places where the Measure has not worked well. We hear also those voices which are critical of the way that we have undertaken our task, but we have done this work sincerely and we have tried to do it with integrity and authenticity to the task that we were asked to undertake the Archbishops' Council and in a genuine spirit of waiting on the spirit in those conversations and consultations which we have undertaken. We would argue that there is a clear vision for this work and it is in the general duty of the Measure, which is our shared outcome is to further the mission of the Church and make better provision for the cure of souls.

We are grateful to all those who have expressed support for this work, but we also hear the concerns and if Synod approves this motion we will continue to seek consensus as we progress this work together.

Before I conclude, I want to express my own heartfelt thanks to the whole staff team who have undertaken this work at the same time as continuing to carry the enormous caseload represented by the work of the Mission and Pastoral Committee. Wendy, in particular, has worked in the most untiring and self-offering manner with absolutely unending reservoirs of professionalism and grace. Thank you.

Dear friends, I hope you will support the recommendations the Commissioners have made. Our parishes are part of the unique geography, both physical and spiritual, of this country and our church buildings continue to be a sacramental sign of God's presence and of the commitment to be a Christian presence in every community. We have been acutely conscious of this precious inheritance and of the particular challenges of our present context. We have developed consensus through conversations which have been hopeful and realistic in proposing this renewed framework to support the mission and the cure of souls. I move the motion in my name.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 28, unamended, to the vote.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. I now call on the Archbishop of York who will dismiss us with his blessing.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Again, if you are able, please stand, and if you can bear it at the end of the day, a prayer for the evening before the blessing.

*(Prayer)*

*The Archbishop of York dismissed the Synod with a blessing.*

*THE CHAIR* The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin) took the Chair at 9.00 am

## **MORNING WORSHIP**

*The Chaplain to the Synod (The Revd Dylan Turner)* led the Synod in an act of worship.

### **ITEM 511**

#### **SPECIAL AGENDA I:**

#### **LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

#### **SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEWS OF CODE OF PRACTICE**

#### **(GS 2295)**

*The Chair.* We come now, Synod, to Item 511m the Safeguarding Practice Review's Code of Practice. Members will need the code GS 2295. I would now like to call on the Bishop of Stepney to move Item 511 "That the Safeguarding Practice Reviews Code of Practice be approved". You have up to ten minutes.

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell):* Thank you, Chair, and good morning, Synod. I am the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding.

We know that the Church has failed to be a place of safety. Perpetrators of abuse have done harm in ways that have had, and will continue to have devastating consequences for victims and survivors. The Church's response, or lack of response, has at times compounded this harm and hurt. We have heard as we debated the new work on redress of the importance, as far as is possible, of making amends. Redress in this context will include not only financial recompense but also acknowledgement, apology, accountability and support.

One further aspect of offering redress is a commitment to institutional learning. This is about looking beyond individual decision-making and reflecting on organisational culture. No policy can ever mitigate or repair the harm that has been done to an individual, but a policy can help by learning and making the organisation safer for others. The vital underlying aim of this first safeguarding Code of Practice that I am introducing to Synod today for approval is understanding the past as a means of strengthening preventative work for the future. It is a proposed new comprehensive policy on safeguarding practice reviews which we have previously called lessons learned reviews.

The current advice on such reviews is just two pages in a much wider 2017 document Responding to Assessing and Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations Against Church Officers Practice Guidance. But I think it is worth reminding ourselves how we

have got to this point. Safeguarding policies have not previously been brought to Synod, and what is our responsibility this morning?

In 2021 you, Synod, voted through the Code of Practice Measure, effectively replacing the former Rules under which safeguarding guidance has been issued and ensuring that Synod must approve any new Codes of Practice. This first one is before you today. The change, which applies to any new code, replaced the former duty to have due regard with a duty to comply with the requirements of the code. There is also an extension of the list of relevant persons to whom this code applies. The strengthening of guidance was a recommendation arising from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

All code documents, including this one on safeguarding practice reviews, contain both requirements which are mandatory and good practice advice which is advisory. All requirements are clearly marked as such and are in a blue box. Once approved these cannot be changed. The good practice advice is part of ongoing safeguarding work and will change over time.

This new guidance before you today takes into account good practice from other sectors such as health and social care, where learning reviews after serious incidents are a common and well-established practice. There are particular similarities between what we now propose to call a safeguarding practice review and child safeguarding practice reviews and safeguarding adults reviews which occur in the statutory sector. In such work we are aiming to look beyond individual decision-making into the issues that have hampered, and may still be hampering, good safeguarding practice at an organisational level.

As the document shows, it is important to distinguish the purposes of the different processes that exist in safeguarding so that people are clear what to expect from each.

First, there is the process for responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns about church officers. That process is about the identification and management of risk through the serious case management or core group process. Secondly, there are the processes which focus on responsibility and accountability for actions, including the establishment of guilt. These processes may include criminal investigation and prosecution, disciplinary processes for those with contracts of employment, or complaints under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM at the moment) for those who are ordained. As Synod heard yesterday, this is currently being revised with the Clergy Conduct Measure.

This third process today, learning lessons, is about taking a step back to try to understand why the events happened in the way that they did. Answering the “Why?” question enables an organisation to learn and make improvements that will keep people safer in the future.

These distinctions are crucial. Safeguarding practice reviews are not judicial processes designed to establish guilt. If people think they are, they will inevitably be disappointed and frustrated. In order to prevent that misunderstanding, it is important to provide absolute clarity about their purpose.

There has been widespread consultation on the document before you today, which also included the important voices of victims and survivors.

Synod, this is one piece of work which is part of a bigger jigsaw of the safeguarding code, following the timetable set out in your Synod papers. We have valued and acted on the feedback that has already been received from you, and from others. I do recognise that there are very many other painful and difficult issues which we have needed, rightly, to air over the last few days. However, I encourage you to support this code and allow us to continue this work of practice improvement to make for a safer Church. I look forward to taking your comments and questions.

*The Chair:* Thank you.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* Point of order. I wish to move an adjournment of this debate under Standing Order 34.

*The Chair:* Could you be more specific and say when you wish this to be resumed?

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* Thank you for that. To the next Synod. A pause, as we sometimes say.

*The Chair:* Members, Mr Martin Sewell has moved the motion that the debate be now adjourned and resumed at the next Synod. If the motion for 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 now call on Mr Sewell as the mover of the motion for the adjournment of the debate to speak to it, followed by the mover of the main motion, who will reply. I will then consider whether to allow any further debate. You have a maximum speech limit of two minutes.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* Two minutes, frankly, is not enough.

*The Chair:* I am sorry, you have two minutes.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* Well, there you go again. I propose this matter be adjourned. I am going to put this speech away because I prepared it carefully but you will have to have the raw speech. The reason this needs to be adjourned is that this is an irrelevancy at this present time. It is like washing the decks of the "Titanic" as the ship sinks beneath the waves. Our credibility on safeguarding is absolutely shot, not least by the way that the Chairs and the management of this Synod have constantly restricted

open debate on serious issues. We prioritised electronic service registers over survivor desperation.

It seems to me that if they will not listen to our concerns and our survivors' concerns, why should we listen to theirs? What we are being offered here is a 75-page document, and I have yet to meet one of you who has read it. This needs to go over and this is your opportunity to say to this platform we are disgusted at the way you have treated this Synod in the management of safeguarding issues throughout this time. It is a disgrace. The only man I know who would have read it is Gavin Drake, and integrity has left the building, because he walked out because he was so broken by the way that we have seen ourselves being treated.

I ask you to adjourn this motion because it does not make any difference. No survivor is going to want to be reviewed by this establishment. They will not co-operate. They have already said so. So, setting up a system for doing it is a waste of time, a waste of money and an insult to them, but they are getting used to that.

*The Chair:* I call on Bishop Joanne to respond.

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell):* Thank you, Martin, for the challenge.

*The Chair:* Sorry, you have two minutes.

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell):* Sorry, was I too soon? I recognise where we are at the moment and the challenges around that. I also recognise the pain of both the past and the present, but no policy can take away the hurt that has already been done. We need future thinking, future learning, and policies that help us to prevent harm from recurring and to make improvements in our practice. To achieve good safeguarding practice, it is essential that organisations have ways of reflecting on their actions and behaviours and the factors that shape them. This is essential not only to say what is working well but also to identify what is not. The aim is to drive improvement.

Synod, in bringing this code now, I am following your Rules, the ones you voted through. I am required to bring all such codes to Synod when they have been through sufficient and appropriate consultation. That has happened. There is no logic in delaying the code for the sake of it, least of all one that is relatively straightforward and has been in development since 2020. It would achieve nothing now. It would sit on a shelf rather than being used to improve practice.

Furthermore, delaying this specific code would mean that we are specifically choosing to ignore good practice which has been developed in conjunction with other bodies, statutory agencies and victims and survivors. The main consequence would be that the factors that undermine good safeguarding could not be addressed and that really turning away from best practice would be contrary to the Church's mission. This code is about the

future. It is about helping people who may need to go through these processes in such a way that enables us to learn. I urge you to resist the proposal from Mr Sewell.

*The Chair:* Thank you.

*The Chair:* Members, I do not consider that the motion for the adjournment of debate needs to be debated any further. I therefore put the motion to the Synod.

*Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester):* Point of order. Can we have a counted vote, please?

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 people standing for a counted vote? I think we do have 25 people.

This is a counted vote of the whole Synod on the item asking for adjournment.

*The motion was put and lost, 74 voting in favour 74, 184 against, with 24 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* We now continue with debate for the main motion.

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

*Mrs Margaret Sheather (Gloucester):* I am speaking to welcome very warmly this Code of Practice and to support all that Bishop Joanne had to say both in her main introduction and in her response to the proposal for adjournment. I spent my working career in local authority social services and none of you in this chamber needs me to tell you what a rocky road that has been for all of us in public service, but there has been learning and there has been change, and it is possible to come out of those periods of highly charged, emotional, painful, damaging times and move forward.

After my career in social services, I have also chaired independently a number of safeguarding reviews, so this is really familiar territory for me, and I do not underestimate any of the things we have discussed earlier this weekend. I was not just pleased but relieved to see this important code coming forward for our approval. I am glad it is here for open debate rather than having stayed in deemed business. That is because it feels normal. We are an unusual body in our dispersed structures and our complex organisation, but that need not stop us being normal in our practice, learning from those who have gone down this route before us and being fully accountable for that practice.

There has been reference earlier in these sessions to the Church's tendency to exceptionalism. This is us saying we are not an exception. We can put ourselves into the same position as others who have trodden this road before us, and have learned the same painful lessons, but have established ways to minimise that damage in future.

This code has clearly been carefully and thoughtfully developed, and, Martin, I have read it all the way through. It sets out really clear standards and processes while recognising

the complexity of our organisational context. It has built in victim and survivor involvement in the consultation and that continues to be integrated throughout the whole process, to a standard, I have to say, far in excess of what was customary when I was still in social services.

It is thorough and demanding but it offers support through good practice advice, explanatory examples and templates. It is very clear about independence, role and expectations of the reviewer. All this properly brings us alongside other organisations exercising their responsibilities for safeguarding. This is an important contribution, and, as I look forward to the further codes to come, which are clearly going to get the same level of careful attention given the timetable we are looking at and which will continue to strengthen and update our work, I commend warmly this code to Synod.

*Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham):* I also want to commend this code. I speak as a member of the National Safeguarding Steering Group and a member of the Archbishops' Council. It is really the quality of the professionalism and coherence of this code that I want to commend. It comes to the NST, and, Deborah and others on the team, how well you have done to bring it to us in this form.

I want to say that the level of professionalism, coherence and quality we see here is increasingly becoming part of a whole system across the Church, from the NST, through DSAs and DSOs, CSOs (cathedral safeguarding officers), PSOs and DSAT chairs. In other words, at a national, diocesan and parish level we are seeing incredible quality of coherent and connected safeguarding work. This is yet another building block in that whole process, perhaps at a much level of seriousness and complexity, because what we want to be is a learning organisation, as we have already heard. Great organisations are learning organisations. Good ones are, and those like us that seek to be as good as we can be have to be.

When I was a GP adviser to the Care Quality Commission I did over 40 visits to GP practices across the country, looking at safeguarding practice and patient safety. What I saw was a whole mixture of those who are committed to the organisations of learning and those that were not. There was one thing called the significant event learning analysis. They had to do one a year. The ones that only did one, my heart sank: how serious were they just to do the one to tick the box? Where there were lots my heart soared. They took seriously looking back at what might have happened, so-called near misses, or where there had been issues. They wanted to learn and share and understand and move on and get better. This is about serious incidents. This is a different level of complexity and importance.

To be a learning organisation requires a culture and a leadership that is open, agile, curious and undefended. Every member of the team is to be valued, every contribution from (in this case) those who work in the system as well as survivors and victims. All voices are equally important, from the lowest member of the team. I use the word lowest meaning the top of the team. The best people are often those nearest to the action, those

most involved, and those most affected, and those most damaged. We need to be humble, we need to be undefended, and everyone to make a contribution.

As we have heard already on page 3 of the Report, we learn what this is and what it is not. Learning reviews and these great safeguarding practice reviews we envisage are not judicial processes designed to establish guilt. That is for somewhere else. They are, rather, a place where we try to understand why - why did this event happen? What was going on? What was the context? What was the organisational system that contributed to the failure? With that “Why?” question answered, the organisation can then learn and make improvements which will keep people safe into the future.

This is not an option. This is something we must do and we must do it really well. I think this code is a huge step forward with its wonderful sense of coherence, and I recommend it. Thank you, Mark.

*The Chair:* After the next speaker I will be reducing the speech limit to two minutes.

*Mrs Kashmir Garton (Worcester):* I declare an interest in that safeguarding and public protection are central to my work in the criminal justice system, and I have led on learning from serious further offence reviews in the Probation Service.

I fully support the introduction of safeguarding practice reviews as outlined clearly in GS 2295. They will provide evidence-based learning to help the Church understand why such events have happened and the practice improvements that are required. As Bishop Joanne stated, these reviews will mirror the established practice in statutory organisations, namely child safeguarding reviews conducted by children’s safeguarding boards, adult safeguarding reviews conducted by adult safeguarding board, and, indeed, serious offence reviews conducted by the Probation Service.

Drawing on such established procedures from other statutory organisations will help to build confidence in the Church’s procedures for identifying and improving learning and practice for the future. I particularly welcome the identification of trends and themes from such reviews that will help ensure appropriate targeted action is taken to make the Church a safer place for everyone.

Synod, please support the safeguarding practice reviews to help build a culture of learning within the Church.

*The Revd Canon Mark Bennett (Oxford):* Synod, I want to draw to your attention the fact that this Code of Practice, as good as much of it is, is too much an artefact of a culture we need to change. By this I mean that it asks questions convenient to us, good and worthy questions, the answers to which in past reviews have undoubtedly led to better training and safeguarding practice, sometimes very good practice led by exceptional people. We rightly ask ourselves how do we make sure this does not happen again, and that is good. But in a sinful and fallen world it will happen again, and we need to



acknowledge that and own that truth. If abuse is of low incidence, few of us will have experience of dealing with its consequences, and we need to ask two questions about our response - every time - to capture learning so that we are not reinventing the wheel every time bad things happen.

The first missing question is a simple factual question: have the victims and survivors here been properly treated? We need to know that before we can move on. It simply needs to be explicitly there.

The second is how has the care of context in the community in which this happened, been managed. A piece of personal experience. The day our new curate moved into the parish, I went round to his house, to welcome him of course, but also to explain why the picture of a former team vicar had appeared that day on the front page of the local newspaper. I also had to drop everything and family time on my day off to deal with a youth worker who had unexpectedly had the police visit the group that she was leading. Some in our community felt that an exceptional priest was being unfairly traduced. Others felt equally strongly shocked and betrayed. People were instinctively divided. I could have done with some digested learning from the experience of others; wisdom in leading a divided and betrayed community.

I hope it will never again happen to me but others might benefit from my experience and my learning, but no one has captured it, and now it is years ago and memories have faded. If we are to heal the consequences of sin, we do need to capture that language for the healing of survivors, and the healing of communities, and if we are doing reviews, we ought to be asking those questions as part of the reviews we are doing.

*The Chair:* I now wish to test the mind of the Synod on whether Item 511 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 511.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried. I would like to call on Bishop Joanne to respond. You have up to five minutes.

*The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell):* Thank you to Synod and all those who have made points we have just heard for engaging with the aims and the details of this code and for those really constructive comments.

To answer just a few points, Margaret and Kashmir, thank you particularly for those reflections on the parallels with other statutory bodies. It really helps to know that we are not pursuing exceptionalism and that we can tread the path others are trying to tread too towards better practice. And it is really important to identify themes, not just instances.

Mark, yes, thank you, I completely agree, culture does need to change. In relation to the two points in particular about the survivor focus, I think quality marker 7 on page 58 might

be quite helpful here because it looks at the involvement of victims and survivors, and, in particular, any ways of making the review process more positive in engaging victims and survivors, and to think about justice and healing alongside learning. I think the same quality marker may also be helpful in terms of the community engagement. I recognise that communities may be groomed and wounded too and need to be really helped to heal from that as well.

Finally, Jamie, yes, thank you for talking about a whole Church coherent approach. The Church is safer when every member is attentive to safeguarding, and that means every Synod member as well as every parish and safeguarding diocesan officer, supported by the National Safeguarding Team, and in partnership with statutory bodies. If every member helps it to be safer, then investing in a culture of learning will always be foundational.

To conclude, I really believe that this is a sensible and effective code for safeguarding practice reviews which gives us the best possible chance of review and learning. It is certainly vastly better than its 2017 predecessor.

If I may, I would like to thank the team who have worked on the detail of this over many months, especially Deborah, our National Safeguarding Policy and Development Lead, who is sitting behind me, and the team which supports that work. In fact, it feels important today to say thank you to all of those NST members, some of whom have been watching over the last few days, and to recognise that we see the detail of their work.

Thank you too, Synod, for your careful attention. I urge you to vote to support this new code and I move the motion in my name.

*The Chair:* I now put Item 511 to the vote

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Point of order. Chair, I have forgotten the Standing Order, but I am going to ask for a vote by Houses. When you said that was clearly carried that we had decided to end this debate, I am not sure many of us agreed with you it was clear, and the Archbishop himself was hoping to speak. I hope that we can have a counted vote by Houses. I think this debate has been horrendously rushed. I think it is such a key issue and I do hope that members might think about showing that in the way that they vote.

*The Chair:* Do I see 25 members standing? We clearly have 25 members standing. I now order a counted vote by Houses.

The Vote on Item 511: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 27, against none, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 113 in favour, 10 against, with 11 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 112 in favour, 18 against, with 24 abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

## ITEM 510

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

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 9.59 am

*The Chair.* Good morning, Synod. We come to Item 510, the draft Church of England Pensions (Application of Capital Funds) Measure. For this you will need GS 2264 and the Explanatory Notes GS2264X3. Synod has reached the Final Approval Stage for the Church of England Pensions Measure. I would like to call on the Chair of the Steering Committee Mrs Busola Sodeinde to move Item 510, “That the Measure entitled ‘Church of England Pensions (Application of Capital Funds) Measure be finally approved”. She has up to ten minutes to speak to her motion.

*Mrs Busola Sodeinde (London):* Chair, in introducing this Final Approval motion may I start by declaring my interest as a Church Commissioner. This is a short and technical Measure which if passed will extend the Church Commissioner’s time-limited power to spend capital in order to meet the pre-1997 pensions obligations. Under the current legislative framework this power will expire at the end of 2025. This draft Measure will extend the power for a further seven years until the end of 2032.

As I explained at the First Consideration Stage last July, this power gives the Commissioners much greater flexibility in their asset allocation policy. It enables them to invest in a broad range of asset classes including those where most (and in some cases all) of the investment return comes from capital appreciation rather than income distributions.

This power has a crucial enabling factor in the strong returns generated by the Church endowments management by the Commissioners. The purpose of those returns is to feed through to increased support for the Church’s mission and ministry.

I would like to give you two recent examples of this increased support. First, in 2020 to 2022 the Commissioners were able to make available £150 million of additional funding above the level that might have been expected. Secondly, and as reported to the Commissioners, in the current 2023 to 2025 quinquennium the Commissioners plan to distribute 30% more than the previous triennium funding. As John Spence reminded us yesterday, the planned call on strategic distributions from the Church’s endowment management by the Commissioners in 2023 to 2025 have more than doubled the equivalent of what was distributed in 2017 to 2019.

Following the Revision Stage, I can confirm to this Synod that the text of the previous Measure is identical to this text that came to you before the First Consideration in July last year. I commend it to you for Final Approval.

*The Chair:* The motion for Final Approval is open for debate. I would like to remind members that motions for closure, speech limit change or next business are not in order in this debate.

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

I do not see anyone standing. Therefore, we go straight to the vote. The question is: “That the Measure entitled ‘Church of England Pensions (Application of Capital Funds)’ Measure be finally approved.” In accordance with Standing Order 37, I order a counted count by Houses. Under Standing Order 28(3) I order that the ringing of the bell be dispensed with.

The vote on Item 510: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 23, against none, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 123 in favour, none against, with no recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 141 in favour, none against, with two recorded abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

*The Chair:* Therefore this motion is carried. The Church of England Pensions (Application of Capital Funds) Measure now stands committed to the Legislative Committee. We now move to next business.

THE CHAIR The *Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds)* took the Chair at 10.07 am

## **ITEM 14**

### **RESPONDING TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

#### **(GS 2306A AND GS 2306B)**

*The Chair:* Synod, we now move to Item 14 on the agenda, Responding to the Climate Emergency. Members will need GS 2306A and GS 2306B for this item. Members will also need Notice Paper 4, the Financial Memo, as this item has a financial impact, and there is also a financial comment on Item 84 on your Order Paper in paragraph 1 of Notice Paper 11.

I would just like to say one other thing in terms of the organisation of this debate. We do of course have timed business at the end of the morning, and so I give notice at this point that I will be setting a three-minute speech limit for those presenting amendments. I announce that now so that if they have a prepared speech they might have time to make an adjustment to it. So there will a three-minute limit on presentations of amendments, and I will make speech adjustments of course as we go along. We begin by inviting Bishop Olivia to speak in favour of the main motion, which is Item 14 on Order Paper IX.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* Point of order. Madam Chairman, in order to enable the Synod fully to engage with the subject of the use of fossil fuels, I wonder if we might have the air-conditioning turned off for this item.

*The Chair:* I have been advised that that is not a point of order. I now invite Bishop Olivia to present the main motion and to move it. You have up to ten minutes.

*The Bishop of Reading (The Rt Revd Olivia Graham):* I am really delighted to be here this morning presenting the Oxford Diocesan Motion on the environment and, incidentally, making my maiden speech. How to get ten minutes for a maiden speech.

It is really good that the Oxford motion has risen to the top of the pile and will be exposed to the oxygen of this chamber for debate today, even though it is three years old and so it is more of a toddler than a baby.

The motion you have before you was passed by the Oxford Diocesan Synod in March 2020 after a debate which set the direction of travel and guided our actions as a diocese ever since. Progress has been good but we know that we need to go further, and faster.

Synod, our debate today is not to discuss what Oxford has done, but to encourage lightning speed and to significantly raise the ambition for what we, the Church, can and must achieve. The spirit of the motion before you is about asking much, much more of ourselves, recognising that creation care is more than a programme: it is a way of living, of being, of worshipping.

Let me set this motion in context. It is simply this: an existential planetary crisis faced by the human race and many other species due to human action and inaction, particularly in the past 30 years. This is on us.

You may be familiar with the climate stripes. I do not know if you can see them behind me. The climate stripes were created by Professor Ed Hawkins at the National Centre for Atmospheric Science at the University of Reading in 2018. This dataset is for Berkshire where I live, and each stripe represents a year. The dataset begins in 1863 and goes through to 2022. The blue stripes show years in which the average temperature for the year has been below the average temperature for the whole period. The red stripes show years in which the average temperature for the year has been above the average temperature for the whole period.

You might like to note the year 1990, which is where Hannah has her finger. It is where the stripes start to turn red. The last stripe is for the year 2022, a year in which the UK saw temperatures of more than 40° for the first time. This stripe is not quite as dark as 2021, and that is because we were in a La Niña phase in the Pacific which helped to hold the temperatures down. When we see a return of a neutral or warming phase of El Niño, the very darkest red stripes will return, and we know that an El Niño has just begun in the Pacific.

Professor Hawkins says this: "... the message is clear. Excess heat is building up across the planet at a rate unprecedented in the history of humanity ... If you think how hot 2022

was, and then realise that those 12 months will likely be one of the coolest years of the rest of our lives, I think we will regret not having acted sooner on these warnings”.

The reports and warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are equally stark: “We must limit global warming to 1.5° and our window for action is rapidly closing”. The Independent Committee on Climate Change here in the UK concurs. Their recent report is very critical of the pace of action by our Government, which they say is “worryingly slow”.

And the signs from Westminster, friends, are not at all good. Lord Deben, the outgoing Committee Chair, called the decision to approve the UK’s first new deep coalmine in 30 years “total nonsense,” and was damning about plans to approve the Rosebank Oil Field off the coast of Scotland. How, he asks, can we ask countries in Africa not to develop oil? How can we ask other nations not to expand their fossil fuel production if we start doing it ourselves?” Alok Sharma, who was Chair of the COP26, has said that the UK is at risk of losing its international reputation and influence on climate, that we risk falling behind without a response like the US’s vast subsidies for green industries. Zac Goldsmith resigned two weeks ago, citing Government apathy and the Prime Minister’s apparent disinterest in climate change as the cause. Just a few days beforehand it was reported that our Government is drawing up plans to drop the UK’s flagship £11.6 billion climate and nature funding pledge and on Sunday it was claimed that Sir Keir Starmer “hates the tree huggers”.

As our politicians row back to appease extreme elements on the backbenches, there are evermore solid and compelling evidences of the extreme dangers that we are in. Last week the UN Secretary-General said that climate change is out of control, as an unofficial analysis of world temperatures showed the hottest week on record. As our planet heats up, as tipping points are passed and interact with each other, as species go extinct, as water resources become scarcer, as increasingly large parts of the planet become simply uninhabitable for human beings, mass movements of people will begin. There could be as many as 1.2 billion climate refugees by the end of the century.

We should be very, very concerned about the instability which will be created by intense heat, by water shortages and by crop failures. We all want to know that our grandchildren will grow up in a stable and habitable world, but this climate crisis reaches well beyond self-interest. This is self-evidently an issue which has injustice and inequality at its core, intersecting with every other part of our mission as Christian disciples, affecting first and catastrophically, the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people. This is a bleak picture, my friends, and I paint it not to be alarmist but to concentrate our minds.

The Bible has much to say on God’s love for this world, on the responsibility God gives to human beings to care for nature and on nature’s provision for human beings, and, right now, God’s people have a heck of a lot of work to do.

In 2020, this Synod passed a motion setting a net zero target for the Church of England of 2030. It was a bold and ambitious target, and some would say foolhardy, but we have resoundingly endorsed the *Routemap* to net zero to achieve this ambitious goal. The milestones contained within it, such as changes to our faculty jurisdiction Rules are already being enacted.

The recent, and very welcome announcement from the Church Commissioners and the Pensions Board on divestment is the outworking of the amended Oxford Motion carried by this Synod in 2018. Friends, never let it be said that Synod lacketh teeth. Those divestments demanded by Synod just five years ago have had an impact far beyond our shores. We have given a clear and unambiguous message that we share the conviction of the International Energy Agency that net zero is not compatible with the continued development of fossil fuel.

We have dedicated people leading on environmental work in our dioceses, in our parishes, at the NCIs. We have great partners, such as the Woodland Trust and A Rocha, we have a high functioning National Environment Working Group, chaired by Bishop Graham Usher. All 42 of our dioceses have signed up to Eco Church. We have a committed funding stream from the Church Commissioners and a new board set up to oversee our transition to net zero. We have informed and committed Bishops in the House of Lords. There is much to give thanks for.

But friends, we are just off the starting blocks, we must go further and we must go faster. All of us, as individuals, churches, communities, as dioceses, the Church of England, as the whole Anglican Communion, and with people of goodwill from all denominations and faith communities, we have only the rest of this decade to take decisive action. It is a very small window.

The motion before you seeks to challenge us in all areas of life, from finances to buildings and political advocacy. We need the National Investing Bodies to be investing at scale in renewable energy and climate solutions, doing everything we can in our dioceses and parishes to get to net zero, and asking every Christian in every church to pray for change and to lobby their MPs as we ramp up to a general election. We must not kick this can down the road for future generations to deal with. There is no greater issue facing society today than runaway climate change.

Our Church, with the level of resources, reach and influence we have must be on the frontline of the battle for the sake of every beloved part of God's creation. I look forward to the debate and on behalf of the Synod of the Diocese of Oxford I move this motion.

*The Chair:* I think we will have two speeches before moving to amendments, because of the pressures of time. Roy Faulkner followed by Mark Bennet, please. You have up to five minutes, but 'up to' is the phrase that I stress.

*Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester):* Synod, I cannot support this motion. There are a number of reasons behind it. I want to try and take one or two aspects of the *Routemap* to try to illustrate where things are not going correctly. First of all, Jack Shepherd is going to bring an amendment, but let us not rewrite the catechism. The proposal to safeguard the integrity of creation in this new version of the catechism is an extremely presumptuous aim.

God is very capable of looking after his own creation without any interference from man or woman. He has shown this through observations of the earth's temperature over the last billion years, and this is IPCC data that I am quoting here now, the temperature of the earth over the last billion years has changed by plus or minus 4.5°C, 12 times in the last billion years. So, the worst predictions of global warming that we are facing at the moment are a temperature change of 2.1°, so there have been much bigger oscillations than that in the earth over the last billion years.

Additionally, it was only 500 million years ago that America was fused with Europe, so that has changed, as we must know from what we see now, and if that is not an example of God messing around with his creation without our help, then I do not know what is.

Another aspect that we need to be looking at is the inefficient and uneconomical way in which we are considering in the *Routemap* GS 2258 of how to change or reduce the carbon emissions. Schools and some churches are being asked to replace traditional gas boilers with heat pumps, and install much better insulation. None of this will lead to any reduction in carbon emissions, because it is the primary energy source, electricity, that needs to be carbon free, and these heat pumps use electricity. To ensure that electricity is carbon free, we must rely on the electricity generators and no amount of hand wringing by the Church Commissioners through the NCIs will make any difference.

And the costs will be enormous. The Church Commissioners, through the NCIs, have promised, I think, the figure is now £210 million over the next triennia. This amount, spread over the next nine years would give each diocese an extra ten vicars. The Church is fighting for its survival, it needs vicars, not heat pumps.

This leads me on to the last point I want to make, which is that the exhortations of the *Routemap* ask us to stop driving and stop flying. Aerospace and automotive industries are the lifeblood of our commercial society. If we want to generate enough money to pay for the world-wide war against poverty and demographic changes brought about by climate change, we must do more driving and flying and encourage these industries, which will provide more revenues through their taxes.

I have not got time to expand on this, but there are carbon-free ways of allowing us to do more driving and flying and maybe it will also help with the air conditioning, as Prudence mentioned. So, in the light of all this I want to conclude we should ask whether the C of E is wise in investing huge debilitating amounts of money to try to arrest climate change



when much bigger governmental and industrial forces are already making much more effective attempts to achieve the same objective.

*The Chair:* Mark Bennet, you have up to five minutes, and then I will be moving to the amendments because of the pressure of time.

*The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford):* I am a member of the Oxford diocesan synod. I want to commend this motion wholeheartedly to you. I was responsible for introducing paragraph (f) to this motion when it went through the Oxford diocesan synod. I wanted not to be saying pious words, but to be committing ourselves to effective actions. We have heard in this Synod, in our governance review and in other places, how complex an organisation the Church of England is. If we are to get anywhere near to dealing with this in our own patch, we have to work at a scale and pace with which we are thoroughly unfamiliar and which our systems are not set up to deliver.

When I put in subsection (f), the world was a different place, and I am glad to say that some of those things in there have already happened, but I hope we will pass this motion, and I hope that all those on our various committees will see it as their mandate to cut the bureaucracy, to stop attempts to move on to other agendas before this one is dealt with, and to make this actually happen for us.

I also want to say that the practical actions taken by the National Investing Bodies ought, I think, to have a focus on helping our parishes to deliver by investing in the technologies that are actually useful to us, and noticing if there are gaps in the market with technologies that would help our historic buildings that people are not developing, because that will help us to save money in the end as the Church of England. It requires huge joined-up thinking to deliver this, that is what the Oxford diocesan synod want you to do. Synod, I commend this motion to you, please vote wholeheartedly for it.

## **ITEM 82**

*The Chair:* As I indicated, I would like to start working through the amendments at this point and so I call upon Dr Cathy Rhodes to move, as an amendment, the amendment that appears as Item 82 on your Order Paper number IV, may I remind her that you have three minutes for this speech.

*Dr Catharine Rhodes (Sheffield):* Of course, the solution to air conditioning would be if we solar panels on our roof. Last month, I was on a Zoom call to Nigeria with the Revd David Ugolor and Innocent Edemhanria. David is the Executive Director of the Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice, or ANEEJ, Innocent is their Programme Manager. I promised I would pass on some of our conversation to you all today.

I am also glad that Bishop David of Bondo is visiting my Diocese of Sheffield, and may be visiting us in the chamber at some point and I know this subject is close to his heart also.

I am hoping the amendment will update and enhance this section. It was written over three years ago, as we have heard, it reflects my Private Member's Motion that now has 96 signatures. Thanks to all who signed and supported this. The amendment begins with commending the welcome announcement on 22 June that the Church Commissioners and Church of England Pensions Board would independently disinvest in fossil fuels. Thank you. David and Innocent welcomed this in a letter to leaders, including Archbishop Justin and Alan Smith, commending the Church for standing on the side of people.

Moving to the second part of the amendment, we know that the International Energy Agency said in 2021 that investment in renewable energy needs to more than treble to \$4 trillion a year by 2030 if we have any chance of reaching our target of net zero by 2050 and limiting global heating to 1.5. We will still need fossil fuels in this transition, but the key is urgency and speed, and we need climate solutions as well, so I have added that on.

To support investing in areas like energy storage, public transport and energy efficient buildings, the Church Commissioners' July 2023 Climate Action Plan, which I commend to you, quotes climate solutions 19 times, and saying it is key for them, how we care for land is crucial, including restoring and protecting peat, growing trees with care and supporting farmers to reduce emissions and that also improves biodiversity. We are a major landowner as the Church of England and in a great position to show leadership here. We heard excellent presentations in the fringe meeting on Saturday morning on this.

All of this fulfils the Fifth Mark of Mission, as well as the other Marks, in fact, of justice and unjust structures and preaching the Gospel as we strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. We can lead on this. The Diocese of Truro has sold £1 million of investments and transferred into solutions such as wind energy, solar systems and storage. Most dioceses are committed to divest from fossil fuels and I hope that they will now be inspired, and I heard - York was on my list, but I believe has just announced divestment, so I am very happy to hear that, but there is a small number of remaining dioceses, and please consider this now.

But the Niger Delta communities do not have the option of moving on from oil companies, and millions of people have shorter life expectancy, 41 years, due to toxins in air, water and soil and raised risks of cancer. A research paper showed a significant increase in new-born babies dying after local oil spills, close to my heart as an obstetrician, and the home to some of the planet's largest mangroves, fresh water swamps, forests and largest wetlands is one of the most polluted places on earth.

*The Chair:* Could you move your amendment, please.

*Dr Catharine Rhodes (Sheffield):* David's letter calls on people to go and visit and see this. I will just say one thing, that the Commissioners have discussed this with us and are happy with the wording, and so I beg to move this amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair:* I call upon Bishop Olivia to indicate whether she accepts or rejects this amendment.

*The Bishop of Reading (The Rt Revd Olivia Graham):* I accept this helpful amendment.

*The Chair:* Thank you. This is now open for debate. I will hear one or two speeches.

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

*Mrs Sue Cavill (Derby):* I am very pleased to see this motion from Oxford, and I shall be voting for it. I would like to speak in support of Cathy's amendment. I agree with Cathy in wholeheartedly commending the Church Commissioners' recent announcement of disinvestment. And it is so important that now, when there is still a window of opportunity, to slow the changes in our climate, we go through that window in a positive way by investing in renewable energy and other climate solutions.

For those who are still sceptical about climate change, I say what harm can this investment do? Even if you are not sure about the reality of climate change, is it not better to have greener energy that does not pollute the atmosphere, causing health problems for many. For myself, looking at the results of climate change., I do not want to keep hearing heart rending stories such as Cathy has just told us. I do not want to keep getting emails from Tear Fund, such as the one I have just received, telling me about 20 million - 20 million - people trapped in hunger crisis because of drought in Ethiopia. Please, Synod, support this amendment along with the whole motion.

*The Bishop of Newcastle (The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley):* Members of Synod, I support this amendment as a I do the broad scope of the motion. When I returned from ministry in New Zealand in 2018, and with lived knowledge of the vulnerability of Pacific Island communities, I spoke to the then First Estates Commissioner and urged divestment. But I wish, notwithstanding, to make a point around the scope of our discussions.

At the end of May I was invited to bless the Northumberland Show, held near Hexham. On a baking hot day - it is always like that in the north - thousands of people from across the region came together to celebrate our diverse rural heritage. Leaving aside the fact that I did not manage to see many livestock, but did see a few camels, not what you usually see in Northumberland, rural crafts were widely on display, as were many local organisations and charities that work hard to support our farming communities and economy.

I urge us not to forget the realities of the rural landscapes and the vital importance of farming in our national life, amid the importance of debates and discussions about the environment. The north American farmer and poet Wendell Berry encourages us to practise resurrection in the way we attend to our land. And, members of Synod, there are opportunities too, here, for mission and ministry.

I fear sometimes that rural gets side-lined or forgotten about in our discussions, and while I will do all I can do encourage us to safeguard the integrity of the environment, I will also seek to be an advocate for our farming and rural communities, acknowledging all that our farmers themselves do to care for creation. I support this amendment, but I ask that farming and rural communities not be left to the side in our discussions and debates and a more holistic conversation sought.

*The Chair:* I wonder if I might test the mind of Synod, oh, we do not think anybody else wants to speak. Ah, right, okay, I would still like to test the mind of Synod for a closure on this amendment.

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

*The Chair:* I put the amendment to the Synod. It is the item 82 on your Order Paper.

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

## **ITEM 83**

*The Chair:* So, we can move on to Item 83, and I call upon the Revd Martin Poole to move his amendment, and the speech limit, as I said at the beginning, is three minutes.

*The Revd Martin Poole (Chichester):* This is my maiden amendment, if there is such a thing, or certainly my maiden prepared speech. I have done some ones when I have just jumped up because I felt like it but this is properly planned. Thank you to Oxford Diocese and the Bishop of Reading for this motion and the Synod staff for helping me with this amendment and I fully support this motion.

You have seen the climate strikes visual aid and I just want to take you on a quick timeline of activity since 2014. We have had six United Nations COP conferences with pledges about environmental policy. In 2015, 196 countries signed up to the Paris Agreement pledging for greenhouse gas emission cuts as a legal target. In 2019, the IPCC reported that ice sheets in Antarctica and Greenland may have already passed the point of no return and their collapse could raise sea levels by ten metres.

2015 to 2020 were the five warmest years on record. In 2019, the UK passed the world's first net zero emissions pledge. In 2020 greenhouse gas emissions were the global highest. Also in 2020, this house set the Church of England a target of becoming carbon net zero by 2030. Last year, this Synod passed changes to faculty legislation to nudge

PCCs to plan for environmentally friendly boilers. Last month was the warmest in the UK since records began.

Why this timeline? Because the current environmental policy on my own diocesan website was written in 2014 and not revised since then. A good friend of mine frequently says that when you point a finger at someone there are always three fingers pointing back at you, and so I am aware that I am partly responsible for this, I am on the Diocesan Council for the Common Good and I acknowledge that I could do something and I will do something. It is one of the reasons I have set this amendment.

This amendment seeks to strengthen the clause in this motion about policies and to encourage all levels of the Church of England to review their policies and keep them up to date. I think we can all agree that 2014 is not up to date given the timeline of climate change events over the last nine years. We have framed the amendment fairly loosely. I would love it to say “we mandate everybody to update their policies every two years”, but we felt it should be slightly more loose than that, because we are talking about PCCs diocesan synods, national Church organisations. They will all need different timelines, and we trust you to grown-ups and decide what an appropriate up-to-date policy is for you. If we really mean what we say about the Five Marks of Mission then we should be looking ---

*The Chair:* Can you please move your amendment.

*The Revd Martin Poole (Chichester):* I beg to move this amendment standing in my name.

*The Chair:* I call upon Bishop Olivia to indicate whether she accepts or rejects this amendment.

*The Bishop of Reading (The Rt Revd Olivia Graham):* I accept this amendment.

*The Chair:* The amendment is now open for debate. I see no one standing, so we can proceed to a vote on the amendment.

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

## **ITEM 84**

*The Chair:* And so we can move on to the amendment numbered 84 on your Order Paper. I call upon Jack Shepherd to move this item as an amendment. You have three minutes.

*The Revd Jack Shepherd (Liverpool):* Before I start, can I just ask whether it would be helpful for me to have five minutes and move my second amendment at the same time? I imagine that we would want to vote on those in the order that is in the papers, but just to save time.

*The Chair:* That would be in order, What you will need to do is to speak to both, but only move the first one.

*The Revd Jack Shepherd (Liverpool):* I am very happy to do that.

*The Chair:* And then when we actually hit the second one on the Order Paper you will just to move it in a formal way. So, you can have up to five minutes for dealing with both.

*The Revd Jack Shepherd (Liverpool):* Thank you very much for your words, Mark Bennet, who said to address this we need to work at a scale and pace with which we are unfamiliar. And thank you for this original motion from the Diocese of Oxford, in which I used to enjoy working. I wholeheartedly support this original motion, regardless of the success of my amendments. I believe my amendment builds on Dr Cathy Rhodes' amendment urging investment in renewable energy and other climate solutions to be scaled up.

When I moved into my current vicarage, the house had a reputation for being very cold and we asked how improvement of insulation would serve the Church of England's carbon net zero goals. We were told that vicarages would probably be sold rather than taking steps to improve their carbon footprint. The progress that has been taken by the Diocese of Liverpool to develop an imaginative partnership with Faiths4Change to facilitate the delivery of its Net Zero Carbon Action Plan is mentioned in the notes for this debate.

In 2019, the Diocese of Liverpool gained the bronze Eco Diocese Award, and they are now progressing work towards a silver Eco Diocese Award. I would like to introduce the urgent need for improving the carbon footprint of vicarages to this discussion. I have deliberately worded the amendment to avoid the prescription of a specific financial amount. The Notice Paper for this debate indicates that the cost of the implementations I am asking would be approximately £210 million.

My original estimate was £420 million, which is more than twice the amount of Strategic Development Funding awarded in 2014 to 2021, so I am relieved to see an amount that is smaller than that.

However, the term "reflective of" is defined as showing the state or nature of something. My hope is that this amendment will contribute to changing the narrative about carbon footprints of vicarages, so if you are worried about a particular prescribed amount of money, that is not what is being asked for in the wording of this amendment. The additional effects of this amendment would be investment in the quality of clergy housing, including reduction of energy bills, which would be a massive help to many clergy, particularly during this cost of living crisis, positioning the Church of England for economic sustainability.

This amendment should be expected to be cost neutral, or even cost beneficial in the long term with some immediate cost benefits. Recently, when I enjoyed a curry with some

friends they paid the bill, always great, and we said do you want us to half it and they said don't worry, we can cover it with the returns from our solar panels.

Overcoming financial disparities between dioceses through investment in vicarages by National Church Institutions, this amendment is inserted in a section of the motion in which there are direct, clear references to the National Institutions and to the Church of England, so my positioning of the amendment in this part of the motion is the expectation that this money would be provided by the National Institutions of the Church of England rather than from increasingly diminishing diocesan pots.

I think this is also made clear by the context of my amendment and witnesses to the world about our belief in a loving creator who has not abandoned the world but stepped into it with commitment to the ultimate transformation of the entire cosmos. This testifies to the historic Christian faith. The President of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde, has said tackling climate change is a collective endeavour. That means collective accountability, and it is not too late.

I believe that my second amendment is the most effective way to ensure collective accountability. I move my first amendment.

*The Chair:* I call upon Bishop Olivia to indicate whether she wishes to accept or reject simply Item 84. We will call you back when we get to the moving of the other one that has been covered by this speech. So, this is just in relation to 84 on the Order Paper.

*The Bishop of Reading (The Rt Revd Olivia Graham):* Thank you, Jack. I fully appreciate the intention behind this amendment and fully acknowledge that Oxford is a wealthy diocese compared to many others, and we want us all to be encouraged by this motion and not disheartened by the challenge before us. However, I am going to gently resist it, because I do know from Julian Atkins, the director of the Net Zero Programme Board, that there are already plans for the use of the triennium funds for this purpose, and, subject to sign off by the Archbishops' Council, they are ready to go on this. So, I gently resist.

*The Chair:* As you have heard, Bishop Olivia rejects this amendment and so it will lapse unless I see 25 people standing in the chamber or using the hands on Zoom to indicate that they wish the debate to continue. We have over 25 so the debate will continue. The debate is now open on Item 84. Simon Friend and Paul Cartwright please. Can I encourage people to move to the podium in anticipation of their speech, even if they are the second person called, as indeed is happening there, because it speeds things up a bit.

*Mr Simon Friend (Exeter):* I just want to make a very quick point. I am sympathetic to the amendment but I would oppose it myself, because actually the wording "improve the carbon footprint of vicarages" I think it does not reflect the difficulty of how one does that. I am a property developer, housebuilder. Sometimes properties cannot be improved, they

need to be knocked down and start again. I have had this bitter experience myself where we have been doing our own property and it costs a fortune to improve old properties. I just think we need to be more creative about this, so I will resist this amendment myself.

*The Revd Canon Paul Cartwright (Leeds):* Just very briefly, I would like to speak in favour of Jack's amendment. I think it is absolutely fantastic and I declare an interest that the Diocese of Leeds have put solar panels on my vicarage. What has that meant? Well, it has meant that we have changed the way in which we think about using electricity. We have moved away from sticking the dishwasher on and the washing machine and doing photocopying on a night to doing it during the day, because the impact is less. So, there is a knock-on effect.

But I go a stage further. I mean just imagine if we had buildings available with south-facing roofs. How fantastic that would be. And let me go a stage further, Leeds is a poor diocese, actually, we are not rolling in it, and so any money that can be released would be used, not wasted, it would be fantastic for everyone, for the environment and I would like you all to get this behind this if you can.

*The Chair:* I would like to test the mind of Synod on the closure on this amendment.

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

*The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford):* Point of order.

*The Chair:* Yes.

*The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford):* This is quite a small point of order, but given that we have had some contentious votes and some people are expressing doubts about counting, it has been drawn to my attending that hands have been raised, and I cannot actually make out with my eyes who it is from the non-voting zone of the gallery, which is not in order under Standing Order 38(1)(a).

*The Chair:* That is a good point of order Neil, and I do remind people that if you are sitting in the non-voting area of the chamber you should not be participating in votes by raising hands. However, as it happens, I think there was no closeness of voting there, so I think there is no material difference to the outcome, so we will let things stand as they are, but I do welcome Neil's point of order there because we do sometimes lose sight of those bits of the Standing Orders, people get carried away with enthusiasm and the comfort in where they are sitting and forget to move.

We had taken a vote on closure, so let us now take a vote on the amendment.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* Can we have a count of the whole Synod, please, I noticed in previous counts we had some for and some against, but a lot of people did not vote and I think we need to record the abstentions as well.



*The Chair:* We have had the proposal that there should be a counted vote, that could proceed if we have 25 people standing or otherwise, on Zoom, indicating with the hands. Do I see 25 people standing? No, I do not, and there are two hands on Zoom, but that does not add up to 25, so that proposal is not carried. We can therefore proceed to vote by show of hands.

*The motion was put and the result was unclear.*

*The Chair:* We feel that from what we can see all around that this is not sufficiently clear, so in order to provide clarity there will be a counted vote of the whole Synod on Item 84.

*The motion was put and carried, 139 voting in favour, 124 against, with 25 recorded abstentions.*

## **ITEM 85**

*The Chair:* We move now to Item 85 and I call upon Dr Ros Clarke to move Item 85. The speech limit is still three minutes.

*Dr Ros Clarke (Lichfield):* I do want to make it clear that I welcome the motion as a whole, but as I read through the various clauses it was clear to me that clause (g) is not like the others. Clause (g) is not merely about reiterating the Church's commitment to the Fifth Mark of Mission, clause (g) is about who we welcome into the Church and who we do not.

Confirmation is the means by which a person affirms their baptismal vows, is welcomed at the Lord's table and is enabled to take their place in the whole life of the Church. While the proposal, quite rightly, does not set this additional promise within the baptismal vows or their reaffirmation - we cannot and must not make changes to that dominical sacrament - nonetheless, its inclusion within the promises made in the commission at the end of the confirmation service, does presume that all confirmation candidates present would be able to make that promise.

Let me be clear, it is a good promise to make, it is a good thing to do. But by including it in the confirmation service we are effectively making this promise a requirement for those who want to affirm their faith and fully participate in our Church. It would take a very particular kind of courage for a confirmation candidate to tell their bishop that they cannot make a promise that the bishop wants to have included in the liturgy. It would be very much easier for them to decide not to be confirmed at all.

Are we really saying that we only want people who agree with us on this issue, an issue which is not even mentioned in the catholic creeds or the 39 Articles, not to be welcomed in our churches? Do we really want to make it harder for some people to receive Communion? Do we have the right to withhold that means of grace because someone has a different view of our responsibility towards creation?

Synod, do we really want a Church that sets narrower limits than the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church? I do not think that we do. I urge you to support this amendment, so that we can wholeheartedly vote for the rest of the motion. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*The Chair:* Before I ask Bishop Olivia to speak to that and indicate whether she accepts it or not, we have a point of order on Zoom, so I invite Clive Billenness to make his point of order.

*Mr Clive Billenness (Europe):* Chair, I apologise for interrupting the flow. May I please ask you, when you are asking us to indicate on Zoom how we wish to express an opinion, to give us very clear directions as to which button you wish us to press. In one of the past votes, a few minutes ago, you said please indicate by hand, but in fact people will be using green crosses and hands, and it is not always clear what your expectations are of us, so could you please precisely instruct us which button you wish us to press to ensure that we convey our opinion to you properly.

*The Chair:* Point noted. I have not been operating it from your end of process, so I do apologise if I have misled you in any way, and I hope that has not interfered with the substance of the business at all.

*The Bishop of Reading (The Rt Revd Olivia Graham):* Thank you very much, Ros, for the points that you raised. I need to, perhaps preface this by making it clear that clause (g) is not intended to take us into the minefield of what is or is not liturgical business. But, in Oxford and Norwich Dioceses, we have encouraged ministers to add this question to the optional commissioning in the baptism and confirmation services under Canon B 5, and it is this informal but warm invitation which we are inviting bishops and the Liturgical Commission to extend.

And just to say that our experience of using this question in Oxford is how very powerful it is, especially for the young people coming to faith and seeing that environment care is a core part of their discipleship and not something that they have to leave at the door. I am therefore going to resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* So that was not supporting that amendment, therefore that will lapse unless I see 25 people standing in the chamber and also indicating with the green ticks on Zoom. I see Clive, on the screen that we have here, Clive is now nodding and putting his thumbs up, that is good. But he has also put up a green tick. So, we clearly have 25 people standing, or otherwise indicating by the green ticks, so we can proceed with the debate on this.

*The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford):* I declare an interest as a member of the Liturgical Commission. There is no doubt that this proposal in clause (g) has attracted very wide public attention, even, perhaps, controversy. *The Times* newspaper last summer called

it “the first environmentally friendly amendment” to our Church of England liturgies, and it has faced something of a backlash, perhaps we are hearing some of that in the room today.

But, for those of us here who might have doubts about its wisdom, let us just emphasise and clear up these two confusions. First, do not believe the newspapers. I am really glad for what Ros and Olivia have both clarified. We are not talking about any variation to the declaration of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, which lies right at the heart of the baptism and confirmation service at the heart of Christian discipleship. “I turn to Christ the Saviour, I submit to Christ as Lord, I come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life”, that is the heart of our response to the Gospel and no one is proposing a variation to the baptismal decision or the profession of faith which lie at the heart of the rites.

What we are talking about, as we have heard, is an optional question, which is being added, perhaps, to the optional commission which is sometimes used at the end of a service just before the dismissal alongside other existing questions about loving your neighbour and seeking justice and defending the weak. It is a very appropriate place to put it. So, do not believe the newspapers and their sensationalism.

Secondly, do not believe your Synod briefing documents. There are no plans to authorize this liturgical variation and unfortunately both our documents GS 2306A and B get us into sloppy terminology, as have a couple of recent Ad Clerums which adds to the confusion. So, contrary to our supporting papers, this new variation has not been authorized in the Dioceses of Oxford or Norwich. We really rejoice in the pioneering work of those dioceses in Creation Care, but of course we know that a change to the confirmation liturgy can only be authorized, of course, by us, as a body, here.

So, there are no plans, let us emphasise that, there are no plans to authorize this variation. What is proposed is a friendly, informal encouragement for parishes and bishops to use their liturgical discretion as is already permitted. That is a good thing. When both of those confusions are dispelled then there is no reason, I suggest, for any fear about clause (g). It is a helpful proposal, it is optional, it is carefully crafted in the language of the Five Marks of Mission, which we have already welcomed as a General Synod, and it reminds us, as God’s followers, that we are called to care for God’s world, as one of many different practical aspects of our Christian discipleship. So, let us support the motion in its totality.

*The Chair:* Thomas Saville, with a speech limit of three minutes still. Graham Usher, with a speech limit of two minutes, please, because we will move on to two minutes from here on in the debate.

*The Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities):* I am very grateful for what Andrew has just said, which I agree with entirely and it would have been part of my speech had I got to make a longer one. I just want to remind us, if I may, of what the doctrine of creation teaches about, its extent. This phrase “integrity of creation”, I think, is often confused with

integrity of the environment. The integrity of creation refers to far, far, far more than this tiny, tiny little spot on the western arm of the Milky Way.

God the Son is the ultimate subject of every contingent particular. I hope everybody here believes that. It is a truth worth dying for. In Him, all things hold together, and that does not mean just this little tiny place, wonderful and marvellous though it is, although what a mess we are making of it, but it also means things which are created. He created this hall. On my way here, I travelled through the marvellous West Yorkshire town of Dewsbury and also Batley and yes, he created Batley. He also created Betelgeuse. Do you remember Betelgeuse? One part of the universe, apart from this planet, which feels almost home. I am not sure whether that is the right pronunciation, but it is the one, ever since *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which I use.

We do need an awareness of that. He is the subject of dark matter, He is the subject of neutrinos, and we learned last week that there are three kinds, three flavours, of neutrinos. These are wonderful things, but I think we need to be careful of our language. And I like the general direction of this amendment, but please let us be careful with our language so that we may have one day even more of this amazing and staggering place in which we live, the universe.

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

*The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher)*: I hold my hands up as guilty of using this line in confirmation services in the Diocese of Norwich, and I am very grateful to Andrew for clarifying exactly how that has come about. Also, as lead bishop for the environment, though I must add that I am less a tree hugger rather than a tree planter. But what I have seen this question do at confirmations is enthuse young people. Young people want to belong to a church that is credible about the environmental agenda. They see it as so important, so part of their faith, and asking this question has opened up so many conversations.

That is why I want you to resist this amendment, because I have seen the fruits of it. And what else is normal for Norfolk? Well, it is also that the Bishops are giving out hazel trees, something that is happening at confirmation services in very many parts of the Anglican Communion. Why a hazel tree? Well, because I want to see people plant trees, as their faith grows to see this tree that they have cared for grow as well, and one day perhaps they will hold a hazelnut in the palm of their hand, and like Mother Julian of Norwich, think the first thing to think is that God made, the second is that God loves it and the third is that God keeps it. So, please, resist this amendment, so that we can celebrate the care of God's creation.

*The Chair*: Alison Coulter, and then, conscious as I am of our timed business at the end of the morning and the fact that we have got another amendment to deal with and then the rest of the debate to be voted, I think I will be testing the mind of Synod about a closure on this amendment after we have heard from Alison.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* I also want to resist the amendment. Friends, 98% of the Church are lay people who are seeking to follow Christ every day of their lives. I think that this gives us an opportunity to give them a practical way to affirm how they do that. I also speak to you as a member of the Investment Board, and, Carl, I hope you will not be too shocked if I say this, but even if we gave our whole budget to make vicarages and church buildings more carbon neutral, it would not have the same impact, I believe, as 98% of the Church living out their lives in the way that this encourages us to do.

In Zechariah, the prophet said “Do not despise the day of the small thing”. And, as people say, “I turn to Christ”, this is a way in which we can affirm every day faith for them, that actually in the decisions that they make, in the way that they live their lives, that Jesus is interested in that and will use those small things, just as the young boy brought his packed lunch to Jesus, Jesus used that. I just really think this is a way in which we can affirm to people that their lives matter to Jesus, the decisions they make matter to Jesus.

*The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter):* Point of order. In view of the controversy that this has clearly attracted, may we hear a speech in favour of the amendment as well as all the ones against?

*The Chair:* I think that is a reasonable request. I see someone there, in what to me is gloom, I cannot tell who it is. Oh, it is Debbie, right. Yes, you have two minutes and then we will proceed with testing the mind of Synod on closure for this amendment.

*Miss Debbie Buggs (London):* By encouraging bishops and the Liturgical Commission to commend but not require promises in this way, we may find ourselves in the utterly repugnant position of making this something of a postcode lottery. Our baptism and therefore our confirmation bind us together. One baptism, one faith, one Lord. Introducing variations does not promote unity that we so much desperately need in our Church today as we say we believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. And I am particularly conscious that some of our Anglo Catholic brothers and sisters here will be particularly concerned that this is almost playing with and politicising the Sacrament, and that it sets a precedent which is unwelcome. So, I would urge us, please, for unity, to vote for Ros’s amendment.

*The Chair:* Thank you, I will now test the mind of Synod for closure on this amendment.

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

*A Speaker:* Point of order.

*The Chair:* I have a point of order that precedes yours. You cannot know that but it has come in from Zoom and it came in first. I realise that you cannot know that but I need to take them in order. The point of order is that we proceed with voting by taking a vote by Houses on this amendment, a counted vote by Houses. In order to do that I would need

to see 25 members standing or otherwise indicating as they are able and, similarly, for those on Zoom to indicate by green ticks that they wish that to happen. We have 25 indicating that they wish to proceed in that way and, therefore, that is what we will do. Could I ask what your point of order was, please?

*The Revd Robert Thompson (London):* I wanted to ask for a count of the whole Synod.

*The Chair:* The count by Houses takes precedence over the count of the whole Synod, so that is the way round it is.

*Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool):* Typically, in the chamber we are told who raises the point of order. May we know that?

*The Chair:* I beg your pardon, yes. It was Robert Thompson. I am afraid I cannot remember offhand what his diocese is. Oh, London, thank you. I suppose I might have known from the numbering but I do not carry that in my head. Yes, it was 166, Robert Thompson. Thank you, fair point.

Oh, point of order, yes. You will need to come to the podium because otherwise the Zoom people cannot hear what the point of order is, so it is essential. I am sorry but you must come to the podium. No, I am afraid that we have to be equal to our Zoom members and they must hear what you say and the only way they can hear it is if you come and speak into the microphone. I know that feels tedious, but it is just a fact of life of having a hybrid meeting.

*Mr David Ashton (Leeds):* Before you take the vote, as churchwarden of a church in Batley I would like to tell you that people do enjoy living there.

*The Chair:* We have heard what you say but that is not a point of order, as everyone knows I think. There will be a counted vote by Houses. I am dispensing with the ringing of the bell because of the time factor. This is a counted vote by Houses on Item 85.

The vote on Item 85: In the House of Bishops, those in favour two, against 20, with two recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 47 in favour, 81 against, with nine recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 68 in favour, 78 against, with 16 recorded abstentions. The motion was lost in all three Houses.

## **ITEM 86**

*The Chair:* We move on now to the amendment at Item 86 and I call upon Jack Shepherd simply to move formally that amendment on which you have already spoken.

*The Revd Jack Shepherd (Liverpool):* I move my amendment.

*The Chair:* I call upon Bishop Olivia to indicate whether she accepts or rejects that amendment.

*The Bishop of Reading (The Rt Revd Olivia Graham):* Jack, thank you again. I have been advised that it is not the role of the Business Committee to review progress. Much as we want there to be a high level of momentum, it is probably more realistic to have a review in 2025 and the *Routemap* which we are all signed up to requires report-backs in '25, '28 and '31. In any case, a report back in '24 might simply add a reporting burden for not much gain and so I would resist this amendment.

*The Chair:* Since Bishop Olivia resists this amendment, it will lapse unless 25 people if they stand in the chamber, or use the green ticks on Zoom or otherwise in the chamber if you cannot stand indicate in some other way. Do I see 25 people standing to continue this debate or indicating on Zoom with the green ticks? That does not amount to 25 and so that amendment lapses. We can then return to the main debate and that is now open for consideration from the floor if anyone wishes to make any further contributions.

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

*The Revd Andrew Mumby (Southwark):* There are a number of things that I want to say in very heavy support of this whole motion. I am very pleased that we have kept this confirmation question in. I want to say though that it fits very beautifully with Church of England speak and, having grown up in rural Lincolnshire, not far from Norwich, I am glad that it has gone well in Norwich. However, the question itself and the language it uses is not the sort of language that we use in Walworth where I live and minister.

"Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of creation" is a beautiful thing, but I wonder if the Liturgical Commission or whoever is responsible could come up with something that is also a bit more communal and shows that we need to work together, something like: will you work with God, our creator and your fellow Christians and people of goodwill to look after the earth, our common home better? Just a suggestion.

I am very pleased that paragraph 17 in this motion talks about loss and damage which is a relatively new concept to me in the climate crisis conversation. I think it is an essential Christian principle and important to keep hold of and it keeps this conversation within the context of climate justice which is also, among other things, racial justice and gender justice.

Finally, I want to say that the paragraph on lobbying may be small but is key because many experts say that you and I can do nothing on our own, air conditioning, lights and otherwise, but we need big business and Government to act and we need to speak prophetically using our privileged voice in Parliament and each of our public spaces. We too must call out total nonsense when we hear it.

*The Chair:* I am minded at this point to test the mind of Synod for closure on the debate on the main motion as amended.

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

## **ITEM 14**

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried and I, therefore, call upon Bishop Olivia to reply to the debate. You have, Bishop Olivia, five minutes, but if you could help Synod by speaking a little more briefly than that in view of the business still remaining that would be welcome.

*The Bishop of Reading (The Rt Revd Olivia Graham):* Thank you, Synod, for an excellent and engaged debate. Roy, the science is clear and scientists estimate that the earth has not been this hot for the past 125,000 years. We are not talking about saving the planet. We are talking about saving the human race and many other species. Thank you for pointing out that green electricity generation is key to the transition and renewable tariffs by 2024 are part of the *Routemap* for schools and churches - that is my point, not Roy's. Bishop Helen-Ann, many thanks for the important points raised about the crucial importance of and impact on the farming communities, well made.

Simon and Paul, on buildings, retrofitting is not always the answer. We need bespoke solutions for each building clearly and sometimes the bulldozer is the best one, but sometimes retrofitting is and we have just completed our first retrofit in Oxford Diocese at the cost, I believe, of £75,000. We now have a net zero vicarage. We hope it is the first of many.

I am very grateful to Andrew Atherstone for the clarification on the use of the additional clause in the Commission, that it is not formal authorization which is being sought, and to Thomas Seville for so beautifully enlarging our awareness of the enormity of God and God's creation. It was great to hear about how young people have been inspired by the use of these words in the Commission in Norwich Diocese. Thank you, Bishop Graham.

Also to Alison Coulter for the reminder that it is the individual commitment of ordinary Christians which is the key to addressing the grave problems which face us. 90% of a Church's entire carbon footprint lies with the congregation. Andrew Mumby, I loved your rewrite of the words of the Commission. Do please send them to me.

Let us be in no doubt, Synod, that we cannot invent or spend our way out of this crisis. It is going to need us to change. This Synod is a legislative chamber. It is also a fellowship of faith. It is a place of shared prayer and hope and spiritual inspiration and the issues which face us are deeply spiritual ones. They have to do with us facing into our sinfulness in the way that we have misused and mistreated this beautiful blue-green marble floating in space which is our God-given single planet home, mistreating it through our greed and indifference and apathy.



We must recognise that we live lives in which we want much more than we need and that we have been for decades programmed to do this. We have lost quite simply our ability to know how much is enough. We must all wake up and we must all change. We must pray and we must act. We must lobby and we must influence in every single context in which we are able to do this. This is the spirit in which this motion is offered and I commend it to you for your support today.

*The Chair:* We can now proceed to vote on the main motion at Item 14 as amended.

*Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth):* Point of order. Can we have a count of the whole Synod, please?

*The Chair:* That has my consent. Do I see 25 people standing or otherwise indicating by green ticks on Zoom that they support the proposal for a counted vote of the whole Synod? That has been sufficiently supported. We have over 25 people indicating and so we will have a counted vote of the whole Synod. I dispense with the bell given the time constraint. This is a counted vote by the whole Synod on Item 14.

*The motion was put and carried, 256 in favour, 36 against, with 16 recorded abstentions.*

*The Chair:* This motion, as amended, is carried. That concludes this item of business. Please do remain in the chamber for the next item.

THE CHAIR *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* took the Chair at 11.36 am

## **ITEM 29**

### **SPECIAL AGENDA IV:**

### **DIOCESAN SYNOD MOTION**

### **REDUCE PAROCHIAL FEES FOR MARRIAGES**

### **(GS 2282A AND GS 2282B)**

*The Chair:* Good morning, Synod. We are now at Item 29. Members will need papers GS 2282A, GS 2282B and also, for the financial aspects, Notice Paper 4 and Notice Paper 11, paragraphs 7 to 9. Tom Woolford has ten minutes in which to introduce this motion.

*The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to introduce this debate. It is a special honour to do so because this motion started life in the PCC of the church where I was serving my curacy in Blackpool deanery and it is a real thrill to see how a few people in an ordinary parish can start a chain of events that ends up with a chance to change national Church policy and potentially impact the lives of tens of thousands of people in England every year.

I feel the need at the outset to declare an interest. I am the proud father of five daughters aged between ten and two and traditionally minded when it comes to financing weddings and so I stand to save £3,000 if we pass this motion in due course. Due in part to the press coverage this motion has received, a lot of people have talked to me about it and every single person has said to me that, on principle, they are in favour of this motion to scrap the statutory wedding fees.

Everyone, it seems, is by and large persuaded by the theological, missional and social justice arguments that lie behind our diocesan motion. Theologically, we believe and even say in the preface to the Marriage Service that, "Marriage is a gift of God in creation" and a means of His grace. If it is God's gracious gift, good for human flourishing in the family and in society, why are we charging for it? Missionally, the case for abolishing the fee is convincing too. If we levy no fee, we will get more weddings which means more meaningful pastoral connections with more of our parishioners through marriage preparation, the service itself and ongoing pastoral contact and care. What is more, with this countercultural act of radical generosity we have a chance to change perceptions about the Church's relationship with money.

Finally, the grounds of social justice, the minimum £539 for banns in the wedding, is the same in the most deprived parish of central Blackpool and in the wealthiest parish in suburban Surrey. It is true that some couples will spend £30,000 on their big day but some, especially in the context of the cost of living crisis, can afford to spend but a fraction of that, hence the recent phenomenon of "minimonies", mini-ceremonies, "minimonies" - that is a good word to say. Very many at the lowest income range will delay, even indefinitely, marriage on the grounds of cost. Research by the Marriage Foundation has exposed what they call the marriage gap. 90% of the richest bracket in society get married. 20% of those with an annual income of less than £20,000 do so, which then perpetuates higher rates of family breakdown among that demographic.

Of course, as you will doubtless hear in some of the speeches in a moment, the power exists for an incumbent on a case by case basis on the grounds of clear financial hardship to waive the PCC portion of the fee with the consent of the churchwardens and to inform the archdeacon of an intention to waive the DBF portion or to petition the archdeacon for permission in other circumstances. But this current provision is very far from ideal. It is humiliating for the poorer and struggling couples. Unless an incumbent were to make assumptions about a couple's financial circumstances, and if so on what basis ought those assumptions to be made, it relies either on the incumbent asking intrusive and maybe even insulting questions about the couple's circumstances or on the couple themselves having to ask, bowing and scraping for the crumbs of ecclesial charity.

Even a section of the Church of England weddings website says, "If you are struggling to afford your wedding costs or finding yourself in financial difficulties, it is worth mentioning this to your vicar as they might be able to suggest ways to help. If you need to borrow to pay for your wedding, why not consider using a local credit union". The current system patronises the poor and robs the struggling of their dignity.

As I have said, not one person has objected to this motion on the grounds of principle. The only objections I have heard to it are about money. Not the money that the poorer couples cannot afford to pay but the money that the Church cannot afford to lose. I gather a number of dioceses have even circulated to their Synod reps scary estimates of what the DBF and the parishes would stand to lose if the fee were abolished. The Secretary-General has mentioned a figure of £16.5 million across the whole Church which, broken down, comprises 0.9% of PCC income and 1.4% of dioceses' income. Synod, please do not give way to fear. It is not the case that you can simply add up the statutory fees' income at either a parish, diocesan or national level and then say that is the black hole in our finances if you vote this through.

What will certainly happen if we abolish statutory fees is that most couples will make a donation. The donation could be an amount suggested locally by a parish priest in view of the circumstances of their parish - so maybe a £50 suggestion in Blackpool and £1,000 in a commuter village - or a suggested percentage of what the couple are planning to spend overall on their wedding. For instance, something like at St Mary's we ask couples to give 5% of what they are going to spend on their wedding day as a donation to the Church.

This, incidentally, is how the Roman Catholic Church operates, there is no fee but a locally set suggested donation. Those donations, I gather from Fr Young, the Roman Catholic ecumenical guest - I think he has gone home - with us at Synod, are almost always made.

The point is we would still be getting an income from weddings but by way of a donation of what couples can afford to give. Some will give a great deal. Some will only be able to afford to give a little. What is more, if by abolishing the fee we get an increase in the overall number of church weddings, even if the average donation per wedding is less than the current statutory fee, if we get more weddings, we may not be overall that far off; we might even be better off. That is to say nothing of the possibility that through marriage preparation and the couple attending church to acquire a qualifying connection, or even to hear their banns and the follow-up pastoral care that we offer, that more couples are drawn into the worshipping life of the church and become regular givers.

Overall, therefore, please put those big scary numbers out of your minds and think far more realistically about how a donation system would actually likely work.

So, catholics, please vote for this motion on sacramental grounds as it is odious, simony even, to charge for a sacrament: a gift of God and a means of His grace: an icon of the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church.

Evangelicals, please vote for this motion on evangelistic grounds as more weddings will mean more and deeper contact with the unbelievers and not-so-sures in your parishes.

Liberals, please vote for this motion on social justice grounds. The fee structure is like a poll tax, inexpensive for the rich but prohibitive for the poor.

Save the Parish, please vote for this motion on parochial grounds. Let us start rebuilding and strengthening the generational links between parishioners, their priests and their church buildings by getting more of the key life events back where they belong in the heart of our worshipping communities.

Bishops, I cannot think of a reason why you should vote for it, but I hope you do anyway.

I beg to move the Blackburn Diocesan Synod Motion standing in my name.

*The Revd Tim Edwards (Rochester):* Chair, I notice that a number of the Bishops are not in the chamber. May I check we are quorate in the House of Bishops when we are talking about such an important issue?

*The Chair:* Please would all Bishops stand to be counted? And we have one on Zoom. Thank you, we are quorate.

Members of Synod, you will see from the Order Paper that Item 87 only leaves the first four words of the original motion in the text. I understand this is a friendly motion so I would like to call on the Ven. Mark Ireland to move his amendment so we can debate that before we debate the whole thing.

*The Ven. Mark Ireland (Blackburn):* I am the Archdeacon of Blackburn. This a friendly amendment drafted in collaboration with the mover. When this Deanery Synod Motion to reduce wedding fees came to Blackburn diocesan synod four years ago, I voted against it, but I was wrong. I voted against it because I am an archdeacon. I may have forgotten to pack my dog collar for coming to York but I am still an archdeacon.

I was worried whether the Church could afford it, for the reasons that William Nye sets out very eloquently in his briefing paper. However, I was wrong because I believe that what we say in the wedding service is true, that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of His grace. Marriage is a very precious gift from God not just for Christians but for humanity as a whole. Faithful committed relationships bring stability to homes and families. They are the bedrock of society. Stable faithful relationships can be found inside and outside marriage. Those relationships which are sealed by the public commitment of marriage have the best chance and this is a real stability that gives benefit to families and children, and to society as a whole.

If marriage is a gift of God and a means of His grace, we should not be charging for it. I think the Roman Catholic Church is right on this. It gives us a lead that we ought to be following. I think I can give a reason for Bishops to want to vote for this, because that is why I am tabling this amendment, as a cautious amendment: one which will give us the opportunity to do a time-limited trial, one which will give us the opportunity to see whether

people are in fact more generous under grace than they are under law. I believe that people will be more generous when we send out a positive and strong message to the nation that the Church of England is here for you and we want to serve you. Whether or not you come to church, we think marriage is something really special for you to have the opportunity to make a public commitment in front of your family and friends, and in a place where you can seek God's blessing, and you should not be put off from that by cost, or feeling you have to beg, or ask your vicar to beg the archdeacon to waive the fee, which is something which is surely not right in a church which is for the whole nation.

If we want to be a Church which serves the whole community we need to be there for the poorest as well as for the wealthy. I believe that those who can afford to give more will do so knowing that their donation will enable another couple to get married in church who would not otherwise be able to do so. I can think of many couples who would love to make that donation.

The advantage of doing a time-limited and regional trial is that it gives us an opportunity to test the evidence. Let us have the courage of our convictions. If this is something which we believe could make a difference and could be good news for society, and a way in which we can serve the whole country, let us be there and let us do it. Let us have the courage of our convictions. Even if the income did not go up and we did not get to do more weddings, which I am sure we would do, we will have had an opportunity to demonstrate to the nation that we believe in marriage and that we want to offer you a priceless gift. We want to give something which we think will really help you and be a blessing. If you want to have some extra bells and whistles, we can do that, but we will not charge you for the marriage ceremony itself, because marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of His grace. If you are a cautiously minded archdeacon or Bishop then I encourage you to vote for this amendment in my name because that gives us an opportunity to take a calculated risk, but one which I believe is a Gospel risk. I urge you to support this amendment.

*The Chair:* I call on Tom Woolford to respond. He has up to five minutes.

*The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* While some worry a donations-only system would result in a substantial reduction in income, others, as I have argued, think it may lead to more weddings, and not much of a reduction and perhaps even an increase. We cannot know for sure in advance so a time-limited and regional trial to win over the worried seems a responsible way forward. Between the Legal Office and the Archdeacons WhatsApp group we have come up with three or four ideas about how that could work but it would be up to the Archbishops' Council to work out the logistics of that.

I warmly accept this amendment.

*The Chair:* Item 87 is now open for debate.

*The Revd Canon Katrina Scott (Gloucester):* Thank you for this amendment, which I support. I really like the focus and the desire of the original motion, but I fear that without this amendment I would have been torn about whether to vote against it or not. I am not convinced that the original motion in itself comes up with the right answer to the opportunity posed, or indeed explores sufficiently the wider implications of the motion. I am probably one of those people that Tom referenced in his opening speech there: I am with the desire but a bit torn about the implications.

I speak as a priest who loves weddings ministry. I have enjoyed working with married couples in inner city Coventry, in estates ministry and now in the rural Cotswolds. In each of these places I have on occasion needed to waive marriage fees in order to enable couples to be married in the place which means the most to them, on that most important day.

I am also aware that very often the total cost of the wedding means that the church proportion is as small as 5%, or even as low as 1%, of the total expenditure of the day. Indeed, I am conscious that sometimes even the florist bringing the flowers into the church is receiving significantly more in return than the church. I do not mean to suggest for a moment that we do weddings for the income but that for many people the costs are minimal.

That is why in the original motion I feel the blanket reduction in fees is not necessarily the way forward. I love what the motion is trying to say, let us celebrate weddings as a central part of our church life, and let us ensure that no one feels turned away from the Church for financial reasons, and let us take all the opportunities that there are for sharing God's love for people coming to marriage.

I agree with all of these and I think this amendment helps. It helps us to explore the opportunities and the options that there are in the original motion. It enables us to test it out, to ask the question, how do we make the waiving of fees easier? How do we advertise our offer better? How do we support the whole day for the couple, perhaps offering receptions, extra support? How do we enable parishes to have the confidence to ask for donations? I hope that this amendment will enable these factors to be explored.

So, I encourage us to vote for this amendment, which will help us to reduce the tensions or the anxiety around the original motion, and help us to go forward to supporting the mission and ministry of our weddings.

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

*The Bishop of Blackburn (The Rt Revd Philip North):* I am supporting vigorously this motion. I am supporting the amendment less vigorously. I hope it does not last long and that soon the whole Church comes to realise that offering marriage for free is the way ahead. For me the questions are very simple ones. Do we believe we should be celebrating the gift of human love? Do we believe that marriage is a good thing? Do we

believe that rich and poor should equally be able to access the ministry of the Church, and that those who are unable to afford a fee should not have to endure the indignity of asking for it to be waived? Do we believe that marriage is a means of mission? Because if we are going to answer “yes” to any of those questions, then clearly we should be making marriage as available as possible. Let us start with that simple proposition. We want people to get married. If we agree on that, the financial questions, which seems to be the only objection to this motion, must come second. Our money must be our servant, not our master.

If we have established that critical first principle, let us address the financial issues which must necessarily come second. First, should marriage primarily be a fundraiser? We do not levy a fee for baptism, for the Eucharist, or for confirmation. When I ordained 14 deacons last week I did not charge any of them a penny. So, why do we charge for marriage? We do not levy a fee to lead school worship, or to visit the Cubs, or to take Communion to the housebound. Why do we pick out this ministry? Many other denominations do not.

Secondly, if our only objection to this motion is a financial one, let us find financial legislation, and Tom has given us those in bucket loads. If we were to find ways of relaxing marriage legislation still more, and getting rid of the absurd complexity around qualifying connections, the number of weddings, I am sure, would increase still more.

Churches which put mission first usually find their financial worries melt away. Do not vote this down out of financial fear. The Project Fear data put around by some of your diocesan secretaries needs to be seen as that, because when we prioritise the Gospel, financial solutions will always follow on. What comes first: our faith or our money? What is our primary objective: to declare the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, or to have a stable bottom line on the spreadsheet? Let us have some Gospel courage. Let us offer the ministry of the Church as free gift, just as Jesus offered his life as free gift, because I profoundly believe that God will honour that courage.

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Point of order. I apologise if this was mentioned at the beginning, but it is normal to have a financial statement, and Mr Ireland’s amendment has financial implications, so in the absence of one - I cannot see find one - might we hear from the Chair of the Archbishops’ Council Finance Committee, please?

*The Chair:* I did mention at the beginning of the debate you would also need Notice Paper 11, paragraphs 7 to 9, as well as Notice Paper 4. After the Archbishop I would like to see if there is anyone who wants to speak against Item 87, please? In that case, we will have the Archbishop and then Mr Hughes.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* I have been told when I give my name do not look at my badge, so, Archbishop of York, No. 2, Stephen Cottrell. I have remembered who I am!

Of course, I might be speaking against the motion myself but I am not. I have always been persuaded by the principle of this, and have needed no further persuasion, but the problem is that we are not starting from scratch; we are starting from where we are. The anxieties from our diocesan secretaries and others are real anxieties, and if you are a diocesan bishop, struggling to make ends meet in your diocese, responsible for paying clergy stipends, this is sleepless-night territory for us, to do something which you know might reduce the income that is coming in at a time like this.

However, I am going to be voting in favour of this, and I am going to be voting in favour of it particularly in the very helpful way that Mark Ireland has amended it, because it gives us the chance to find out not whether it is right or wrong to do it - I believe it is right to do it - but we have to take account of other realities at the same time. This allows us to do that, to see what its impact is and therefore, if we take it further, to be able to plan accordingly. This seems to me to be the right thing to do but also the right way of doing it. It will not quite grab the headlines in the same way it, but it seems to me to be a godly sensible way of finding a better way of doing what we want to do. I am really grateful to Blackburn Diocese for bringing this issue and to Mark for, I hope, making it a bit easier to take this step.

Just a couple of caveats. If we do pass this, I hope the regional experiment/pilot will be in a wealthy area of the country as well as a poorer area, and also that the donation that we invite people to make will be shared between PCC and diocese in the same way the current wedding fee is shared. Assuming that would happen anyway, I am saying, Synod, this is a chance for us to do something which I believe could be really good for us, good for our soul, and I hope we may support it,

*Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark):* I am afraid that I am here to play the role of Mr Grumpy, and I do hope that after this speech the very kind invitation I had from Bishop Philip yesterday to make an early visit to the Diocese of Blackburn will not be withdrawn.

I have to say that I have do considerable empathy with this motion and the amendment brought to us from Blackburn by my good friend Tom Woolford. However, I do wish to encourage Synod to vote against these proposals even as amended. The Secretary-General has clearly set out in his paper GS 2282B the reasons why this motion, while worthy, is misplaced. The amendment also sets in train a further initiative that staff are going to have to address in the coming months when they are already very stretched.

Parishes already do have the ability to waive marriage fees at their discretion, and I think that Tom has overstated the difficulty of an incumbent exercising sensible judgment in this regard. If passed, we would be reducing fees at a time of financial challenge both for parishes and for dioceses. Any monies foregone will need to be replaced from elsewhere, or the extensive budgeted deficits at parish and diocesan levels, as was set out very clearly yesterday by John Spence, will simply increase. There is considerable financial risk in this motion, notwithstanding the argument that income foregone might be mitigated



by marriage-related financial gifts, so on behalf of the Finance Committee I feel I have to ask you to vote against this motion.

*The Chair:* So that we can move on to a debate either on the rest of the amendments, or the motion as amended or not amended, as the case may be, I am looking to test the mind of the Synod on a motion for closure on Item 87.

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

*The Chair:* That is clearly carried, so now we move to vote on Item 87.

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

*The Chair:* The amendment is carried. We can now see that Items 88 and 89 will not be debated. That means we move on to a debate on the main motion as amended by 87.

*The Revd Canon Rachel Firth (Leeds):* Thank you for calling me, for what I am calling my first speech to General Synod. I will not use the word “maiden” if you do not mind; the corresponding label, when I have spoken many times, makes me shudder to think.

I wanted to speak for this motion as a parish priest and area dean but found myself, as I prepared to speak, thinking my way out of it. I am delighted that we have just adopted this amendment because it takes me back to my natural positive jolly supportive kind of speech. Usually, when a colleague talks about us the Church not charging fees, I am afraid I am assume that they are the vicar of a leafy Cotswold parish with a really pretty money tree in the churchyard, and I would think my colleague naïve for not knowing that those trees are not a native species in the Northern Province.

It is a bit different though, I have to say, when the ask comes from where it comes from today. I am enthused by the generous spirit coming from the Diocese of Blackburn. It is hard, it seems, for us to act generously at every level of our Church, to trust that when we are generous, when we choose to reflect and respond to God’s generosity, that things will move and change and work because we are moving and working and changing in the ways of the Gospel, in the Way.

This motion now commends generous action, not just generous-sounding prose, and I want to affirm that.

There are many buts for me. I am not always convinced that it is fees that are the main barrier to people coming to the Church. We have been fighting a losing battle for at least ten years, in the face of cultural change. The funeral and wedding industries, the occasional office industries (because they are industries now) have been transformed. People do not cross my threshold to even ask about weddings because a slightly shabby hotel in town is going to charge them thousands and their common sense tells them that they cannot afford the big beautiful church. The question is not even asked.

So, as well as supporting this amended motion today, I would like some more support from the Church. I would like some affirmation from senior colleagues that we can already be generous with the option to waive the fees that we have. I would like some support from our award-winning national comms team. I would like you to tell the world that we are rather wonderful, that we are fabulous welcoming communities which are ready to support them with their occasional offices. I would like you to tell them, before we get to the results of this trial that we are hoping to have, that we are already as cheap as chips - sorry, surprisingly budget friendly.

So please, let us support this amended motion, let us do the trial and let find out if free weddings are actually really missional, or if it is just a nice idea. But let us do something about that perception gap, too.

*The Revd Lis Goddard (London):* I have the privilege of living in a beautiful place, just 15 minutes from Church House, Westminster. White stucco houses line the streets. Even the estate in which my Grade I listed building sits is listed Grade II. It gains a Green Flag every year for its garden. The ideal city wedding venue, you would think. I have been there for 13 years and yet I have done five weddings - five. I have done multiple banns. I read banns constantly, but they, I have to tell you, are for those who go off to be married in the pretty country villages, the young professionals, the wealthy who live in the white stucco houses. Meanwhile, the majority of my parishioners, many of whom struggle with mental health issues and who live below the poverty line, do not get married - they do not get married. Why this disparity, you ask.

Inevitably, the reasons are complex and it would be unfair to pretend otherwise. But, equally, there is one reason which dominates. Tom has already referred us to the Marriage Foundation figures. Among parents with children under five, 80% of those in the highest income quantile were married compared to 24% of those in the lowest income quantile. And it is not, Synod, that marriage is going out of fashion. Last year, the Marriage Foundation did some research which showed that marriage remains universally popular, with nine in ten young people (bearing in mind our commitment to the young) across society aspiring to marry - nine in ten - regardless of income or any other factor. Yet when we look at who actually ties the knot, the answer is predominantly the rich. And we charge for marriage. We are charging for people to get married, which is a gift of God in creation. The first thing we say when people marry is: this is God's gift, give us your money. Meanwhile couples looking for the affordable option are told by the *Daily Mail*, "Tie the knot in McDonalds." If only the *Daily Mail* were saying, "Tie the knot in the Church. Look the Church are offering it to you for free". I rest my case.

*The Chair:* After the next speaker, I would like to hear from someone against the motion, if there is anyone who wants to do that.

*Mr Nigel Lea-Wilson (Liverpool):* This is my maiden speech. On 28 January 1989, my friends in St Helen's, Merseyside - let us call them Dennis and Sue - got married. They

were both young. Dennis was a teenager; he was 19. They had no money. Their church reached out to them and a glorious wedding happened at almost no cost. Jesus himself was invited to the wedding. Dennis and Sue are still following Christ today 34 years later and are still happily married.

Fast forward to today and, as we have heard, the weddings market has gone crazy. My wife is a freelance florist, note that word “freelance”, and she has done dozens of weddings. Top venues near us include Knowsley Hall, home of the Earl of Derby, and Knowsley Safari Park is there well. At Knowsley Hall the flower stands on the huge tables are three feet high off the table. You need a lot of flowers to make it all look good. So, add a zero to the cost, and many, many wedding companies do (but not of course my wife).

Wealthy couples can afford it, but between the wealthy couples and those like Dennis and Sue, who have very little, stand the middling couples. Let us think about them, because wedding venues often include the cost of the ceremony as part of the package. Couples are being asked to spend an additional £600-plus to have it in church, not an alternative to the fee at the venue. Reducing the parochial fee for marriages to zero or a minimal amount holds the door wide open to all and the one who said, “Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”. I urge support for motion 29.

*The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury):* I speak as an ordinary parish priest from Canterbury and in that regard I declare an interest. I have learned since being here that this is the third poorest diocese. Hi, friends from Liverpool, and I am afraid I do not know who is number two.

But this is not about big scary numbers. Marriage enriches society and strengthens community, which reminds us that when people marry it is more than just two individuals buying a product. They are, as part of a local community, declaring their love and commitment publicly in a sacred space that is shared by and, hopefully, open to the whole community. People value this presence. Being under so much pressure, as we have heard over the last few days here, and we have also heard how the giving among the poorer parts of our Church exceeds the generosity of those in the wealthier, it is highly valued.

In my experience people, are willing to save until they are ready to celebrate this among their family and friends in as lavish a way as they feel is right, whether that is paid for in cash, in instalments (do all of our churches offer that option automatically?), or in one lump sum by BACS. By reducing fees carelessly, we risk cheapening what we are offering: a beautiful building in the heart of their community, with space for everyone to fit in, and ongoing pastoral care in good times and in bad from the church community.

Like Katrina Scott, I would have strongly opposed the original motion, but I wanted to say resisting the motion does not mean a lack of commitment to marriage and pastoral care. In

contacting a couple whose banns I had read on their first anniversary, I learned they were expecting their first child, which has led to a baptism request and one of those parents getting confirmed last month. Every week in my church we do not just ask for what birthdays there are to celebrate; we also ask if there are anniversaries to give thanks for. When a young woman discovered her fiancé's infidelity and cancelled the wedding, the way the church looked after her has led to her getting baptized, alongside her four siblings, the whole household.

I agree with Rachel Firth that we are hiding our light under a bushel. The liturgy is the same for a princess as for our parishioners. As someone from a parish of high IMD recently told me, people are not having church weddings, not because of the cost but because "church is weird". I too question the causal link described in the motion. It seems to be a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

I am left wondering all kinds of things which I have cut because of time, but who are we talking to about this? Is it the Archbishops' Council, is it our friend archdeacons, or is it the people in those areas that we are talking about, genuinely? If this is carried, I do feel sorry for whoever has to carry the financial burden of a trial period. Please do not let it be Canterbury.

*The Chair:* I would now like to gauge whether you think this item has been sufficiently debated.

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

*The Chair:* That is carried. I now call on Tom to respond.

*The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn):* Thank you for a lively and stimulating debate. I have not been on the platform before so trying to keep track and mention everyone is a new skill which I currently lack.

Katrina, Rachel and his Grace the Archbishop, I am so pleased that this amendment means that you can be positive about the overall motion because those real concerns and unknowns about what could happen can be addressed in that regional trial. His Grace's suggestion that the trial should include different areas, one richer, one poorer, perhaps one in the Southern Province and one in the Northern Province, is particularly welcome - and Blackburn Diocese is available.

Carl, you resist the motion. That is okay, that is your job.

Bishop Philip is less enthusiastic about the amended motion than the original. So am I, but I think this one is winnable because of those real concerns and unknowns. I hope this will mean that we will win the vote overall.

Lis, thank you for highlighting the marriage gap and the enduring popularity of marriage.

Nigel, thank you for thinking about the middling couples and the way that this is not an alternative direction of the monies for so many couples but an additional wedge for the privilege of getting married in church. I think that is important to note.

Rachel, it would not be the diocese that would fund the experiment. That is why Carl does not like the amendment because it is the Archbishops' Council that would design, fund and implement the trial, so do not worry in the Canterbury Diocese.

Rachel made a point about the national comms team. Revising that section of the website that I quoted in my speech might be done to encourage a better way in the interim before in two years' time, three years' time, this returns and we vote for the full abolition in due course, if the trial goes well. Perhaps in the interim that section on couples who cannot afford the fees could be looked at and tweaked a bit. I think I have mentioned everyone. Debbie, what do I do? I move the motion standing in my name, our name, whatever.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* Point of order. Because of the interest in this far beyond this place, it would be good to have an accurate count of the Synod, so when you come to order the vote, would you consider ordering a count of the Synod?

*The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham):* Point of order. Could we have a counted vote by Houses, please? Have I done it at the wrong time? Am I right? Do I sit down now?

*The Chair:* I am sorry, did you retract that or did you leave it?

*The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham):* I am leaving it. I am just checking I can retract myself.

*The Chair:* You may. If there are 25 people standing indicating they wish a counted vote by Houses, then we can do that. Yes, we will do a counted vote by Houses.

The vote on Item 29 as amended by Item 87: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 15, against four, with two abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 104 in favour, 19 against, with eight abstentions. In the House of Laity, 118 in favour, 17 against, with seven abstentions. The motion was carried in all three Houses.

*The Chair:* That concludes this item of business but please stay in your seats for a speedy transition to Item 30.

## **ITEM 30**

### **SYNOD COMPLAINTS PROCESS (GS 2316)**

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Dr Rose Hudson Wilkin)* took the Chair at 12.33 pm

*The Chair:* Members of Synod, we come now to Item 30, Synod Complaints Process. This is a presentation which will be followed by questions. I am sure you will appreciate that we are up against time, so do please now begin to formulate your questions so that when you come to asking your questions you can be as precise as possible. Thank you. I now call on the Revd Paul Cartwright to introduce the presentation. Alison Coulter and the Ven. Mark Ireland will also be speaking.

*The Revd Canon Paul Cartwright (Leeds):* I am the Vice-Chair of the Business Committee. Synod, we have been pushed for time throughout these meetings and so we have literally got a few minutes just to give you a flavour of this item. It is the last part of business that is going to be presented to us and I would like to say it is my joy to introduce this final item on behalf of the Business Committee, but if I am honest, I wish we did not have to do this.

I should maybe explain this for new members that, amongst other things, it is the responsibility of the Business Committee to keep under review matters relating to the conduct of members of General Synod. Our roles as members of General Synod are part of our Christian service and discipleship and I am sure that there are many of you, if not all, who feel called to this work. It is a longstanding view of the General Synod that as Christians we ought to be able to rely on good behaviour of members and grace towards one another.

But this side of heaven, we are not perfect, we are only human, and the items we discuss are often those things which are personal to us, our experience, things which go to the core of our being. Synod, you will know that emotion is often linked to experience, and emotion shows itself in many different ways, from acquiescence, antilocution and sadly, in some circumstances, extermination, where we either seek to exclude or remove or someone feels that the only thing they can do is leave a situation.

Sadly, Synod, we have probably seen all of these experiences, as described by Gordon Allport in his work *The Nature of Prejudice*, in this session of Synod. The sad thing is that when we are focusing on that which is important to us, we sometimes forget that Jesus is the one which unites us all, and so successive Synods have felt it helpful to have published a Code of Conduct to guide our behaviour. This is on the General Synod website and I am sure you will all have read it and maybe even read it time and time again. That said, the Business Committee have received representations that our Code of Conduct is insufficient, even though it was previously adopted by Synod.

So let me share with you the main three arguments that we have heard. First, that our existing Code of Conduct, which was principally written for a pre social media era, is not good enough. Behaviour in the Synod chamber is mostly excellent, but our attention has been drawn to examples where comments have been posted on social media that have, regardless of intention, caused members distress.

Second, that where there is an example of genuine poor behaviour, our redress and sanctioning power is limited. Paragraph 28 of the code encourages colleagues to talk to their brothers and sisters in Christ. It is the right thing to do, but then if that does not work, if the poor behaviour persists, you should let the Business Committee know and the Chair of the Business Committee can actually write to the individual. There is actually no power in law to sanction members, for example by suspending them from membership. And, as you know, we do not have a Speaker of the House.

Third, that this chamber is increasingly out of step with other similar bodies in the United Kingdom in relying on an informal and internal procedure. The notes that you have seen in GS 2316 show, in their annex, other lawmakers have increasingly put in place things to deal with this kind of behaviour, formal policies that have been written down.

We have also heard powerful arguments against. Some are pragmatic points that it would be hard to set such a policy and that it risks consuming resource that would be better spent on mission, and others fear the weaponisation of any process to pursue other agendas. Still others fear that any process could be unfair for those with neurodiverse characteristics or those who hold different theological traditions within the Church of England.

The Business Committee has considered all of these arguments and we are not of mind. We could see both sides of the debate and we did not think that either side had made such a strong case that we could infer the mind of Synod. And that is why we have brought this to you today. We are going to ask you questions directly after this session and so you will not have a chance to vote at this session, but please do put in your feedback and your thoughts.

But we recognise that for some that may be hard, and so if you want to actually write a direct email, please address that to the Clerk of the Synod and it will be forwarded to the Business Committee. Of course, there is a cost in all this, some of it is a personal cost, and some of it is financial. I am not going to talk about the financial cost because that is in the papers.

Before we do begin to hear from our two volunteers, and please, they are volunteers, they are going to give us two opposing views of processes that may be available. Let us treat them with kindness, just like Harry Styles says. Some of you may not know who Harry Styles is, but I am not going to waste time.

If we do have time for questions, may I ask you please do not identify anyone or allude to someone if someone has formed this question for you to ask. That would be unfair to anyone in the Synod today, and so I ask that we ask the question of the panel and hopefully we can move forward. So, we look forward to what you feed back to us, but let us have some more information.

*Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester):* Synod, I want to speak in favour of a more formal process for considering Code of Conduct complaints. This may surprise some of you who remember that I spoke this time last year against having a formal process and against my friend Jayne Ozanne. Synod, and Jayne, I have changed my mind. Like any good sermon, I would like to give you three reasons why we should have a complaints process.

First, if we fail to deal with bad behaviour, it normalises bad behaviour. The Bishop of Leeds gave us a comprehensive definition of culture the other day. I am a simple lay soul, and the definition I use is the way we do things around here, the way we behave together. If we want a healthy culture, then we need to ensure we behave well. We have heard excellent speeches from Bishop Sarah and others about the link between culture, trust and behaviours.

The way we behave matters for each of us and for the reputation and good functioning of Synod. The way we behave will build or destroy trust, which we have spoken often of in the last few days. If we do not have a way of enforcing the Code of Conduct, it damages the reputation of Synod and it brings the Church into disrepute and makes Synod a less safe place.

Secondly, as we have already heard from Paul, Synod is increasingly out of step with other modern legislatures. The House of Commons, Scottish and Welsh Assemblies, local governments, all have complaints processes and enforceable codes of conduct. Members can be suspended from the House of Commons for breaches of those policies. Synod does not have a bullying, harassment and discrimination policy and cannot suspend members for unacceptable behaviour. I think we need to look at this and learn from best practice.

Thirdly, if we do not have a proper synodical process for managing complaints, it puts pressure on other processes we do have. I am thinking of the Clergy Discipline Measure and diocesan complaints processes. Bad behaviour already takes up time and energy and therefore already costs money. So, yes, this will cost money to set up but there is already a cost. Let us use our resources wisely and put in place something that works well.

I can see that there are some aspects of a complaints process that we will need to think carefully about. Will it dampen debate? Will it make it harder to have disagreement on matters of theological difference? Could it be weaponised? Would it penalise neurodiversity? Other organisations have found solutions to these issues, so we will need to do work on this policy, what it will cover and when it will apply. But I think in the process of design we can think together about how we want to be together, how we can belong together, as Archbishop Daniel talked to us about, and how we are to walk together, which is, indeed, what being Synod is.

*The Ven. Mark Ireland (Blackburn):* Thank you very much to Canon Alison for your very helpful presentation. She has drawn attention to the fact we do already have a clear Code



of Conduct, but it is not widely known. I will let you into a secret, I spoke to one of my colleagues earlier today, who is the person I know who most reads, voraciously, every General Synod paper, and he did not know that we had one. So, I think we need to make that much more visible.

But the basic value on which it is built is that as a Christian body, operating by Christian values, we ought to be able to rely on members' faith to govern good behaviour. Canon Alison mentioned that Synod is out of step with other legislatures by not having a formal process, and I want to say and so we should be, because we have a very clear foundation document in the New Testament which teaches us how we ought to live together, and we need to work and live that out.

And if people are not working well together, and trust breaks down, which clearly it has done in our Synod in different ways, I do not believe that calling in the lawyers is the best way, always, to deal with a breakdown in trust. You may get to that point in a breakdown in relationship in the end, but I do not believe that we are there yet.

I think there are three disadvantages in introducing a formal complaints procedure. The first is that I believe it would constrain debate and be quickly weaponised, secondly, that it could penalise those with particular disabilities or characteristics and thirdly it could be expensive. I believe it would constrain debate.

I can just hear in my mind the arguments of people in some of the debates we have had this weekend on both sides, equally on both sides, who have felt deeply hurt but might end up so weaponising a complaints procedure that it constrains people being able to speak in the room. A healthy body like this is one where people are able to articulate unpopular or minority voices and be engaged with rather silenced.

Secondly, it could penalise certain disabilities. Sometimes the behaviours that some find challenging are the result of medical conditions that might not be widely understood. As we work towards being a more inclusive and diverse Church, there is a danger that a formal procedure could be used to penalise those who might be on the spectrum or have neurodivergent characteristics.

And thirdly, it will be very expensive. As GS 2316 makes clear, the costs are considerable. The paper suggests if there were, say, 20 cases a year, the cost would be between £100,000 and £200,000 a year. As an archdeacon, I immediately translate that into stipendiary posts, and we would be saying that actually we need to, somewhere, make savings equivalent to between two and four stipendiary posts of full-time parish clergy just because we cannot find a way of getting on in a Gospel way with one another.

That is likely to be an underestimate because experience shows that whenever a formal mechanism for making complaints is introduced, more people make complaints, and so demand would be greater.

I think there are two things we could do to increase members' buy-in to the current code. First, to raise the visibility of the Code of Conduct, and I would put it on the Synod App, so that everybody sees it, but I would also make formal adoption of the code a brief item of Synod business at the start of each quinquennium. That is really building on a bridge-builders principle, where you actually, as we do in many PCCs, adopt a code of conduct at the first meeting after the annual meeting, everybody has a chance to debate it, and then having adopted it, and voted for it, they can then hold one another to account for behaviour which falls short of that, and I believe that is a better and a more Christian way to improve behaviour than the threat of expulsion from this body.

*The Chair:* We are very short on time, so can I have a very quick question from Bishop Christopher Cocksworth.

*The Bishop of Coventry (The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth):* These matters are very pertinent to the Diocese of Coventry, so I very much appreciate paragraph 16, which outlines the risks of not having a robust process in place. Mindful of (b) in paragraph 16 and of the place of the General Synod in the legislature of the nation may I ask the Business Committee whether it intends to consult with the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament for its view of the matter.

And mindful of (c), may I ask whether the Business Committee is considering consulting with Bishops and diocesan secretaries. And in the light of both, would the Business Committee give consideration to whether forms of behaviour that give rise to the concern of the police signal that a threshold has been reached that requires action by the Synod.

*The Chair:* Can I call Arwen Mary to make her question very, very briefly, please.

*The Revd Arwen Folkes (Chichester):* My question is twofold. I feel as though we really need to look at the behaviour of groupthink within Synod and how that affects and validates the behaviour of individuals. My second question is regarding how we can really define Anglican breadth with a respect for theological integrity. It is the first time I have seen it mentioned really well over the sessions that I have been part of in this quinquennium and I would be very grateful for that to be expanded and strengthened.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Point of order. Can we please adjourn this until November, given we have no time to hear from Synod, which is what the whole purpose of this presentation is supposedly about?

*The Chair:* I am afraid on this occasion we have reached our time.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* Exactly.

*The Chair:* And we cannot continue. The answer to the question on this occasion will be blowing in the wind as well, and we will have to get something formal from you to them.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* That is the whole point.

*The Chair:* We are not adjourning. We are not adjourning, we have arrived at a timed point.

*A Speaker:* Point of order.

*Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford):* I am disgusted, I am so sorry.

*The Chair:* The presentation is completed. If the Business Committee would like to bring this back, then the Business Committee can advocate for that. Thank you. We move to the next item.

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* took the Chair at 12.51 pm

## **ITEM 31 FAREWELLS**

*The Chair:* Synod, we move now to Item 31, the farewells, and I call immediately upon the Archbishop of York to deliver the farewell for the Bishop of Exeter.

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Just before the farewell to the Bishop of Exeter, I hope very much that last item comes back. I am sure the Business Committee will have heard our frustrations.

I would also like to welcome some visitors who are in the public gallery who have been with us for part of this morning. The Diocese of Sheffield, here in the Northern Province, is hosting this week, for the first time, a delegation from the Diocese of Bondo in the lovely Province of Kenya, so could you just briefly join me in welcoming the party from there.

Sisters and brothers, we are really up against the time, but Bishop David and those with you, you are very, very welcome. I have been to Kenya many times and I know when you do greetings you do them a lot better than this, and take time over it, but you are very, very welcome. May God richly bless you.

Like so many good things in the Church of England, Robert Atwell, our dear brother the Bishop of Exeter, for a couple more months, has his origins in the Chelmsford Diocese. St Andrew's, Ilford, if I remember rightly, but I will not wax too lyrical about that bit of his life. But to understand Robert and to know and love Robert, I think the key are the 11 years, Robert, that you spent testing your vocation as a Benedictine monk. Although that was not the way God led you in the end, I know, we know, that you are still an Oblate of Beck Abbey.

And even though you then came, as it were, back into parochial ministry in Primrose Hill and then as Bishop of Stockport and Bishop of Exeter, there are many things. I mean, somebody just said to me about you, Robert, they said the thing about Robert is he is just such a very lovely, kind person, is what somebody said about you. And for me, so much of that flows from your Benedictine spirit.

Now, I was staying at a Benedictine house a few years ago, and, as some of you may know, Benedictine hospitality is second to none. We were having a very fine dinner, with very expensive claret, somebody sitting next to me turned to me and said, “Mmm, if this is poverty, I wonder what chastity is like”. However, I corrected them by pointing out that the Benedictine vows are of stability, fidelity and obedience, no mention of poverty, and let us leave chastity to one side, we have quite enough of those issues in the General Synod.

Robert, quite simply, we love you and we esteem you for your obedience to the call of God, your championing of rural issues, the skilful, godly, caring way that you have chaired the Liturgical Commission, your commitment to older people as well as younger people. We esteem you for your fidelity, to the gifts that God has given you, your beautiful writing, and probably most of us, or many of us, will have on our shelves those books celebrating the saints and celebrating the seasons, but many people will not know, because of your modesty, that it is your scholarship, your wisdom, your spirituality, your godliness and your beautiful prose that enabled those books and many, many other books to happen.

And we thank you for the way that you have demonstrated stability as a core principle in the Christian life, the way that you have brought stability and flourishing to the Exeter Diocese, and I know that when you first went there, there were real, huge challenges, and the comfort and the reassurance and the affirmation that this has brought to the clergy and the parishes you serve.

Robert, my dear brother, your rootedness in Christ, and in the living streams of Christian tradition, and the way that it is evidenced in your holy life has been a great blessing to the Church of England, to the House of Bishops, to the House of Lords, and so many other people and places besides. Devon will miss you and so will we.

Now, I am going to have to move on, I am up against the clock, and there are still three more farewells to go and we are not running a clap-o-meter on which bishop gets the most applause, so I am sorry that we do not have time for too much clapping.

But secondly, we say farewell today to our dear brother Peter Eagles, the Bishop of Sodor and Man, Peter cannot be with us in the chamber, but I believe he is watching on Zoom. Sodor and Man, as is well known, is the smallest diocese in the Church of England. In case you do not know, the word Sodor does not come from *Thomas the Tank Engine*, but from what was the Hebridean Islands that were part of the diocese when it was part of the Norwegian Church.

Anyway, it is the smallest diocese, now just the Isle of Man, but it has one of the biggest hearts. And its bishop, Peter, who retires later this year is, as we know, a modest, godly, prayerful big-hearted bishop. I recently visited the island, my flight was cancelled because of dense fog, so I got the true Manx experience. I could not get on the island, and when I did get there, I saw very little, but I did see Peter at work and I saw a bishop who loves his people and serves them and is deeply, deeply committed to his diocese.

But although the diocese is small, many of the tasks and responsibilities of running a diocese are the same whether you have 15 parishes or 515. And for Peter, there is no one to stand in. But, of course, he has never complained because what Peter personifies and embodies is a spirit of loving service and duty, and of course this comes from where he has spent most of his ministry, which is in the Royal Army Chaplains department. He spent ten years as a Regimental Chaplain, ten years serving as a Divisional Senior Chaplain, five years in Army Headquarters, and in 2011 became the Archdeacon for the Army which is the most senior Anglican chaplain in the British Army, before his final appointment as Deputy Chaplain General, the second most senior post.

During that time, he completed challenging operational tours: Northern Ireland, the Helmand Province in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq. An army chaplain provides a lifeline of hope in dark times and it was in these situations that Peter's pastoral grace was formed and forged. No doubt, he has many stories to tell, often harrowing, harrowing stories that can only be told to God in great lament.

The Isle of Man is also a self-governing British Crown Dependency, home to Tynwald, the world's oldest continuous parliament, and the bishop is part of that, where Peter's contributions have been hugely valued. There was a motion in the Tynwald just a couple of weeks ago for the bishop to be removed; it was roundly defeated, and this, more than anything, demonstrates the value of Peter's ministry in that place.

Peter is also a gifted linguist. He went to Manx lessons so he could lead prayer in the Isle of Man's native tongue, and his knowledge of Russian has made his reflections on the war in Ukraine particularly helpful.

On my travels with Peter around the diocese before Easter, I discovered Peter's love of Russian poetry and, who knew it, Peter, as a side line, translates 19th century Russian poetry into English. I will read you a bit at the end. But most of all, Peter is a man of prayer, a man who is always putting out into the deep waters, rooted in the Catholic faith of the Church of England, but relating across the traditions. In the national Church he has led on deliverance ministry with our relationship with the Old Catholics, with the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade.

Alongside him is his wife Gail, a constant support and a wonderfully hospitable host. Peter, as you prepare for retirement, I think to Walsingham, where your devotion to the Mother of God and the truth of the incarnation will open new doors of opportunity, you go with the gratitude and affection of a church that you have served so well, as pastor, padre,

priest and bishop, we thank you but we are going to end with just a few lines of one of Peter's translations from the poet Osip Mandelstam.

"The heaven is vast, and everything to come is yet promise, the mother of the archway to the gate, *primaeval*, and eternally beginning". Those words of hope we offer to you, Peter, in retirement and indeed to the other bishops. Peter, thank you.

So, we turn to Christopher, dear Christopher, who came to be Bishop of Coventry back in 2008 after a distinguished career in theological education latterly as principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge. His years in Coventry have been marked by huge dedication to the whole of the diocese, the former North Warwickshire coalfields, the universities, Shakespeare's birthplace.

But Christopher, also, has given extraordinary service in the wider Church: Chair of the Faith and Order Commission in the House of Bishops, co-Chair of the Joint Implementation Commission for the Anglican Methodist Covenant, and, of course, much of the work in the early stages of LLF. His work on reconciliation in relation to the huge significance of his post in Coventry has been recognised in the Federal Republic of Germany and the awards they have given him.

We all know, in this Synod, that Christopher is an intensely thoughtful and profoundly reflective priest and bishop, who is always able to offer us new angles and new insights. And he has also taken that into the House of Lords, where he has served since 2013, carrying a wide range of briefs, including health and social care and higher education. In the House of Lords, in the General Synod, in the House of Bishops and certainly in the Diocese of Coventry, we will all miss his irenic, gentle and insightful wisdom. He is, for me, the personification of what it means to be a pastoral theologian, who brings his considerable learning and great thoughtfulness to the ordinary, everyday things of pastoral ministry.

However, while extremely good at helping us navigate theological complexity, there is a question about his ability to handle technological complexity. Indeed, I was sitting next to him on the famous occasion where he was, I think, the sole person, in, I think, the whole of the Synod voting against the House of Bishops' motion, which he had only just spoken in favour of, by pressing the wrong button.

Excuse the pun, Christopher, but in every other walk of life and in your ministry as a bishop and a priest and in all that you have given to the Church of England, you have pressed all the right buttons. There is a lot more that could be said about each of these persons but let me just say this one more thing about Christopher, which is not, probably, so well known.

He is such a great investor in others, and one of those has borne fruit in the way that he pioneered a scheme for interns and research assistants back in 2010. Since then, three clergy, one social worker, two academics, one lay chaplain, three civil servants, one policy

analyst, one faith co-ordinator for the West Midlands Police Violence Reduction Unit have all been produced because Christopher believed in these young people and gave them a chance.

And in the midst of all this heavy responsibility of ministry, he and his wife Charlotte, who I presume is the woman sitting next to him, you are in the gloaming and I cannot quite see, devoted to their family, devoted to one another and their home has always been a place of delight and hospitality. Christopher, you are laying down the Coventry crozier, but going to fresh adventures as Dean of Windsor. The General Synod, the Church the Diocese of Coventry, we thank you.

I think I am just about on time as we come to last, but not least, James, retiring Bishop of Carlisle, who when he went for, ACCM, or whatever it was called back in those days, the precursor to BAPs, his referee said, "James is not ambitions for worldly advancement, he is free from all self-importance, he is well-balanced and he is seriously committed to God, other people and his vocation".

Those words, written 50 years ago, are just as apt today, for James is quite simply a loving, godly, self-effacing, Gospel-focused, Christian gentleman. Ordained for 45 years, Suffragan Bishop of Penrith for seven, Bishop of Carlisle for 14, James has had a huge impact in many places and in many people's lives, and, in particular, his vision and ecumenical vision has left a mark on Cumbria, so much that it is now often spoken of as the ecumenical county.

This commitment began in his first incumbency in Ely where he oversaw a local ecumenical project, and throughout his ministry and today, where he hosts the biannual meeting with the Church of Scotland, James is deeply, deeply committed to collaborative ministry, to working together. One of the photos behind me, I think, shows him in the Ridley/Westcott Eight in the Cambridge May Bumps of 1978. You may also notice that Malcom Brown is the bow man. But what I think we all know is you only succeed in rowing by working together.

Everywhere you go in Cumbria, people know James. He, of course, would claim otherwise, though I have heard on good authority that on one occasion he was walking down a very remote country lane in a beautiful, remote part of the area - well, it is all remote in the Lake District to me - and he was explaining to a friend of his that even though he was in the public eye, he was very rarely recognised, at which point a man came by on a horse, doffed his hat and, and said "Oh, good morning, Bishop".

James is also deeply committed to the other responsibilities that come with episcopal ministry. A member of the House of Lords for the last ten years, he has covered several portfolios, particularly lead bishop on health, where he has been a gentle, persuasive and compelling voice for the Christian faith in Parliament and here as well.

Another good story about James is how he got the job. It was, again, Malcolm Brown - there is a connection - they needed a new lead bishop for health, and somebody said ask James Newcome, because he used to be a healthcare chaplain. So, Malcolm Brown took him to James bar, whenever it was, and bought him a drink and asked him whether he would like to be the lead bishop on health, and having said yes, James, just as they were leaving said "So, I am interested, why did you ask me?" And Malcolm replied, "Because you used to be a healthcare Chaplain". "Oh, no" said James, "no, never done that, although I did briefly drive an ambulance during the long vacation from university".

But if you remember, in 2018, the debate on Downs Syndrome here in the Synod, James brought in to the Synod through a video the voices of people. It was very, very beautiful and shows his spirit.

Most intriguing of all, James is the bishop who has the magnificent title Clerk of the Closet. And since 2014, all bishops, paying homage to the Sovereign, have been accompanied by James, myself included. So, when I paid homage in 2020, me and James were dressed up like episcopal ships in full sail, only it was a Zoom conference with Her late Majesty the Queen. She was in Windsor, we were in the Cabinet Office dressed up to the nines. Nobody could find a Bible, I mean James had not forgotten it, but somebody had forgotten it. Amazingly, they had a Bible in the Cabinet Office, who knew that, and halfway through, the fire alarm went off. But that is another story.

James puts you at your ease, and I think these qualities are simply because James takes the Gospel of Jesus Christ very seriously indeed, but he does not take himself too seriously. So, whether he is serving the King, or, the other week, when the two of us were having tea with the King of the Gypsies at the Appleby Fair, James is just James, being alongside people demonstrating the love of Christ.

Episcopal ministry has its costs, and James, like all the bishops who are retiring, has carried the cost of that. But James, and also, please, to Alison, we thank you so much for your service to the Church. I stayed with them both in Keswick a few weeks ago, where I saw the beautiful, beautiful gardens that Alison has created from scratch, so please pass on to Alison our thanks for all that she has done and the way, James, that she has kept you fertilised, nurtured and, where necessary, pruned.

As you lay down your crozier later this summer, I am sure God will open new doors of opportunity for you and for Alison, new gardens to tend. But now, we thank you for your faithfulness and for your witness, because you, like the other brothers we are saying goodbye to this morning, have shown us what it looks like to follow Jesus, and may God richly bless you in all that lies ahead.

*The Chair:* Synod, that closes this item of business, please remain in the chamber for the next item, which is the prorogation.

## **ITEM 32**



## PROROGATION

*The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell):* Synod, I overran by a minute on the previous item, I do apologise, I think it was you clapping too much, and of course I was supposed to share those speeches with Archbishop Justin, but was honoured to stand in.

Sisters and brothers, as we draw this group of sessions to a close, I would like, on your behalf, to thank the team at the university and colleagues from across the National Church Institutions, particularly from the Central Secretariat and the Legal Office, who have helped ensure the smooth running of the General Synod.

Just a small detail, I found out last night that just photocopying our Order Papers takes somebody about 90 minutes, early each morning. So much goes on behind the scenes to make our meetings work. Also, to thank Robert and the Business Committee who we have really challenged this week, rightly so, we have to do our business, but we are very, very grateful for the gracious and efficient way that they have worked to facilitate what has not been the easiest set of meetings, but I think we have learned important things about ourselves and about how we need to move forward.

Robert, I also gather you have been successfully elected to a second term in the role. I should not be partial but I think it is richly deserved. So, thank you. Could we just very briefly show our appreciation.

Please could you continue to keep Archbishop Justin and his family in your prayers, as I am sure you will. And let us keep each other in our prayers, especially those who, for all sorts of reasons, may have been hurt and troubled by all that has happened these past few days. In the name of God, Amen.

*The Archbishop of York prorogued the Synod and dismissed it with a blessing.*

# **APPENDIX TO THE REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

## **GENERAL SYNOD**

**July 2023**

### **Supplementary Questions**

## **Supplementary to Questions 8 & 9**

*Ms Rebecca Mynett (St Albans):* Please could the Archbishops' Council publish the Serious Incident Report and in due course annex it to the Report of Proceedings of Synod?

### **Answer**

I attach a copy of the Serious Incident Report submitted to the Charity Commission on 26 June and the closing letter received from the Charity Commission on 3 August. (see pages 8 and 12 of this annex)

## **Supplementary to Question 36**

*Ms Rebecca Mynett (St Albans):* Are the policies of bodies referred to in your answer publicly available and, if so, where can we find them?

### **Answer**

Currently, the Pensions Board publishes its Code of Conduct Policy (which can be found here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/church-england-pensions-board/pensions-board-membership>) and the NCI Supplier Code of Conduct is on the Church of England website (and can be found here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/ncis-supplier-code-of-conduct-proc0038-v3.0-002.pdf>). The other policies of the NCIs are not currently publicly available.

## **Supplementary to Question 37**

*The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes:* I am very grateful to the Chair of the Ministry Council for replying on behalf of the Archbishops' Council. There may be an element of confusion here. The Faith and Order Commission, of which I have the honour of being the Chair, is indeed the primary focus for doing theology but it is not part of the Archbishops' Council; it is an independent Commission. I should say that all the six Bishops and nine academics who sit on FAOC give their time freely and so there is no investment required from the Archbishops' Council in that sense.

My question is, to be really precise, could the Archbishops' Council tell us how many people employed by the Archbishops' Council do theology or have theology qualifications and are engaged in theology and what is the budget for doing theology, both the doctrine and ecumenicism?

### **Answer**

Data on the academic qualifications of NCI staff is not coordinated centrally – the following information has been put together in consultation with Directors of the Archbishops' Council.

We are aware of 17 staff in the Archbishops' Council who hold doctorates in theology or religious studies and are active in using their qualifications in the course of their work. They work for FAOC and the Liturgical Commission, and in the Faith and Public Life, Ministerial Development, Education, Vision and Strategy and Racial Justice teams. Other staff also have Masters and other qualifications in theology which they draw upon in their work. Theological expertise among staff crosses a broad range of the theological disciplines.

Many of these staff are academically active through teaching in TEIs and universities, supervising at Masters and Doctoral levels, publishing etc. Some have formal university affiliations, including: Visiting Professorships and Lecturerships, Research Fellowships and other links. The great majority of these links to academe are not part of the staff's job descriptions and it is conducted in their own time.

Whilst all these staff make direct use of their theological qualifications in their work for the Archbishops' Council, it is not possible to specify what proportion of their work – and, therefore, of the Archbishops' Council budget -- counts as “doing theology” without a disproportionate analysis of how each staff member spends their time. Arguably, such a study would be meaningless as theology is integral to most of these staff roles and informs all their activities – “doing theology” is not a discrete activity that can be isolated from other aspects of the roles. The theological activity of the Archbishops' Council staff ranges well beyond work on Doctrine and Ecumenism and includes Christian Ethics, Inter Religious Studies, Missiology, Ministerial Theology and other topics.

## **Supplementary to Questions 40-41**

### Further Information provided under SO 116(5)

1. With reference to Questions Notice Paper 1 and the supplementary questions to Questions 40 and 41 by Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) (see pages 87-88 above): The Archbishop of York said that he did not know that the questions had been changed until he arrived at Synod an hour or so before proceedings started (having been notified of the changes by the questioner), that Mr Sewell deserved an explanation for why the questions had been changed and that he should have been consulted, and that the Archbishop looked forward to finding out more about what had happened and to giving an answer to Mr Sewell's question through other means. This note provides that explanation.

2. The questions were changed by the deputy registrar, Mrs Louise Wills. She had the task of reviewing all questions as they were received to check if they were in order. The usual practice is that if a question is judged to be out of order (which may be on a number of bases, including if the question contains “argument or imputation”, contrary to SO 113(4)(a)), the Synod member is alerted before the deadline for questions and, if possible, suitable rewording is agreed. It is acknowledged that this did not happen in this case, and that it was entirely proper for the questioner to seek a thorough explanation on behalf of Synod.

3. Mr Sewell had submitted his two questions at 7.03 am on 21 June 2023 – well before the deadline of 12 noon on 27 June. This was the text of the questions as submitted:

*To the President of Archbishops' Council:*

The Review in response to Dr Martyn Percy's complaint of "the deliberate weaponisation of safeguarding allegations, with intent to cause harm to me , perpetrated by senior clergy, church lawyers and church PR" , was announced by ISB Chair Maggie Atkinson, in February 2022, "paused" in October 2022 and withdrawn in February 2023 without consultation with either the complainant or the then ISB members : can the President of Archbishops Council confirm that each of these steps occurred as result of a formal decision taken by minuted resolution of the Archbishops' Council, and if not, clarify by whom, and under whose authority each of these steps have been taken?

*To the President of Archbishops' Council:*

At the time of asking this question, no details of the process towards establishing the promised Independent Review into Dr Martyn Percy's complaint into the deliberate weaponisation of safeguarding allegations, with intent to cause harm to me, perpetrated by senior clergy, church lawyers and church PR", have been published. Will the President of Archbishops Council please provide Synod with a fully particularised chronology starting 1st February 2023 setting out, who has taken what decisions and practical steps on behalf of Archbishops' Council to collate the allegations, identify the issues and evidence to be considered, agree a suitable reviewer and devise a suitable timetable whereby all material steps required to bring this to a timely conclusion are expedited?

4. The questions were duly acknowledged at 9.05 am on 21 June, with no suggestion at that time that they were not, or might not be, in order. Answers to both questions were drafted by staff and approved by the Archbishop of York (who was to answer them at Synod) for inclusion in the Questions Notice Paper ['QsNP']

5. On the afternoon of Wednesday 5 July (the day on which, in accordance with SO 114(1), the QsNP was circulated to all Synod members), and shortly before the QsNP was to be printed, Mrs Wills received a call from Darren Oliver, Registrar of the Oxford Diocese and partner of Winckworth Sherwood LLP, Solicitors, asserting that two questions from Mr Sewell relating to Martyn Percy quoted unsupported allegations and were potentially libellous and, in his view, out of order under SO 113(4)(a).

6. Under time pressure, Mrs Wills considered the points that Mr Oliver had made. She formed the view that the wording contained argument or imputation, and that she should have challenged them earlier in the process. Her choice was either to leave the text unaltered; remove the two questions and their answers altogether; or amend the text in a way which, in her view, kept the gist of the question without the argumentative tone. She chose the third of those options. But by doing so at so late a stage, Mr Sewell was denied the opportunity to be consulted to try to agree suitable re-wording, or, if that was not possible and the questions were ruled out of order, to ask for a ruling from the Chair under SO 113(5). Mrs Wills also deleted the words in brackets, "(though not necessarily as characterised by the question)" after 'Martyn Percy' in each of the two answers.

7. After the questions session on Friday 7 July, following Mr Sewell raising his concerns on the floor of Synod, Mrs Wills contacted Mr Sewell, offered a full explanation and apology, and gave him copies of the original questions and answers so that he could see the changes that she had made.

8. Mr Sewell explained that, in his view:

- a. the terms of the original questions were neither defamatory, nor did they contain any imputation of themselves. Rather, the questions asked about the response to a complaint by Dr Percy, identifying the nature of that complaint and pointing out that every complaint complains an imputation of some kind;
- b. the questions as drawn 'denoted' the character of the complaint and did not of themselves make any imputation, and the words objected to by Mr Oliver were neither more nor less than the precise words of the complaint under consideration;
- c. accordingly, it could not be out of order to identify the character of the complaint with precision.

9. Mrs Wills accepts that had she had the opportunity to reconsider the matter in the light of Mr Sewell's explanation it might have been possible to agree a form of wording.

10. Mr Sewell accepts that Mrs Wills has acted in good faith throughout and that she has addressed his concerns with professional propriety and transparency.

### **Supplementary to Question 47**

*Mrs Carolyn Graham (Norwich):* As a lawyer, I am aware that you usually draw on a bank of precedents when drafting contracts, do you have precedents in these contracts that you can share with Synod that you have used?

*Mrs Alison Coulter:* I would have to find out. Obviously, I work in a people team as an HR professional and these details are confidential to individuals, so I would need to see what we can share and what we cannot share, Carolyn.

*Mrs Carolyn Graham:* Yes, I was only looking for generic stuff. Nothing personal or financial just the generic stuff.

### **Answer**

The full contracts have now been made available to Sarah Wilkinson who is leading the review of the Independent Safeguarding Board. She will consider what information should be made public as part of the review.

### **Supplementary to Question 48**

*The Ven. Sally Gaze (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich):* I am leading one of the SDF projects in rural ministry and mission which has an upcoming evaluation and so I am very excited with your mention of that project. By what means is the national Church currently exploring the thematic analysis of learning around rural ministry and mission that you mention in your answer and how many rural practitioners contribute to that exploration?

### **Answer**

The Vision and Strategy team are commissioning a research agency to undertake a meta-evaluation of those SDF projects which are focused on rural ministry. This will include those SDF projects who have already had their own final evaluations, as well

as capturing key learning from projects still in train. One of the objectives of this work will be to launch a learning community for Rural Mission, bringing together rural practitioners to share learning with one another.

Since July's Synod colleagues have met directly with Archdeacon Sally and her colleagues to discuss this work.

### **Supplementary to Question 49**

*The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I am Chair of the Legislative Reform Committee as well. Many of the things that emerged in the work we have done on the MPM do not really touch on legislative things, the sorts of things Ian is talking about. I wonder if it would be helpful if Flora and her team might produce a separate document outlining some of those issues that remain, as it were, work in progress or work to be done arising out of the excellent consultation she and her team have done in the past period.

### **Answer**

As GS2315 sets out, the Commissioners worked hard to listen to the concerns of all those who had an interest in the review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, and as a result, have put trust and transparency at the heart of the new approach and the recommendations for new legislation. As part of the next phase of the programme, the Commissioners have considered what wider process and culture change can be taken forward in parallel with the development of the new Measure, particularly to address the issues of trust and independent advice which were raised. We will develop a new MPM Operating Framework to set out the governance in a transparent way. This will include new delegation arrangements for the Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee and staff team to help to streamline and speed-up the current processes. The staff team will also be working to make the processes easier to understand and navigate in various way, including better guidance and training materials and new online systems.

### **Supplementary to Question 50**

*Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester):* As a matter of completion, can you or will you confirm which member of the HR team attended the meeting?

### **Answer**

I can confirm that it was the Clergy HR Manager.

### **Supplementary to Question 63**

*Mr Benjamin John (St Albans):* Please may you provide details such as when it was agreed, was there a vote, what theological work was done ahead of making a decision for the agreement and the longstanding policy referred to in your answer?

### **Answer**

The theological work and decisions in relation to the issue of a person whose transitioning has been legally recognised can also be recognised as such by the Church are covered by the debate in the February 2004 General Synod, the associated paper GS 1519, and the publication *Some Issues in Human Sexuality: A Guide to the Debate*.

### **Supplementary to Question 64**

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Bishop Sarah, thank you very much for your extremely clear and helpful answer that the people in a marriage continue to be the same people. I wonder if you could tell me where members of Synod can access the documentation around the discussion in the Pastoral Advisory Group and the reason for coming to this conclusion and, if it is not available, when might it be published?

### **Answer**

The Pastoral Advisory Group was, as its title implies, a body set up to advise bishops who wished for guidance on either specific cases or general principles. As such, the deliberations of the PAG were for the benefit of the bishop(s) concerned and are not available for publication or wider dissemination.

### **Supplementary to Question 69**

*Mr Robin Hall (Europe):* In February, Bishop Sarah, I asked you whether the apology offered to victims of Church homophobia would mean an individual apology and compensation, where appropriate, to those clergy who lost their home or income as a consequence of marrying their same-sex partner. You undertook to come back to me with a full response which I have not yet had and I wonder if you would be able to answer that now or could come back to me fully soon.

### **Answer**

On the specific question of clergy who lost their home or income as a consequence of marrying their same-sex partner, work has not been done on this as to enter into a same-sex marriage is still against the discipline of the CofE. Following the outcome of the current work, with the changes brought in by the new Pastoral Guidance, the harm that LGBTQI+ people have experienced and continue to experience in the life of the Church will be looked at by the proposed Pastoral Consultative Group. Without the Pastoral Guidance being in place it is premature to address this question, but we would encourage the questioner to bring it to the PCG when its work has started.



### **Supplementary to Question 96**

*The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham):* Bishop Sarah, thank you for your answer to the question, but I think you have only answered one part of the three parts there which is you do not make any mention of when this decision was communicated to the House of Bishops, the Archbishops' Council and perhaps even members of General Synod.

### **Answer**

The future need to bring the output from the working groups together for a November Synod meeting was outlined at the end of the College of Bishops meeting on the 7th June, which was followed immediately by a House of Bishops meeting. This was then shared with those members who were able to attend the in-person working groups meeting on the 16th June, which was followed up by an email to all members of the working groups (including those not present on the 16th) on the 20th June.

# Report Serious Incident

**Are you reporting a new serious incident or updating an existing one?**

I am reporting a new serious incident

**Do you have authority to report the incident(s) on behalf of the trustees?**

Yes

**Is the charity registered with the Charity Commission?**

Yes

**Charity name or number**

1074857

**Select a charity**

1074857 - THE ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

**Title**

Mr

**Given Name**

Simon

**Family Name**

Gallagher

**Your email address**

simon.gallagher@churchofengland.org

**Your telephone number**

02078981385

**What is your connection to the charity? (You can select more than one option)**

Employee

**Choose the best option to describe the incident type (select one option only)**

Other significant incidents (for example insolvency, forced withdrawal of banking services without alternative, significant data breaches/ losses, incidents involving partner that materially affect the charity)

**Which of the trustees are aware of the incident(s) you are reporting?**

All

**Did the incident take place on a single date or did it take place over a period of time?**

It took place on a single date

**What was the date of the incident?**

21/06/2023

**Is this an approximate date?**

No

**When did the charity become aware of the incident?**

21/06/2023

**Did the incident take place in part of the UK or overseas? (Must select at least one but can be multiple selection)**

England or Wales

**Do you know or suspect that a crime has been committed?**

No

**Have you reported the incident to any other regulator(s) or statutory agencies?**

No

**Has the charity prepared or released any media handling/press lines in relation to the incident?**

Released

**Provide details of the media handling/press line(s) prepared/released by the charity (include link to press release if applicable)**

Our media statement is available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/statement-archbishops-council-independent-safeguarding-board> . In addition trustees have given on the record quotes in interviews over the last 4 days for example in the Sunday Programme on Radio 4

**Are you reporting on behalf of more than one charity?**

No

**Choose one option to describe the other type of significant incident that you are reporting**

An incident has occurred involving one of your charity's partners in the UK or internationally which has materially affected your charity, its staff, operations and/or reputation

**Partner name**

Independent Safeguarding Board

**Registered charity number**

N/A

**Choose the option that best describes the incident type**

Other significant incidents

**Provide a short summary of the incident including details of what has happened and how it came to the charity's attention**

The Archbishops' Council decided, following discussions over months with the trustees, to terminate the contracts of members of the Independent Safeguarding Board, designed to provide independent oversight of safeguarding in the Church. Interim arrangements are in place and the Archbishops' Council remains committed to independence in its safeguarding work. This was announced on 21 June. There has been extensive critical reporting on mainstream and social media including that the Council is leaving survivors without support.

**Provide a short summary of the impact of the incident on the charity (For example, how has it affected the charity's staff, operations, finances and/or its reputation?)**

The decision has had a short-term impact on the reputation of the charity with a number of critical media articles and social media posts. The charity judges that this is the right decision in order to get to its destination of independence in safeguarding most swiftly, but in the short term there is uncertainty for staff, partners and its reputation.

**Provide a short summary of the steps that have been taken or are being taken to deal with the incident**

Trustees have been engaged in the media to be as open and detailed as we can (especially countering some of the myths and outright untruths out there) while recognising that this is a disagreement between two individuals and a committee/governing body and avoiding a tit-for-tat debate. We have interim arrangements in place (for continuity of service) and are reinforcing these. And we are developing a plan to get towards proper independent safeguarding as soon

as possible.

**Confirm what action has been taken to prevent future incidents from occurring**

This is a particular incident relating to working relationships so is specific to the circumstances of the case. However we are drawing on learning and reflections from trustees in order to inform our work on future independent safeguarding.

**Provide any other relevant information (optional)**

Next formal trustee meeting is 18/7 where they will discuss reflections and next steps.

**Are the charity trustees satisfied that the action taken in response to the incident gives them assurance that it has been properly managed, the appropriate organisations and/or statutory bodies have been notified and adequate procedures are in place to manage any live risks to the charity and the people who come into contact with it through its work?**

Yes

**I confirm that the information I have provided in this service is true and correct to the best of my knowledge**

Confirm



**CHARITY COMMISSION**  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

FAO Simon Gallagher

Sent via email only to  
[simon.gallagher@churchofengland.org](mailto:simon.gallagher@churchofengland.org)

Charity Commission  
PO Box 211  
Bootle  
L20 7YX

**T: 07919044626**

**Your ref:**  
**Our ref: 1074857/092385**

**Date: 03 August 2023**

Dear Simon

**The Archbishops Council – 1074857**

Thank you for your letter dated 25 July 2023.

We have considered the information provided in your letter alongside the serious incident report and the discussion (and accompanying papers) at General Synod on 9 July 2023.

We have been contacted by members of the public expressing concern that given that the ISB was “*designed to provide independent oversight of safeguarding in the Church*” and it “*exists to ensure the Church of England delivers its safeguarding responsibilities*”, the decision to disband the ISB had left individuals, including abuse survivors and members of the Church feeling unsafe and expressing a lack of trust in both the charity and the wider Church. In addition to the media coverage concerns had been raised directly with the Commission about this decision.

As you know from our previous engagement, we have understood and established that the Church’s formal and legal structures for considering allegations relating to safeguarding incidents are not in fact matters for us as charity regulator to be involved in. However, our regulatory role does include ensuring that trustees comply with their legal duties and responsibilities which in the context of safeguarding issues, focusses on the conduct of trustees and the steps they take to protect beneficiaries, employees, volunteers, and others who come into contact with the charity through its work.

It is reassuring that the trustees of the charity have demonstrated they understood their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and reported the matter to us as a serious incident.

We note that the trustees are in discussions about the work of the ISB and the events leading to the decision to disband it so that lessons can be learnt. It is important to note that effective charity governance includes reviews of the charity’s key policies and procedures to ensure that they

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Visit [www.gov.uk/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/charity-commission) for help  
on filing your annual return and accounts

**t:** 0300 066 9197 (General  
enquiries)

**w:** [www.gov.uk/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/charity-commission)

continue to support, and are adequate for, the delivery of the charity's aims, this includes reflecting on lessons learnt which you have indicated you will do.

Finally, we note that Church has appointed Professor Alexis Jay to develop proposals for a fully independent structure to provide scrutiny of safeguarding in the Church of England. Professor Jay is undisputedly qualified for such a review, given her former role as Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, IICSA.

We are satisfied at this time that there is no regulatory role for the Commission.

If we receive further complaints about the ISB, we will refer those individuals to the charity. If we receive complaints regarding safeguarding, either generally or in relation to specific cases we will consider these in the normal way in line with our published risk framework.

This letter has been copied to William Nye (Archbishop's Council) and Helen Earner (Charity Commission) for information given their previous engagement.

Yours Sincerely

**Joanne Maguire**  
**Senior Case Manager – Regulatory Services**

CC: William Nye (Secretary General, Archbishop's Council)  
Helen Earner (Director of Regulatory Services, Charity Commission)